



Australian Government

Department of Defence

2008 Defence Attitude Survey

Summary of Results



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The *Defence Attitude Survey* allows our military and civilian personnel to comment candidly on a range of employment-related topics that are of great interest to us as senior leaders and which may also impact on Defence's reputation as one of Australia's leading employers.

The 2008 survey results are a snapshot of the relationship that our people have with the Australian Defence Force (as military members) and the Department of Defence (as Australian Public Service employees). The survey provides valuable feedback from our personnel, helping us to develop effective and targeted policies and programs that support our people and enhance Defence's standing in the employment marketplace.

Data from past surveys has been used in the development of a number of the ADF retention and recruitment initiatives announced by the Government as part of the 2008-09 Budget and the Defence White Paper. Previous survey findings have also helped in the development of other programs such as childcare, spouse and partner employment, remuneration arrangements and improvements to career management.

At the time of the 2008 survey, major retention initiatives for Australian Defence Force personnel were in their early stages and the benefit of these programs may take some time to be reflected in the survey results.

A major long-term human resources reform strategy is underway to improve Defence's capacity to attract, develop, engage, retain and transition its people. This strategic reform is expected to create a more supportive workplace and career environment. Future survey findings will help us to evaluate the effectiveness of this reform and assist us in better targeting the allocation of streamlining resources.

The *2008 Defence Attitude Survey Summary of Results* highlights the survey findings and includes a brief commentary on comparative trends. Some of the results show that there is still work to be done to try to meet the needs and expectations of the Defence workforce, while we are encouraged that other results show that recent initiatives and programs are having a positive effect in the workplace.

Our appreciation is extended to those who took the time to complete the 2008 survey and share their views and opinions. Survey contributions continue to be an important point of reference in the fields of Defence's workforce planning, human resources and personnel policy. The 2008 survey both supports and reinforces our commitment to the welfare of our people and values-based leadership at all levels.



NICK WARNER
Secretary

June 2009



ANGUS HOUSTON
Air Chief Marshal
Chief of the Defence Force

June 2009

The *Defence Attitude Survey* (DAS) provides an indicative picture of the Department of Defence's organisational climate by capturing personnel opinions and attitudes about a number of employment related topics. The voluntary survey was first administered Defence-wide in 1999 and has been re-administered annually since 2001.

The 2008 DAS was distributed between November 2008 and January 2009 to a 30 percent random, stratified sample of all permanent Australian Defence Force (ADF) and Australian Public Service (Civilian) personnel employed within Defence. Response rates from the sample surveyed were as follows: Navy: 39.0 percent; Army: 30.0 percent; Air Force: 50.2 percent; and Defence Civilians: 63.9 percent. The 2008 DAS results reflect responses from 8,001 survey participants.

Defence now has a wealth of information and trend data about its organisational climate. We will build on this by continuing to review the DAS to optimise the measurement of issues critical to contemporary workplace policy and program development.

To supplement the personnel-related information sourced from the DAS, Defence also draws data from other surveys such as the *Defence Census*, which is conducted every four years, the *ADF Exit Survey* and the *Longitudinal ADF Study Evaluating Retention*. In combination with other sources of organisational data, these surveys help us to determine whether our personnel policies and programs reasonably reflect the requirements of our people.

The DAS *Summary of Results* is published to present the key findings from more than 100 attitudinal survey items. This Summary groups the results into the following major themes:

