



Army

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Scaling the Force

Reserve Mobilisation for
Domestic Contingencies

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Serving our Nation

Disclaimer

The analysis and conclusions presented in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Australian Defence Force or the Department of Defence. The author is responsible for any errors or omissions.

About the Author



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Cover Image: (L-R) Australian Army Reservists from the 13th Brigade, Sapper Malcolm Stewart, Private Bodhi Rowe and Lieutenant (LT) Connor Brede assists in the Australian Defence Force's bushfire recovery support operation to the victims of the devastating Perth hills bushfire in the suburb of Gidgegannup, Western Australia. (Defence Images)

*'There were people coming off helicopters who
were elderly, disabled, young children ...
they weren't crying ... but they were distressed*

*Essentially looking at Australian refugees in our
own country was quite confronting. And I sort of
have to deal with that and I have to keep pushing
through and do my job and I can't look away.'*

Private Michael Currie,
HQ JTF 646
AAHU interview transcript,
14 February 2020.
Omeo, Victoria

*Poxes of the sun or of the mind
bring the force-ten firestorms.
... Love the gum forest, camp out in it
but death hosts your living in it, brother.
You need buried space ...
Cellars, or bunkers, mustn't sit square
under the fuel your blazing house will be ...*

Les Murray (1968),
Hesiod on Bushfire.

Foreword

Members of the ADF spend their careers honing their ability to respond to extreme circumstances through training and exercises. The ultimate test of these skills comes when they are required for operations. Australia's Call Out of the Reserve for Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020 was a watershed moment for the part-time component of the ADF. Three thousand Reservists were called to serve their country at a time of acute crisis. Their response embodied so much; their training, commitment and collective experience were all suddenly brought to the fore. Operation COVID-19 Assist extended domestic Reservist contributions further than ever before.

This story is told against the backdrop of the real heroes of the Bushfires and COVID-19 – the civil and emergency services who have led the nation's responses. Our first tribute is owed to them, and our ADF support to their worthy efforts has solidified close civil-military partnerships and interoperability here at home.

This work focuses on the contributions of the part-time ADF to the domestic contingencies of 2019–2021. While valuable for a number of reasons, this work is particularly important because it is written from a 2nd Division perspective. Noting the generally sparse literature examining the part-time ADF experience, I especially welcome contributions of this kind – and encourage more of them! However, this is not some triumphal account of the Reserve. The real story told here, from the ADF perspective, is about the triumph of the Total Force, as the full-time component of the ADF also stepped forward, critically enabling its part-time components. Working together, the Total Force succeeded in the eyes that matter most – those of the Australian public.

The story is not complete without us acknowledging the families of all ADF members, without whose support none of us could effectively serve, especially during a national crisis. For the Reservists who stepped forward in 2019–2021, the employers of the nation were also critical supporters, and I extend my thanks to them as well. All are actively contributing to the security and future prosperity of the nation.

Our strategic environment and our physical environment are changing. The domestic contingencies of 2019–2021 may not be the last the ADF will respond to. Whether on- or off-shore, the ADF will need our part-time component more and more. As a country, our future will involve some tough compromises, including the allocation of scarce resources. And the most valuable resource is our people. Wise sailors, soldiers and aviators never rest on their laurels, but always strive to improve. This work points to some important opportunities for the ADF to both embed the successes of our recent domestic operations

experience and address areas warranting strengthened attention, especially concerning its workforce. How do we bring out the best in our people, both full- and part-time, and leverage the opportunities of flexible service within the contemporary economy? I encourage you to debate the workforce concepts discussed in this work, build on them, and propose your own.

The author of this work speaks of a ‘cultural pivot’ – a shift in outlook towards the part-time component of the ADF. Both within and outside the ADF, we have witnessed such a cultural pivot and it is towards the Total Force as no longer just a concept, but a positive, living cultural identity.

Culture endures and is the finest legacy any among us can hope to leave. From the ashes of the National Bushfire Emergency, the cohesion and resilience of the Australian community has shone through, fortified by that extreme test. In the same way, in those dire circumstances, the ADF rose and embedded a way of working and thinking – a culture – that succeeded, and it is Total Force. Our future is a partnered one – internally, domestically with other agencies, and internationally with partnered forces. Together we can succeed.

Commanding the 2nd Division was the greatest privilege of my military career, especially during this crucial period in our history. I stand in humble awe of what our ADF can achieve, including the domestic operations of 2019–2021. I commend to you this work; and urge you to continue to strive towards excellence in service to our nation.



*Major General Kathryn Campbell, AO CSC (Retd),
Commander, 2nd Division, 2019–2021*

Canberra, October 2021

Prologue

This paper was written on Ngunnawal Country and the events it describes occurred across the Country of many First Nations Australians. The author pays her respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Writing this paper so soon after the events themselves felt like being a war correspondent. There is a trade-off between capturing memories while they are still fresh enough to accurately describe events, and allowing sufficient time and space to analyse and reflect upon those events. There are two key drivers for this paper:

1. the importance of sharing the story of the ADF's domestic contingency campaign of 2019–2021, without delay; and
2. the imperative to understand the implications of that campaign and inform senior decision-making on and in the ADF that is occurring now.

While this work may be amongst the first to dissect, analyse and assemble the implications for the ADF of the domestic contingency campaign of 2019–2021, it will certainly not be the last. New ideas must be socialised through discourse and tested through debate. The fastest means of developing robust positions is to subject initial ones to constructive peer review. The purpose of this work is therefore to stimulate debate that can help shape the future ADF; an invitation to that debate is offered here, in the finest frank, fearless, respectful, and considered traditions of the ADF. Both war and peace are competitive learning environments. In the spirit of a healthy contest of ideas: may the best ideas win! The future of our ADF and the nation will be all the stronger for your intellectual engagement on these important issues. It is always a privilege to serve and to shape our future – and a particular privilege to share this part of the ADF's story.

Executive Summary

The 2019–2021 period required unprecedented mobilisation of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in response to domestic contingencies, including the National Bushfire Emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, and High-Risk Weather Season (HRWS) events. This mobilisation has included extensive employment of the Reserve and provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on force scalability, particularly the emerging role of the part-time Force. Several traditional compromises have limited the Reserve's contributions to ADF capability in the past and now warrant revision. Historically, these compromises have included tensions around the Reserve's perceived purpose, availability and focus for training and resourcing, which have influenced conceptions of its potential for employment. This paper explores how recent domestic contingencies allow for more effective compromises and highlight opportunities to maximise the Reserve's contributions to the capability of the ADF.

While Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020 is the principal focus of this working paper, Operation COVID-19 Assist is also considered. During these recent domestic contingencies, the Reserve performed effectively by:

1. applying and adapting existing training in foundation warfighting and leadership;
2. value-adding a civil-military mindset and skillset; and
3. being well-enabled by the full-time Force.

The author argues that foundation warfighting skills allow the ADF to respond well to short-notice domestic contingencies. To this, Reservists can leverage geography, relationships, and expertise, to offer an additional civil-military capability edge. When appropriately resourced, this allows more effective responses, more rapidly enabling the ADF to excel during domestic contingencies.

While the Reserve is now a 'force of choice' for domestic contingencies, there are two associated risks. Firstly, stereotyping the Reserve exclusively for this purpose may compromise the ADF's capability for higher-spectrum military operations, including offshore operations, which may also require Reserve contributions. Secondly, there is a risk of defaulting to the Reserve as a 'force of convenience' for domestic contingencies, with strategic opportunity costs to the wider economy of utilising Reservists more. Appropriate investments in civilian response capabilities and community resilience can avoid this potential pitfall.

The real successes of the ADF's domestic contingency campaign of 2019–2021 include:

1. the demonstration of the Total Force concept, in a two-way, leading/supporting sense across the part- and full-time components of the Force; and
2. use of Call Out to achieve ADF scalability.

The integration and embedding of warfighting and civil-military skills across the Total Force is now critical to force scalability and delivering the highest value capability contributions for the ADF and the nation, covering the full spectrum of military operations. For the ADF, both the full- and part-time components of the Total Force require elements of both skillsets, and a preparedness to balance their application during on- and off-shore contingencies.

This paper unpacks this paradox of scalability compromises to build an appreciation of contemporary Reserve potential – a future flexible force, within a Total Force context. From the inside out, opportunities to embed and exploit enhanced capability and scalability include:

1. developing workforce intelligence on the civil-military skills of all ADF members;
2. minor adjustments to Reserve training and task organisation processes to achieve greater impact, scale and focus through flexible force flow;
3. resourcing Reserve brigades to enhance distributed response capabilities within jurisdictions;
4. sustained, multi-level engagement with civilian response agencies in each jurisdiction; and
5. developing strategic partnerships with the civilian employers of Reservists.



A Sapper of the 5th Engineer Regiment Task Group cross-cuts fallen timber on the NSW South Coast during Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020. (Defence Images)

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAHU	Australian Army History Unit
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFSIP	Army Force Structure Implementation Plan
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
AMCU	Australian Multi-cam Camouflage Uniform
AO	Area of Operations
APIN	Army Presence In the North
AIM AW	<i>Army In Motion Accelerated Warfare</i>
C2	Command and Control
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CFA	Country Fire Authority (Victoria)
CFS	Country Fire Service (South Australia)
CFTS	Continuous Full-time Service
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CPD	CDF Preparedness Directive
CO	Commanding Officer
COP	Common Operating Picture
DACC	Defence Assistance to the Civil Community
DFACA	Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ESF	Emergency Support Force
ESP	Employer Support Payments
FAT	Fly Away Team
FoF	Follow-on-Force
FORGEN	Force Generation
HADR	Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief
HRWS	High-Risk Weather Season

IIP	Integrated Investment Program
JOSS	Joint Operations Support Staff
JMAP	Joint Military Appreciation Process
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTG	Joint Task Group
LHD	Landing Helicopter Dock
LIMFAC	Limiting Factor
LO	Liaison Officer
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NTM	Notice to Move
OBA	Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020
OCA	Operation COVID-19 Assist
OLOC	Operational Level of Capability
ORBAT	Order of Battle
OSD	Operational Staffing Directive
PMV	Protected Mobility Vehicle
PTRAK	Personnel Tracking
RBG	Reinforcing Battlegroup (under the Beersheba Force Generation Cycle)
RFS	Rural Fire Service (New South Wales)
RFSU	Regional Force Surveillance Unit
RN	Readiness Notice
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RTS	Raise, Train and Sustain
SEOC	State Emergency Operations Centre
TAA	Train Advise Assist
TLS	Training Level Standard
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia
VUCA	Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous

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Introduction

An Unprecedented Contingency: Australia's Black Summer 2019–2020

Late December in Australia is traditionally a relaxed, carefree season, when families, communities and workplaces ease into the festive Christmas–New Year vacation, after a busy year of endeavour. Yet in late December 2019, the nation stared horrified at an emerging domestic catastrophe. Years of chronic drought combined with record temperatures and acute wind conditions to form a 'perfect storm' of fire weather. In the continent's south and east, large swathes of bushland, farmland, national parks and state forests ignited, kindled by accumulated tinder-dry organic litter. For a while, the bushfires were 'out there' in the bush, and perhaps not front-of-mind for the majority of Aussies, who are accustomed to occasional bushfires and hot summers. But when the creeping fire fronts began to coalesce into 'megafires', generate their own reinforcing weather systems, and threaten towns and capital cities alike, the 'Black Summer' Bushfires of 2019–2020 suddenly held the nation's captive attention. This was clearly not a normal summer – in fact it was off the chart – and presented a 'near and present danger' even to city residents, as Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney struggled to breathe bushfire-polluted air and authorities issued advisories to remain indoors and wear face masks.¹

Normally idyllic coastal localities became fire epicentres, visible in satellite imagery. On Kangaroo Island (South Australia), and in Mallacoota (Victoria) and the Bega Valley (New South Wales), festive feasts were forgotten as residents, summer vacationers and tourists scrambled to defend their properties from advancing fire fronts, or pack and evacuate. Authorities responded by activating local Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) around the country. These Centres operated within a hierarchy of Regional and then State Emergency Operations Centres (SEOCs) to coordinate the emergency services' response. These Centres, where local commanders assessed the risk of envelopment (!) and the dwindling number of evacuation routes remaining open, were reminiscent of the tactical command centres of World War I and World War II, except that they relied on digital maps. In some areas the lead bushfire combat agencies in each jurisdiction had been valiantly

¹ On 01 January 2020, Canberra's Air Quality Index (AQI) measuring fine particulate matter (PM2.5), peaked at 3,839 micrograms per cubic metre at the Civic monitoring station. The Australian Standard for PM2.5 is 25 micrograms per cubic metre, measured over a midnight-to-midnight 24-hour period, and a reading of 200 is considered 'hazardous' to human health. <https://health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring/air-quality/air-pollutants-and>, accessed 04 Sep 2021.

fighting the flames on the ground since September 2019.² By the time the infernos of late December 2019 approached their climax, exhausted volunteer crews were struggling to sustain their shifts. To describe the deteriorating situation as surreal was an understatement; ‘unprecedented’ became the catchword of Australia’s Black Summer.

An Unprecedented ADF Response

When, on 4 January 2020, the Governor-General Called Out (Annex A) the Defence Force Reserves under the *Defence Act 1903*, for the first time in its history, this extraordinary act was almost universally received as reasonable in the circumstances. A total of more than 3,000 (mostly Army) Reservists of the 2nd Division were mobilised and deployed on Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020 (OBA) under three subordinate Joint Task Forces (JTFs), operating concurrently across three jurisdictions (Figure 1).

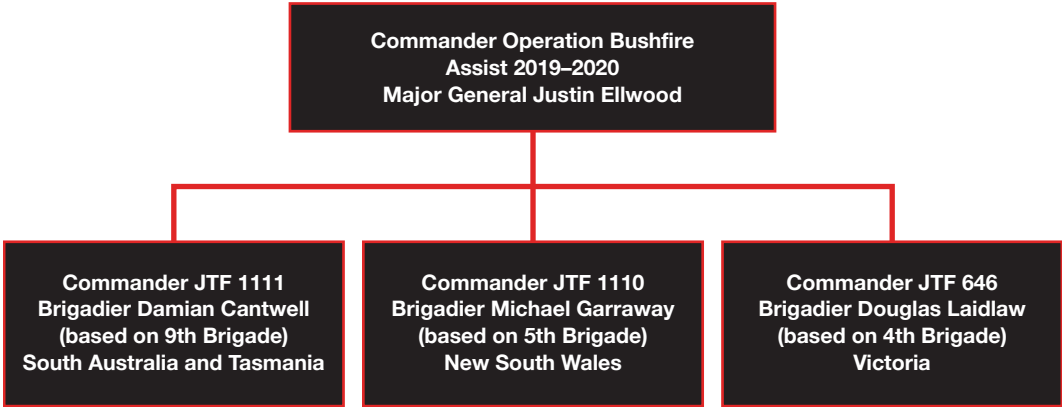


Figure 1: Joint Task Force Command and Control structure for Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020.

2 These were the Rural Fire Service (RFS) in New South Wales, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in Victoria and the Country Fire Service (CFS) in South Australia.

Contingencies and Compromises

The definitions offered in Box 1 frame the unprecedented nature of OBA. Until this point in Australia's history, a domestic emergency has been considered a contingency – an uncommon event. Accordingly, the ADF, and therefore the Army, have for most of their history understood their priorities to be:

Main Effort: 'Deter and defeat attacks on Australia and its national interest.'³

Supporting Effort: Be prepared to support domestic contingencies.

The relatively low-frequency, localised occurrence of natural disasters in Australia, triggering domestic ADF Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations has not warranted more explicit attention.

Box 1: Definitions

Contingency: a contingent event; a chance, accident, or possibility, conditional on something uncertain.⁴

Compromise: a settlement of differences by mutual concessions; an adjustment of conflicting claims, principles, etc., by yielding a part of each; arbitration.⁵

Mobilise: 1. To put (armed forces) into readiness for active service. 2. To marshal, as for a task. 3. To put into motion, circulation, or use; mobilise the wealth of a country. 4. To be assembled, organised, etc., for war.⁶

ADF Mission: to defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity.⁷

Army Mission: 'to prepare Land Power in order to enable the Joint Force in Peace and War'.⁸

3 Australian Defence Doctrine Publication – Preparedness and Mobilisation, Executive Series (ADDP – 00.2), Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2013, p. 1-1; and 2-2.

4 Macquarie Concise Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Sydney, 2006, p. 260.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 247.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 773.

7 <https://www1.defence.gov.au/about/at-a-glance>, accessed 2 Sep 2021.

8 Lieutenant General Rick Burr, Chief of Army Address – Army's 120th Birthday, 1 March 2021.

However, Black Summer's ash had barely settled when, in March 2020, a second domestic (indeed international) contingency required a major ADF response – the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, the ADF's Operation COVID-19 Assist (OCA) is ongoing.

The scale, concurrency and duration of these domestic contingencies raise provocative questions about the *raison d'être* of the ADF. The University of New South Wales Canberra's 2021 University Lecture was delivered by Georgeina Whelan, Commissioner of the Australian Capital Territory's Emergency Services Agency. Her Lecture was titled: 'The Future Frontline: The Role of the ADF in Disaster Response', and in it, Whelan posed the following questions:

The ADF is playing a prominent role in the national response to the impact of our ever-changing climate and the global pandemic. Is this, and should this be, the role of the Australian Defence Force? How will this impact upon readying our nation for future conflict?⁹

The Department of Defence issued revised strategic guidance in July 2020, which clearly flagged the Government's increasing expectations of Defence in domestic contingencies, juxtaposed with strong statements that 'strategic warning time' for potential armed conflict offshore should no longer be assumed.¹⁰ In response, the ADF must consider how it can best balance preparation and readiness for conventional expeditionary warfighting operations alongside domestic contingencies, and, in particular, manage concurrency risks. This is the first of several scalability compromises treated in this paper, and is at the highest strategic level.

The first element of the ADF's response to Government's increasing expectations is evident in the recently revised mission statements (Box 1). The ADF's mission statement does not specify what threats the ADF is defending Australia against – therefore, in the strictest sense, a domestic contingency triggered by an environmental threat is within the scope of the ADF's mission. The Army's current mission statement goes further, listing 'Peace' first in the explicit contingencies for which the Army is preparing. Emergency response to a natural disaster is, therefore, also within the Army's mission scope.

Just as the recent domestic contingencies have triggered an expansion of ADF thinking on the nature of 'threat', the second element of the ADF's response to increasing Government expectations is to internally reconsider the capabilities and disposition of its extant forces. In particular, ADF Headquarters is turning towards its part-time Force – the 'Reserve' –

9 Whelan, Georgeina, 'The Future Frontline: The role of the ADF in disaster response', University Lecture, University of New South Wales Canberra, 15 September 2021.

10 Department of Defence, Defence Strategic Update, Commonwealth of Australia, 2020.

and a prospective increased role for it in domestic contingencies. OBA crystallised this approach, since both that operation and the JTF structure illustrated in Figure 1 represented unprecedented ADF responses in at least two respects:

1. the Reserve was *tasked to lead*, and
2. the Call Out required the Reserve to respond, with scale and concurrency, *without notice*, in contrast to doctrinal and directed Readiness Notice (RN), which is a considerable period for most Reserve members.

This paper is amongst the first of undoubtedly many works which will seek to contextualise and determine the significance of the ADF's response to Australia's recent domestic contingencies.¹¹ It does so by examining how these domestic contingencies have challenged the traditional compromises that have shaped perceptions of the Reserve's *raison d'être*. From this analysis, a new *raison d'être* for the Reserve will emerge, one that not only reconciles some of the traditional compromises; but also presents real opportunities to maximise the capability contributions of the Reserve to the ADF, as it and the nation grapples with increasing and concurrent strategic demands.

The Army Reserve

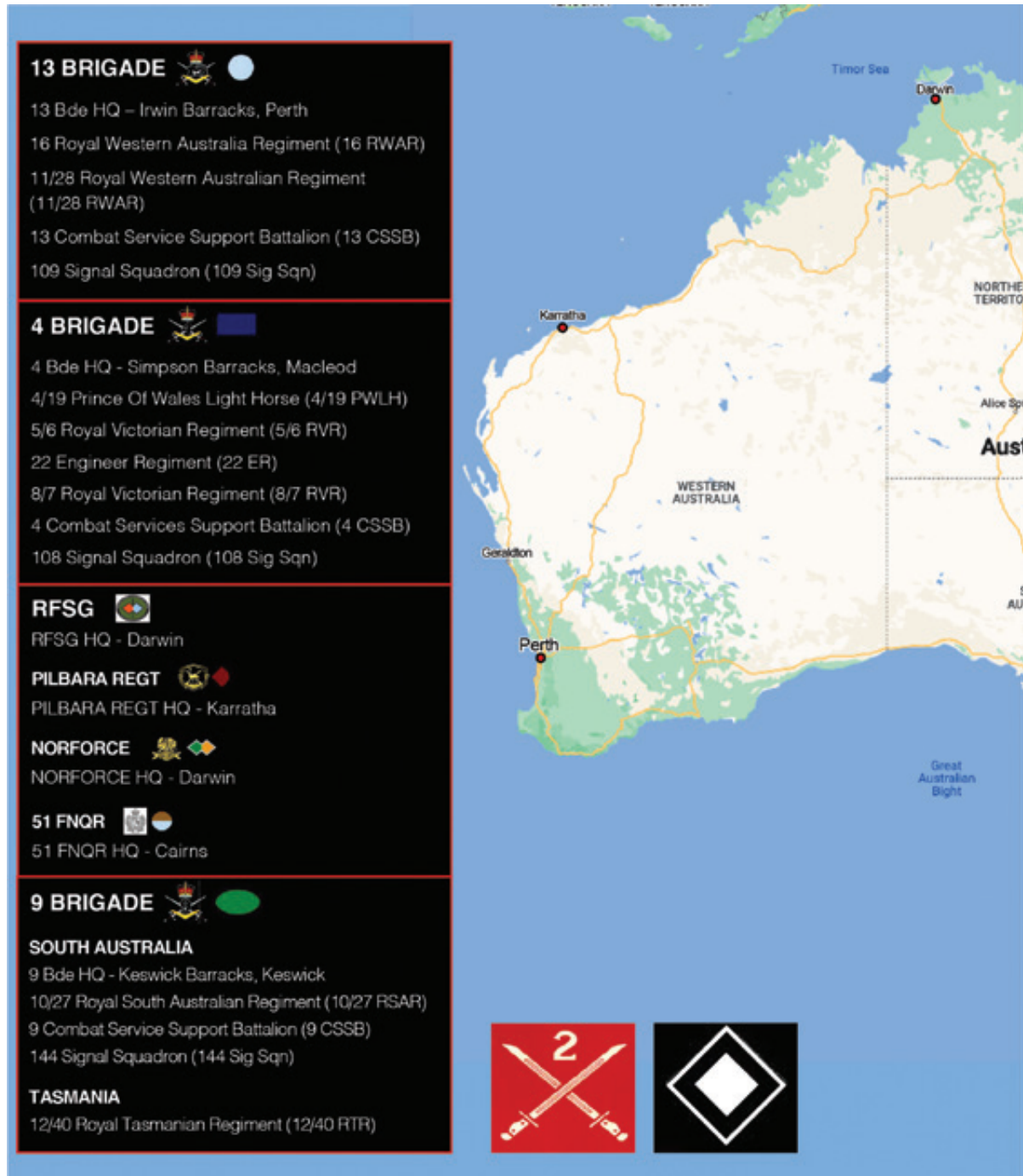
The Australian Army is underpinned by a central, critical premise. The Army's primary role is to perform combat operations: specifically, expeditionary warfighting. All soldiers and officers are trained towards this end. While the Government may direct the ADF to assist in other tasks such as domestic contingencies, the Australian Army does not explicitly train for these scenarios.

Notwithstanding this warfighting focus, the ADF has a diversified workforce. All three Services (the Navy, Army and Air Force) have a component of their workforce labelled as 'Reserve', comprising enlisted personnel and commissioned officers who render service on a part-time basis. The Army has the largest part-time Force, and while Reservists of all three services have been notable contributors to OBA and OCA,¹² this paper focuses on Army Reservists. Within the Army, most Reservists are posted to the 2nd Division, which is headquartered at Randwick Barracks in Sydney, and commands Reserve brigades distributed across Australia (Figure 2).

¹¹ See also: Armstrong, M., *Every Possible Capability: Some Implications of the Army Reserve Call Out for Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020*, Occasional Paper, Australian Army Research Centre, Canberra, 2020 and Cuffe, H. (2020), *Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020: The Royal Australian Navy's Role and Response*, Australia: Sea Power Series Paper 6, Sea Power Centre, Canberra, December 2020. Armstrong provides a first-order, quick assessment of OBA, published soon after the event in April 2020.

¹² Cuffe, *op. cit.*

Figure 2: Geographic disposition of the 2nd Division, which holds the majority of the ADF's Army Reserve (part-time) members.





The Reserve brigades formed the nuclei of the three OBA JTFs shown in Figure 1: the 4th Brigade constituted JTF 646 in Victoria; the 5th Brigade constituted JTF 1110 in New South Wales; and the 9th Brigade constituted JTF 1111 in South Australia and Tasmania.

While defining a ‘typical’ Reservist is challenging (**Box 2**), Reservists are generally understood to work full-time in their civilian professions of choice, living within the community as ordinary Australian citizens, but who have additionally volunteered to enlist in the Australian Army as a part-time profession. Like all ADF members, Reservists are legally subject to the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982* while on duty. However, Reservists are employed under conditions of service distinct from those of full-time soldiers. Most notably, Reservists are not generally liable to render ‘Unrestricted Service’ except in certain very exceptional circumstances defined in the *Defence Act 1903*, including, for example, Call Out. Unrestricted Service means that full-time soldiers must be prepared to relocate, deploy and serve as required by Army – often at short notice.

