

**HMAS WESTRALIA**

**QUESTION 1**

**ACTION AREA: Navy**

Senator Hutchins

Navy states 71 sailors were posted to HMAS WESTRALIA at the time of the fire, can you clarify if this figure includes the four deceased sailors?

**RESPONSE**

The four deceased personnel were not included.

**QUESTION 2**

Can you clarify the status of the four others who were listed as being onboard but were not posted to the ship?

**RESPONSE**

The four personnel were loaned to WESTRALIA for the planned deployment, two from HMAS STIRLING and two from HMAS TORRENS. They were to supplement the posted crew for the short term or for training requirements. The Directorate of Sailors Career Management (DSCM) took no posting action as the loan would have been agreed between the commands involved.

Of these personnel three have discharged, one for medical reasons and two by claim (resignation); both are members of the Naval Reserves. The remaining sailor is still serving.

**QUESTION 3**

What is the average annual Navy discharge rate?

**RESPONSE**

The sailor discharge rate is 10.55% (1482 personnel) annually as at 01 Jul 2004, but has been higher in the past five years.

In relation to the 71 WESTRALIA sailors this equates to about seven to eight personnel within one year and a reducing number in subsequent years. Over the six years since the fire in 1998 this exit rate extrapolates to about 35 personnel out of the 71 who would have been expected to discharge given the Navy average rate.

The discharge of 44 sailors out of the original 71 is higher than average but not unusually so, particularly as separation rates have been above the current level

**QUESTION 4**

Of the 44 that have since discharged, can you supply a breakdown of grounds for discharge?

**RESPONSE**

Listed below are the three main categories of discharge;

- Resignation (Claim for discharge, Expiration of enlistment, Discharge at own request) - 31.
- Retention not in the interest of the Navy (eg unsatisfactory performance, conduct etc) - five (5)
- Medical (Medically unfit for Naval Service) - eight (8)

**QUESTION 5**

Of the 44 that have since discharged, how many continue to receive to pensions for complete or partial mental or physical incapacitation?

**RESPONSE**

Defence is not in position to answer this question. The information is the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**QUESTION 6**

How many sailors requested postings from WESTRALIA within three months of the fire?

**RESPONSE**

Career Management Information Systems (PMKeyS, Career Managers' notes and records of conversations) were reviewed for all 71 sailors posted to WESTRALIA. No evidence of any personnel requesting to be posted from WESTRALIA during the period indicated was found. In some cases personnel requested to extend their posting to WESTRALIA.

This review would have captured any formal request to be posted from the ship, and may have recorded any informal request that did not progress to a formal posting request.

**QUESTION 7**

Was there an official Navy directive that all sailors that wished to transfer from WESTRALIA could do so? If so, when was that given?

No Official Navy Directive is available. It is understood the opportunity to transfer from the ship was given by both Chief of Navy and the Ship's Commanding Officer at all ship crew briefings soon after the fire.