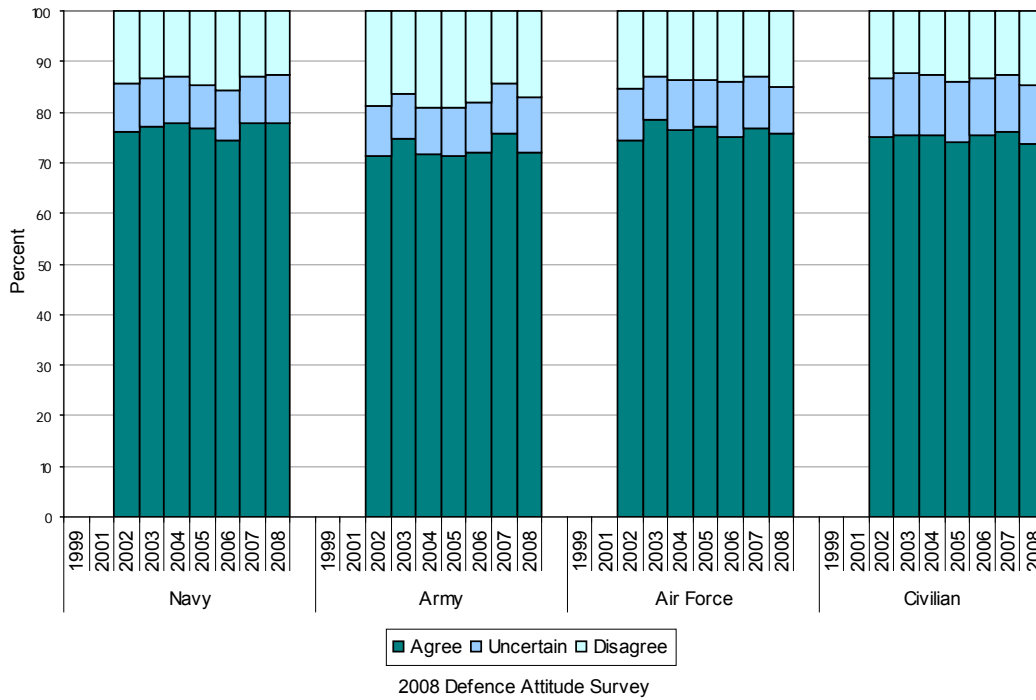
- Leadership
- Organisational Commitment
- Personal/Family Matters
- Career Management
- Employment Package
- Working Life
- Wellbeing

Privacy

The DAS is run under the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988. Data collected from the survey is strictly 'in-confidence' and is held by Defence's Directorate of Strategic Personnel Policy Research, which is staffed by professionally qualified research officers. Only aggregated results are reported. Under no circumstances is individual data provided that would make it possible to identify a respondent.

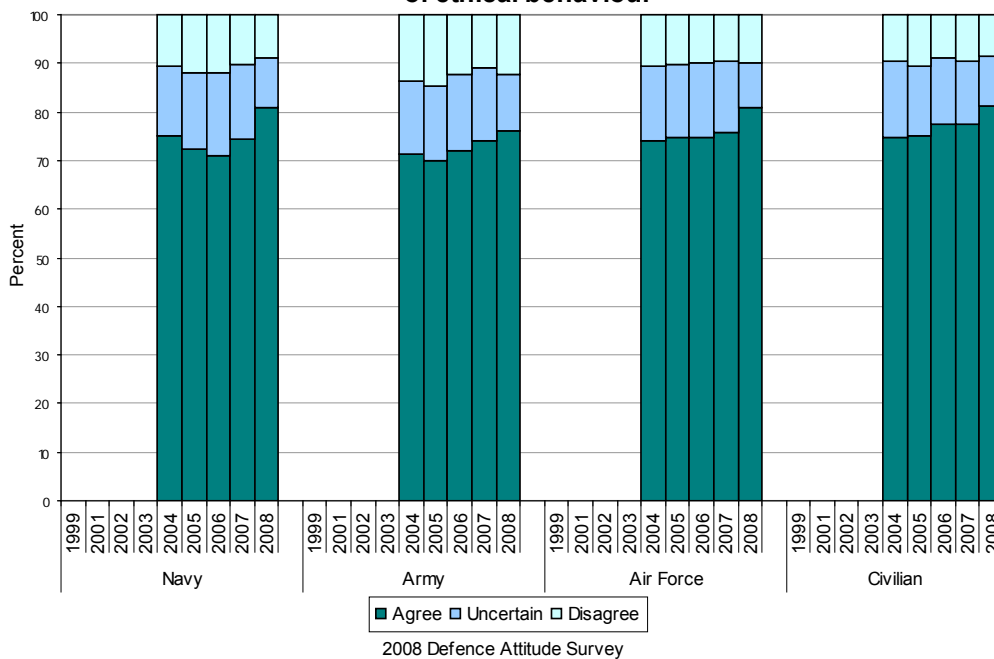
- Perceptions of immediate supervisors remained positive amongst ADF and Civilian personnel. In particular, approximately three quarters of personnel had confidence in their immediate supervisor.