The 2nd Division has a long and proud history of service.¹³ For much of the 2nd Division’s history, its part-time members have been known as ‘Citizen Soldiers’. Significantly, their history relates firstly how Citizen Soldiers have stepped forward to deliver Unrestricted Service alongside full-time soldiers, during each major conflict or crisis; and secondly how the 2nd Division has been resourced, relative to the full-time Force, during the often-lengthy intervening periods of peace.

During those periods of peace, the main type of domestic operation the ADF has been tasked to support was Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), which is classified as Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) in the *Defence Act 1903* (Annex A). Essentially, HADR domestic operations support the lead civilian agency in responding to natural disasters in Australia. With Cyclone Tracy (1974) as a prominent example, bushfires and floods are more typical examples of the domestic HADR operations the ADF has mounted in recent decades in support of civilian agencies.

13 Much of this service has been captured in McCarthy, D., *The Once and Future Army: A History of the Citizen Military Forces, 1947–74*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic. 2003. Lieutenant Colonel Dayton McCarthy is currently the Commanding Officer of the 9th Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment.

Box 2: Types of Reservist

Formally, the ADF recognises two types of active Reservist: General Reserve and Specialist Service Reserve. General Reservists, who form the vast majority, complete initial military training, known as foundation warfighting, before specialising in one of the Army's Corps, such as Infantry, Engineering or Logistics. The Reservists' civilian background and qualifications are largely irrelevant in the General Reserve; progression is based entirely on completion of military courses and training after soldiers enlist or officers are commissioned. Subsequent employment of General Reservists within the ADF is based on the skills they have gained after joining. The Specialist Service Reserve, in contrast, is a comparatively small category, to which members are recruited for their specific civilian skills, on which basis they are employed within the ADF. For example, Specialist Service soldiers include tradespeople, such as (carpenters, plumbers, and electricians), while officers include doctors, nurses, and engineers.

Informally, while there is no 'typical' contemporary Reservist, there are distinct 'types' of Reservist emerging in the modern Total Workforce System which warrant description here, with a view to further discussion. These emerging demographic categories within the Reservist population present significant differences in both skill sets and availability. The four broad but distinct types offered below are neither mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive, and there are inevitably exceptions to these categories, but they serve to illustrate the diversity of Reservists.

1. 'Traditional' – The traditional Reservist has full-time civilian employment, and undertakes Reserve service on a mostly part-time basis, with occasional short periods (usually measured in weeks) of full-time service to complete training activities, courses, or operations. **Skill Set:** This Reservist is more likely to have a primarily civilian background, without previous history of extensive service as a full-time ADF member. **Availability:** This type of Reservist generally takes leave (either paid or unpaid) from their full-time employment in order to render a period of continuous full-time service. Most salaried workers take between two and four weeks of leave for ADF service in a typical year. Generally, this Reservist is less elastic in their availability.

2. 'Gigster' – This is a Reservist who may be a full- or part-time tertiary student and/or who otherwise participates in the 'gig economy', that is they are without a regular full-time job, but they may work across several part-time or casual 'gigs' simultaneously, or may be unemployed except for their Reserve service. Generally, this Reservist is younger. **Skill Set:** General – the Gigster Reservist usually presents with a lower-level civilian professional skill set. **Availability:** Availability is opportunistic.

If they are interested in the work, or in need of income at a particular time, these Reservists may choose to offer strong availability for extended periods of ADF service.

3. 'Ex-Reg' – This is a Reservist with a prior history of full-time service as a Regular soldier. Ex-Reg Reservists have transitioned into the civilian workforce, and may be self- or otherwise employed, either full-time or part-time. **Skill Set:** Depending on their rank and trade while serving full-time within the ADF, this Reservist may have valuable, well-recognised niche military skill sets that are in demand within Reserve formations and units. **Availability:** Highly variable; and may be flexible. Self-employed Ex-Reg Reservists may choose to work full-time as Reservists for lengthy periods between civilian contracts.

4. 'Retired/Transitioned' – This Reservist is older and has transitioned from full-time civilian work altogether. They may work part-time for themselves, or on contract or for an employer, or they may receive a pension or superannuation and not work elsewhere. **Skill Set:** This is dependent on the Reservist's former profession, and generally correlates to their rank. Senior non-commissioned officers and officers generally present with higher qualifications and professional skills. **Availability:** May offer strong availability if not committed to work elsewhere. Finally, a Reservist may present as a combination of two types – for example, as both an 'Ex-Reg and Retired'.

Reserve Compromises: Warfighting or Domestic Contingencies?

The Australian Army, therefore, has two types of operation: warfighting and HADR. These operations can be either domestic, that is conducted onshore, or expeditionary – conducted offshore. While these types are not mutually exclusive, the obvious strategic preference is for warfighting to be conducted offshore and for domestic contingencies to be of an HADR nature. Since the ADF also has two workforce components – full- and part-time – it may be tempting to leap to the conclusion that the full-time Force should focus on expeditionary warfighting while the part-time Force should concentrate on domestic contingencies. However, as history and practice reveal, it's not quite as simple as that. This paper considers the inherent compromises in tasking the part-time Force with specifically domestic contingencies.

In *The Once and Future Army*, McCarthy distills three key compromises which have recurred throughout the 2nd Division's history. These compromises have proven consistently controversial over many decades and are intrinsically linked. Australia's recent domestic contingencies have accelerated the ADF's consideration of the future of the part-time Force from abstract philosophical debate to 'decision and execution' on these compromises, as the ADF considers the future of the part-time Force.

Compromise 1: Purpose. *What is the raison d'être of the Reserve?* The range of historical perspectives on the purpose of the Reserve, can be summarised by the following questions:

Is the primary purpose of the Reserve either

- to form an 'expansion base' for national mobilisation in the event of major crisis such as it did in WWI and WWII and thereby achieve scalability, or
- to be a 'Home Guard' or 'Civil Defence Force', focused on responding to domestic contingencies?

Further, is the purpose of the 2nd Division to Raise, Train and Sustain (RTS) part-time soldiers to serve on expeditionary warfighting operations as individual 'round-outs' to full-time formed bodies?

Figure 3 captures this range of views of the purpose of the Reserve as a spectrum with 'Warfighting' at one extremity and 'Domestic Contingencies' at the other. The compromise on the Reserve's purpose can be conceptualised as a specific position along this spectrum. This paper considers where that current position should be in order to maximise the Reserve's capability contributions to the ADF, given the increasing expectations of the Australian Government.



Figure 3: Purpose spectrum for the Army's part-time force component. The Reserve's purpose 'pendulum' has oscillated across this spectrum over the Reserve's history.

Compromise 2: Availability. *To what extent is Reservist availability limiting? Is there latent potential?* Since most Reservists are employed full-time outside Defence (**Box 2**), their availability for operations is more limited than that of full-time ADF members. What is a reasonable contemporary compromise for operational service for part-time members, given their wider commitments, most especially their civilian employment?

Compromise 3: Training and Resourcing Focus. *What should the Reserve be trained and resourced to do?* This compromise is contingent on interpretations of the Reserve's purpose; and is constrained because part-time members have limited time to train. Reflecting the Australia Army's central premise, the current training priority for all soldiers is 'foundation warfighting' – towards the left extremity of Figure 3. Is that still appropriate for the part-time component of the Force, given recent domestic contingencies and Government's increasing expectations? Does this type of training maximise the Reserve's contributions to ADF capability?

2019–2021 as a Domestic Contingency Campaign: From OBA to OCA

In February 2020, the rains at last came to south-eastern Australia and fire conditions eased. After two months of sustained effort, the OBA JTFs were formally disestablished in early March 2020. Reservists returned to their civilian professions and, after a surreal summer, the nation was keen to resume a life resembling normality. This was not to be. Those who concluded that the ADF had just completed its largest peace-time operation ever were proven premature.

In New South Wales, the 5th Engineer Regiment (5 ER) had been Called Out complete by the Governor-General on 4 January 2020. The Commanding Officer (CO), Lieutenant Colonel Renée Kidson (the author of this paper) had led the 5 ER Task Group in the New South Wales firegrounds full-time for two months. Yet on the Friday night of 27 March 2020, barely four weeks after her return to her civilian profession, she was in the back seat of a 5 ER staff car transiting the well-worn route from Canberra to Sydney, reading the Execution Order (EXECUTO) for Operation COVID-19 Assist (OCA) from the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). The 5th Engineer Regiment and the 5th Brigade were again called to serve. The CO was recalled to Holsworthy to conduct the 5th Brigade's Mission Analysis for what would become the ADF's second major domestic operation in the space of less than a year – to assist the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Sappers of 5 ER quipped at the time that the one thing both Operations had in common was the compulsory wearing of face masks. But while comparable in scale and scope, OCA was responding to a very different threat, and the character of this Operation was distinct from OBA. While OBA responded to an acute crisis that required a **surge**; OCA required a **sustained** effort over many months, punctuated with surges in different jurisdictions, as each State combated the successive waves and variants of COVID-19.

OCA invoked a Call For, rather than a Call Out (Annex A). While several factors contributed to this decision, the inability to predict the duration of the pandemic response was one consideration. As OCA is ongoing at the time of writing, the ADF has adopted a campaign approach to the domestic contingencies of 2019–2021.

This paper does not aim to chronicle the history of OBA and OCA, but rather to analyse the consequences of 2019–2021's unprecedented domestic contingency campaign for the capability of the Reserve, specifically how a reconsideration of the three traditional Reserve compromises identifies opportunities to maximise future capability contributions to the ADF by the part-time Force.

Exploiting some of these opportunities may require a cultural pivot in both the full- and part-time Forces. In 2020, Chief of Army Lieutenant General Rick Burr published *Good Soldiering*, the Army's cultural optimisation initiative.¹⁴ *Good Soldiering* centres on five command themes: People, Preparedness, Profession, Partnerships and Potential, which this paper adopts as a rubric for examining the Reserve's compromises. The fifth of these themes is Potential, and this paper identifies important opportunities for how the full capability potential of the Reserve can best be realised in the future. This signals that this topic is no longer a peripheral debate, but a central consideration for capability and scalability for the ADF. The choice of words in the title is deliberately provocative: while the *Defence Act 1903* did not necessarily envisage a national domestic contingency as the first major trigger for mobilisation of the Reserve, it may be neither the only nor the last such event.

Methods

The approach involved semi-structured interviews of eight officers and a senior non-commissioned officer who held command and staff appointments during OBA. This group included both full-time and part-time members of the ADF. Several of these members also served on OCA; however, as this operation is ongoing, sources are necessarily limited at the time of writing. The insights gained from these interviews were combined with the author's own experience as a Reservist who was Called Out to serve during OBA (Table 1).

The Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) deployed oral historians to the field during OBA and collected a series of contemporaneous interviews with a number of members. Thirty of these transcripts were also available as sources for this work (Annex B).

The interviews aimed to gain perspective from a range of command and rank levels in OBA; from each of the key OBA jurisdictions of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia; and also from ADF HQ in Canberra, which had recommended the Reserve Call Out to the Minister for Defence (and then to the Governor-General).

14 Lieutenant General Rick Burr, *Good Soldiering Statement*, 2020, https://www.army.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/201013_Good%20Soldiering%202%20Pages_5.pdf, accessed 04 September 2021.

Table 1: ADF members contributing to this paper, based primarily on their role during Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020 (OBA).

	Officer:	OBA Role:	OBA Location:	Interview Date:	Paper Contribution:
1	Major General Kathryn Campbell AO CSC (Retd)	Commander, 2 nd Division (2019–2021)	Canberra and Sydney	15 June 2021	Interviewee, Recently retired Reservist
2	Brigadier Neil Sweeney AM	Deputy Commander, 2 nd Division	Randwick Barracks, Sydney	22 June 2021	Interviewee, Reservist
3	Colonel Mark Welburn CSC	Chief of Staff, HQ 2 nd Division	Randwick Barracks, Sydney	05 July 2021	Interviewee, Former full-time ADF Officer, now transitioned
4	Warrant Officer Class 1 Darren Murch OAM	Regimental Sergeant Major, 2 nd Division	Randwick Barracks, Sydney	24 June 2021	Interviewee, full-time ADF Senior Non-commissioned Officer
5	Major General Douglas Laidlaw AM CSC	Commander, Joint Task Force 646, OBA	Simpson Barracks, Melbourne	06 July 2021	Interviewee, Reservist
6	Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Coates CSC	Commanding Officer, Joint Task Group 646.2, OBA	Victoria: Bairnsdale and Orbst	30 June 2021	Interviewee, Reservist
7	Brigadier Michael Garraway AM CSC	Commander, Joint Task Force 1110, OBA	Holsworthy Barracks, Sydney	08 July 2021	Interviewee, full-time ADF Officer
8	Lieutenant Colonel Renée Kidson CSM	Commanding Officer, 5 th Engineer Regiment Task Group, OBA	New South Wales	06 March 2020 by Dr Alex Kallioniatis, Defence Science and Technology Group	Author of this paper, Reservist
9	Brigadier Damian Cantwell AM CSC	Commander, Joint Task Force 1111, OBA	South Australia and Tasmania	06 July 2021	Interviewee, Reservist
10	Colonel Michael Scott CSC	Director of Current Military Commitments, Military Strategic Commitments Division	Canberra	24 June 2021	Interviewee, full-time ADF Officer

Compromise 1: Purpose

What is the *raison d'être* of the Reserve?

The significance of 2019–2021's domestic contingencies for the Reserve is best understood by examining the 2nd Division's **Preparedness** journey prior to OBA.

Preparedness Prelude: Warfighting Focus under Beersheba

Under Lieutenant Generals David Morrison and Angus Campbell as consecutive Chiefs of Army (2011–2018), the Australia Army had embraced Plan Beersheba's re-balance of the Force structure and aligned it with the Army's Force Generation (FORGEN) Cycle. Plan Beersheba's salient feature was the pairing of two 2nd Division brigades with each full-time brigade, while the Army's FORGEN model involved a Ready-Readying-Reset cycle which saw each of the full-time combat brigades rotate from a 'Ready' (online and deployable) period to periods of lower readiness. Plan Beersheba was actualised through certification during major annual exercise series – Exercise Hamel and Exercise Talisman Sabre, which deployed the Readying Brigade 'in the box', supported by a Reinforcing Battlegroup (RBG) generated from the paired 2nd Division brigades. The Beersheba plus FORGEN model served to concentrate resourcing on the Readying Brigade, while brigades at other stages of the cycle held lower resourcing priority.

Like all bold experiments, the Beersheba plus FORGEN model realised both positive and negative aspects – especially for the 2nd Division. Interviewees highlighted two positives. Firstly, this model gave the 2nd Division a clear purpose (warfighting) and output (the RBG) and the annual exercise commitment increased the 2nd Division's **operational readiness**. The Beersheba plus FORGEN model was successful in generating a relatively small pool (RBG) of highly trained and ready warfighters from the 2nd Division. Secondly, the pairing with full-time brigades developed lasting **habits of cooperation** amongst the 2nd Division brigades, which were subsequently leveraged by the JTF Commanders during OBA – albeit in reverse.

Against these two positive legacies, the Beersheba plus FORGEN model also highlighted challenges for the 2nd Division, since it focused exclusively on very specific warfighting outputs. Colonel Mark Welburn commented that

RBG was an excellent tool to demonstrate Reserve capability but the cost of doing the RBG as the sole output was challenging ... it was consuming two brigades a year to output It didn't suit the nature of the [Reserve] workforce We were excluding the majority of the workforce and the commitment was extreme.

Colonel Mark Welburn

From his strategic perspective as Deputy Commander of the 2nd Division, Brigadier Sweeney noted that Beersheba's focus on warfighting outputs was reflected in the 2nd Division's Strategic Guidance, and hence the Division's **preparation** for OBA: 'We were asked to generate a reinforcing battlegroup – we were never given a task to prepare for a humanitarian response at that [OBA] level – it was not part of the planning guidance we had.'¹⁵

By the time of Chief of Army Lieutenant General Rick Burr's tenure (2019–present), the 2nd Division had developed a thorough appreciation of Beersheba's limits as a *raison d'être* for the part-time Force – namely its under-utilisation of (the majority of) 2nd Division personnel not directly able to contribute to the RBG, and the uneven concentration of resourcing and equipment on the RBG, to the exclusion of much of the remainder of the Division. In achieving a warfighting focus, perhaps Beersheba had extended too far. In relation to the 2nd Division, a **compromise in purpose** was warranted in order to realise the full capability value of the Reserve.

Refreshed Strategic Guidance in 2019 tasked the 2nd Division with an expanded role, including preparedness for domestic security. This required the Division to 'look outwards', beyond the Army's Beersheba focus towards civilian police forces, and to consider a more geographically distributed (rather than centralised) resourcing footprint, able to potentially support multiple concurrent contingencies around the country.

Under Major General Kathryn Campbell's Command (2019–2021), the Division was just embarking on this stage of its Transformation journey on the eve of OBA, re-imagining its *raison d'être* as more than just warfighting, using an 'And-And' rather than an 'Either/Or' model. The 2nd Division harvested the best aspects of its recent history (both Beersheba and the subsequent move towards broader-based engagement of civilian agencies for domestic security) to respond to the unprecedented domestic operations that followed.



Commander of the 2nd Division, Major General David Thomae AM, speaks to soldiers during a visit to their field phase of a Subject Course for Corporal conducted by the 4th Brigade at Puckapunyal. (Defence Images)

15 Interview, Brigadier Neil Sweeney, 22 June 2021.

OBA: An Unprecedented Task

As foreshadowed in the Introduction, OBA was unprecedented in the way it employed the Reserve. Brigadier Sweeney described two aspects of this:

1. The 2nd Division was **tasked to lead** three JTFs for this major domestic operation, across three jurisdictions simultaneously. With Major General Justin Ellwood providing overall command of OBA (Figure 1), operational Command and Control (C2) for each of the JTFs was vested within the Reserve brigade headquarters. The full-time Force was tasked to support the 2nd Division's main effort; and
2. Use of the Call Out provision under the *Defence Act 1903* (Annex A).

The significance of these aspects requires some elaboration, as neither had previously occurred in the ADF's history. Firstly, this scale of leadership of an operation by the 2nd Division was a significant pivot from previous practice: and a significant stretch. Under Beersheba, the RBG was tasked in a 'supporting' (rather than 'supported') role, with the full-time combat brigades leading. Hence the leadership structures within the Reserve formations and units – while capable – were neither resourced nor recently specifically rehearsed to lead operations of OBA's large scale. Secondly, while annual preparations for the High-Risk Weather Season (HRWS) were routine across the Reserve Brigades, they were at the company-sized scale, designed to support modest, local HADR led by civilian agencies.¹⁶ While it's untrue to describe the 2nd Division as unprepared for OBA, in Brigadier Sweeney's words, 'we never envisaged ourselves responding at that level to a disaster relief in that way'.¹⁷

We weren't unprepared. But we were unprepared for a mobilisation, because it was almost a theoretical construct to this point.

Brigadier Damian Cantwell

¹⁶ For example, over the Summer HRWS, each Reserve formation held an ESF (Emergency Support Force) on reduced notice.

¹⁷ Sweeney, *op. cit.*

Call Out: A Test of Scalability

The Call Out itself also warrants elaboration as an unprecedented event. The situational context of OBA required a large-scale ADF response for the following reasons:

1. the scale (geographic extent) and concurrency (multiple jurisdictions) of the Summer 2019–2020 bushfires;
2. civilian agencies (many of which had already been combatting the fires from October 2019) were close to culmination; and
3. a large workforce was required quickly, in assured numbers.

Colonel Michael Scott commented: ‘Government has few other organisations with both the personnel and the equipment to rapidly respond; as a result, we are ... the “go-to force”’.¹⁸ However, the ADF’s specific response in using the Call Out provision to mobilise the Reserve for the first time in Australia’s history is of profound significance for the *raison d’être* of the 2nd Division, and the strategic assessments that informed this decision are instructive.



Reservists from the 3rd Field Squadron, 10th/27th Battalion, Royal South Australia Regiment, work to remove a burnt tree from a local farm’s access road on Kangaroo Island during OP Bushfire Assist. (Defence Images)

18 Interview, Colonel Michael Scott, 24 June 2021.

From the perspective of the 2nd Division headquarters, Brigadier Sweeney and Colonel Welburn cited two strategic reasons a Reserve Call Out was used to meet OBA's contingency. The first was geography: 'the Reserve is in location across the country as a force that can mass quickly and deploy'.¹⁹ The second reason was 'to test the capacity to rapidly scale the ADF' (both for potentially domestic and overseas contingencies).²⁰ Colonel Welburn elaborated that OBA was 'an opportunity to exercise the Call Out provisions for the Government to understand what it took to put that order before the Governor-General'.²¹

From Canberra's ADF headquarters' perspective, Colonel Scott agreed that senior leadership sought to balance the pressures of concurrently meeting existing military commitments and holding combat-ready forces for expeditionary operations, while meeting increasing expectations of Government domestically – a strategic compromise of a high order. In summary, the ADF's macro workforce pressures caused it look beyond an initial response to OBA led by the full-time Force. A growing confidence in the part-time Force's ability to meet this response also contributed to this decision. The ADF had conducted a small-scale practice Call Out in late 2019 (Operation Civil Assist 2019), involving approximately 100 personnel, which was designed to test the administrative requirements for a Reserve mobilisation. This recent experience was fresh in the memories of ADF HQ staff, and as the scale and scope of the national bushfire emergency became apparent over the summer, the Minister for Defence supported a Call Out.²²

The Call Out was excellent for HQ above the 2nd Division that had not understood or thought through the Call Out provisions ... The benefit of the Call Out was not actually for the 2nd Division but for wider parts of the organisation to understand ... If they needed to execute this for something other than HADR, this was an opportunity to identify lessons learned.²³

Colonel Mark Welburn

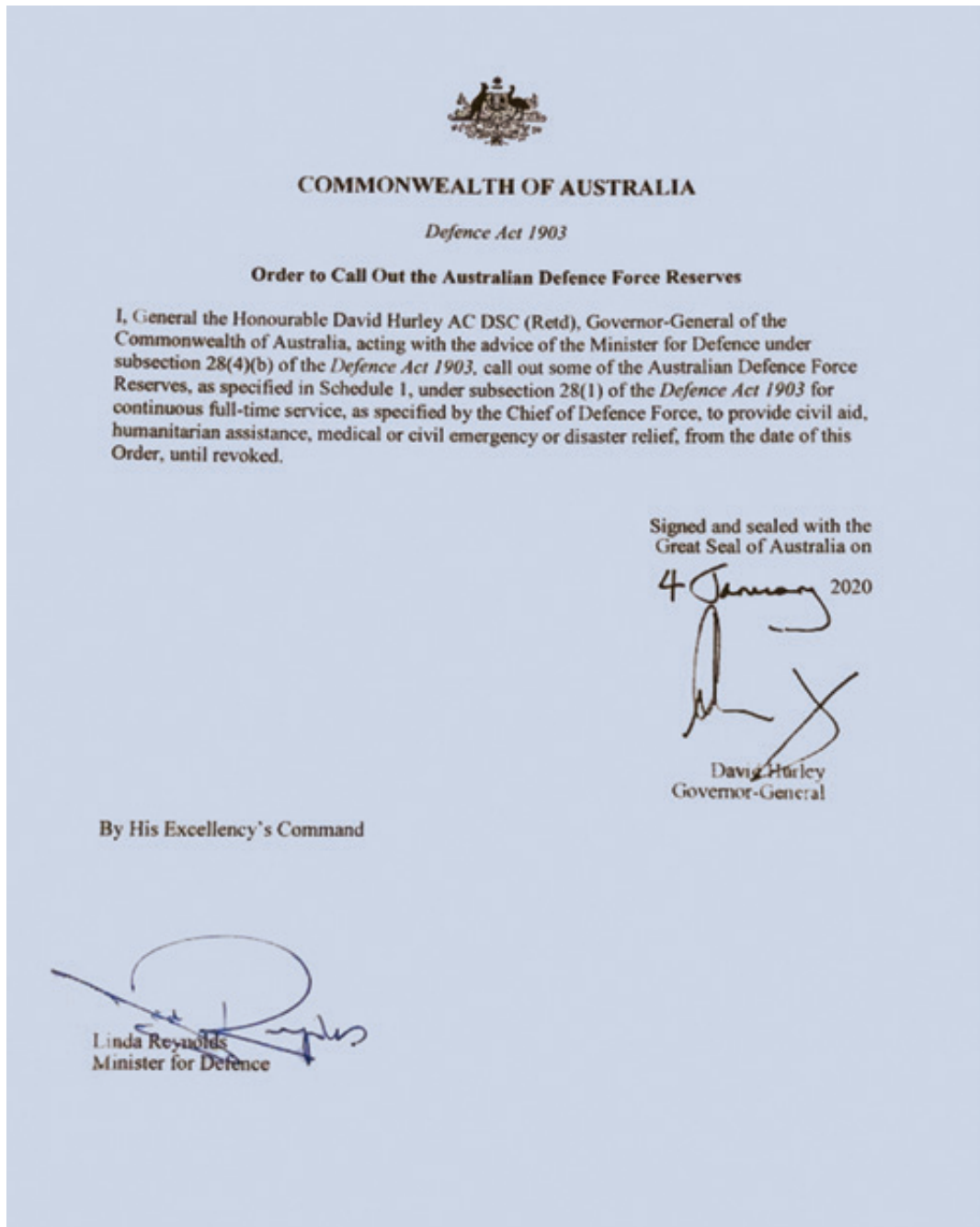
19 Welburn, *op. cit.*

20 Sweeney, *op. cit.*

21 Welburn, *op. cit.*

22 The Minister for Defence at this time (the Honourable Linda Reynolds CSC MP) is a former Reservist who attained the rank of Brigadier. We can reasonably infer that Minister Reynolds' intimate understanding of Reserve capability contributed to the Government's decisiveness in mobilising the Reserve for OBA.