I have confidence in my immediate supervisor



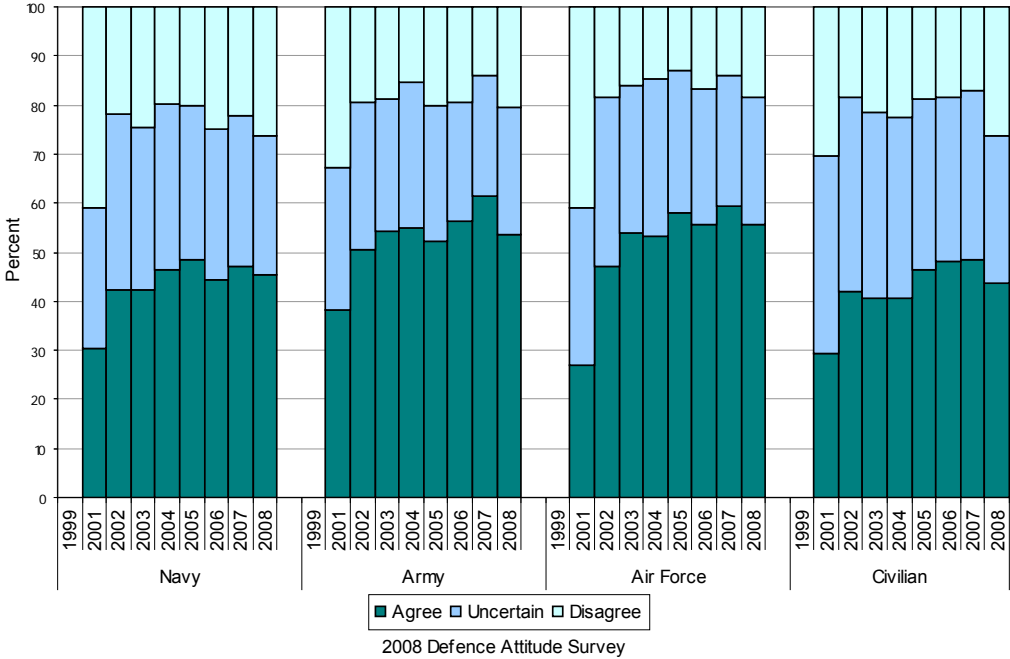
- More than three quarters of personnel agreed that their immediate supervisor set a high standard of ethical behaviour, a result which shows a generally positive trend since 2006.

My immediate supervisor sets a high standard of ethical behaviour



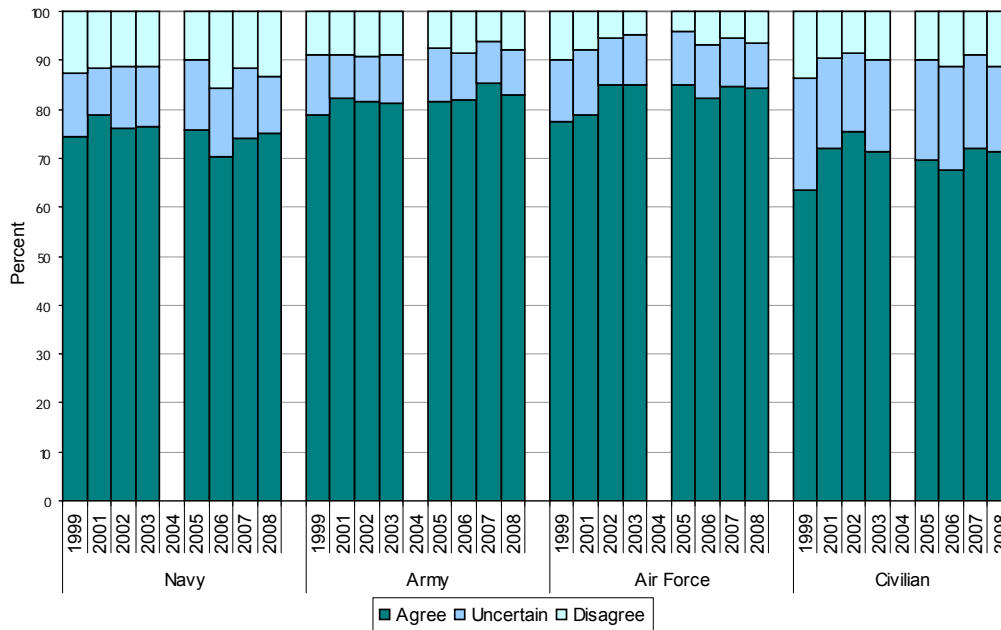
- Comparable with previous results, a greater proportion of personnel viewed their immediate supervisors more positively than Defence senior leaders. This result was not unexpected as respondents have significantly less visibility of senior leaders compared to daily contact with their immediate supervisor.
- Confidence ratings in Defence senior leaders have varied but this year, they were in the range of 44 to 56 percent.

I have confidence in senior Defence Leadership



- In general, Army and Air Force members indicated higher levels of employee engagement and organisational commitment when compared to the other Services.
- More than 70 percent of ADF and Civilian personnel continued to feel proud in telling others that they were a Service member.