23 Welburn, *op. cit.*; Colonel Scott adds the view that in fact no HQ (including the 2nd Division) had 'thought through' a Call Out. In essence the Call Out was useful for all HQ to execute the mechanics involved.



Order to Call Out the Australian Defence Force Reserves, secured by Chief of Staff to the CDF (then Colonel Greg Novak) who drove to Sydney to gain the Governor General's signature, 4 January 2020. (Image: Colonel Mick Scott)

The Reserve's Natural Advantages: Partnerships

Leadership involves taking calculated risk, and OBA's reversal of traditional methods of employment of the Reserve carried obvious risk. Despite this, both the 2nd Division's leadership of OBA and the Call Out itself produced a resounding overall success. One measure of this success was the Army's establishment of a standing Joint Task Force headquarters within the 2nd Division at the conclusion of OBA; this headquarters proceeded to lead the ADF's OCA response.²⁴ Subsequent orders have formally transferred primary responsibility for domestic contingencies to the 2nd Division.

Through the lens of OBA's internal and external successes, this section unpacks some of the 'natural advantages' presented in the part-time Force. Understanding these highlights opportunities to enhance future ADF capability.

As Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Rick Burr originally issued his strategic documents (notably including *Army in Motion Accelerated Warfare (AIM AW)*²⁵ and *Good Soldiering*)²⁶ in 2019. Viewed with the hindsight of 2019–2021's subsequent domestic contingencies, these strategic documents show a degree of prescience in terms of the Reserve's natural advantages, and these opportunities can now be built upon.

Both *AIM AW* and *Good Soldiering* stress that the Army's 'competitive advantage' lies in its ability to team and rapidly re-team with whichever partnered force is required to achieve mission success. Throughout this paper, partnerships are analysed in five senses: from looking in to looking out:

1. Partnering (integration) of the part-time and full-time Force,
2. Partnering with civilian agencies,
3. Partnering with local communities,
4. Partnering with Reservist employers, and
5. Partnering with international forces.

24 Headquarters Forces Command Task Order 1840-20 – HQ FORCOMD SUPPORT TO OPERATION COVID-19 ASSIST – ADF RESPONSE TO COVID-19, dated 26 March 2020.

25 https://www.army.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020%20-%20Accelerated%20Warfare_0.pdf, accessed 30 Oct 2021.

26 Burr, *op. cit.*

Partnering of Part-time and Full-time Force: Two-Way Total Force

The Introduction highlighted that OBA tasked the Reserve to lead the three JTFs and also provide the main force elements. However, there were inevitable gaps in either capacity or specific capabilities. While Beersheba envisaged the Reserve Brigades ‘rounding out’ full-time brigades, OBA involved the full-time brigades rounding out and forming the follow-on force (FoF) for the leading Reserve elements of the response.

Internally, Colonel Scott cited the integration of part-time and full-time Forces on the ground, led by the Reserve C2 structures, as a notable OBA success. Commander 9th Brigade, Brigadier Damian Cantwell, emphasised that **partnerships** extend internally. Upon receipt of the OBA Call Out Warning Order, Cantwell recounted: ‘My initial guidance to my team was: build the Force. And build it quickly. I immediately texted Commander 1st Brigade.’²⁷ Similarly, Commander 4th Brigade, Brigadier (now Major General) Douglas Laidlaw credited Beersheba’s paired brigade construct as ‘creating interoperability’ between the full-time and part-time Forces, which became a key enabler for OBA: ‘We were reinforced by a [full-time] RBG based on 7th Combat Services Support Battalion [and] a Ready Company from Adelaide.’²⁸

Major General Laidlaw expanded:

I had to rebalance my force [disposition], so I placed some full-time elements under command of part-time COs [and vice versa] and that was accepted without one complaint - as though they were the same thing ... I don’t believe that 10 years ago there would have been the comfort which allowed this to happen, operationally. I lay that success at the feet of Beersheba – the familiarity and confidence ... to fundamentally make no distinction between full-time and part-time.²⁹

Lessons Learned

The role of the full-time Force in enabling the Reserve throughout the domestic contingencies of 2019–2021 was critical to mission success.

OBA successfully demonstrated the Total Force concept, in a two-way, leading/supporting sense across the part- and full-time components of the Force.

²⁷ Cantwell, op. cit. Cantwell elaborated: ‘In addition to texting COMD 1 Bde immediately as my paired (full-time) brigade, I also texted COMD 6 Bde (commander of 16 Regiment at Woodside SA), COMD 17 Bde (commander of a range of CSS FE across my AO), and the two SA based RAAF and RAN senior commanders at RAAF Edinburgh and Keswick Barracks, knowing that I would need to draw upon their respective people, capabilities and facilities. These all became invaluable to rapid joint force generation, integration and sustained deployed effect, as I expected.’ Cantwell, pers. comm., 16 September 2021. Under Beersheba, 1st (full-time) and 9th (part-time) Brigades were paired.

²⁸ Interview, Major General Douglas Laidlaw, 6 July 2021.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Partnering with Civilian Agencies

Externally, the resounding success of OBA could be measured in terms of **partnerships** with civilian emergency response agencies. The first crucial observation is that under Australia's federated governance, state and territory jurisdictions have primacy in responding to domestic contingencies. Each jurisdiction has separate legal constructs, response agencies and coordination mechanisms. In contrast, the ADF is a national organisation, with (for most purposes) a jurisdictionally-agnostic outlook. Mastering separate partnerships with each of Australia's eight jurisdictions for domestic contingencies is therefore challenging.

Like much of OBA, achieving success in civil-military partnerships required a rapid upscaling of some pre-existing elements, and there were differences in the starting states between the JTFs. JTF 646 was OBA's exemplar for civilian agency partnerships. In late December 2019, the Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, gave a live, nationally-broadcast Press Conference on the Mallacoota evacuation. At his right shoulder stood (then) Brigadier Laidlaw. The visual messaging was powerful. Interviewed for this work, Major General Laidlaw expanded on his Reserve career, which had involved deployment on various previous Victorian HADR missions, *at every rank from Major*. These included the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires at King Lake and Marysville. At Task Force level, Laidlaw stressed 'the context of many prior domestic operations that had been supported by the Brigade ... [and] the shared history meant there were already well-established linkages with the emergency services in Victoria – and we don't see the same posting-churn in the part-time Force'.³⁰



Australian Army Reserve soldier Private Kiera Foot, from the 13th Brigade, assists with the Australian Defence Force's bushfire recovery support operation to the victims of the devastating Perth hills bushfire in the suburb of Giddegannup, Western Australia. (Defence Images)

30 *Ibid.*

Major General Laidlaw further reflected that recent (2019) domestic security exercises, conducted with both the 4th Brigade and the Victorian Police (VICPOL), had further cemented good working relationships across a range of rank levels prior to OBA; and that many (if not most) part-time officers and leaders within his Brigade had prior experience with local HADR responses. Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Coates echoed this view, describing her experience as an Engineer Officer in prior Victorian bushfires which enabled her to quickly step into OBA. As the initial ESF commander, she deployed her 'tac'³¹ headquarters to the field in Bairnsdale within hours of being called, and proceeded to quickly and efficiently coordinate movements CH-47 Chinook helicopter supporting Mallacoota's evacuation.

Laidlaw stressed that the relationship with peers in the Country Fire Authority and VICPOL, the key civilian emergency response agencies, had strengthened over the years as that collective cohort of emergency services personnel had progressed through their careers and become more elevated in rank. He described mutual respect and a relatively strong understanding of each partnered agency's capability contributions to HADR operations, gained through previous multi-agency deployments together.

In contrast, the pre-existing relationship between the local Army formation (5th Brigade) and the civil and emergency services in New South Wales had a different start-state during OBA. Brigadier Garraway, a full-time Officer, marching into his new command in December 2019, did not bring a local Reserve Officer's background, having served most of his Regular career deployed on overseas operations. Only a minority of Brigadier Garraway's more junior Reserve officers and leaders had direct prior HADR experience. While the officers of the 5th Brigade were also local; New South Wales had experienced a lower frequency of natural disasters over the previous two decades than Victoria. Some members of the 5th Engineer Regiment had been involved in the Blue Mountains Bushfires Response in 2013 and the Wagga Wagga floods in 2012. However, the Commanding Officer of the 5th Engineer Regiment, who led the first New South Wales Task Group during OBA, had no prior direct experience of HADR in her twenty-plus-year local Reserve career.

At first glance, the subsequent success in New South Wales was a positive testament to the versatility of the ADF's training in foundation warfighting and leadership, which both part- and full-time members were able to apply in initially unfamiliar contexts. However, the overall initial lower maturity level of Civil-Military partnership in New South Wales had consequences. It took a little more time to forge understanding and trust with partnered agencies amid the politically charged atmosphere of Federal-State relations playing out in the media at this time.

In South Australia, Brigadier Cantwell described agencies with only a modest understanding of ADF capability. This led to some initial challenges in tailoring task requests: ‘We would ask – what do you need? To which the reply was: *What can you bring?*’³² Laidlaw described that early in a partnership, some agencies ‘would ask for stuff instead of effects’, presenting an obvious opportunity for the ADF to build improved mutual understanding of capabilities in advance of a domestic contingency.³³ Cantwell’s experience highlights that the better the mutual understanding of the civil-military partners’ respective capabilities, the better expectations are managed, and the less likely unhelpful dependencies are to develop.

Civilian agencies seeking to submit an ADF task request must do so according to principles and procedures contained in the ADF’s DACC Policy and Manual, respectively.³⁴ Again, the agencies’ pre-existing levels of experience varied greatly across regions and jurisdictions. Agencies with prior familiarity of the ADF’s processes found it easier to access them. Feedback from the very considerable range and number of organisations attempting to navigate this formal process throughout OBA and OCA, some for the first time, resulted in rapid revisions to both documents in 2020–2021, in order to simplify and clarify communication with civilian agencies. New ADF doctrine³⁵ targeting civilian agencies was rapidly issued in 2020, providing a second example that the ADF recognised the importance of building a more uniform, consistent awareness of ADF capabilities in civilian agencies, as well as understanding of limitations and caveats on their use.



1st Armoured Regiment ASLAVs (Australian Light Armoured Vehicles) and support vehicles drive along Hog Bay road after arriving on Kangaroo Island during OP Bushfire Assist. (Defence Images)

32 Cantwell, *op. cit.*

33 Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

34 Department of Defence, *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual*, Canberra, 2020; Department of Defence, *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy*, Canberra, 2021.

35 Department of Defence, Joint Doctrine Note 5–20, *ADF Response to a Natural Disaster or an Emergency*, Commonwealth of Australia: Defence Publishing Service, 14 December 2020.

Analysing these jurisdictional differences in relationships with civilian agencies more broadly shows that three **success factors** are paramount in forging strong Civil-Military partnerships for HADR response:

1. ADF recognises that each State and Territory is a distinct, independent entity, with distinct partnership requirements.
2. The recent history of natural disasters in a jurisdiction is significant - as deploying on operations together is the surest means of developing interoperability and trusted relationships. Jurisdictions with incidentally more frequent natural disasters have *inter alia* been presented with more opportunity to develop these relationships with the ADF.
3. The type of posting background for the Military members also contributes. A local Reservist is more likely to have been involved in whatever history of natural disasters a given jurisdiction has experienced.

The 2nd Division's Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM), Darren Murch, offers a further subtlety on the relative contributions of the full- and part-time components to civil-military relations: 'Once they lodge and learn, Regular forces can understand these local communities. The power of the Reserve is that they *already* understand, immediately – and with that, there is often relationships already established.'³⁶

Laidlaw described pre-existing and longstanding relationships as the 'natural advantage' of the Reserve, making it the 'plain and clear' choice for domestic contingencies.³⁷ He identified a **cultural compromise** in the full-time Army's acceptance of 2nd Division units holding the primacy of C2 relationships with civil agencies, and notes the speed with which his senior full-time counterparts have acknowledged this. The requirement for jurisdictionally-specific partnerships favours a Reserve solution, due to the long-term presence of Reserve formations in most jurisdictions (noting there may be nuances in Queensland and the Northern Territory, which feature a strong full-time ADF presence).

Reflecting on OBA's success in expanding and strengthening civil-military partnerships, RSM Murch commented:

Where we are right now, with COVID – the level of civ-mil engagement was definitely not as developed as it is, now ... We've always been there on exercise with the other agencies, but to a small degree – force element-sized ... We are now confident enough in the maturity of our relationships – that we can now anticipate.³⁸

³⁶ Interview, Warrant Officer Class 1 Darren Murch, 24 June 2021.

³⁷ Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Murch, *op. cit.*

Closing out this partnership section, OBA and OCA's domestic contingencies have generated tremendous momentum in civil-military relations; it will now be important to embed and sustain these gains. Through studying excellence, we can identify how to replicate strong relationships with civilian agencies across the part-time Force. A crucial insight is that while the absence of a pre-existing relationship with a given local community does not preclude rendering valuable HADR assistance when needed, the coordination and efficacy of a response is very much enhanced when an existing relationship is strong and readily leveraged into partnerships to maximise capability and impact on the ground.

Identifying the above three **success factors** in civil-military partnerships enables the ADF to design improved mechanisms for forging ongoing trusted relationships with all jurisdictions, rather than relying on circumstance. Training programs are, by their nature, designed to replicate field conditions for formed bodies of troops that may be difficult to experience if relying purely on individually encountered happenstance, and deliberate career planning can actively cultivate real relationship effects in the human terrain.³⁹ These themes are taken up again in the sections 'Reserve Compromise 3' and 'Potential'.



Colonel Graham Goodwin, Commander JTG 629.4 speaks during a Reception, Staging, On-forwarding and Induction (RSO & I) brief for reservist personnel travelling to the SA border, as part of Operation COVID-19 Assist, Keswick Barracks, Adelaide. (Defence Images)

39 Combat is the exemplar for this training system design.

Partnering with Local Communities: The Army in the Community

Chief of Army's AIM AW introduced the aspiration of 'Army in the Community' as a model for partnership and the domestic contingencies of OBA and OCA realised this aspiration in operational practice. Brigadier Garraway views the Reserve formations around the country as epitomising 'Army in the Community', and credits this as the Reserve's second natural advantage.⁴⁰

To appreciate the significance of the Reserve for 'Army in the Community', we must first examine the ADF's recent geographic history. Since at least the 1980s, the ADF (and the Australian Army in particular) has responded to national strategic drivers by concentrating its presence in the north of the Australian continent. For the Army, this translates to the *Army Presence in the North* (APIN) initiative, which has seen various full-time (Regular) formations and units re-position into the Northern Territory and Queensland. APIN is expressly designed to position the Army to respond to anthropogenic adversarial threats along the most likely northern approaches. This makes sense in conventional military strategic terms, APIN also makes sense when proximity to the regional locations for previous HADR missions is considered, such as the ADF response to the Banda Aceh earthquake and tsunami. These strategic contingencies of an external-facing ADF also broadly drive the geographic disposition and posture of the other two services – the Navy and Air Force.

However, one of APIN's strategic compromises is that the majority of full-time Army forces are concentrated a long way from Australia's main population centres in the south-east of the continent, particularly New South Wales and Victoria. In these jurisdictions, the main ADF presence is the traditional footprint of part-time (Reserve) formations and units, as shown in Figure 2.

In domestic contingencies this geography and jurisdictional governance really matters. Part-time soldiers have traditionally been recruited to local Reserve Units in the main population centres, to enable close proximity for part-time service and training. As a full-time officer who has commanded through both OBA and OCA, Brigadier Garraway reflected on the unprecedented need for the ADF to be culturally sensitive (for example in OCA's pop-up immunisation clinics in Shepparton and engagement in suburban Western Sydney during the COVID pandemic). He saw mastery of the human terrain in Australia as foundational to operational effectiveness on warfighting and peace-winning overseas.

40 Interview, Brigadier Michael Garraway, 8 July 2021.

Garraway emphasised that location, warfighting focus, and expeditionary mindset afford lesser opportunities for the majority of full-time Forces to develop a relationship with and hence understand their local communities: 'If you don't understand your own country ... the multi-cultural, multi-racial, geographically and ethnically diverse country we live in – how are we going to win the peace overseas?'⁴¹

Garraway's media engagement during OCA carefully reinforced the positive 'Army in the Community' relationship afforded by DACC.⁴² During the COVID-19 Delta outbreak in Sydney, the ADF received a request from the NSW authorities to assist with compliance checks in the local community. Some commentators criticised this as 'securitisation' of the Government's response to the pandemic, but Garraway's response – that the ADF held no powers of arrest, and were accompanying the NSW Police on joint patrols to *assist the community* – provided some reassurance to communities who felt confronted by this experience.

RSM Murch highlighted geography and pre-existing integration with local communities as forming a Reserve 'point of strength that we should continue to develop and rely upon'. He noted that Reserve Brigade geography 'gives us that footprint immediately, with the command-and-control structure, a reasonable number in force that we can bring together quickly, and they can apply their local knowledge to deal with the contingencies that are in front of them'.⁴³

At a more emotive level, Murch commented both on the effectiveness of Reserve soldiers on the ground during OBA, and their developing sense of their own *raison d'être* for serving in uniform: 'Reservists are from and for the Community, and this brings immediacy to their actions, they bring commitment because it's their backyard ... I saw in the eyes and language of many of the soldiers – a completely selfless focus on the job at hand.'⁴⁴ In the field, he observed that Reservists were a 'source of inspiration from and to the Community'.⁴⁵

The realisation of the value they bring from their civilian work and lives, including soft skill sets such as compassion - when complimented by foundation warfighting ... was empowering - it brought coherence to their service.

Regimental Sergeant Major Darren Murch

41 *Ibid.* Given very recent events in Afghanistan, Garraway's comments hold particular poignancy.

42 Especially in contrast to Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority (DFACA) (Annex A), which involves some coercive powers under separate provisions of the *Defence Act 1903*.

43 Murch, *op. cit.*

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*

OBA triggered a rethink in the first traditional compromise of the part-time Force: its **Purpose** (and specifically its method of employment). Tasked to lead the ADF effort during the largest domestic operation in the nation's history, with minimal notice and a modicum of **preparation**, the 2nd Division rose to meet that challenge, aided by its natural advantages of geography and pre-existing civil-military relationships, and, critically, enabled by the full-time Force. That rethink in purpose is evident from the strategic level right through to the individual soldier. Brigadier Sweeney summarised OBA's impact: 'The Reserve has surprised a lot of people in a positive way ... It is an excellent capability, a Force of Choice for Domestic Operations – but should it be the only capability for those types of operations?'⁴⁶

To revisit the compromise spectrum of the Reserve's Purpose (Figure 3), if Beersheba pushed the Reserve pendulum too far in the direction of an exclusive warfighting focus, has OBA (and OCA) pushed the Reserve pendulum too far in favour of domestic contingencies? Where is the appropriate contemporary compromise that realises the full capability **potential** of the Reserve's capability contribution to the ADF's future strategic contingencies?



Western Australian Police Force Chaplain Paul Trimble from the Health and Welfare Unit, speaks with Australian Army soldiers at a vehicle check point on the Albany Highway in Bedfordale, Western Australia. (Defence Images)

46 Sweeney, *op. cit.*

Compromise 2: Availability

To what extent is Reservist availability limiting?
Is there latent potential?

OBA may have been ‘catastrophically successful’ in demonstrating the Reserve’s suitability for domestic contingencies (purpose). But OBA also exposed the limits of the second traditional Reserve compromise: availability. This section seeks to understand those limits, to identify opportunities to unlock the full capability **potential** of the Reserve.

OBA Call Out Surge

The Call Out proved a rather blunt instrument in its first at-scale application to the Reserve, presenting both internal and external challenges. Internally, the main issues were task-organisation and force flow.

Legally, the Call Out requires individual force elements to be specified. This initially resulted in entire units being called out complete. However, the HADR nature of OBA’s tasks required a force to be *task-organised*, using the ADF’s doctrinal and practiced method for deliberate composition of a force for a task, based on selection of individual capabilities from a range of units. The scope of the initial Call Out order did not include all the enablers such as communications, transport assets and logistics required for independent operations in the field. Despite the best efforts at liaison of several headquarters, no less than three Call Out orders were signed by the CDF in the first 24 hours, as the 4th, 5th and 9th Brigade headquarters scrambled to task-organise the JTFs for OBA.⁴⁷

Of more enduring significance, the Call Out created challenges for force flow and resourcing across a number of levels. **As the Call Out Order was both instantaneous and simultaneous in its effect, this created a massive initial surge in Reservist availability,** and a mammoth task for the 2nd Division HQ staff. Major Paul Summers, a Mounting Team OC, commented: ‘We’ve never done this kind of mobilisation in this kind of speed before, to the best of my knowledge [and] not probably since World War Two ... As at 1700 on the 15th January ... 1,014 Reserves had been ‘PTRAK’d’ into JTF 646 Area of Operations.’⁴⁸

47 Scott, *op. cit.* An opportunity to streamline the Call Out instrument to enable task organisation has been identified as a lesson.

48 ‘Personnel Tracked’. AAHU interview transcript, Major Paul Summers, 17 January 2020 (Annex B).

RSM Murch cited OBA's innovations in mounting processes as a key internal success. While not initially structured to undertake force mounting at multiple dispersed locations, the 2nd Division developed a 'Fly Away Team' (FAT) concept which proved highly effective both in the mounting and demounting process.⁴⁹

The ADF's administrative and personnel processes for bringing Reservists onto full-time service were never designed to react with the speed and agility required of this availability surge. At first glance this would appear to present an opportunity for improvement in policies and procedures which can be invested in now, before a future mobilisation. But the force-flow pipeline created by this massive availability surge encountered other choke points downstream.

At the Task Group level, CO JTF 646.2, Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Coates, observed that such was the urgency to bring volumes of troops onto task very quickly, that the soldiers themselves were deployed ahead of all the enablers (especially vehicles and principal items) needed for their useful initial employment.⁵⁰ Coates emphasised the essentiality of bringing the required equipment onto task with the same speed and in the appropriate quantities as the soldiers.⁵¹ This is an especially important insight, given the limited time (due to availability) that Reservists can spend on-task (generally in the order of several weeks), and the imperative to generate the most capability value possible on the ground within this window.

In the firegrounds, large numbers of troops were flowing into areas faster than the local authorities' abilities to usefully task such an unaccustomed influx. Speaking from Omeo in Victoria, Major Ben Jankalns commented: 'We have had a large contingent here but ... we only have so many local authorities that can be supported at any one time.'⁵²

49 The FAT concept was designed by Lieutenant Colonel Jim McGann, at the time the 2nd Division's G3 (Operations Officer). Lieutenant Colonel Kidson recalls that the FAT deployed to Bega racetrack to demount members of the 5 ER Task Group in late January/early February 2020. She witnessed a handful of FAT personnel able to medically demount more than 200 personnel in one day.

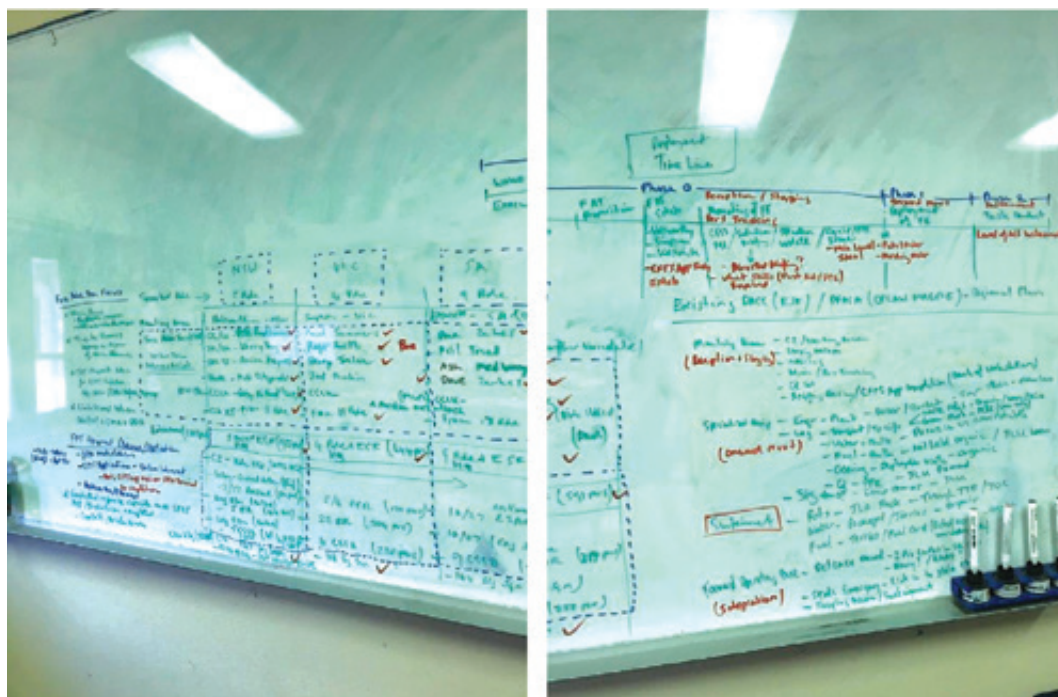
50 Major Sam Baumgarten, Chief of Staff to the 5th Engineer Regiment Task Group in JTF1110 (NSW) interviewed by AAHU in Bega on 27 January 2020, particularly emphasised the shortage and lack of currency of principle items held at unit level, for example small engines, chainsaws and hydraulic power packs. AAHU interview transcript, Major Samuel Baumgarten, 27 January 2020 (Annex B).

51 Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Coates, 30 June 2021.

52 AAHU interview transcript, Major Benjamin Jankalns, 14 February 2020 (Annex B).

Externally, the rigidity of the Call Out also created friction. While the ADF Leadership's principal equity in the Call Out was assurance on troop numbers (i.e. securing ADF workforce *supply*),⁵³ this required a **higher strategic compromise** to be struck within the broader economy, including with civilian employers of the Called Out Reservists who were competing for the same set of individuals to meet the demand for a civilian workforce. This strategic compromise is the **opportunity cost** to the wider economy of diverting Reservists from their civilian roles, in numbers and in niches. One of the Call Out's initial rigidities was the application of Continuous Full-Time Service (CFTS) Conditions to Called Out Reservists. An arbitrary 28-day contract length was specified in the Call Out Order, representing a threefold compromise struck between:

1. current CFTS policy minimum contract period;
2. the estimated likely minimum 'time to effect' on the ground in OBA; and
3. a period long enough to 'make it worthwhile' for the Called-Out Reservists, noting many would be forgoing income while Called Out under CFTS conditions.⁵⁴



Initial plan for Operation Bushfire Assist generated by 2nd Division Headquarters Staff (Image: Brigadier Neil Sweeney)

53 I.e. confidence that the number of troops announced in the Prime Minister's Call Out Press Conference of 4 January 2020 would materialise on the ground. Without Call Out's compulsion, guaranteeing a *specific* number of Reserve troops is challenging.

54 Scott, *op. cit.*

Time- versus Conditions-based Exit

The revised DACC Policy outlines the principles of ADF support to the civil community. The first principle states the intent that ADF assistance be ‘normally short-term in nature, provided on a non-enduring basis’, and with the objective of return to civil normalcy as soon as possible.⁵⁵ Recently-released doctrine further reinforces this intent.⁵⁶ The ADF’s exit from an operation is usually defined as either time- or conditions-based, and the application of this thinking to recent domestic contingencies has a significant interface with Reservist compromise 2 – availability.

OBA’s timing was significant. In common with many HRWS events, OBA occurred during the long Australian summer vacation period. Superimposed upon the ADF’s internal administration cycles, this timing was both a good and bad happenstance – good because many Reservists were already on leave from their employers, and bad in that Reservists obviously needed to cancel planned and current vacations and precious time with family in order to step forward for the Call Out. The ADF’s traditional posting cycle – occurring over the summer – was also disrupted by OBA, since many staff (full- and part-time) were recalled to duty either before or after their Summer posting transition.

The timing of OBA’s Call Out meant that the initial impact on employers was minimised in many cases, since the 28-day CFTS period occurred through January, but as February and the typical annual return to school and work approached, employers sought certainty on release dates for their Called-Out employees, including for Commander 2nd Division herself!⁵⁷

In its first use of Call Out, the ADF Leadership had discovered a powerful workforce instrument providing assurance on the numbers of Reserve personnel, since members are obliged to serve. However, the ADF Leadership had not previously encountered, or therefore appreciated, the Reservist availability compromise at this scale, which required a **higher strategic compromise** to be struck within the broader economy and with employers. The ADF leadership discovered that discretion is required in Call-Out *duration*. Any naïve perception within ADF HQ that Call Out would be a convenient (supply-side push) workforce solution for the ADF, providing unlimited Reservist availability, were quickly dispelled. OBA’s duration past the initial 28-day Call Out period, and pressure from civilian employers (demand-side pull), combined to require a larger full-time follow-on force into February 2021.

55 Department of Defence, *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy*, Canberra, 2021, para 1.10.

56 Department of Defence, Joint Doctrine Note 5–20, *ADF Response to a Natural Disaster or an Emergency*, Commonwealth of Australia: Defence Publishing Service, 14 December 2020.

57 Murch, *op cit.*; AAHU interview transcript, Major General Kathryn Campbell, 17 January 2020 (Annex B). Major General Campbell is a (recently retired) Reservist, employed full-time then as Secretary of the Department of Human Services. Major General Campbell was subject to the Call Out; discussion between Chief of Army and her employer in late January sought to clarify Major General Campbell’s return-to-work date. Major General Campbell (Retd) is now Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The compromise was ADF leadership's decision (under advice from various sources) that the Call Out would not extend beyond the initial 28 days. The same Reservists serving in uniform to clear routes of dangerous trees in January 2020 were the teachers, nurses, tradies and small-business operators required for economic recovery in February. From that time, the ADF's remaining commitment to OBA was serviced by those Reservists who were able to continue on a voluntary Call-For basis (Annex A), with full-time members rounding out the force when a significant proportion of Called-Out Reservists returned to their civilian employment.

Major General Kathryn Campbell described this relationship between Reserve availability and the strategic context of the national economy more broadly, as one of complementary drivers, rather than a compromise between competing drivers. She saw the ideal model for Reserve deployment on domestic contingencies as 'In-Out', with the objective of returning to civilian normalcy as soon as possible. 'The Government wants the people of Australia to see there's a force, that they are there to support, we've fixed it up, things are back to normal, the civilian authorities are in charge.'⁵⁸

Alongside these idealised time-based exit considerations, were conditions-based considerations of the OBA firegrounds. In practice, these conditions tethered demand for the ADF's workforce. There are macro-economic and social imperatives for local communities to resume their normal self-supporting functions as soon as possible following a natural disaster; hence the ADF takes care to avoid dependency situations developing as communities transition from 'response' to 'recovery' phases following a crisis. In practice, the Black Summer fire-affected communities had already been impacted economically by the preceding drought, and the loss of the coastal summer tourist season following the fires was another economic blow. The ADF's presence across these communities was therefore generally welcomed both as a 'force for re-assurance', and for local economic reinvigoration as force elements procured goods and services locally, where this was beneficial to those communities.⁵⁹ Furthermore, local civilian capabilities in some areas took some time to restore, replace or outsource. In short, ADF decisions to exit a domestic contingency are an **operational-level compromise**, and whether arbitrary time-based exit would be detrimental, given conditions-based recovery or alternative civilian capabilities on the ground, will be appropriately weighed by ADF leadership. In this instance, the 'Total Workforce' of the ADF, including full-time members, is part of the solution for domestic contingencies.

⁵⁸ Interview, Major General Kathryn Campbell, 15 June 2021.

⁵⁹ Scott, *op. cit.*; DACC Policy *op. cit.*, para 1.1.

Surge *versus* Sustain: Workforce Compromise

RSM Murch described OBA's usefulness in maturing the ADF Leadership's thinking on use of Call Out in terms of the ADF's more nuanced workforce approach taken for OCA. The blunt instrument of OBA's dramatic Call Out surge contrasts with the sustained Call For of OCA, which required a larger proportion of full-time members to support its extended duration.

Murch asserted that Call Out should be reserved only for the really 'big jobs', because of Reservists' obligations to their employers and, more broadly, the Australian Government's obvious strategic objectives in reinvigorating local civilian economies as quickly as possible following any natural disaster. He also advocated that the full-time Force should view 'the first Call Out as their Warning Order', since Reservists will need to return to their jobs within a few weeks, and if the task requires a follow on force it will be drawn from full-time elements.⁶⁰

This section is closed by zooming out to the macro and multi-levelled perspective. In Canberra, policy aficionados speak of '**absorptive capacity**', i.e. the limited initial ability of any system to rapidly accommodate an undesigned peaking demand. While personnel policy and procedures can be addressed and resourcing constraints loosened by improved allocation; there is a higher-level opportunity for the ADF Leadership to think more critically about force flow in the context of limited Reservist availability. The ADF's massive OBA surge certainly created an effect on the ground. However, due to limited absorptive capacity – sometimes of the supported agencies - legitimate questions remain. Was this capability applied to the best effect in all cases? Would a more considered, staged force flow of Reservists from the limited pool of availability have sustained OBA longer without the need for recourse to full-time soldiers as early or to the same extent? While each contingency requires unique judgement, two concepts may inform future Leadership's appreciation of workforce flow. The demand-side 'absorptive capacity' of the entire force's pipeline from barracks to field tasking and the supply-side finite resource of Reservists' availability will achieve best capability when employed on considered tasking and with fully resourced enablers.

Partnering with Civilian Employers

Technically and tactically, OBA's use of Call Out neutralised any possible opposition by civilian employers, as they are legally compelled not just to release their Reservist employees for Defence service, but also to hold their position for their return. However: a tactical win does not translate to a strategic partnership and in the latter lie the ADF's opportunities to enhance Reservist availability.

⁶⁰ Murch, *op. cit.*

Essential Workers

A critical aspect of the compromise in employing Reservists on domestic contingencies is appreciating the definitions of 'essential workers' as those required in their civilian capacity to respond to the particular contingency. At the highest level, the ADF sought to ensure exclusion provisions to Reservists Called Out for OBA. 'We wanted to be reasonable about this, as well ... Some of our Reservists are emergency services personnel, ... so we left it to the discretion of the unit Commanding Officers'.⁶¹ One of those Commanding Officers, Lieutenant Colonel Kidson, excluded Reserve members in the following three categories, which she published on FORCENET on Sunday 5th January 2020:

1. Emergency Service personnel (police, rural or urban fire authorities, ambulance);
2. currently overseas; or
3. with domestic single-primary-carer responsibilities.

Major General Campbell commented on the need to **compromise**, and to tailor the Reserve workforce responding to a contingency, depending on the scenario and economy-wide effects. She contrasted definitions of 'essential worker' in OBA and OCA, and how these impacted the Army's selection of Call instrument for Reservists to serve. For OBA, emergency services personnel were deemed 'essential workers' by the civil authority, so the Army compromised by excluding Reservists in these professions from the Call Out. For OCA, the 'essential worker' category implicitly extended to many other parts of the economy and included Reservists whose civilian job may be 'stacking shelves at Woolies'.⁶² Campbell attributes this expediency as the reason for use of the (voluntary) Call For instrument for OCA.

Major General Laidlaw noted the proportion of Reservists recruited from emergency services. Rather than viewing this as a conflict, he also sees it, like Campbell, as a well-founded compromise based on shared intrinsic attitude and service ethos. Laidlaw stressed that a natural advantage of the Reserve is this pool of varied experience, which provides depth – 'You don't know what the next emergency will need'⁶³ – and hence which Reservists should be excluded from a domestic contingency, so the ADF avoids compromising essential civilian capability. While there is an opportunity cost in diverting Reservists from their civilian roles to serve on a domestic contingency, that opportunity cost is most acute for essential workers – in whatever terms that is defined.

61 Scott, *op. cit.*

62 Campbell, *op. cit.*

63 This is nicely illustrated with the contrast in skills required for OBA and OCA. OBA placed a premium on arborists with advanced chainsaw skills; OCA placed a premium on Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (APPRO)-qualified medical and nursing staff able to administer vaccination within an infection control environment.

Employer Goodwill | A more strategic partnership

From his 2nd Division HQ vantage point, Colonel Welburn acknowledged 'that [Call Out] had a cost- impact on individuals and employers, and potential future recruits, not to mention DVA'.⁶⁴ At Task Group level, Lieutenant Colonel Coates noted that 'in OBA, there was no opportunity to put structures in place with their employer to be away for several weeks ... we got a lot of goodwill from employers ... but we need to look at moving forward, better ways of working with employers so they don't need to manage a crisis as well.'⁶⁵

At Task Force level, Brigadier Cantwell's approach represents one exemplar for in-stride employer engagement. Cantwell invited employers into Keswick Barracks (Adelaide) to brief them on operations during OBA, addressing them as part of the ADF's capability. His measure of success with that employer engagement was the numbers. 'We had the Sergeants and Officers' Mess partitions back and it was full.' Cantwell stressed that 'expectations matter – if you can tell employers upfront that Call Out will be for one month, there is some certainty attached to that'.⁶⁶ On the topic of (often assumed) employer goodwill, Cantwell commented that 'there's a limit to that ... we have to phase ... perhaps there's a model there that Call Out can be progressive'.⁶⁷



NSW Rural Fire Service Deputy Captain Bobby Boate briefs members of the Australian Army Reserve prior to their next task in Jerangle, NSW. (Defence Images)

64 Welburn, *op. cit.* DVA: Department of Veteran's Affairs, a reference to potential future compensation claims that Reservists serving on OBA and OCA may lodge.

65 Coates, *op. cit.*

66 Cantwell, *op. cit.*

67 *Ibid.*

A common partnership theme emerging from both civilian agencies and employers is the importance of pre-existing relationships. In the employers' case; several interviewees noted that those pre-existing relationships between ADF and employers do not yet exist at scale, or at the strategic level: 'We can't surge trust or partnerships – these have to be already built. We have to get in with employers and help them understand that their contribution makes a difference.'⁶⁸

To rectify this, Colonel Welburn recommended a campaign approach to engagement with employers to build up a relationship over time, and well in advance of a Call Out. 'Communication with employers needs to be constant, because if you're going to have no-notice type tasking ... that needs constant engagement, so that employers understand and value Reservists and concerns can be addressed.'⁶⁹ Expanding this campaign approach could ensure that mutual understanding and respect is two-way – with senior ADF Leadership developing a more nuanced and sophisticated appreciation of diverse employer equities. While OBA's Call Out was a new experience for the civilian employers of Reservists, RSM Murch highlighted the challenging *cumulative impacts* experienced by employing a Reservist. 'For many Employers, it's a long term shortfall.'⁷⁰ He believes ADF Leadership will benefit from stronger recognition of this. Murch offered the historical comparison of mobilisations for past major wars, contrasting these with 'modern societal expectations of receiving sufficient notice, a build-up of communication – they can see the picture build'.⁷¹ He recommended bringing the civilian employers of Reservists along on that journey.

Conceptually, employer goodwill, like Reservist availability, can be visualised as an (initially) finite store of capital. Undoubtedly, OBA depleted that store. Prudent ADF Leadership will be required to replenish that store, especially for a time-unbounded task such as OCA. This places an imperative on discovering not only means for such replenishment, but also for prospective expansion.

Reserve Compromise 2 poses a second question for Reservist availability: is there latent potential? Lieutenant Colonel Coates highlighted the need for the full-time Force, specifically the ADF personnel agencies, to compromise *in its thinking* on the availability of the part-time Force, in order to generate more Reservist availability:

68 *Ibid.*

69 Welburn, *op. cit.*

70 Murch, *op. cit.*

71 *Ibid.*

There needs to be a realisation that the latent workforce will pick and choose when it wants to work [for the Army and the ADF] ... Reservists are not the answer to all the holes and hollowness [in the full-time Force] ... They are in that part of the workforce because they've chosen to move there, or look at doing work that is suitable to them only in their geographic location.⁷²

Coates saw a ready opportunity to increase Reservist availability: 'The Total Workforce System is still not streamlined enough to move people between service categories quickly and easily.'⁷³

While the Reservist–civilian employer interface means availability is ultimately limited, there are nonetheless opportunities to expand that 'absorptive capacity' and increase potential Reservist availability, from both Reservist and employers' perspectives. The last section – Potential – will explore the ADF's opportunities for strategic partnership with the civilian employers of Reservists. Through such strategic engagement, the ADF can invest in a sustained manner in building relationships with employers over time. Pre-existing relationships can be converted into real partnerships when future mobilisations are required, and potentially leveraged to enhance Reservist availability.

However, assembling that future **potential** requires examination of the third Reserve Compromise: Training and Resourcing, to which the next section turns.



Australian Army Reservists from the 2/17th Royal New South Wales Regiment board an Australian Unimog, in the Taree region, New South Wales. (Defence Images)

⁷² Coates, *op. cit.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Compromise 3: Training and Resourcing

What should the Reserve be trained and resourced to do?

Form follows function, and improved clarity on Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose) directly informs how Reservists are trained and resourced. The training and resourcing compromise is particularly important for the part-time Force, because Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability) is the conditioning factor. When time available to train is at a premium, it is essential for military training to be well-targeted and to deliver a capability 'return on investment' for the ADF.

The starting-point is the Government's expectation that the ADF will contribute to domestic contingencies, and ADF headquarters' expectations that the Reserve specifically will contribute strongly to future domestic contingencies. This section proceeds in four parts. Firstly, *AIM AW's* Command theme of **People** is explored, to identify the skills that mattered most during recent domestic contingencies. **Profession** is considered next, with the traditionally polarised debate on training specifically for warfighting versus domestic contingencies and how to reconcile these. Thirdly, the Reserve's training model is examined, including how it can systematise these learnings from recent domestic contingencies. Fourthly, the resourcing consequences for the Reserve in meeting expectations both of Government and the ADF is analysed.

The key insight that emerges from this analysis is a paradox: *it is in fact foundation warfighting* which equips Reservists with the critical skills they need to be effective in domestic contingencies. To this, Reservists (and all ADF members) can add a **Civil-Military Mindset and Skillset**, which offers a unique capability edge for domestic contingencies. The opportunity for the ADF is to systematically cultivate and embed this civil-military mindset and skillset as a capability.

People – the Skills that mattered during OBA

Interviewees identified three broad categories of skills that mattered during OBA. The first category was **soft people skills**. Reflecting both his own appreciation of the scenario, and the uncertainty which characterised the initial tasking environment for OBA, Brigadier Garraway's opening guidance to the 5th Engineer Regiment Task Group Commander, departing for the firegrounds immediately following the Call Out, was to 'be professional, humble and empathetic'.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Brigadier Michael Garraway, pers. comm., Tuesday 7 January 2020, Holsworthy Barracks.

From a Task Group perspective, Lieutenant Colonel Coates remarked:

Working with partner agencies is very different to working with [other] nations in a military sense ... We need to learn how to work with organisations that aren't structured like an Army and aren't used to the Army way ... Just because you're a CO does not mean people are going to listen to you – you have to work with them, listen to what they have to say, ... realise what their experiences are ... People really need to have a mindshift that we're a support, not a lead.⁷⁵

Brigadier Garraway summarises the desired intangible soft skills as 'good communication skills – people that can listen – twice as much as they speak'.⁷⁶ Coates elaborated that Reservists 'have different soft people skills to deal with interagencies ... We've got soldiers who work in these agencies – and the benefit is they understand the language quickly, [can] be decisive, and work out how to help people.'⁷⁷

Coates points in the above to the second category of skillset valued during recent domestic contingencies: **local knowledge**. Throughout OBA, local knowledge appeared in various forms. Sometimes this was agency-specific knowledge (e.g. Reservists who are police officers in their civilian career); sometimes it was profession-specific knowledge (e.g. Reservists who are civilian arborists); and sometimes it was local geographic knowledge. Cantwell summarised the reputational value of this capability in terms of rapidly establishing trust with a partnered civilian agency:

Reservists with local knowledge bring immediate credibility – at least you know what you're talking about! They amplify our capacity to respond fast ... I'm not saying that others couldn't do it – just not with the same immediacy, which just supercharges our response.⁷⁸

Colonel Don Hogben is one high-profile such example. A civil engineer in his civilian career, Hogben had previously worked on the major transport infrastructure on Kangaroo Island and had established professional relationships with key local leaders. Called Out in his military capacity during OBA, he was able to interface very effectively with the Island's authorities to assist them in restoring services.

Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose) described the requirement for individual partnerships with each distinct jurisdiction. This accounts for the especial premium on local knowledge which Reservists bring to State-based domestic contingencies.

⁷⁵ Coates, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Garraway, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Coates, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ Cantwell, *op. cit.*

The third category of skillset is military-related. Lieutenant General Frewen (then Commander of the COVID-19 Task Force) gave a keynote address at the 2021 Safeguarding Australia Summit, where he described the highest impact capability that the ADF was providing to the nation's pandemic response. He highlighted that the ADF was not providing large numbers of medically-trained personnel but rather was achieving higher impact by deploying small numbers of ADF members who could work within a civilian agency's own planning teams and help guide them through a structured planning process.⁷⁹ Brigadier Garraway concurs, based both on his OBA and OCA experience within the multi-agency settings of the State Emergency Operations Centre in New South Wales. He identified that many volunteer and some emergency service agencies lack a planning capability. 'They don't necessarily have a mindset to plan for the unknown.' Garraway further noted that these organisations are generally designed to respond immediately to individual events and may be unaccustomed to a campaign of emergency events over an extended period. He describes how Reservists with military-related planning skills were a key multiplier effect:

a small number of ADF planners had a disproportionate effect ... a small, thoughtful group to help guide experts through planning, where their expertise was absolutely essential to the multi-agency planning process in NSW.⁸⁰

The ADF trains all members in the military appreciation process, and this is formalised into complex campaign design for the Major (equivalent and above) rank levels as the Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP). Supported by doctrine and practice, JMAP is a generic, assumptions-based planning approach that is suitable for a wide range of planning scenarios characterised by uncertainty. Colonel Welburn described it thus: 'we solve complex problems with resource limitations'.⁸¹ While intended in the first instance to guide the planning of military operations, this planning approach, and the expertise in how to lead a team of experts through it, has clearly become an 'exportable commodity' of value to civilian agencies attempting to coordinate State and Federal responses at the highest level during both OBA and OCA. Lieutenant General Frewen was appointed in June 2021 as the Coordinator-General for Operation COVID Shield – an interagency operation to vaccinate the Australian population. During one of his national media conferences, Frewen described using a 'wargaming' approach to develop options to accelerate the vaccination process, normalising this military planning term in everyday parlance.

79 Lieutenant General John Frewen, Keynote Address, 2021 Safeguarding Australia Summit, Friday 5 March 2021.

80 Garraway, *op. cit.*

81 Welburn, *op. cit.*

Together, these three categories of skillsets – soft people skills, specific local knowledge and military-related skills (including generic planning skills) – are present in concentrated form in the Reserve. This is labelled the **civil-military mindset and skillset**, which offers particular capability value for domestic contingencies and an expanded definition of Profession in A/M AW. The civil-military mindset and skillset is not exclusive to part-time members. Firstly, a full-time member may also possess and develop these skills and secondly, as demonstrated in **Box 2**, the part-time Force is characterised more by diversity than typicality. It's best not to make assumptions on any member's background prior to asking them! The argument is subtle and inclusive; *all* ADF members can develop a civil-military mindset and skillset. Indeed, the ADF has been applying a civil-military mindset in expeditionary operations (e.g. Building Partner Capacity missions) for perhaps a century. The simple proposition is that currently, this mindset and skillset is more concentrated in the part-time component of the Total Force.

The Reservist mindset and skillset which is diverse by virtue of their background ... is an enormous advantage.

Brigadier Michael Garraway



A member of the local community offers water to an Australian Army Reservist during the clean-up efforts at Weeroona Caravan Park in Manning Point, New South Wales. (Defence Images)

Warfighting or Domestic Contingencies?

Given the skillsets of value to domestic contingencies, how should this understanding influence the training of Reserve ADF members? Figure 3 highlights the sometimes binary, polarised debate on training for warfighting versus training for other (including domestic) contingencies. Currently, the ADF and Army training philosophy is to train specifically towards the highest-end warfighting it expects to encounter and assume that operations below that threshold can be adapted to with limited additional 'Mission-Specific Training' (MST). Is this philosophy valid given the recent experience of domestic contingencies, and given Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability) for training?

Colonel Welburn reflected firstly on the generic skills developed in soldiers during basic training for combat operations:

What are the critical aspects of being able to perform effectively in a challenging environment? Effective C2, and [abilities] to:

- analyse, plan and issue orders;
- recognise and manage change and be able to sustain that force;
- recognise risks and issues, and either resolve yourself or refer higher elsewhere if the nature of the situation has changed.⁸²

Secondly, he related how these skills apply to typical domestic contingencies:

If you can gain or regain the initiative against someone who's actively trying to kill you and prevent you from achieving success, if you can maintain control and continue to advance in a positive manoeuvre to a position of advantage ... and be calm, considered ... in HADR and domestic security activities, where there's a similar sense of stress, uncertainty and chaos, if you've got that ability because you've been tested through foundation warfighting, then you are applying similar skillsets ... That's what value-adds when you work with HADR organisations.⁸³

Lieutenant Colonel Coates agrees, based on her OBA Task Group experience.

'Our warfighting skills – discipline, being able to work together in a group, take orders, the ability to think logically, deal with pressure, manage complex situations – are very complementary to working in domestic ops and HADR.'⁸⁴ Brigadier Cantwell described how the foundation warfighting skills of the South Australian Reservists were critical in the initial OBA response:

⁸² Welburn, *op. cit.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Coates, *op. cit.*

Can you go from a warfighting training model of that nature readily to HADR because of that mindset? Absolutely – you just adjust ... It's just another operation. The framework of planning and thinking – execution, get 'em out the door, have you got all your kit – it could have been a warfighting activity – they could have rolled down to Port Adelaide and boarded an LHD. The mindset that got them to that point – starting the engine and driving out the barracks – was the same.⁸⁵

Major General Campbell emphasises both the versatility of foundation warfighting skills, and the importance of rapidly adapting them to the situation at hand. 'What do we bring? Discipline, physical fitness, teaming and mission focus ... If you can do this [in a] Platoon – you can adapt with on-the-job training to most things. We have proven that.'⁸⁶

Brigadier Garraway underscored the training value – not only for Reservists, but for all ADF members – of operational service for domestic contingencies. He drew direct parallels between the degraded conditions typical of a warzone and the operating environment encountered in the aftermath of a major natural disaster domestically:

Working in a traumatised community, under threat, with services broken down, utilities not happening, communications not working ... working with a partnered force and partner organisations ... with damage commensurate with a conventional battlefield: not only is that excellent preparation for conventional operations, but the Reserve brought much higher degrees of awareness of the human terrain than a formation closeted in Darwin, Enoggera or Townsville which by nature is less connected with its own community.⁸⁷

The training value of domestic contingencies can be illustrated with an explicit example. Classical natural disaster management frameworks, and therefore concepts of tasking and support, tend to be linear in their phasing:

1. Response – the initial saving of life and property;
2. Relief – providing immediate assistance to those displaced, e.g. through evacuation centres; and
3. Recovery – welfare and financial assistance to enable a return to civil normalcy as quickly as possible.