I am proud to tell others that I am a member of the Service

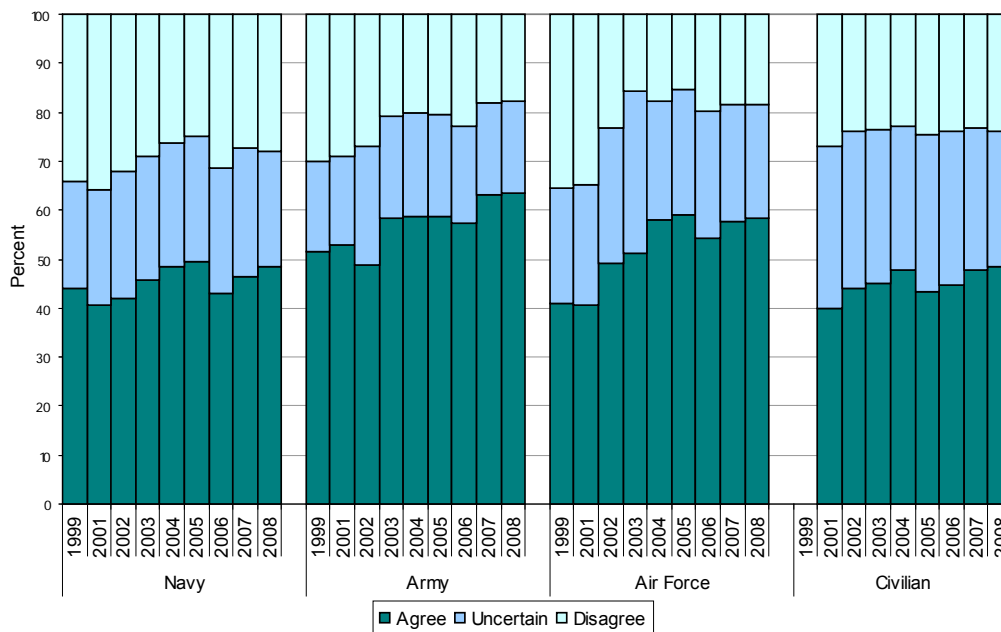


Note: No data available for 2004

2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- A growing proportion of personnel (between 49 and 63 percent in 2008) were inspired by the Service to perform at their best.

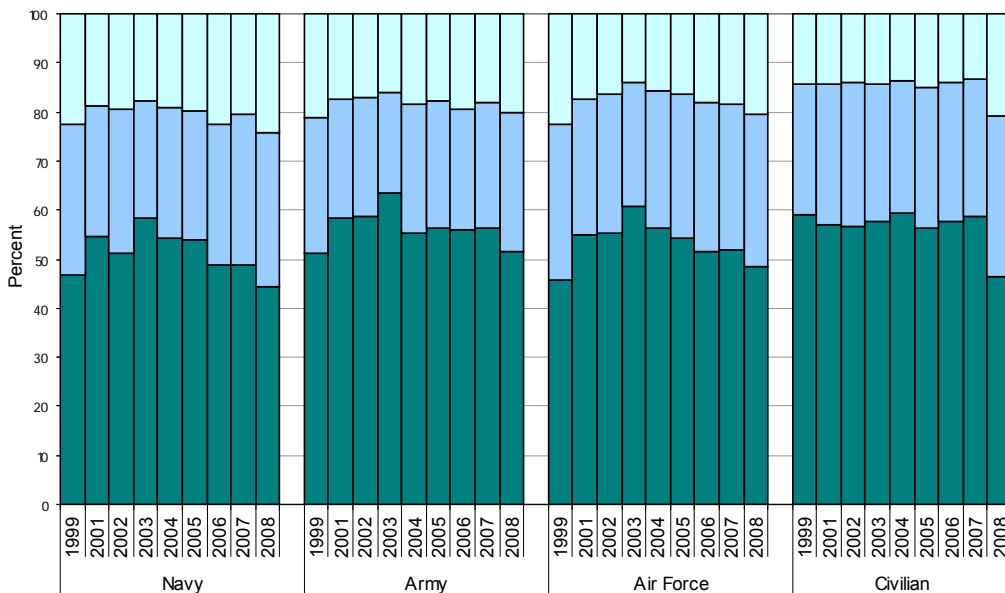
The Service inspires me to perform at my very best



2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- There was a marked decrease in the proportion of Civilians who believed their Service contribution was valued by their leaders (down to 46 percent). There has also been a generally negative trend in ADF responses since 2003.