However, the nature of the OBA firegrounds in multiple jurisdictions more closely resembled what the military mind recognises as a 'Three-Block War',⁸⁸ with simultaneous occurrence of the following in close geographic proximity, each requiring ADF support:

⁸⁵ Cantwell, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ Campbell, *op. cit.*

⁸⁷ Garraway, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Krulak, C.C., 'The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War', *Marines Magazine*, 1999.

- firegrounds repeatedly re-activating and threatening townships and key routes;
- evacuation and relief centres rapidly opening and closing to move elsewhere; and
- distressed and isolated out-stations requiring home welfare visits.

This phenomenon dissolved the convenient boundaries between ‘Response’, ‘Relief’ and ‘Recovery’, with all three occurring in parallel rather than in sequence in a given area.

In training terms, foundation warfighting equips ADF officers and soldiers to deal with VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) Operating Environments.⁸⁹ This is directly translatable to the domestic contingency context. The specific skills used by ADF members during OBA included:

- continuous monitoring of the operating environment;
- dynamically prioritising tasking; and
- making strategically and tactically sound decisions on actions and resource allocation, alongside and complementing ‘flanking forces’ or other organisations.

The people interviewed for this work clearly concur on the value and applicability of foundation warfighting skills for domestic contingencies and their belief in the ability of Reservists to assimilate warfighting skills and blend these with their civilian skillsets to offer capability value for domestic contingencies. Colonel Welburn’s counterfactual reflection enables a stronger statement to be made on the value of warfighting skills for domestic contingencies. ‘What’s the risk of *not* doing foundation warfighting? Our trained product [soldiers] might be different.’⁹⁰ This paper posits that foundation warfighting skills are **necessary** training for all types of operation, from HADR to combat. If warfighting skills are a *necessary* component of an ‘optimal’ training design for Reservists, are warfighting skills *sufficient* for domestic contingencies? Have OBA and OCA identified training gaps that can be reconciled in the Reserve Compromise in training?



Australian Army soldiers from Joint Task Force 1111 clearing remains of a shearing shed on Kangaroo Island, South Australia, as a part of Operation Bushfire Assist. (Defence Images)

89 McChrystal, S., Silverman, D., Collins, T., and Fussell, C., *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World*, Penguin, New York, 2016, p. 64.

90 Welburn, *op. cit.*

Embedding Experience in Domestic Contingencies into Reserve Training

Resilient and learning organisations identify and systematically embed positive operational experiences in order to build the professional capability of their staff to respond more optimally to similar operating environments in the future. If increased domestic contingencies are likely, how can the ADF better prepare its part-time Force for these?

The civil-military mindset and skillset that emerged from the part-time Force during OBA and OCA, which proved so effective as a professional capability for domestic contingencies, did so organically. This mindset and skillset did not appear in orders, nor are Reservists specifically trained in the ADF to respond in this manner. *It just came naturally*. As observed in Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose), because it emerged naturally during OBA, this capability was a little uneven in its first appearance across the jurisdictions and their JTFs. Those jurisdictions with a stronger recent history of natural disasters and ADF responses started with initially better civil-military relations and familiarity with agencies, and were able to be more effective, more rapidly.

A wild patch of Australian bushland provides a good analogy. A skilled gardener will spot a helpful native plant – perhaps a bush tucker or bush medicine plant – which has sprouted naturally. The gardener will study it and deliberately cultivate it within a garden, in order to grow a crop. Building human capability in organisations is the art and science of being a good gardener of promising natives!

Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose) described how military training systems specialise in training for situations that may be uncommon in everyday life and difficult to replicate (e.g. combat). If there is a specific civil-military mindset and skillset that organically emerges from the Reserve Force during domestic contingencies, can the Reserve training system capture and actively cultivate this by supplementing foundation warfighting training? Interviewee responses are presented under the Officer and Soldier Training categories respectively.

Officer Training

The most important part of these domestic ops is working out how we can complement and support the domestic agencies, and some training of officers and seniors would be of benefit ... to understand the importance of working with non-military organisations.

Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Coates

Brigadier Cantwell recommends strengthening Reservist officers' skills in Joint Planning Groups, the Military Appreciation and Planning processes, and Joint Operations Room functions, and their application to domestic contingencies, especially in a supporting rather

than leading context. He assesses that the deficiency is not in the training, which Reservists already receive, but rather in opportunities to apply and practice those skills, keeping them fresh and current.

Periodic interagency planning exercises provide a systematic means to strengthen relationships, build mutual understanding of respective capabilities, and practice planning skills. This would lessen dependence on the vagaries of local disasters as the current primary means of building civil-military relationships and interoperability with allied and partnered military forces. It would be a simple extension for the Reserve brigades to adopt a similar approach with jurisdictional domestic agencies.

Several jurisdictions are adopting an annual HRWS pre-brief, which brings together the key response agencies in each State to examine local weather outlooks for the coming season. As well as connecting the key personnel likely to be involved in a subsequent response that season, these forums could be extended to include a simple interagency desktop planning activity. Lieutenant Colonel Coates describes how this would improve the current situation:

We get on the ground and it takes a couple of days to figure it out ... and help educate them on what we can do ... There's a lot of belief that the ADF can do anything ...

More interagency rehearsals would be good ... In an ICC [Incident Control Centre], we need to be dealing with the area that is focused purely on relief and recovery – understanding how their structures work so we can be more effective from Day 1.⁹¹

Training opportunities of this type do not need to be time-intensive, either for Reservists or the agencies. However, they do need to be regular and formalised in order to embed and refresh both the relationships and the skills. This will enable 'trust to be surged' during the next domestic contingency. Forging these links between the 'local' brigade at the jurisdictional level recognises and accommodates the important differences in the structure and organisation of each state and territory's response agencies, leveraging the Reserve's natural advantage of geography.

A final point on officer training relates to the opportunity of domestic contingencies to widen the experience base of the Reserve. One consequence of the Beersheba force generation cycle was that many Reserve officers were trained – but few were chosen – to lead. For example, the Officer Training Continuum, including the part-time one, trains *all* COs, whether Combat, Combat Service or Combat Service Support, to be Battle Group (BG) commanders and to be fluent in task-organisation and basic manoeuvre. However, if warfighting is the only end state envisaged for this training, opportunities to perform the role of BG CO, whether on Exercise or Operation, are generally offered to Infantry COs. Indeed, the Reinforced Battlegroup construct offered leadership opportunities above Major almost exclusively to Infantry COs.

91 *Ibid.*

Leadership at this scale from other Corps was under-utilised during the Beersheba era. In contrast, during OBA, the nature of the tasks was clearly heavily weighted to Engineering and Logistics, and Engineer and Logistic COs across several JTFs were selected to lead primarily Task Groups (for domestic contingencies) rather than Battle Groups (warfighting). Framed another way, leadership opportunities based on sound task organisation utilised the training that all COs already have, and moreover activated parts of the part-time Force previously under-utilised by the RBG's exclusive focus on warfighting.

Therefore, with no additional cost or training time, the ADF extracted improved value and a return on investment from its part-time Force and *from its existing training*. In fact, it is argued that the ADF was not fully realising the potential of its existing training under Beersheba.

A key principle is the matching process that connects tasks with capability requirements – in short, task organisation. This reinforces the training value of Reserve service on domestic contingencies. Brigadier Garraway summarised: 'Mobilisation of the Reserve for domestic operations allows you to practice deployment and logistics on a scale and for a real need that you would not get on any other training opportunity.'⁹²

Soldier Training

For soldiers, Lieutenant Colonel Coates sees quality training as an attractor. In her experience, potential and serving members will self-select and choose to make themselves more available and to offer more of their discretionary time if a quality training offering is there. 'Consistency of training – delivery of quality training that is relevant to our Corps – that is how the 2nd Division can do more.'⁹³

In common with officer training, improved capability for domestic contingency can be achieved with minor tweaks to existing training. Lieutenant Colonel Coates emphasised that opportunities include setting quotas/targets for minimum qualifications and having military trade skills accredited to Federal, State and Industry standards. 'To be of more use to our partnered agencies ... for example, having 5% of our people [with] intermediate tree felling [qualifications] that [are] recognised by the relevant State authorities ... like we have a White Card for work on construction sites.'⁹⁴

Coates also believes that minor tweaks to enhance civil-military interoperability at the soldier level will have a positive retentive effect for Reserve soldiers. 'Look at the parts of domestic ops that invigorate soldiers to do things ... the more extreme end of domestic ops – clearing of roads, sandbagging, tree felling, which also complement our warfighting skills.'⁹⁵

⁹² Garraway, *op. cit.*

⁹³ Coates, *op. cit.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Brigadier Garraway sees a natural progression in skills and operational service, starting with entry level domestic HADR, grading through to domestic security, and culminating in combat operations. While he views this progression as without distinction between full- and part-time Forces, Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability) will shape Reservist progression along that continuum. Major General Laidlaw offered a training design for Reserve soldiers which captures the essence of this progression:

Part 1 – Common Recruit Course (foundation warfighting skills)

Part 2 – Universal Soldier Training, described as a domestic contingencies course which delivers qualification ‘to render the most likely level of capability that will be asked of them operationally ... That model is similar to what the Country Fire Authority do’.⁹⁶

Part 3 – Special-to-Corps Warfighting training (e.g. one of Infantry, Combat Engineer, Logistics, etc.)

This progressive training design allows individual Reservists to reach their own compromise on their progression along this training continuum, based on availability and aspiration to complete all three parts. Laidlaw highlights two advantages:

1. ‘Warfighting is ... the ultimate aim, where we want as many of our people as possible to be’,⁹⁷
2. Tempered with the realities of Reservist availability.

A progressive training design of this type offers the prospect of extracting more capability from the Reserve by increasing the pool of soldiers able to render effective service for domestic contingencies earlier in their training progression, while also producing a more highly trained force for warfighting for those Reservists able to make the additional time commitment.

Contrast the possibilities of the above progressive training design with a critique of Beersheba. Simplistically, Beersheba’s Reinforced Battlegroup aimed to produce only that (smaller) pool of highly trained Reservists, foregoing opportunities to harvest useful capability from the Reservist pool below a high threshold of availability that few could meet.

Circling back to Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose), we can ask why ‘Either/Or’? Why not ‘And/And’? From the full-time Force perspective, there will remain significant capability value (indeed, imperative, given limits on full-time Force numbers) in producing even a relatively small number of highly-trained Reservists at warfighting standard. From a part-time Force perspective, there is also value in encouraging Reservists’ aspiration towards this goal. Brigadier Cantwell notes the current 10% quota for Reservists for overseas deployments and describes the substantial force-multiplier effect that even a small number of Reservists

⁹⁶ Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

with operational experience can have by coaching and mentoring a much larger team of Reservists who don't yet have this experience. The opportunity is in also leveraging the *much larger pool* of Reservists who may never reach that aspiration, but who nonetheless offer intermediate skills of strong capability value for the ADF, for domestic and other contingencies.

A progressive training design could also better integrate the motivations for service in the part-time Force, which range across a spectrum. While all officers and soldiers 'sign up' for the Army's primary premise of combat operations, a proportion of Reservists are also attracted to the humanitarian aspect of the ADF's role, and many are motivated towards serving their local community. During OBA, Lieutenant Colonel Coates saw the two-way benefits of geography – the community is pleased when it sees (often local) soldiers responding, and the members feel pleased to offer their service back to their local community. Coates believes this has a positive recruitment and retentive benefit for the part-time Force. This is supported by anecdotal evidence that intrinsic motivations for initial **recruitment** can evolve to become distinct for **retention** of the part-time member over their service career. Beyond anecdotal evidence, Reserve member motivation is often assumed or imputed by the ADF; this is an opportunity to build understanding through evidence, e.g. market testing. This understanding can improve ADF design of the employment value it offers and can therefore maximise desirable retention. Nonetheless, even in the absence of firm knowledge, the spectrum of motivational effects can be accommodated, without detracting from the Army's warfighting role, within a progressive training design, such as the one above. This is more inclusive as it contains 'something for everyone' depending on life and career stage.

Conceptually, if the Reserve is visualised as a pool of individuals, this pool has a spectrum or a bell curve of availability; of longevity (with some Reservists serving a short career and others a long one); and also, as discussed above, of motivation. Achieving more capability from that pool involves recognising these spectra and finding ways to integrate more trained individuals across their bell curve of self-selected availability, longevity and motivation. This is a sophisticated workforce concept, catering for the wide range of individual Reservists' circumstances, allowing a continuum of on- and off-ramps for their military service. It better reflects contemporary 'gig economy' civilian career and employment norms. The hypothesis is that structuring Reserve service in this way is likely to harvest more capability from the same pool of people. A pilot program could test this hypothesis. Delivering choice to individual Reservists, rather than system-imposed compromises, requires a flexible mindset orientation in the ADF personnel agencies.

Lesson Learned

Perhaps it is compromise within the ADF's systems that is needed, to achieve the best capability value from the Reserve.

Collectively, the goal of embedding domestic contingencies experience into systematic training for both Reserve officers and soldiers is to more deliberately cultivate **Profession**, the civil-military mindset and skillset that can be a capability multiplier for the ADF in future domestic contingencies. The analysis presented here does not suggest that major shifts in training focus are required, but instead that minor tweaks to annual exercise design for Reserve officers and to training sequencing for Reserve soldiers can yield real ADF capability dividends for domestic contingencies.

Do domestic contingencies require more training than the progressive design above? This paper argues not. The progressive training design provides generic skills (foundation warfighting) and a limited number of specific skills (universal soldier training) for domestic operations. The latter could include basic chainsaw cross-cutting, small engine operation and basic maintenance, generator operation, sandbagging, route clearance, knots and lashings, and other basic field skills currently associated with the ‘assault pioneer’ trade. These basic Sapper skills are likely to be employed in a range of domestic contingencies. Again in the words of Laidlaw:

We generally know the type of domestic operation we are going to get called to support. It's going to be bushfires (e.g. clearance of roads, recovery centres), storm damage, and the same with floods.⁹⁸

However, given that civilian agencies have the lead for domestic contingencies, the ADF will not necessarily be aware of what the specific tasking requirements of a given scenario will be. Therefore, investing more training time in *additional* specific skills is not warranted. By extension, latent concerns that the Reserve training programs may be ‘taken over’ by domestic contingency training are also unwarranted.



Australian Army Lance Corporals Mark Deignan (left) and David Nichols from the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion conduct maintenance on NSW Rural Fire Service chainsaws in Jerangle, NSW. (Defence Images)

98 Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

Resourcing

By definition, civil agencies will lead future domestic contingencies, requesting only specific, targeted ADF assistance for specified tasks. From an advance planning perspective, the traditional ADF military appreciation process is challenged, unless there are some specifics, since the ADF is trained to plan and lead an entire operation independently. Issued a Warning Order for OBA in his Townsville base, Major Jankalns described this dilemma:

Myself and other elements of the 3 CER [3rd Combat Engineer Regiment] hierarchy commenced the planning on what would be required to support a contingent of up to 100 ... for an unknown period of time, in an unknown location, conducting unknown taskings.⁹⁹

But while there may be limited value in detailed advance planning for domestic contingencies, the need for detailed 'snap' planning is strong once a domestic contingency occurs and a specific ADF task has been requested and accepted.

In contrast to the dilemma of detailed advance planning, the likely **resources** required from the ADF for domestic contingencies are very predictable. Major Jankalns noted the perennial enablers required for domestic contingencies:

We had planned and accounted for as much as possible with a task group organised to support whatever was required. We had logistics, medical, transportation, signals, we were ... able to do basically a raft of taskings ... So it was all about how do we enable their force.¹⁰⁰

Investing in skills through training is one element of **Profession** in the sense of Chief of Army's *AIM AW* Command Themes. The complementary element to Profession is resourcing. Historically, Reserve formations have been a secondary priority for resourcing.¹⁰¹ The Beersheba plus FORGEN model, and the Reinforced Battlegroup construct tended to amplify uneven resourcing across the full-time and part-time Forces, and especially the part-time Force. Given the Reserve was just emerging from this era at OBA's commencement, OBA did expose some resourcing shortfalls for the part-time Force. RSM Murch described this training and resourcing compromise he observed in the field during OBA, and the means to address it, as follows:

Foundation warfighting allows us to react quickly – however the deficiency was in equipment and kitting (e.g. chainsaws). So long as our acquisition system is slick and responsive, provided our C2 is listening and reacts to the needs of capability asks from the bottom-up – then we can overcome the shortfalls of equipment. We need to ensure equipment is relevant to the environment and easily integrated into teams (e.g. communications equipment).¹⁰²

99 Jankalns, *op. cit.*

100 Jankalns, *op. cit.*

101 McCarthy, *op. cit.*

102 Murch, *op. cit.*

Resourcing Implications of Concurrency

As stated in the Introduction, concurrency was the critical challenge of both OBA and OCA with simultaneous contingencies across multiple jurisdictions. Concurrency is a major challenge to a key ADF resourcing assumption – that ADF assets are national, and that the limited pool of these assets can be readily cross-levelled across the country as required for domestic contingencies. Unpredictable state border closures, as happened in OCA, also limit response options if ADF resources are not locally available.

An extreme example of national cross-levelling during OBA was the road movement of significant forces from the full-time 3rd Brigade, based in Townsville, to far south-eastern Victoria. Major Jankalns described this 3,000 km road movement, and the additional time and logistic complexity this entailed before the forces could be effective in the Victorian firegrounds.¹⁰³ The receiver of those forces, Lieutenant Colonel Coates, offered the plain and simple logic that if the Reserve Brigades are the key regional interfaces for domestic contingencies now, they need to be equipped with sufficient enablers, or access to them, for independent operations. This includes logistics, secure communications, vehicles, plant and equipment hire, etc.

In New South Wales, the Reserve elements deployed to the OBA firegrounds resolved equipment shortfalls through private hire of equipment, such as white fleet vehicles, chainsaws and bulldozers. However, less easily resolved were basic differences in kitting entitlements for part-time members. For example, Reservists have an entitlement to only two sets of Australian Multi-cam Camouflage Uniform (AMCU), and laundering struggled to keep pace with work rates during OBA's physically and OCA's biologically dirty tasks.

Brigadier Garraway further extended this resourcing limitation to vehicle and equipment maintenance and readiness. 'I would take risk in the full-time Force before I accepted risk in the part-time Force, in the southern states with the highest bushfire risk where the first element called upon will be part-time.'¹⁰⁴ This thinking stands in strong contrast to much of the Reserve's history, and is testament to the growing appreciation amongst senior ADF Leadership of the preparedness and readiness requirements of the part-time Force, if it is to achieve its full potential in meeting domestic contingencies.

If this is to be the go-to force, has it been resourced effectively? There's a minimum level of capability that needs to be maintained to be effective.

Colonel Mark Welburn

The ADF's 2019–2021 domestic contingency experience is already translating to some structural and resourcing action. Recognition of the requirement for strong, independent

¹⁰³ Jankalns, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Garraway, *op. cit.* Garraway extends this beyond the equipment: 'reasonable apportionment of posted logistic and maintenance staff to the division that are deployable'.

regional nodes and a distributed force has manifested in rebalancing the force under the Army Force Structure Implementation Plan (AFSIP). Box 3 summarises these changes for the 2nd Division, which include a strengthened presence in Western Australia and Tasmania, and strengthened investment in Armoured or Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMV) and Engineer Corps capabilities in the regions. Within the Integrated Investment Program (IIP), the tightly-contested Defence budgeting process, these are significant achievements which will enhance the agility and capacity of the ADF, both full- and part-time, to respond to multiple concurrent scenarios across several jurisdictions.¹⁰⁵

Box 3: AFSIP Changes to the 2nd Division

Domestic Support In response to lessons learnt from the 2019–2020 Bushfires, Operation COVID Assist and domestic security exercises, the 2nd Division has strengthened how it supports state-based emergency services. The 2nd Division will become a command in its own right, to better manage how this task is resourced and balanced with its enduring role to prepare land forces for conflict. To ensure our response forces are balanced across Australia, the Army will grow part-time West Australian-based light cavalry, engineer and littoral manoeuvre forces. This means more opportunities to serve in Western Australia and more options for the ADF. The Army's first significant action to realise this is to re-raise the 10th Light Horse Regiment in late 2021.

Lieutenant General Rick Burr, Chief of Army Letter to Army Commanders,
Changes to Army Command and Control, 3 September 2021.

Pushing the Frontier of Reserve Compromise

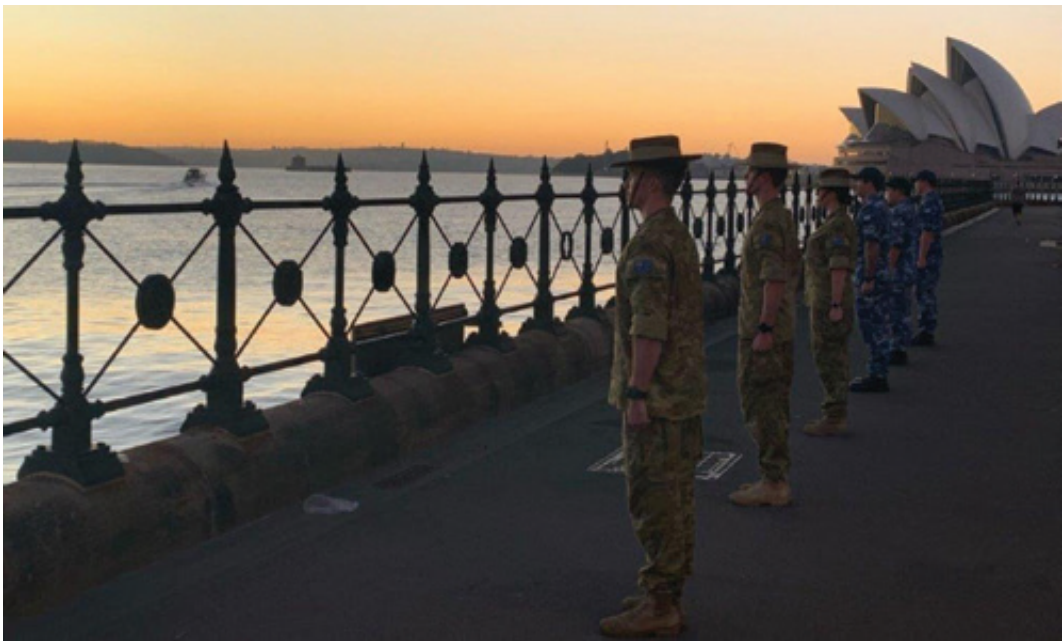
To extend the thinking of the interviewees, resourcing limitations may be limiting ADF perceptions of Reservist capability. Unless checked, that is a circular argument – a resourcing tail wagging a capability canine. The counterargument is posed here – how much more Reservist capability could be unlocked if current resourcing levels to the Reserve were not limiting its capability?

OBA and OCA's reversed and macro-level view enables us to re-frame some of the Reserve's history and chart part of its future course. Seen in longitudinal hindsight, the resourcing compromises evident throughout the Reserve's history are at least partially a function of uncertainty around the *raison d'être* of the Reserve itself. To apply orthodox business thinking to this problem, if the capability 'business case' for the Reserve is strong enough, the resourcing logically flows to enable the government's need to be met.

105 Department of Defence, *Integrated Investment Program*, Canberra, 2016.

This insight pushes the frontier of Reserve Compromise from an internal Defence resourcing focus to an external focus, which interfaces with the civilian real economy and specifically Defence's relationship with employers of Reservists. The successful use by the government of the Call Out provision, and the Reserve force's demonstration of its capability in the field when adequately equipped has emboldened and encouraged Government of the Reserve's future employment potential. If the quick succession of OBA and OCA represented a Road to Damascus moment which challenged and enlightened some traditional ADF thinking, perhaps it also represents a shift in thinking for Australia's political leadership.

However, like all great compromises, the paradox of surmounting successive limits to Reserve employment is that there is always another limit beyond, and as an ultimately finite resource, Reserve potential must be exercised selectively and judiciously, not as an unbounded 'free good'. In diverting Reservists from their civilian roles, there is an opportunity cost to the broader economy in engaging Reservists more in domestic contingencies. The decision to initially staff OCA with Reservists on a Call For basis reflects this judicious assessment and a recognition that some factors limiting Reservist employment are external – specifically Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability), relationships with employers and public perceptions of 'securitisation' of Australia's domestic challenges. These themes will be addressed in the next and final section: Potential.



Joint Task Group 629.1 conducts a COVID-compliant ANZAC Dawn Service on Sydney Harbour during Operation COVID-19 Assist, 25 April 2020. (Defence Images).