The contribution I make to the Service is valued by my leaders

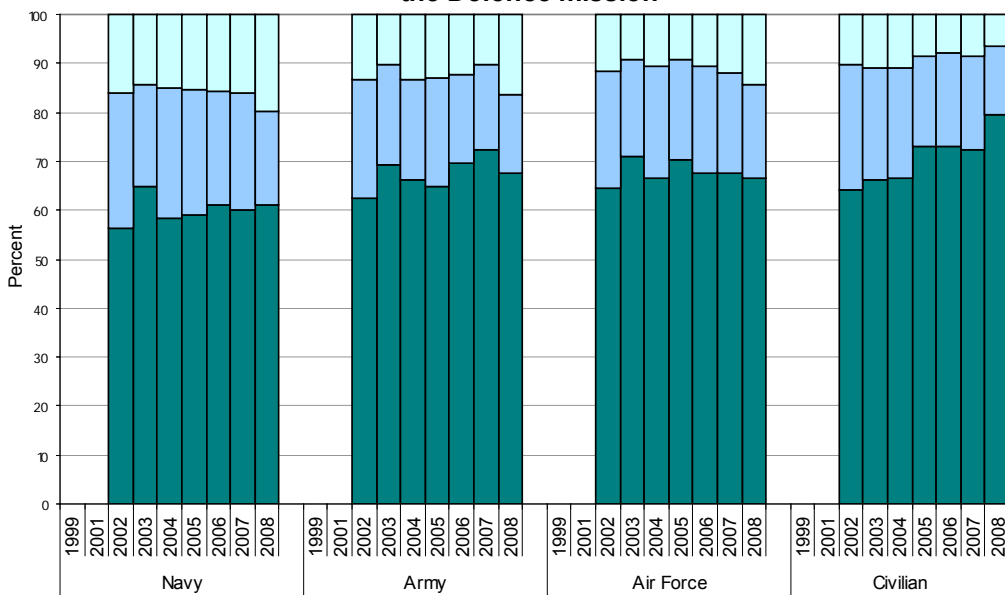


Note: 1999 civilian item 'The contribution I make to the Department is valued by my superiors'.

Legend: Agree (dark teal), Uncertain (light blue), Disagree (light cyan)
2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Civilian personnel were more likely to understand how they had contributed to the Defence mission (79 percent) compared with previous years, and in comparison with ADF members.

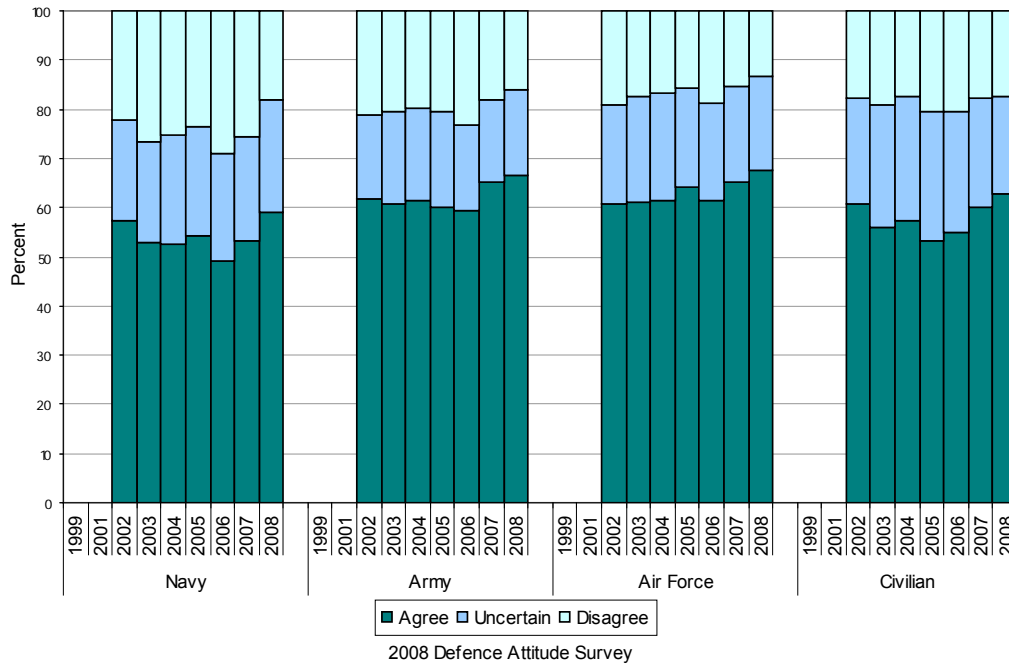
I have a clear understanding of how I contribute to the Defence mission



Legend: Agree (dark teal), Uncertain (light blue), Disagree (light cyan)
2008 Defence Attitude Survey

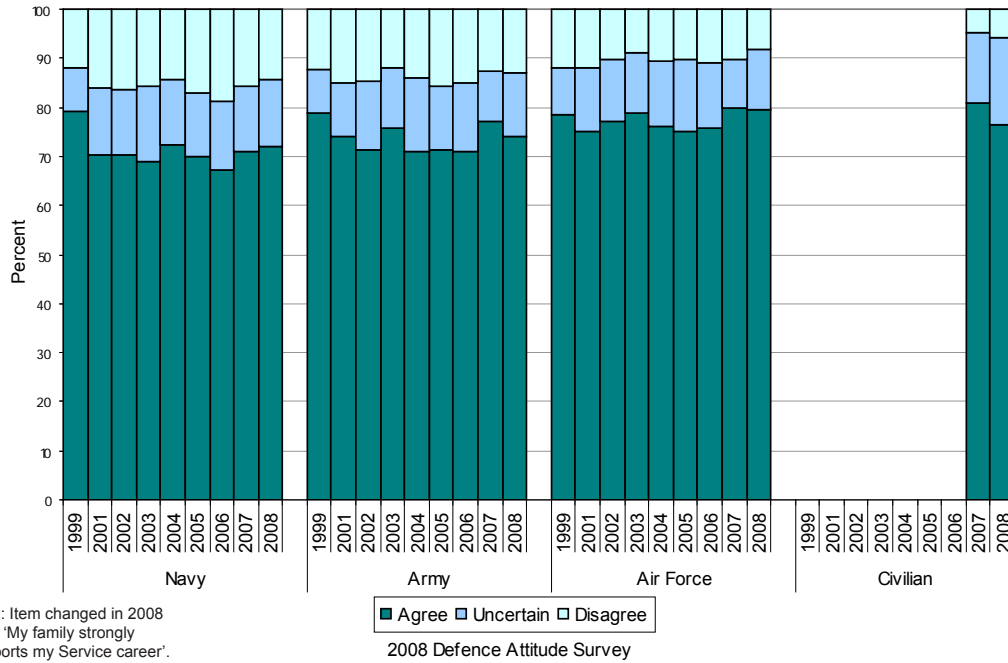
- There has been an increasing proportion (between 59 and 68 percent in 2008) of ADF and Civilian personnel trusting Defence to operate with fairness and integrity since 2006.

I trust Defence to operate with fairness and integrity



- Family support for careers in Defence remained strong, with around three quarters of ADF and Civilian personnel believing their family strongly supported their career in the Service.

My family strongly supports my career in the Service

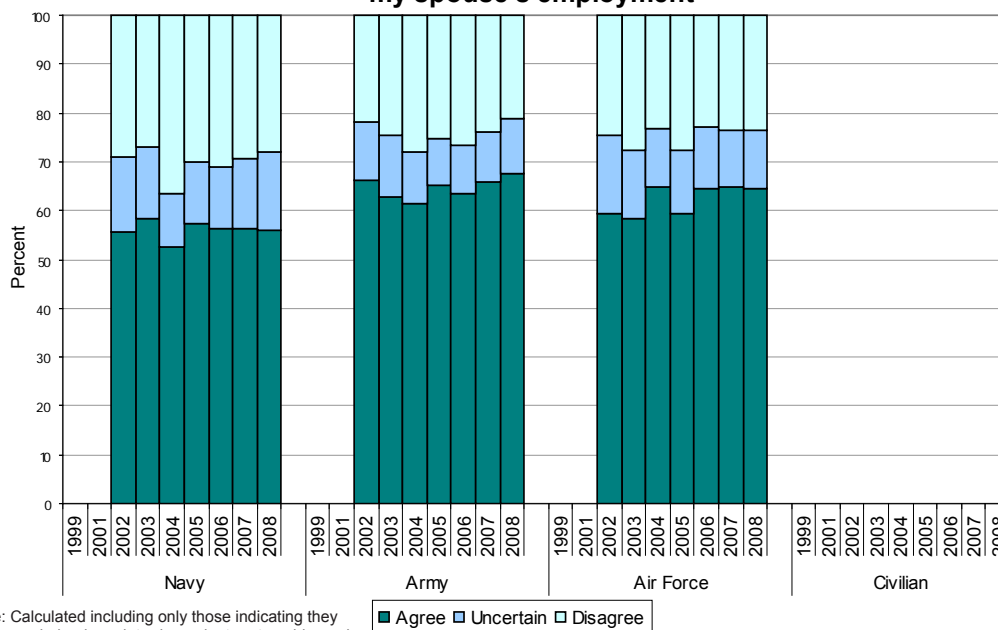


Note: Item changed in 2008 from 'My family strongly supports my Service career'. Military only item prior to 2007.