Potential: Opportunities for the Future Flexible Force

The specific sequence of OBA followed immediately by OCA created a cultural shift in how stakeholders (the Government, the ADF, Army and the Community) relate to the Reserve. Colonel Welburn described this cultural shift:

We rolled straight from a lengthy period of Bushfires support as the primary force provider – then the HQ transitioned across to COVID support – as a validation ... we created an expectation and ... rather than being the reluctant force to go to – we became the primary force to go to.¹⁰⁶

Unquestionably, recent domestic contingencies have demonstrated increased capability value from the Reserve. However, there is a risk that the Reserve becomes **typecast** by those same stakeholders as purely a domestic contingency force – what Brigadier Garraway labels a ‘DACC Army’. This paper and all of the interviewees have argued why the ‘DACC Army’ concept is fundamentally unsound. Because – perhaps paradoxically to some – it is in fact the **training and preparation for warfighting** which equips Reservists with half of the unique capability edge with which the part-time Force distinguished itself during OBA and OCA. To remove this and focus training and service exclusively on domestic contingencies would be to kill the training geese which lay the golden capability eggs for the ADF. Similarly, to exclude opportunities for Reservists to serve on combat operations would be capability-limiting for the ADF, rather than capability-enabling. OBA and OCA have demonstrated in practice and on operations why some of the traditional Reserve Compromises are now outmoded, binary, simplistic and limiting. The way forward is ‘And/And’ rather than ‘Either/Or’ and the subtlety is in recognising how the Reservist civil-military mindset and skillsets are mutually complementary, and can be achieved across a balanced force within a balanced training cycle.

The opportunity now is how to sustain this cultural shift by **consolidating and improving** the existing ADF systems and doctrine which have produced such fine geese and eggs. Annex C considers an opportunity to expand existing ADF Preparedness/Readiness doctrine to encompass Reserve Training Level Standards (TLS) for domestic contingencies. There are further opportunities to revise the ADF’s HADR and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) doctrine to provide more explicit guidance for domestic contingencies specifically.

106 Welburn, *op. cit.*

This section focuses on system opportunities and seeks to create a vision for a future flexible force that realises the full capability potential of the Reserve within the Total Force. Central to the future flexible force are the ADF's opportunities to expand the definition of 'Profession', actively cultivate the civil-military mindset and skillset, and re-value the capability offered by the complete set of skills, both military and civilian, offered by all ADF members.

Profession: Civil-Military Mindset and Skillset

If the civil-military mindset and skillset is a desirable attribute in the Reserve, how can the ADF deliberately cultivate it? Equipping Reservists with foundation warfighting skills is one half of the solution. The second half involves the ADF embracing the less familiar civil-military interface in the lives of Reservists. Interviewees identified three opportunities the ADF can consider in maximising the capability value-adding of the Reserve's civil-military mindset and skillset:

1. Developing workforce Intelligence on the civilian skills and networks of Reservists, and then extending this to all ADF members;
2. Task-Organising for impact, scale and focus; and
3. Developing a National Strategic Partnership with civilian employers of Reservists.

Diversity as a Hedge for Uncertainty

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. While bushfires, albeit not at OBA's scale, are not unexpected in Australia over summer, it is fair to state that, aside from some expert epidemiologists, Australians did not anticipate a viral pandemic. In risk analysis parlance, the global COVID-19 pandemic was considered a 'low probability – high consequence' or 'Black Swan' event. Generic planning for domestic contingencies is easy compared to specific planning for an actual scenario. In Major General Laidlaw's words, 'you don't know what the next emergency will need'.¹⁰⁷ Military thinkers and historians are not naïve about this dilemma. The history of warfare has repeatedly shown that an initial, sometimes rudimentary, peripheral or new capability can suddenly offer a distinct capability edge in a given scenario. Tanks and aviation in World War I are some examples. The role of military capability developers is to rapidly adapt and upscale that capability at a whole-of-Force level, to hedge against contingencies that may not be known in advance. The portfolio force design principle may be applied, which maintains a number of capabilities, in small quantities, 'just in case' a specific capability is required to respond to a specific contingency. RSM Murch considered the ADF's ability to rapidly adapt to a specific contingency:

What is the foundation skill or attribute/ behaviour required?

What is the contingency in the environment?

And then communicate to develop innovative ways to rectify the situation.¹⁰⁸

107 Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

108 Murch, *op. cit.*

Zooming out now to a whole-of-nation, whole-of-society frame, diversity in skills is the national equivalent of a hedge against unknown potential future contingencies. For the ADF, the sheer variety of potential domestic operations begins to place a new premium on the value of diverse potential dual-use, civil-military skill sets latent within the part-time Force. Examples from the experience of OBA and OCA include:

- Tradespeople
- Arborists
- Engineers
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) -qualified medical and para-medical personnel:
 - Doctors
 - Nurses
 - Dentists
 - Psychologists
- Veterinarians (for livestock and wildlife)
- Chaplains (multi-faith)
- Emergency Services personnel:
 - Metropolitan Fire Services
 - Ambulance Officers
 - Police Officers
- Emergency Services volunteers:
 - State Emergency Services
 - Rural Fire Service / Country Fire Authority
- Public Servants:
 - Local
 - State
 - Federal.

In terms of intent, where there is concurrency, the ADF seeks to *avoid* drawing Reservists who are essential workers in a given contingency – that is their critical skills are required in their civilian capacity – and where the opportunity cost to the wider economy of their diversion for military service is unacceptably high. Conversely, however, in the more common non-concurrent scenario, Reservists with required particular civilian skillsets may be sought to serve in uniform, on a Call For basis, and through appropriate national cross-levelling. Both of the above scenarios require and assume that the ADF has knowledge of which Reservists hold what skills – in corporate terms, workforce Intelligence.

Recognising diversity is an oft-quoted organisational objective. Currently, the ADF does not formally or systematically recognise skills diversity in its part-time Force. Aside from meeting the basic eligibility and educational requirements of the ADF recruitment process, General Reservists are not required to disclose their civilian profession, employer, or credentialed skills and qualifications; and these are not officially recorded.¹⁰⁹

Box 2 sets out the Army's two formal categories of Reserve: the general, and the second, smaller workforce category of Specialist Service Reservists. As the Army increasingly seeks to draw upon niche expertise, revision or expansion of the Army's Reserve workforce categories may be warranted.

Building Workforce Intelligence

An opportunity therefore exists for the ADF to enhance its capability by formally recognising skills diversity in all its members, focusing initially on the part-time Force, then extending to encompass all members. This approach offers potential benefit for Reservists by unlocking more opportunities for short-term service in niche capability areas that reflect their expertise.

Visioning a **future flexible force** requires imagination. Imagine a Reservist database within ADF personnel agencies, containing the civilian employment, formal qualifications, accredited skills, and professional networks of the entire Reservist pool. Imagine that these details were current, updated annually as a mandatory training requirement. Imagine now being able to interrogate that database using smart analytics, and identify a specific set of Reservists with critical expertise required for a specific ADF task, whether military or civilian for domestic contingencies. For example, imagine a natural disaster or other event which has damaged significant critical infrastructure. Imagine the ADF being able to task-organise a 'Fly Away Team' of Reservists, who are also accredited bridge inspectors in that jurisdiction, and deploying this team to the point of need to perform wide-area damage assessment in regions of restricted access.

The compelling argument for building Reserve workforce intelligence is that this will enable smarter, more targeted task-organisation for domestic and other contingencies. In addition to niche capabilities, workforce Intelligence of this type could be used for more detailed whole-of-workforce planning and design. Two examples are offered here:

Example 1: Quantifying different 'types' of Reservist (see **Box 2**) would allow estimation of availability *elasticity*, that is how much additional availability the member might render if additional suitable ADF work was offered for these distinct demographic groups.

Example 2: How many Reservists are also currently-serving Police Officers? In which jurisdiction? Of what Police rank and seniority?

109 Currently, *Privacy Act 1988* provisions prevent the ADF from seeking this information.

When the ADF seeks to rapidly scale a force for any contingency, workforce intelligence could help build the required capability in niches and numbers. Such a tool could also be used to:

- identify gaps in the current part-time workforce, which would assist more targeted (as opposed to mass) recruitment;
- target employer engagement to maximise Reservist availability;
- make geographic posting decisions for Reservists, and map the geography of a Reservist's posting history to understand where Reservists may be able to leverage local knowledge; and
- apply discrimination in future Call Outs by excluding 'essential workers', noting the higher opportunity cost to the wider economy of their diversion from their civilian roles.

A cost-benefit analysis of the capability value of such workforce intelligence tools warrants consideration and is one tangible means by which the ADF could both recognise and apply Reservist skill diversity to yield capability value. A cost-benefit analysis may also consider the 'hedge value' of such workforce intelligence against future uncertainty, noting that diversity has a quality all of its own. A pilot scheme could initially build workforce intelligence for high-value skills (e.g. medical, nursing, engineering, cyber/IT). Later extension to all ADF members represents the Final Operating Capability for such a tool.

Seamless Career Transitions: 'Life-Long Service' Ethos

Full leverage of the complete professional skillsets (civil and military) offered by the Reserve requires an important supporting effort in the ADF personnel agencies which transition members between various service categories over a career. Such transitions include from 'Inactive Reserve' into 'Active Reserve', and from 'Active Reserve' into full-time service, and vice versa. Currently, the ADF uses the Total Workforce System (TWS), which offers great potential and while much progress has been made in its implementation, Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability) identified considerable opportunity to further streamline processes.

The **future flexible force** vision sees seamless transitions between full- and part-time service categories over a career. Achieving this vision will enhance Reserve capability; and will also benefit full-time members in extending flexibility to their own careers. This can be supported by a unifying ethos which can bring people back to the ADF in various capacities as part of a 'life-long service' ethos. This ethos can emphasise that there are many ways to serve the Total Force, through periods both in and out of uniform. Embracing the life-long service ethos involves a capability re-valuation by the ADF of both military and civilian skills held by all members. The following section, Task Organisation, further explores this capability re-valuation concept.

Task-Organising for Impact, Focus and Scale

The ADF can leverage task organisation to achieve greater impact, focus and scale from Reserve capability in domestic contingencies. Greater capability **impact** can be achieved by:

1. specifying a standing design (force structure) of a task group-sized force suitable for domestic contingencies. This will allow faster force assignment of enablers and shorten ‘time to effect’ in the field; and
2. flexible force flow, which will increase Reservist availability, and allow finer tailoring to the task.

Greater capability **focus** can be achieved by engaging Reservists in their civilian (specialist skills) capacity to address high-value, **niche** task requirements in domestic contingencies. Greater capability **scale** can be achieved by leveraging Reservists in their military (generalist skills) capacity, to achieve increased **numbers** on task where the contingency requires this. This section unpacks these task organisation opportunities to achieve greater capability impact, focus and scale from the Reserve for domestic contingencies.



Australian Army Craftsman Ridge Dove from the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion reseals a leaking jerry on a NSW Rural Fire Service vehicle in Jerangle, NSW. (Defence Images)

Task Group Design for Domestic Contingencies

Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability) described how OBA's Call Out was a 'blunt instrument' in terms of initially Calling Out complete Reserve units, without all the enablers (e.g. communications, transport assets and logistics) required for independent operations in the field. Whilst this was quickly corrected in-stride, interviewees identified strong opportunities to sharpen task organisation for future domestic contingencies, based on the Reserve formations, for a faster initial response. On the eve of OBA, the Reinforcing Battlegroup was considered the deployable nucleus across most Reserve formations. Unsurprisingly, this Beersheba legacy was the instinctive initial reaction when the OBA Call Out required a task group. However, task-organising for warfighting requires a different structure to domestic contingencies. Lieutenant Colonel Coates noted:

Battlegroup Jacka¹¹⁰ wasn't quite the right construct [for domestic contingencies] ... We needed a heavier HQ than BG Jacka provides you, because of the integration with partnered agencies.¹¹¹

Interviewees described how OBA required rapid upscaling of the Brigade's standard company-sized HRWS Emergency Support Force (ESF) to include a much larger component of civil-military *integrators* – that is, liaison officers (LOs), CIMIC operators and military chaplains. Brigadier Cantwell highlighted that one of his first acts as JTF Commander in South Australia and Tasmania was to embed multiple dedicated LOs with the key civilian agency decision-making nodes. In Victoria, Major General Laidlaw described how military chaplains interfaced with the Council of Churches and offered an early and powerful feed into his Commander's situational understanding, most especially around mental health issues in fire-affected communities within his Area of Operations (AO).¹¹²

More broadly, OBA's requirement for strong civil-military interface identifies opportunities to strengthen and improve coordination in the ADF's existing civil-military capabilities. The ADF currently has two standing Reservist capabilities to deliver civil-military liaison. The first, CIMIC, is designed almost exclusively for overseas contingencies and lacks doctrine for domestic contingencies. The second capability is the Joint Operations Support Staff (JOSS), a small, embedded capability reporting directly through to ADF Headquarters. The OBA AOs therefore had three simultaneous ADF liaison networks – the JTF LOs, CIMIC and JOSS. As perceived by the civilian agencies, these separate ADF reps were confusing, and JTF Commanders faced the challenge of integration across the three networks. Brigadier Cantwell emphasised the importance of multi-levelled engagement between ADF and civilian agencies, beyond the high-level connections of senior officers. He noted that perceptions of

110 Jacka is the title of the 4th Brigade Reinforcing Battlegroup under the Beersheba plus FORGEN model, named in honour of Captain Albert Jacka, VC.

111 Coates, *op. cit.*

112 Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

the 'Common Operating Picture' (COP) frequently differ across the AO; Cantwell sees the job of the JTF staff, working in concert with LO networks, to assemble and reconcile often divergent observations, avoiding reliance on any single source.

Two opportunities arise in the light of emergent domestic contingency requirements:

1. a capability establishment review of both CIMIC and JOSS may be warranted; and
2. future JTF task organisation may benefit from clear force assignment of CIMIC and JOSS to JTF headquarters to clarify reporting lines and avoid duplication.

Integrating all the task organisation lessons from OBA, a standing design (force structure) for a task group-sized force for domestic contingencies can be specified for future activation.

The ideal structure for that organisation includes:

- a heavy headquarters suitable for running 24/7 operations deployed in the field, including communication assets
- main force elements featuring engineer and logistic components
- critical enabling force elements for civil-military interface (e.g. liaison networks and military chaplains).



Australian Army Lieutenant Hamish May (right) and Captain Chase Batten-Smith, who are from the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion, conduct a brief on the positions of deployed personnel in the greater Cooma region, NSW. (Defence Images)

Flexible Force Flow

Interviewees also identified opportunities, especially in domestic contingencies below the Call Out threshold, to harness increased Reservist availability via a flexible force flow, tailored to the task. Lieutenant Colonel Coates commented that ‘we need to be mindful of flexibility to draw people in and release them as needed ... Do those workflow and people requirements to the task’.¹¹³ Cantwell expanded that for Task Group COs during domestic contingencies, task organisation is a dynamic, continuous process, rather than once-off or static, noting the CO’s job during HADR includes receiving (often diverse) force elements, and quickly flowing these forces onto tasks.

Extending this idea, Brigadier Garraway noted a strong opportunity for the ADF to make a real difference as communities recover, by deploying smaller numbers of well-targeted, high-impact teams with a low resourcing footprint for the ADF and a more enduring presence:

The Reserve has the ability to bring in small groups of people, for a few days at a time, staggered over a few weeks, returning to their civilian job ... The Reserve, being local, regional, available for periods of time, over a longer time, in the affected region could be more enduring than a Combat Engineer Regiment coming out of the northern states. You can offer a far more enduring effect (in the community) if you’re prepared to use it in a flexible way, particularly in a disaster that may require support over a longer period of time.¹¹⁴

The **flexible force flow** described by Coates, Cantwell and Garraway delivers operational effects on the ground, and is simultaneously ideally suited to dynamic Reservist availability through time. This may require compromise in traditional full-time concepts of operational deployments, which are generally for prescribed, fixed dates and protracted periods. An openness to deployment flexibility during domestic contingencies would allow Reservists, who may otherwise not be able to commit for a protracted period, to offer more availability, more often.¹¹⁵

Task-Organising Numbers ... and Niches

Brigadier Cantwell highlighted that the ADF values General Reservists only for the time they serve in uniform and advocated for a re-valuation of Reserve capability based also on their roles and professional networks outside the ADF. This point warrants explanation.

113 Coates, *op. cit.*

114 Garraway, *op. cit.*

115 Defence has already responded to this opportunity. Additional legislation was passed by Parliament in 2020, to ‘enhance flexibility in how ADF Reserve members serve’ under a Call Out. *Among other things*, this legislation enables Reservists to serve on conditions other than continuous full-time service. Defence Legislation Amendment (*Enhancement of Defence Force Response to Emergencies*) Bill 2020.

The categorisation of the vast majority of Reservists as 'General' means the ADF employs these part-time members in their general military role, according to the military rank and trade that they have attained *within the ADF*. For example: a Reservist may have attained the rank of corporal in the ADF. However, in the absence of workforce intelligence, the ADF is unaware he is a civilian chemical engineer. Opportunities to employ this member within the ADF according to his highest-value skill set for example in chemical weapon defence, are foregone. Conversely, the opportunity cost to the wider economy, if this member is deployed on a lower-skill military task, may be significant, but are currently unmeasured. The 'General Reserve' is perhaps a legacy concept of the original 'expansion base' thinking for massed armies in the past. Its main legacy consequence is that much skilled capability is overlooked when a contingency requires a niche rather than a numbers response. A departure from the General Reserve model is not appropriate because some contingencies do require numbers (scalability). However, recent domestic contingencies and future uncertainties do suggest there is an emergent requirement for more niche capabilities. An expanded General Reserve concept can service this emergent requirement.

Cantwell described the current situation where 'thoughtful task-organisation' occurs at an individual, informal scale, reliant on local (and sometimes accidental!) knowledge of their Reservists' civilian credentials by a given chain of command. He noted this approach relies on 'leadership ... to place Reservists in positions where they can use their local knowledge'.¹¹⁶

The ADF therefore has an opportunity to systematise this practice and task-organise niche capabilities and liaison effects for increased **focus**. The ADF can achieve this through identifying **high-value niche task** requirements and matching these against members of the General Reserve with the relevant civilian skills and networks. Workforce intelligence is a critical enabler for this enhanced capability.

Method of Employment

Brigadier Garraway noted the current valuation of Reserve capability is based almost exclusively on **numbers**. While this achieves **scale**, he also advocated for the inclusion of **niche** considerations, in the re-valuation of Reserve capability. Across both OBA and OCA, he observed capability value not because of the size of the force but because of the niche capability that enables one highly-trained, part-time soldier, sailor or aviator to supervise a larger group of lesser skilled individuals to achieve a greater effect on the ground.¹¹⁷

Reserve Compromise 3 (Training and Resourcing) described the multiplier effect of embedding small numbers of ADF planners able to guide a much larger team of civilian agency staff through a planning process. This ADF method of employment is termed 'Train,

¹¹⁶ Cantwell, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁷ Garraway, *op. cit.*

Advise, Assist' (TAA), and is, inter alia, an effective means of building capability in a partnered workforce.¹¹⁸ OBA spontaneously generated numerous instances of TAA. One was the 5 ER Task Group's chainsaw Mobile Training Team (MTT) which dispatched a team of ADF trainers to various New South Wales locations to deliver a short course in basic chainsaw operation (a competency only held by sappers of the Royal Australian Engineers) to soldiers of all Corps. This enabled a rapid expansion of the proportion of the force able to use chainsaws for basic route clearance and multiplied the effect of a limited pool of sappers.

The ADF TAA method of employment is particularly well-suited to domestic contingencies, noting that civilian agencies have primacy both for leadership and response. The potential Reserve contribution to TAA tasks in future domestic operations is another ADF opportunity and useful application of enhanced workforce intelligence.

Employers of Reservists: Forging a Strategic Partnership

Given OBA was the first Call Out of the Reserve at scale in Australia's history, and occurred without notice, many civilian employers of Reservists *also* learned for the first time about this strong (if unlikely) legal caveat on their Reservist employees. Given the unquestionable scale of Black Summer's national bushfire emergency, the compelling need for the Call Out was widely understood and accepted once triggered (even if it was not anticipated *a priori*). The overwhelming majority of Australian employers were highly supportive in initially releasing their employees. Many went 'above and beyond' in offering paid leave to their Reservists (in cases where civilian employment conditions do not include this), and several directly donated goods and services to fire-affected communities as a means of 'giving back'.



Australian Army Lance Corporal David Nichols from the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion speaks with a local in Jerangle, NSW. (Defence Images)

118 Frame, T. (Ed), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions*, University of New South Wales Press, Randwick, NSW, 2017.

Once the January 2020 adrenalin rush subsided, employers generally sought certainty from the ADF on the return-to-work dates for their Reservists, and whether the Call Out would be extended beyond the **mandatory** initial release of 28 days.

Just as business-as-usual was resuming across the Australian economy in February and March 2020, COVID-19's arrival in Australia triggered the ADF's second major domestic operation, OCA. Many Reservists again stepped forward, though this time on the Call For basis of **voluntary** release by their civilian employers.

The rapid sequence of these two high-profile instances of Reservists serving on domestic contingencies gives rise to sometimes unspoken concerns in the Reservist–Civilian Employer relationship. The author has engaged with employers and Reservists on this issue. The concerns assembled here are based on that engagement, with source anonymity preserved. From the civilian employers' perspective, principal concerns include:

- Will the Government/ADF expropriate my Reservist employee in the future?
- How much notice will I receive?
- If natural disasters occur with more frequency in Australia, will this expropriation become more frequent?

From the Reservists' perspective, principal concerns include:

- Will my employer continue to release me for Reserve service in the future, e.g. for voluntary periods of training or annual exercises?
- Will my employer (unconsciously) discriminate against me in the future, when promotion and other professional development opportunities arise in my civilian workplace?
- Should I choose another employer, who is more supportive of my Reserve service?
- Should I tell a prospective new employer at my job interview that I am a Reservist? Will this impact my recruitment success?
- Should I just leave the Reserve – because my main civilian job is just too important to me and my family's future to compromise?

Currently, aside from the punitive **legal** 'big stick' of the Defence Reserve Service Protection Act (2001) and limited **financial** assistance to employers (under certain qualifying conditions) of the Employer Support Program (ESP), the ADF has very limited official interface with civilian employers of Reservists. Up to this point in the ADF's history, most of the burden, risk of and responsibility for negotiating with civilian employers has rested with individual Reservists. Depending on their age, profession and seniority, individuals are not always in positions of bargaining power in workplace relations. This current 'grass roots' approach to ADF–civilian employer relations can be considered **transactional and tactical**.

The ADF has an opportunity to increase Reservists' availability, including voluntary release from their civilian employment, by forging a strategic partnership with the civilian employers of Reservists. Given the strategic outlook and anticipated increase both in domestic contingencies and ADF deployment to assist in them, it is argued that this is now an imperative.

The first step involves recognising that the concerns expressed above by both employers and Reservists are legitimate, currently compromising of Reservists' availability, and need to be addressed. The second step involves greater risk-sharing amongst the ADF, employers and Reservists. Employer concerns are based on three core business uncertainties:

- Duration – how long will my Reservist be absent from my workplace?
- Notice – how much lead time will I have, to prepare for their absence?
- Frequency – how often will my Reservist be absent from my workplace?

There is more the ADF can do to address these uncertainties, and doing so will increase Reservists' availability by providing greater confidence to both employers and Reservists.

Relationships versus Partnerships

Often used interchangeably, differentiating 'relationship' from 'partnership' can forge a path forward. A 'relationship' implies open communication channels, at least basic familiarity, and a friendly rapport. 'Partnership' implies that parties are working together on a shared purpose, with both offering inputs, and receiving benefits in return. Noting the ADF's current start-state, building an initial strategic relationship with employers of Reservists is the initial objective; converting this into a strategic partnership is the subsequent objective.

Converting *transactional and tactical* into *transformative and strategic* can start with an engagement plan. Brigadier Garraway noted the high regard that civilian employers of Reservists place on receiving explicit **recognition** for their support in releasing their Reservist(s) during OBA (and OCA).¹¹⁹ Periodic local, state and national awards and recognition ceremonies for employers already occur; this is a positive start and can be built upon. Major General Laidlaw highlighted opportunities for a national advertising campaign, praising the employers of Reservists with the same frequency as recruiting advertisements seeking to enlist them.¹²⁰ A national advertising campaign delivers the effects of raising the positive profile of both Reservists and their employers, while also establishing a baseline of expectation across the community. Building the national support base of goodwill towards both Reservists and their dual-service contributions to their civilian workplaces and the ADF will increase that currently finite store of goodwill capital described in Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability).

¹¹⁹ Garraway, *op. cit.*

¹²⁰ Laidlaw, *op. cit.*

This work aims to scope the opportunity rather than to design the future ADF–civilian employer strategic partnership. Within this remit, the recent experience of domestic contingencies identifies five initial success factors:

1. A strategic partnership implies representation from the ADF leadership at an appropriately senior level, with suitable delegation and leverage to recommend ADF personnel policy and procedure changes, as or if necessary.
2. While goodwill is a valuable, if intangible, quality in itself, a partnership requires tangible mutual interests to be mapped out and agreed. A two-way conversation and consultation, with the ADF ‘listening twice as much as it speaks’ will be beneficial in:
 - a. raising the understanding of employer circumstances, needs and aspirations by the full-time ADF senior leadership; and
 - b. allowing civilian employers to co-design the partnership.
3. A long-term campaign approach is important, as partnerships take time to develop and require sustained investment through time.
4. Recognition by the ADF that civilian employers of Reservists are not a single homogeneous entity. Targeted engagement with a selected few large employers is outmoded, and discounts the large proportion of Reservists employed in micro, small and medium enterprises. However, social media and other digital platforms enable unprecedented reach.
5. Workforce intelligence, of the type described in this chapter, will be a powerful tool for understanding the complete market of civilian employers of Reserves, in addition to understanding the complete market of current Reservists themselves. Workforce intelligence will assist the ADF to design a strategic partnership with the civilian employers of Reserves.

There will always be a need for a direct ‘grass roots’ tactical engagement between Reservists, their immediate chains of command, and their employers. However, this section argues that, given domestic contingencies, the ADF’s aspiration to use Reservists more requires a **multi-levelled** approach, engaging civilian employers of Reservists at the strategic level, to complement existing tactical-level engagement. Exploiting this opportunity offers the prospect of increasing Reservists’ availability and, conversely, may assist in minimising the undesirable opportunity costs to the wider economy of diverting Reservists from their civilian roles for military service.

Effective engagement with civilian employers may require a willingness to compromise on the ADF side. Specifically, this will strengthen the **three-way value proposition**:

- of the Reserve to the ADF;
- of the ADF to Reservists; and
- of releasing Reservists to employers and the broader economy.

The measure of effectiveness will be tested the next time the ADF needs to 'surge trust' with the civilian employers of Australia, and whether that store of civilian employer goodwill exists, as part of the national support base.



Lance Corporal Michael Coulson (left) uses an emergency services map to update colleagues on progress and potential tasks in the Yengo and Wollemi National Parks south of Singleton. The men are, from second left, Deputy Incident Controller Phil Bryant (National Parks and Wildlife Services), Corporal Jason Verdouw and Lieutenant Richard Bell. The soldiers are all serving with Joint Task Force 1110's 4th Composite Engineer Troop for Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-2020. Australian Army Reserve engineers from Joint Task Force 1110's 4th Composite Engineer Troop are assisting Hunter Valley emergency services and partners to clear roads and tracks to allow ongoing access for residents and emergency services. (Defence Images)

Towards a Future Flexible Force

The final question posed to interviewees was about their vision for the future Reserve, based both on what has been learned about the Reserve over the last several years, and also on the strategic outlook.

I hope this is not the ‘new normal’. But I think this is closer to the ‘new normal’ than the old one.

Brigadier Michael Garraway

We are likely to be the pointy end of a domestic op.

Brigadier Damian Cantwell

All interviewees agreed that the Reserve can anticipate increased service on future contingencies, both on- and offshore. Brigadier Cantwell described the demands as ‘significant and increasing’.¹²¹ Integrating several Reserve compromises, he differentiated between onshore (domestic contingencies) and offshore (expeditionary warfighting and HADR) in terms of potential Reserve contributions as follows:

[Reservists] bring our networks, our sense of commitment; we bring complementary and supplementary capacities that can help a JTF ... Offshore [the Reserve] brings challenges; onshore, we can more readily do force rotations.¹²²

Major General Laidlaw saw an opportunity to bring clear tasking and structuring coherence to both types of contingencies, as outlined in Table 2:

Table 2. Balancing Contingencies: the Army’s emerging Command and Control construct

	Full-time Force:	Part-time Force:
Force Provider:	1 st Division	2 nd Division
Force Employer:	Current: Deployable Joint Task Force headquarters	New: Joint Task Force headquarters
Main Effort:	Offshore Contingencies Expeditionary Warfighting	Domestic Contingencies
Supporting Effort:	Domestic Contingencies	Offshore Contingencies Expeditionary Warfighting

121 Cantwell, *ibid.*

122 Cantwell, *ibid.*

Brigadier Garraway considered the future vision question from the perspective of Reserve unit structure, resourcing and tasking. He looked to models of excellence in the existing part-time Force and highlighted the Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSUs) as an exemplar warranting consideration for emulation more widely across the Reserve formations.¹²³

I'd be tempted to re-role a lot of the [Reserve] battalions and make them more like RFSUs. The type of dispersed threats we face, having a whole heap of Reserve battalions trying to do what Regular battalions do, it's not a smart way to go about business ... We're not going to have the strategic warning time we thought we did ... A Hawkei-type vehicle ... may give us more utility and greater mobility than Reserve light infantry.¹²⁴

The RFSU model offers some attractive utility to domestic contingencies, including the capacity to dispatch multiple small teams of ADF members to dispersed locations for coordinated operations, with organic transport and self-sufficiency for an extended period. This is a versatile and responsive capability, suitable for both domestic HADR and domestic security tasks, and able to achieve coverage over Australia's expansive geography and terrain. It is also suitable for offshore deployment in lower-threat scenarios.

At formation level, Brigadier Cantwell saw opportunities for unified leadership to complement AFSIP's investments towards strengthening the Reserve brigades' capabilities in each jurisdiction. As OBA Commander JTF1111, Cantwell's Area of Operation included both South Australia and Tasmania. He usefully considered Tasmania as a microcosm of the regional start-state of several jurisdictions at OBA's commencement. Cantwell described the ADF's initial presence as 'all sorts of micro-capabilities' and saw his job as Commander to marshal some **cohesion**, in the form of command and control with a unified mission and sense of purpose, to these fragmented elements. Cantwell identified the opportunity for AFSIP to *generate a coherent force by design* in the regions, reflecting these coherency attributes. He went further by *explicitly connecting* this unified ADF command with the jurisdictional civilian political and agency leadership, welding the civil-military partnership together in each State as a specified task.

123 RFSUs include NORFORCE, the Pilbara Regiment and the 51st Far North Queensland Regiment. These units are uniquely structured into mounted 'patrols', tasked with wide-area intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) across remote and regional northern Australia. Importantly, these units feature strong indigenous membership, offering opportunity to protect Country. AFSIP is considering extending the RFSU model to southern Australia, including Tasmania.

124 Garraway, *op. cit.* The 'hawkei' is a military light four-wheel drive protected mobility vehicle.

Total Force

The future flexible force vision for the Reserve outlined above contains an important nuance. Colonel Welburn emphasised the evolving construct of the Reserve as the domestic force of choice, supported by a new, standing JTF headquarters raised from the 2nd Division, with the full-time service being the offshore force of choice, supported by the current Deployable JTF headquarters raised from the 1st Division. The nuance is in 'And/And' rather than 'Either/Or'. He commented that while simple distinctions (Reserve = domestic contingencies; Full-time = offshore contingencies) are tempting: 'I don't think the environment is that simple'.¹²⁵

By this, he meant that both forces need to be prepared – to a degree – to support both on- and offshore contingencies. Integrating all of the Reserve Compromises of Purpose, Availability and Training and Resourcing, Welburn saw that both within and beyond the first rotation, both forces may require supplementation from the other, contingent on the duration of the operation and the particular capability and skillset required. While the Reserve's natural advantages for domestic contingencies are 'plain and clear', both the requirements of an offshore contingency, and the specific capability value of the Reserve civil-military mindset and skillset for certain offshore contingencies may demand a Reserve contribution.

The particular sequence of OBA (an ADF surge challenge) and OCA (an ADF sustain challenge) demonstrates that an assumption that domestic contingencies are short-term and therefore staffable from a largely part-time Force which is able to surge for a short period, even if once true, are no longer sound. There is an ironic symmetry in a similar realisation for offshore contingencies. While military planners ideally aim to 'win the peace' in the first (full-time) rotation, an assumption that missions will be short-term has repeatedly been demonstrated as flawed in recent offshore experience in East Timor, Solomon Islands Iraq and Afghanistan.

Domestically, if the mission requires an enduring presence, and a follow-on force is required, full-time Force components can expect to become involved, while the same applies to the Reserve for offshore contingencies. In the words of Major General Campbell, for domestic contingencies: 'The [Second] Division can surge and do that first triage, that first assessment – and then let the Regulars fall in.'¹²⁶

Therefore, a simple alignment of on- and offshore contingencies with ADF respectively part- and full-time workforce availability is not workable.

¹²⁵ Welburn, *op. cit.*

¹²⁶ Campbell, *op. cit.*

Distinguishing the future flexible force and the unique capability value of the Reserve civil-military mindset and skillset, must therefore also underscore the overarching Total Force concept and the continued importance of integration between the full-and part-time components of the ADF. The Total Force concept must have primacy and be central, both in how the ADF views itself internally and the image and reputation it projects of itself externally. Brigadier Cantwell emphasised that members of the Australian Public (or indeed, any target population) do not distinguish 'full-time' from 'Reserve' soldiers, when they see ADF 'boots on the ground'. They just see the uniform and a force for reassurance. This reputation is valuable and must be preserved and enhanced by all those serving in uniform. For this reason, the ADF will 'stay as long as we are needed' in communities recovering from a domestic contingency. This may change the composition of the force from predominantly part-time to predominantly full-time over time, due to conditions on the ground. The real measure of effectiveness of the Total Force concept is when neither offshore adversaries nor friendly domestic stakeholders can tell the difference between part- and full-time ADF members. The surface the ADF presents externally must be seamless and presenting that surface externally starts with aligning Total Force thinking.

Importantly, interviewees uniformly reinforced, with a sense of urgency, the critical value of the Reserve to the Total Force as the Nation faces the future. If historical doubts existed on that point, they are now extinct. The contemporary and future value of the Reserve is not contested in any quarter. Assurance on this point allows the Reserve to move forward confidently, and appropriately contextualise its own unique value contribution within the Total Force. This can be done in the same manner that Corps (Army), Category (RAN) and Muster (RAAF) identities merge and nest within the broader combined arms and joint ADF identity.



Australian Army Corporal Brenton Rose works with Australian Federal Police officers to alert residents of Tharwa, ACT of the evacuation status. (Defence Images)

Perspectives from an International Friend and History

Reflection on fundamentals such as Purpose (*raison d'être*) and Future is, by definition, introspective. This section zooms out to contextualise the future flexible force vision with a perspective from an international friend, and another from history.

International Partnerships

During OBA, Australia and the ADF were humbled to receive many offers of assistance from our South West Pacific and wider international friends. Far beyond the gesture itself, Australia's international friends brought valued capabilities, knowledge and ethos. Military personnel from New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea deployed to Australia, and served **in partnership** alongside ADF allies in the OBA firegrounds. In all these cases, OBA assistance was offered in response to long regional memories of Australia's prior HADR assistance to natural disasters in their own nations. This further reinforces the value and importance of investment in relationships both domestically and internationally, and these can be turned into **partnerships** when forces team up to achieve a shared mission.

The 5 ER Task Group hosted forty sappers from Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), the Indonesian Armed Forces. Working with the Indonesians enhanced not only interoperability but also mutual respect and understanding. The Indonesians demonstrated strong experience and familiarity with HADR missions, explaining to their ADF hosts the TNI's regard for HADR as a principal role and task for foundation warfighting. This outlook reflected the frequency of natural disasters across the thirty-four provinces of the Indonesian archipelago, each with independent governance arrangements. The TNI impressed the ADF with their mindset, perceiving HADR and foundation warfighting as natural complements, without any sense of tension in their *raison d'être*. This positive outlook encouraged the Australian soldiers to think differently about their role and tasks as Reservists.

Senior Indonesian officers described the importance, in the Indonesian military mindset, of 'province of origin'. They explained how their careers were explicitly designed – from recruitment, to retention, to deliberate posting cycle planning – to ensure representation from and returned service to a TNI's member's province of origin. The strategic calculus in this deliberate method is devastatingly simple – through direct knowledge of, and long-term influence in each province, military operations there are more effective, for any contingency. The TNI High Command places a premium on the importance of balanced geographic representation across the wide range of provincial, ethnic and language groups comprising Indonesia.

This perspective from an international friend offers a valuable potential lesson for the ADF. In meeting Chief of Army's AIM AW tenet of *Army in the Community*, there is room for the ADF personnel agencies to take a more deliberate approach to maximising the latent potential of its part-time Force by also placing a premium on the importance of local knowledge and relationships.

This requires a long-term investment – *of time*. Relationships take years to develop. The ADF innately knows this. The value of one's officer cohort, with whom one progresses through various career stages, is widely appreciated within the full-time Force, and underpins joint relationships at the most senior leadership levels of the ADF. This paper encourages the ADF to expand this thinking beyond its own force, and apply it to the deliberate cultivation of long-term relationships with civil and emergency services, across all jurisdictions. Given the posting cycle of typical full-time members, the part-time Force offers advantages for the deliberate cultivation of the civil-military interface. A full-time posting cycle tends to result in full-time members physically re-locating themselves and family regularly, typically every two-three years. Posting locations are national and deployments can involve multiple extended periods internationally. This cycle presents limited through-life opportunity to cultivate professional working relationships with local authorities. In contrast, many part-time members have a less geographically fragmented career, with more opportunities to invest time in building local knowledge and relationships.

Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose) highlighted that the ADF's default outlook is **jurisdictionally agnostic**, cultivating instead a sense of *national* identity. Geographic agnosticism is reinforced in the full-time posting cycle described above. There is again a compromise to be struck here. Conceptualising *compromise* as a spectrum, if one extremity is 'national identity' and the other extremity is 'local/regional parochialism', there is a balanced point between them that can achieve the benefits and avoid the undesirable pitfalls of both.

Circling back to Chief of Army's five command themes of Preparedness, People, Partnership, Profession, and Potential, this paper can be summarised by offering a sixth 'P' – **Place** – to complement them. The presence of the Reserve across the nation provides the ADF with unique contextual knowledge of place, encompassing geography and civilian communities and organisations. Reflecting on the last four decades of the Australian Army's history, the APIN initiative understood 'likely threats' to the nation as literal and physical, emanating from the north. However, that does not leave the remainder of the country out of military calculus due to Reserve presence elsewhere. In the current era, the domestic contingencies of 2019–2021, combined with the strategic outlook, underscore that threats can be environmental, and can strike at the heart of Australia's population centres. With the full-time Force predominantly positioned in the north, the Reserve provides Army and the ADF a complementary 'Ubique' (everywhere) effect.

‘Securitisation’ of Domestic Contingencies

In December 1974, Australia suffered its worst natural disaster until the bushfires of 2019–2020. Cyclone Tracy wrought almost total, warlike destruction on Australia’s northern capital, Darwin. In response, the Australian Government dispatched Major General Alan Stretton to lead the response and recovery efforts.¹²⁷ Stretton did something which at the time was considered extraordinary. He was expected to establish a military task force. Instead, he organised a civilian task force from the deeply traumatised Darwin locals, appointing key civilian leaders to positions of responsibility. Stretton had assessed the situation and realised that the locals needed to lead Darwin’s response and recovery. He empowered the apparently helpless to help themselves.

During the recent domestic contingencies, there has been some isolated commentary around the Government’s ‘securitisation’ of domestic contingencies, given its use of the ADF in OBA and OCA. This paper therefore includes an important caveat. While the positive arguments for the use of the ADF in domestic contingencies are strong, they do not obviate the need to simultaneously advocate for resourcing civilian agencies with the capabilities they need to respond independently to future contingencies. In the words of Major General Campbell: ‘We need the fabric of those communities [to respond], we cannot substitute for that. We are there for that first bit and then let the economy and the government run through.’¹²⁸



(L-R) Australian Army Reservists from the 13th Brigade, Private Bodhi Rowe, Private Thomas Burfoot, Sapper Malcolm Stewart and Lieutenant (LT) Connor Brede, assist with the Australian Defence Force’s bushfire recovery support operation to the victims of the devastating Perth hills bushfire in the suburb of Gidgegannup, Western Australia. (Defence Images)

127 Stretton, A., *Soldier in a Storm*, Collins, Sydney 1978.

128 Campbell, *op. cit.*

Force of Choice versus Force of Convenience

The Build Back Better philosophy requires continued investment in building community and agency resiliency, especially given expectations of an increased frequency of domestic contingencies.¹²⁹ It is also acknowledged that the magnitude of a domestic contingency can exceed even a boosted capability threshold in agencies and communities, and that beyond a certain level, budget constraints require avoiding duplication of certain assets suitable for large-scale responses.¹³⁰ Two quotes summarise the range of views on this topic, both from former serving ADF members of star rank, now in local or jurisdictional government service roles. Commodore Vince Di Pietro (Retd) is now Coordinator of the Shoalhaven City Council *Recovery into Resilience* project. Commenting on the ADF's involvement in both the Black Summer Bushfires, and the COVID-19 Pandemic, which both directly impacted the Shoalhaven community, he offered:

Some say the ADF is there for one thing only – to fight a war. Adaptive pathways, however, may require the use of highly specialised and technical service people for different tasks in an emergency. With imagination, doing so can be made good training for a military context, such as practicing delegated command responsibility. That, above all else, is about futuristic scenarios and adaptive pathways.¹³¹

Contrast this with Brigadier Georgeina Whelan (Retd), now Commissioner, ACT Emergency Services Agency, who asks, regarding domestic contingencies:

Is the ADF necessary? Or convenient? It is absolutely right for people to question the involvement of the ADF ... Are we properly resourcing our State-based, non-military response options?¹³²

In Australia's adjustment to our apparent 'new normal' of domestic contingencies, there is a strategic compromise yet to be struck, between investment in civilian and military capabilities. Perhaps increased ADF involvement in domestic contingencies will be an interim step, as the nation works towards longer-term and larger-scale response solutions. From a longitudinal perspective, the topic of this paper – harnessing increased Reserve capability, from within the existing Reserve workforce – is ultimately an incremental response, limited by numbers. Should our 'new normal' in time require an order-of-magnitude larger response, Australia may need to consider more radical workforce and other capability solutions, which will not necessarily be supplied by the ADF.

129 Fitzsimmons, S., 'Resilience: preparing for and recovering from crisis and disaster', *Royal United Services Institute Journal* (NSW), Winter 2021, 72(2): pp. 14–18.

130 Binskin, M., Bennett, A., and McIntosh, A., *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements – Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2020.

131 Di Pietro, V., *Bushfire: The Recovery Phase, Path to Resilience and Future Readiness*, *Royal United Services Institute Journal* (NSW), Winter 2021, 72(2), p. 8.

132 Whelan, *op. cit.*

If the part-time component is the ADF's initial 'force of choice' for domestic contingencies, it is important that the nation avoid defaulting to it as a 'force of convenience' for domestic contingencies, for two critical reasons. Firstly, capability investment elsewhere in civilian response agencies may be more appropriate and, secondly, the opportunity cost to the wider economy of increasingly using Reservists must be factored into this equation of strategic compromise.



Commanding Officer 5th Engineer Regiment Task Group Lieutenant Colonel Renée Kidson (centre) updates Commander, Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020, Major General Justin “Jake” Ellwood, DSC (left) and Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Armed Forces) Lieutenant Colonel Teddi on the work being conducted by troops at the Zig Zag Railway, Lithgow (NSW). (Defence Images)

Conclusion

Nature and Character: Warfare and Workforce

The emerging challenges of this century are firing heated debate on the nature and character of warfare. While the nature of war is eternal and enduring, the character of war, indeed its very definition, is increasingly discussed by our polity, in public discourse and everyday parlance. At the time of writing (August 2021), state premiers are describing the domestic impact of COVID-19's Delta variant in the language of combat – we are in a 'war against COVID' – and an additional 500 ADF troops, including Reservists, are deploying alongside NSW Police in COVID-related compliance patrols. Regionally, emerging prospects of major power conflict are shortening within planning horizons. Globally, climate-change-inspired concerns for our environment and the increasing frequency and severity of weather-related natural disasters are also routinely discussed in military terms now.¹³³ For Australia's military planners, these are open-source, linguistic early indicators and warnings, of consequence rather than confection in our Operating Environment. As Australia navigates this threatening landscape, the need to harness the collective military power of our people, the material, moral and intellectual capital of our ADF total workforce, grows ever stronger.¹³⁴ The military tasks in our operating environment are evolving, and our workforce concepts need to evolve with them.¹³⁵

National strategists and the ADF are now challenged to examine the nature and character of workforce with the same earnest reflection as we do warfare. These reflections need to lead to capability decisions and outcomes. Should these not occur, the opportunity cost will be our experience of workforce as amongst our first limiting factors (LIMFACs) in the event of escalation of any of the above domestic, regional or global threats. *Accelerated Warfare* means the debates and ruminations on the traditional compromises which have characterised the Reserve are no longer abstract, purely political, peripheral to the full-time Force, or for discretionary military purposes. These debates are now about capability and scalability, and are advancing to contact, then to action. The debates are existential and are extending beyond the 2nd Division to the nation. The concept of the citizen soldier can no longer be considered in idle isolation, but rather is intrinsically linked to the role of that individual in sustaining a recognisably Australian way of life (not to mention way of war). If the language of mobilisation is confronting, it is not unwarranted.

133 Barrie, C., Blackburn, J., Greet, N., Durrant, C., Thomas, M. and Dunlop, I., *Missing in Action: Responding to Australia's Climate and Security Failure*, Australian Security Leaders Climate Group, Canberra, ACT, 2021.

134 *Australian Defence Force Philosophical Doctrine – ADF Leadership*, Command Series (ADF-P-0), Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, April 2021, p. 6.

135 Interview, Brigadier Damian Cantwell, 6 July 2021.

Decision superiority is already in the hands of those able to manoeuvre the military power of the ADF's Workforce with greater dexterity than the threats we collectively face, either environmental or adversarial. Within the ultimate constraint of the Australian population, and balancing the talents of our population between civilian economy and security, opportunities to enhance Reserve capability lie:

1. **Generically**, in the sophisticated reconciliation of traditional Reserve compromises, dissolving the boundaries in **purpose** between either onshore (domestic) or offshore (expeditionary warfighting, HADR) contingencies; between existing mobility barriers in civilian and military workforce **availability**; and between **training** conceptualisation, as either foundation warfighting or domestic contingency in focus. Increasingly, each of these three orthogonal dimensions are in fact part of the same continuum. Conceptually, we need to expand Figure 3, and position dual-purpose workforce and professional capability concepts in multi-dimensional, multi-domain space, rather than a two-dimensional box grid of mutual exclusivity. As seductively simplistic as the 'Either/Or' world view has been historically as our full-time/part-time workforce intellectual architecture, it is no longer fit for the ADF's capability purposes. The future Total Workforce concept is 'And/And'.
2. **Specifically**, in harvesting additional capability – in both niches and numbers – in the margins of the Total Workforce, by exploiting latent availability and skills that become accessible with more **flexible** ADF personnel systems.

Reserve Compromises Revisited

Recapitulating the three Reserve compromises considered in this paper, opportunities to enhance the capability value of the Reserve lie in relaxing some currently rigid constraints and clarifying others.

Reserve Compromise 1 (Purpose) has historically been variously ambiguous, ambivalent or unrealistic. This paper shows how recent domestic contingencies allow clarity of purpose in the part-time Force to be defined, leveraging the Reserve's natural advantages of geography, relationships and expertise. While a **force of choice** for domestic contingencies, the Reserve is not exclusively this and needs to be prepared, to a degree, to also support offshore contingencies. In summarising this purpose, Brigadier Sweeney shows how the Reserve's purpose nests within the ADF's broader purpose: 'our job is to protect the nation. This [domestic contingency] is just another way we do it'.¹³⁶

136 Sweeney, *op. cit.*

Reserve Compromise 2 (Availability) has historically been assumed as low and limited, and leveraged through rigid personnel processes for transition to full-time service under fixed terms and conditions for extended periods. An ADF willingness to embrace more flexibility can, paradoxically, yield increased availability. The **future flexible force** envisions seamless transitions between part- and full-time service, for shorter, opportunistic periods where appropriate. For operations, a more flexible force flow, based on task-organisation, will allow more Reservists to contribute more capability, more often.

Reserve Compromise 3 (Training and Resourcing) has historically been polarised as training either for warfighting or other purposes, and resourcing has consistently been linked to conceptions of lower part-time readiness and training levels which do not warrant higher resourcing priority.

On resourcing, the domestic contingency campaign of 2019–2021 has ‘flipped [this] on its head’, demonstrating the requirements ‘to access equipment at **short notice** that enables you to respond, appropriately’ and ‘assure capacity to respond across the nation’.¹³⁷ Resourcing must consider scenarios which require concurrent responses and be sufficient to enable local response within each jurisdiction, without assuming recourse to national-cross levelling for basic items.

On training, OBA and OCA demonstrated both the necessity and versatility of existing foundation warfighting training, which provides all ADF members with the generic skills to respond and perform in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous operating environments, including combat and other emergency situations. However, the Reserve capability value-add that emerged during recent domestic contingencies is a **civil-military mindset and skillset**, where Reservists organically blend foundation warfighting with their natural advantages of geography, relationships and civilian expertise. This capability has particular value for domestic contingencies, and warrants re-valuation.

Resolving Paradoxes

Framing how the Reserve relates to domestic contingencies presents multiple paradoxes, and the 2019–2021 campaign of domestic contingencies was a rollercoaster ride through them. The eve of OBA’s Call Out was characterised by questions around ‘Can the Reserve actually mobilise, and lead this?’ As OBA progressed and graded into OCA, the question evolved to become: ‘How well did the Reserve perform during these domestic operations?’ As OCA became protracted, the questions became: ‘Great! So does this mean the Reserve should concentrate on domestic contingencies?’ and the training implication that follows: ‘Do Reservists need to train as warfighters?’ And finally: ‘So should the Reserve be considered for expeditionary warfighting?’

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Understanding the nature and character of the ADF's holistic operating environment, including both onshore and offshore contingencies, as well as the nature and character of the ADF's Total Workforce, enables these paradoxes to be reconciled, and the outcome is subtle.

Can the Reserve mobilise and lead domestic operations? Yes. Reservists demonstrated an ability to apply their foundation warfighting and leadership training to domestic contingencies during OBA and OCA, and overall effectiveness was well-enabled by the full-time Force. Existing training plus appropriate enablement: OBA + OCA = QED.¹³⁸

How well did the Reserve perform during these domestic operations? Well. The part-time Force leveraged some natural advantages of geography, relationships and expertise; and embodied these in a civil-military mindset and skillset which proved very effective.

Should the Reserve concentrate on domestic contingencies? Here the compromise is subtle. Yes, to a degree, but definitely not to the extent of excluding warfighting (including offshore). Stereotyping the Reserve as exclusively a domestic contingency 'force of choice' may compromise ADF capability for higher-spectrum military operations and offshore contingencies, which may also require Reserve contributions. Higher frequency and longer duration of Reserve service on domestic contingencies also poses an opportunity cost for the wider economy. This is one supporting argument for increased capability investment in civilian response agencies, to avoid a potential 'force of convenience' pitfall for domestic contingencies.