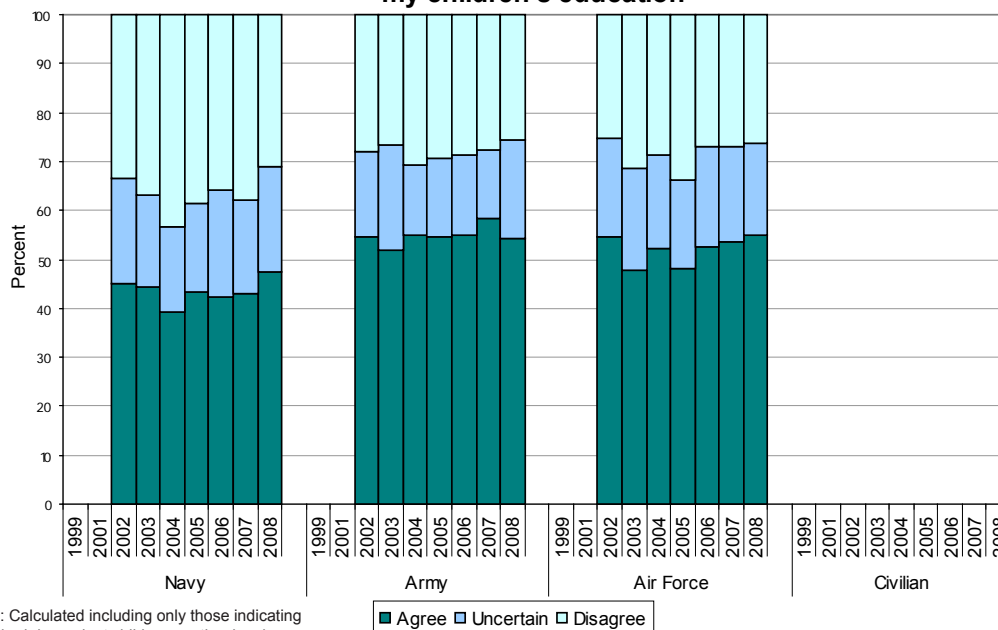
2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Postings continued to be perceived as having a negative impact on spouse/partner employment and children's education. Specifically, between 56 and 68 percent of ADF members believed postings were negatively impacting on their spouse's/partner's employment. Furthermore, between 47 and 55 percent of ADF members indicated that their children's education was being affected.

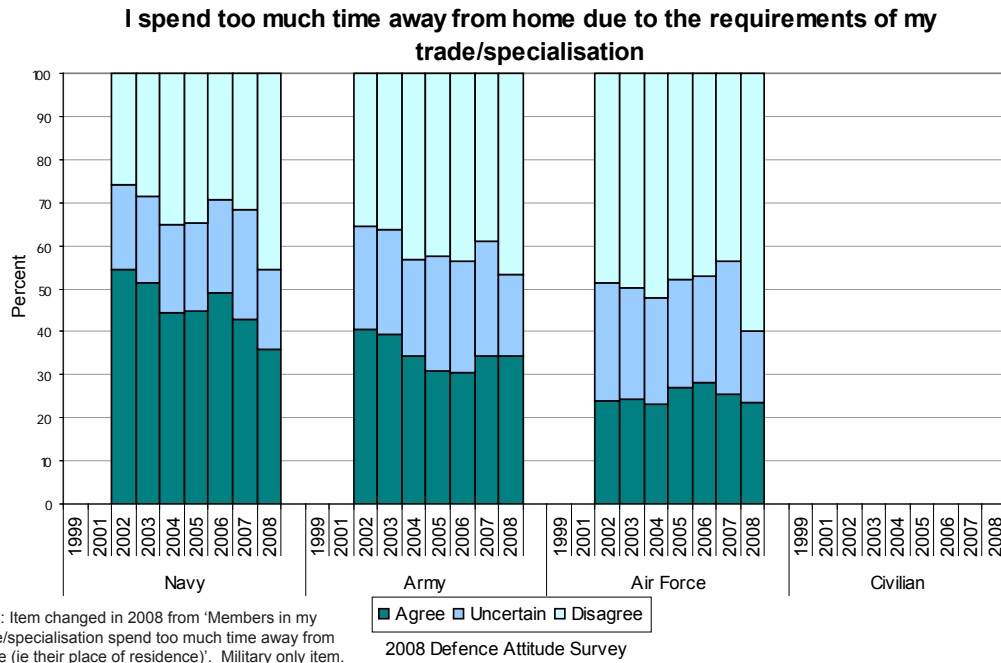
Postings are having a negative impact on my spouse's employment