Do Reservists need to train as warfighters? Here we encounter the biggest paradox. Yes. It is in fact foundation warfighting skills that underpin the Reserve's demonstrated capabilities in domestic contingencies. To remove foundation warfighting would be to kill the proverbial geese that lay the ADF's golden capability eggs for domestic contingencies. In an ironic duality, not only is foundation warfighting critical for effective domestic contingency response; but domestic contingency response directly benefits warfighting and peace-winning as a training mechanism, most especially in professional mastery of the human landscape of civil-military partnership.

Should the Reserve be considered for expeditionary warfighting? Yes: for compelling capability reasons. Removing this target would lessen ADF capability for expeditionary warfighting (and also for domestic contingencies). The key logic is the numbers required to sustain operations beyond the first rotation, whether on- or offshore. In short, both part- and full-time Forces need to be prepared for both on- and offshore contingencies. The nuance is in the leading/supporting mapping, as follows: onshore: part-/full-time; offshore: full-/part-time.

The final question of this evolutionary sequence is now presented as a set of opportunities: *So how can the ADF better-prepare the part-time Force for future contingencies?*

138 Latin: *Quod Erat Demonstrandum*, meaning 'thus it has been demonstrated'.



Australian Army Reservists from the 5th Engineer Regiment assist in the clean-up efforts in Wingham during Operation NSW Flood Assist. (Defence Images)

Opportunities

Standing perennial is **foundation warfighting**. For all ADF members, this is the fundamental capability that allows every part of the Force to respond and perform effectively in adverse conditions. For specifically domestic contingencies, which involve civil-military interfaces with jurisdictional agencies and local communities, the part-time Force offers an add-on to foundation warfighting – the Reserve’s **civil-military mindset and skillset**. This extends the ADF’s capability edge, *allowing a more effective response earlier* in the aftermath of a domestic contingency. Australia’s domestic contingency campaign of 2019–2021 catalysed the emergence of this civil-military mindset and skillset, organically. The opportunity for the ADF is to consolidate and embed this capability, through deliberate incorporation into the Reserve training model, and ADF personnel systems.

It is recommended the ADF re-value diverse dual-use civil-military mindsets and skillsets across the Total Force. To do this, perhaps the only compromise needed intellectually is the concession that our current thought processes around some of these concepts is limiting us. The ADF’s current personnel and training systems are very effective at systematising difficult-to-replicate conditions, such as combat simulation in training environments. The ADF knows inherently that it does not need to rely on (un)happy accidents (e.g. the historical frequency of natural disasters in a given jurisdiction) to field forces well-trained to deliver the desired effect on time at the point of need. These effects can be delivered by design, not chance. The only modification required in the ADF’s current design thinking is to expand the conception of ‘which skills are relevant in the operating environment’ from an exclusively military focus to include a wider, civil–military focus also.

Key elements of this thinking are already present in the ADF mind, but are currently constrained in application. For example, the Total Workforce System, at least in theory, is well-suited to the contemporary 'gig economy' thinking and practice of young professionals embarking upon their careers. As an alternative to unrealistically positioning the ADF as a permanent 'employer of choice', consider instead a 'life-long service' ethos with the prospect of seamless two-way mobility transitions between full- and part-time service. This workforce concept recognises the young professional's natural and laudable instincts to seize career opportunities whether civilian or military and yet retain military connection. Market research, and then pilot studies can test the hypothesis that this approach is more attractive and retentive for potential recruits and offers even greater civilian skills acquisition and harvesting opportunities for the ADF also.

The virtuous circle on this workforce concept can be closed by increasing the attractiveness of re-entry to service from civilian employment, strengthening not just the value proposition of the Reserve to the ADF, but of the ADF to Reservists. This goes most obviously to equipping, resourcing and training. This paper postulates that the better equipped and resourced the part-time Force is, and the higher the quality of the training offering – combined with realistic opportunities for operational deployments domestically and elsewhere, the greater the retentive effect. The ADF is challenged to test this hypothesis!

Reserve Training Model

This paper argues that consolidating and embedding domestic contingencies training into the current Reserve training models does not need to be onerous in terms of additional training time, 'crowd out' an already congested training curriculum, or detract from continued focus on foundation warfighting as the ADF's first-order training objective for all members.

For officers, small tweaks to enhance experiential exposure to civilian agencies, for example through regular annual interagency desktop planning exercises, will (a) prepare officers for domestic contingencies by contextualising their existing C2 and planning training, and (b) systematically embed key partnerships with civilian agencies. For soldiers, training *sequencing* (i.e. a progressive training design) has potential to unlock more capability for domestic contingencies while enlisted members progress through their foundation warfighting continuum. Investing more training time for domestic contingencies beyond this is not warranted, as responses are led by civilian agencies and ADF task requests may be niche and difficult to plan for, in detail, in advance of a given contingency. Rather than ADF system-imposed compromises in the training offered to part-time members, a progressive training design allows members to choose their own compromise, based on their individual circumstances and aspirations. At whole-of-(part-time)-Force level, a progressive training design can harvest more capability from a given Reservist pool, by integrating more trained individuals across their bell curve of self-selected availability, longevity and motivation.

ADF Personnel Systems

This paper identified three opportunities:

- (1) Workforce Intelligence – re-valuing the complete civil-military mindset and skillset of all ADF members, by developing a searchable database of member skills and networks. Workforce intelligence can power development of new workforce concepts required for the ADF to make smart, evidence-based recruitment and retention investments that interface well with the external domestic economy. Understanding the civilian career profiles and currency of part-time ADF members can unlock much currently latent workforce capability.
- (2) Task-Organisation – achieving impact, scale and focus through an enhanced ability to task-organise in either numbers or niches, based both on task requirements and workforce intelligence.
- (3) Strategic partnership with civilian employers of Reservists – if invested in over time, can enable trust and goodwill to be surged the next time a Reserve Mobilisation is undertaken; increase Reservist availability (and hence ADF capacity) in the meantime; and minimise the opportunity costs to the wider economy of diverting Reservists from their civilian roles in specific instances. This can be achieved through much more sophisticated and strategic engagement with the employers of the nation, no longer limited to the large enterprises which historically employed large numbers of Reservists, but reaching also to medium, small, and indeed self-employed enterprises and employers.



Troopers from the 1st Armoured Regiment dismount their ASLAVs (Australian Light Armoured Vehicles) after arriving at the Kangaroo Island Airport during OP Bushfire Assist. (Defence Images)

Strategic Compromises Remain

At the national strategic level, there remain whole-of-Force and whole-of-nation mobilisation compromises in weighing both the capability value of the Reserve and the purposes to which it will be put. At whole-of-Force level, the ADF must balance preparedness and readiness for offshore contingencies, alongside the Government's growing expectations of ADF contributions to domestic contingencies.

At whole-of-nation level, the Government must balance Reservist service on ADF operations alongside the civilian contributions of those same Reservists to the broader national economy and their local communities – in short, the opportunity cost to the economy of using Reservists more. To reconcile both national strategic compromises, continued Government investment in the following is important, commensurate with the domestic contingency outlook:

- building the independent capabilities of civilian response agencies, and
- enhancing Community resiliency.

Army in Motion Accelerated Warfare is Army's Response to Defence Strategy. In terms of the part-time Force's potential contribution to this response, our Strategic Future is a partnered one and the force better-able to forge multi-levelled civil-military interfaces will win. The part-time ADF is a critical component of these future victories in peace and in war.

Returning finally to language, the term Reserve and its connotations are no longer fit for purpose. However, its replacement with a principle of war warrants consideration: **flexible force**. Rather than exclusively favouring the prepared mind, Fortune now favours the future flexible force.

The ADF is blessed with smart thinkers, including within the ADF personnel agencies. This baton of ideas is now passed to these worthy minds to take this agenda forward and realise the full capability potential of the part-time ADF.

Epilogue: If we extend choice, how much will the Reserve choose?

A significant unknown for ADF workforce planning and scalability is the extent of latent Reserve availability.

Over 2020–2021, the ADF has serviced repeated requests from states and territories for assistance under OCA, through the Joint Task Groups (JTGs) established in each jurisdiction. The protracted nature of OCA has involved multiple Call For requests to the Reserve brigades. Occurring immediately following OBA, OCA has especially stretched the availability of many ‘traditional’ Reservists (**Box 2**). OCA has also exposed the tension in the design of Reserve brigade training programs, which assumes that Reservists can be available for several block periods in a given year to undertake warfighting field training exercise(s). With a proportion of Reservists using most of their availability (for example their leave from civilian employment) to service repeated domestic contingency Call Fors over the last two years, it has been challenging to find opportunities to plan and conduct routine field training exercises for warfighting. The resumption of routine warfighting training has also been challenged by extended COVID-19 lockdowns in several jurisdictions.

So how much additional Reservist availability is out there?

The field of economics has a technical term – *elasticity*. Elasticity relates to how sensitive one variable is to another variable. Applied to the Reserve, how sensitive is Reservist availability to shifts in other variables? The future flexible force concept assumes that the ADF can achieve greater scalability through increased Reserve availability if greater flexibility is extended.

Precursive to empirical evidence, such as from workforce intelligence and market testing, and workforce modelling and projections, it is possible to explore this hypothesis with a thought experiment. If more flexible service options were available, how much more Reservist availability would be forthcoming?

Current Reserve conditions of service mean that, beyond the minimum mandatory period of 20 days per year for effective service, Reservists essentially self-select their availability. From an individual Reservist's perspective, increasing one's availability to the ADF beyond this minimum involves voluntarily allocating additional *discretionary* time from other activities. How much more of this discretionary time may be offered depends on the type of Reservist (Box 2) and also on the type of work or task the ADF is requesting of them. Given this additional Reservist availability is both voluntary and discretionary, the interest of the Reservist in the actual task being offered by the ADF is a significant factor. If an individual Reservist is interested in the specific work offered by the ADF, they are more likely to offer increased availability.

Extending the thought experiment further, if Reservists are offered both domestic contingencies and routine warfighting training, what choices in offering discretionary additional availability will they make, and how can the ADF influence those choices?

Would extending choice result in the emergence of different types of Reservists, such as those preferring warfighting training and those preferring domestic contingencies, for example? What are the capability and scalability consequences of those choices, noting that mandatory service options are currently limited?

Reserve Compromise 3 (Training and Resourcing) highlighted that the motivations of individual Reservists are often assumed or imputed. However, the accuracy of these remains largely untested. Behavioural economics indicates motivations can be tested through both direct observation of choices made and market-testing. While the 2020–2021 period represents one empirical experiment, for longer term workforce planning and scalability, the ADF may consider developing a stronger evidence base through more systematic means, including survey, modelling and projections. This will enable an initial estimate of the elasticity of Reserve availability and provide insight as to how it can be maximised.



Australian Army Reservists from the 2/17th Royal New South Wales Regiment, disembark an Australian Army MRH-90 Taipan at Taree Airport, New South Wales. (Defence Images)

Annex A: Called to Serve the Nation for Domestic Contingencies

ADF Domestic Support Provisions

Under the Defence Act 1903, there are two forms in which the ADF can render domestic support:

1. DACC: Defence Assistance to the Civil Community, and
2. DFACA: Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority.

Both are intended to be short term in nature and may or may not separately trigger a Joint Operations Command (JOC)-designated Operation. The main difference is posture and use of force. DACC is aimed at providing immediate assistance to communities in disaster scenarios where lives and property are either at risk or recovering. Under a DACC provision, ADF members deploy unarmed and have few powers of arrest etc. over civilians. DFACA may involve carriage of weapons and use of force on Australians in conjunction with civilian police. Civil unrest is a typical scenario envisaged under a DFACA provision, and the maintenance of law and order is the objective. A DFACA provision has not yet been invoked in Australia's history.

Calling the ADF

In the *Defence Act 1903*, **Call Out** is used in two senses, both requiring the Governor-General's approval:

1. Part IIIAAA, Division 2, refers to Call Out of the ADF (without distinction between full-time and Reserve service) in the event of domestic violence (i.e., a DFACA contingency).
2. Part III, Division 3, Section 28 refers to Call Out specifically of the Reserve component of the ADF, compelling Reservists to render full-time service. Section 28 lists the allowable circumstances for such a call out order:

A call out order may only be made in circumstances (whether within or outside Australia) involving one or more of the following:

- a. war or warlike operations,
- b. a time of defence emergency,
- c. defence preparation,
- d. peacekeeping or peace enforcement,

- e. assistance to Commonwealth, State, Territory or foreign government authorities and agencies in matters involving Australia's national security or affecting Australian defence interests,
- f. support to community activities of national or international significance, or
- g. civil aid, humanitarian assistance, medical or civil emergency or disaster relief.

OBA was the first time in Australia's history that the s.28 Call Out of the Reserve provision has been used at a generalised scale, in this instance under s.28 (g) for a DACC contingency and request from the States. While use of Call Out undeniably sends a strong political message, the main practical reason for its use is when a large scale presence of specifically ADF members is required domestically. In workforce terms, Call Out achieves scale rapidly. Call Out also triggers the *Defence Reserve Service Protection (DRSP) Act 2001*, which compels civilian employers of Reservists to both release their members to render ADF service and retain their positions for when they return.

In contrast to Call Out's compulsion, **Call For** is the instrument more typically used to harness Reservists for domestic contingencies. Call For is voluntary; it generally does not trigger the DRSP Act, and Reservists are responsible for negotiating their availability with their employers if and as applicable.

While Call Out provides a stronger assurance of workforce scale, Call For does not offer certainty on how many Reservists with discretionary time may choose to serve, or for how long. In the long history of Reserve service following natural disasters, Call For has been traditionally used and sufficient. However, these previous instances have generally been of short duration, and within the elasticity of the 'traditional' Reservist's willingness/availability period to serve, noting their employment and other civilian commitments.

Call Up, an informal term without legal definition, may be colloquially used to refer imprecisely to either Call For or Call Out.

Annex B: Australian Army History Unit Oral History transcripts from Operation Bushfire Assist 2019–2020.

Serial:	Interviewee name:	Interview date:	Interview location:	Interviewer:
1	Major General Kathryn Campbell	17 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Luke Carroll
2	Brigadier Neil Sweeney	16 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Luke Carroll Captain Peter Daniell
3	Warrant Officer Class 1 Darren Murch	21 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
4	Warrant Officer Class 1 Nadia McCulloch	22 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
5	Major Paul Summers	17 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Luke Carroll
6	Major Matthew Fitzgerald	21 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
7	Major David Czerkies	21 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
8	Major Mike Smith	21 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
9	Major Shane Conserdyne	22 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
10	Ms Di Lowe	21 January 2020	Second Division Headquarters, Randwick, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
11	Major David Faulks	26 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
12	Major James Kirkham	27 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang

Scaling the Force
Reserve Mobilisation for Domestic Contingencies

Serial:	Interviewee name:	Interview date:	Interview location:	Interviewer:
13	Lieutenant Gabrielle Hendry	29 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
14	Warrant Officer Class 1 Nathan Carpenter	27 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
15	Warrant Officer Class 2 Ashley Browne	30 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
16	Lieutenant Sally Twelvetree	29 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
17	Sergeant Karen Laban	27 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
18	Private Aaron Clarke	29 January 2020	Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales	Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ang
19	Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Coates	18 February 2020	Orbost, Victoria	Captain Peter Daniell
20	Chaplain John Ruhle	18 February 2020	Orbost, Victoria	Captain Peter Daniell
21	Warrant Officer Class 1 Benjamin King	18 February 2020	Orbost, Victoria	Major Kim Willcox
22	Warrant Officer Laki Liloma	17 February 2020	Orbost, Victoria	Major Kim Willcox
23	Major Benjamin Jankalns	14 February 2020	Omeo, Victoria	Major Kim Willcox
24	Private Michael Currie	14 February 2020	Omeo, Victoria	Captain Peter Daniell
25	Lieutenant Colonel Renée Kidson	26 January 2020	Bega, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
26	Major Samuel Baumgarten	27 January 2020	Bega, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
27	Captain Luke Griffiths	27 January 2020	Bega, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
28	Lieutenant Mark Hibbard	26 January 2020	Bega, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell
29	Corporal Christie Connell	26 January 2020	Bega, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell Ms Blythe Guilfoyle
30	Corporal Joseph Zivkovic	27 January 2020	Pambula, New South Wales	Captain Peter Daniell Ms Blythe Guilfoyle

Annex C: ADF Preparedness/Readiness Doctrine: Force Employment Method

This Annex firstly reviews the ADF's current Preparedness/Readiness doctrine and secondly, discusses how OBA's domestic contingency reversed the application of some of this doctrine. Together, this analysis makes the case for a doctrine expansion to exploit opportunities to enhance Reserve capability contributions to the ADF.

ADF Preparedness/Readiness Doctrine

Defence mobilisation involves bringing the joint force in being to OLOC and sustaining it indefinitely. Transition ... occurs when the sustainment of an operation, or the prosecution of a new one, requires a significant expansion of Defence or the call out of significant Reserve forces.¹³⁹

The ADF's Preparedness/Readiness doctrine is codified in ADDP 00.2 Preparedness and Mobilisation (2013) and makes two important initial assumptions. This doctrine firstly assumes that Reservists present with an initially lower level of military training, as formalised in the Training Level Standard (TLS). However, given sufficient lead time, training augmentation can bring less-prepared forces to a higher TLS and achieve Operational Level of Capability (OLOC). Linked to this TLS concept is Notice to Move (NTM). Under the CPD (CDF Preparedness Directive), each unit in the Army's Order of Battle (ORBAT) is assigned an NTM. A part-time Regiment may be, for example, on a 365-day NTM. This means the Army assesses that the time required to bring that Regiment from its part-time TLS to a full-time equivalent, deployable standard is 12 months.

This delicate compromise in **preparedness** (the initial training standard – a measure of potential future readiness of the Force-in-Being) and **readiness** (the deployable standard – a measure of current readiness) represents a commander's acceptance of risk, with this gap able to be closed with time and additional resources.

The second assumption inherent in this doctrine is the concept of strategic warning time. To unpack this, continuous scanning of the operating environment and strategic context allows identification of early indicators and warnings that may require forces to be brought to higher levels of Readiness. In theory, this cues the allocation of additional resources to lower-TLS forces. Should a commander sense that developments in an operating

139 Australian Defence Doctrine Publication (ADDP), 00.2 Executive Series, *Preparedness and Mobilisation*, Commonwealth of Australia: Defence Publishing Service, 2013, para 5.1(c), pp. 5-2.

environment are escalating and deployment probabilities are increasing, that commander can, in theory, provide early warning to their force by reducing the Readiness Notice (RN) from, for example, three months to 28 days. Within an operating environment of conveniently steady deterioration in conditions, a series of RN reductions can allow for the orderly preparation of forces in the background, as a contingency. ADDP 00.2 encapsulates this original 'expansion base' concept of the Reserve.

The ADF's Preparedness/Readiness doctrine in turn shapes the employment of deployed forces, especially their sequencing and force flow. The doctrine assumes a scenario of combat operations and that full-time Forces will be first to surge and deploy, based both on their higher training Readiness and 'Unrestricted Service' Availability, if required. However, should operations protract beyond one rotation, follow-on forces will be required, and Reserve elements may prepare to sustain operations once the initial surge has achieved stability.



Staff Sargent Ivan Solomano explains the capabilities of the mobile Weapons Training Simulation System to Major General David Thomae AM, Commander of the 2nd Division during a visit to the Headquarters of the 8th/7th Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment Ranger Barracks Ballarat, Victoria. (Defence Images)

OBA's Doctrine Reversal

The logic of the ADF's current doctrine makes sense theoretically and when considering conventional combat forces. However, examined in the context of 2019–2021's domestic contingencies, it is clear this doctrine warrants expansion. The 2019–2021 domestic operations reversed this doctrine's assumptions and method of force employment. In keeping with this reversal, these are addressed below in reverse order.

1. **Method of employment.** The OBA Call Out, in both its scale and time-limited nature, meant that Reservists were not a follow-on sustainment force, given time to prepare. OBA required an instantaneous response and the fastest means to achieve a concurrent surge across several Areas of Operation (AOs) was to deploy local forces – the Reserve. The 28-day Call Out period was designed to achieve this initial surge.¹⁴⁰ However, as the operation became protracted, follow-on forces were required for both reinforcement and rotation. Here the art and science of **Force Flow Design** tested the various headquarters responsible for filling the Operational Staffing Directives (OSD) with a blend of full-time and part-time elements from all three services, based primarily on availability rather than readiness.

OCA reinforced this method of deployment, as jurisdictional border closures challenged the ADF's assumption of national cross-levelling of personnel and equipment.

OCA once again demonstrated the utility of geographically dispersed forces, local to the main population centres. The 2nd Division formations were again jurisdictionally activated, this time on a Call For basis, with part-time Reservists as the first ADF responders. However, as OCA became even more protracted than OBA, Reservists needing to return to full-time employment had to be replaced with an increasing proportion of full-time members. In contrast to current doctrine, the Reserve led the initial surge in both operations, with the full-time Force following on to sustain.

2. **The Strategic Warning Time assumption.** As part of the 2nd Division's standard annual preparation for the High-Risk Weather Season (HRWS) in late 2019, formations had each certified and placed on reduced RN a company-strength group, known as the Emergency Support Force (ESF). However, many Reservists Called Out by the Governor-General on 4 January 2020 did not formally receive any RN reductions. This was not because formation commanders across the country failed to recognise the deteriorating bushfire conditions, but rather that a Call Out of OBA's scale and concurrency, and hence the size of the response force, had not previously

140 Interview, Colonel Michael Scott, 24 June 2021.

been seriously contemplated by military planners.¹⁴¹ Given the nature of domestic contingencies is not exclusively military, assumptions of ADF-controlled decision making in such civil-military situations are unrealistic.

However, while limited formal warnings of impending RN reductions were received by nominated ESF members, nonetheless Reservists commonly informally prepared themselves individually over that summer. Expanding this observation, several interviewees noted two historical patterns of self-initiated, pre-emptive Reservist response to disasters:

- Currently serving Reservists arrived in advance of any orders at their local barracks to prepare for an unfolding local emergency;¹⁴² and
- Inactive Reservists suddenly stepped forward in uniform to render assistance.¹⁴³

While the ADF was the happy beneficiary of these Reservists' goodwill during OBA and OCA, there is an opportunity to systematise and embed this for more explicit capability benefit.

Furthermore, the 2020 *Defence Strategic Update* exhorts readers to appreciate that Strategic Warning times can no longer be assumed. With less time to react, this places emphasis on the 'Come as you are' capability offering. How this applies to domestic contingencies and to the part-time Force warrants further thinking.

3. The graduated TLS assumption of the ADF Preparedness/Readiness doctrine.

This assumption was also reversed in 2019–2021's domestic contingencies. Given the unique nature of these operations, Reservists were often presenting with higher levels of training than their full-time counterparts specifically in their non-military skill-sets, including experience in navigating the challenging human terrain of the domestic operating environment. The concept of TLS needs to be expanded beyond strictly codified military competencies to encompass complementary civil-military skillsets of value during domestic contingencies.

141 *Ibid.* Scott adds that no disaster of this magnitude had been previously experienced in modern Australia; and no Australia authorities (civil or military) had foreseen such a demand for ADF support. This prompts interesting reflections on 'Strategic Imagination' in Australia.

142 Interview, Brigadier Neil Sweeney, 22 June 2021.

143 Interview, Major General Douglas Laidlaw, 06 July 2021.

Doctrine Expansion Opportunity

This analysis of the ADF Preparedness/Readiness doctrine suggests it warrants expansion to explicitly incorporate domestic contingencies and exploit opportunities for enhanced capability contributions from the Reserve in these contingencies. This Annex challenges the ADF's current assumption that Reservists present with an initially lower TLS relative to full-time peers, and submits that a doctrine expansion for domestic contingencies may commence with a default assumption that Reservists present with an initially higher TLS. This approach would round out ADDP 00.2 and offer more balance and symmetry across the Total ADF Workforce.



Australian Army soldiers from Joint Task Group 629.6 remove debris from St Mary's Primary School, Northampton in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Seroja. (Defence Images)

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Trooper Gifford, Trooper Ng, Private Jaudzemis and Trooper Turna assisting a Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning employee with a wounded koala, ready for evacuation to the mobile RSPCA unit in Bairnsdale. (Defence Images)

Australian Army History Unit

Army has a rich history of managing change and preparing for war. Colonel Eustace Keogh, founder of the Australian Army Journal and noted soldier-scholar, advised us to “think of military history as the study of military experience” and urged us to use this experience to advance our ideas and thinking.

Lieutenant General Richard M. Burr, AO, DSC, MVO Chief of Army

The Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) is a unique Army unit. Since its establishment in 1998, AAHU has provided the Chief of Army, Army Commanders at all levels and Heads of Corps with advice and support on history and heritage. AAHU also coordinates with its RAN and RAAF counterparts to capture an enduring record of the ADF's history, both on operations and in barracks.

The history and heritage of the Army commands strong public interest, including from the more than two million Australians who have served as soldiers. AAHU manages the Army Museums Network, which provides direct access to the Army's history and heritage collections for Army and Defence personnel, veterans and their families, as well as to the broader community. The Network's success is underpinned by volunteers and supported by museum foundations and corps, unit and other veterans' associations. AAHU also engages with the Australian War Memorial and other museums to ensure that the Army's story is available to all Australians.

AAHU works closely with leading researchers and experienced professionals to encourage and promote rigorous research into the history of the Australian Army. In this way, AAHU supports the professional military education of soldiers by ensuring their connection to the Army's long experience of peace and war.

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Australian Army History Unit

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