Postings are having a negative impact on my children's education

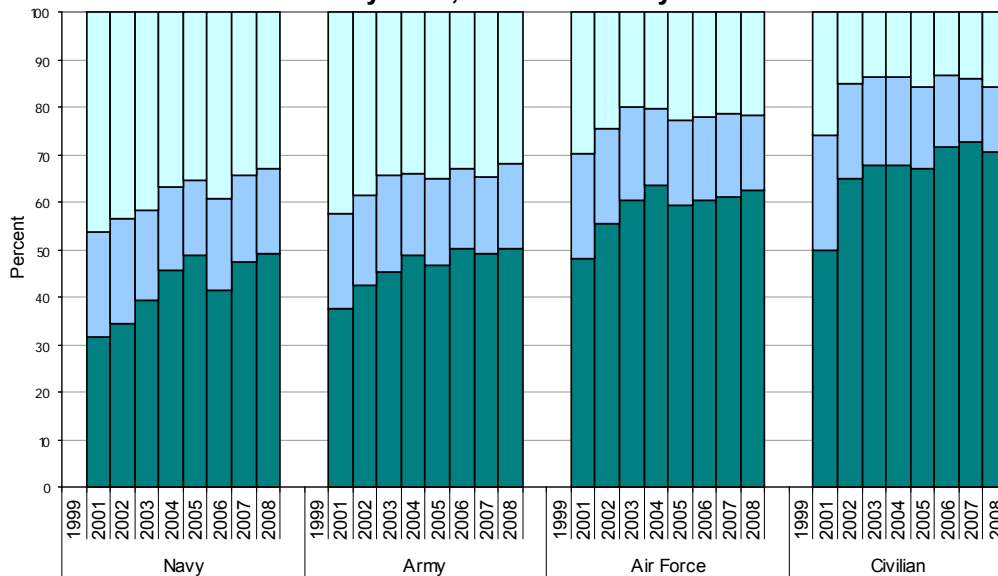


- Overall, the impact of ADF employment on a member's personal life continued to be greater in the Navy and Army. However, Navy members' perceptions continued to grow more positive in 2008.
- Navy continued to show a decrease in the proportion of members who agreed that they spent too much time away from home due to work requirements (down 18 percent since 2002).



- Navy and Army continued to have lower proportions of members reporting that their workplace encouraged a healthy work-life balance (approximately 50 percent) when compared with Air Force members (63 percent) and Civilians (71 percent).

My workplace encourages a healthy balance between my work, home and family life

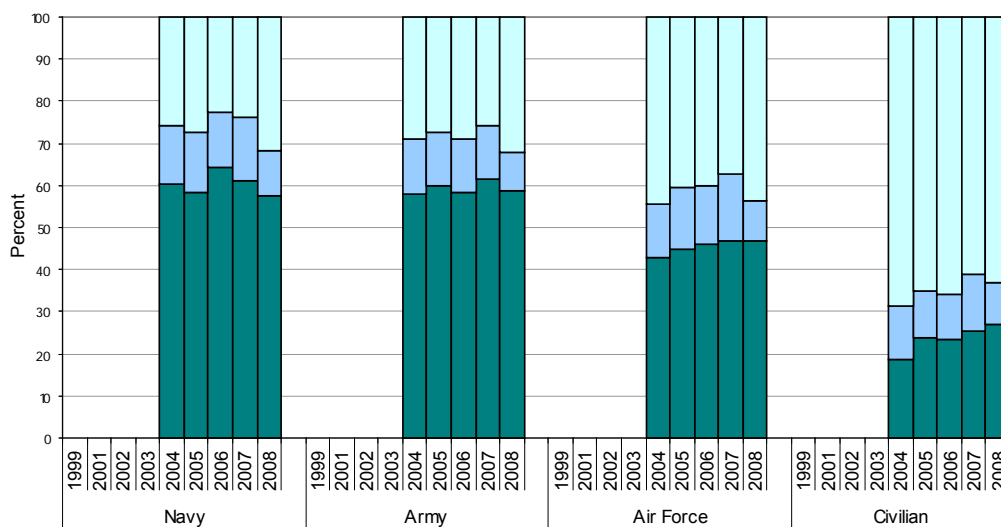


Note: Item changed in 2008 from 'My workplace encourages a healthy balance between my work, home and family'.

Legend: Agree (Dark Green), Uncertain (Light Blue), Disagree (Light Cyan)
2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Similarly, Navy and Army had higher proportions of members believing their work schedule conflicted with their personal life (over 57 percent), compared with Air Force members (47 percent) and Civilians (27 percent).

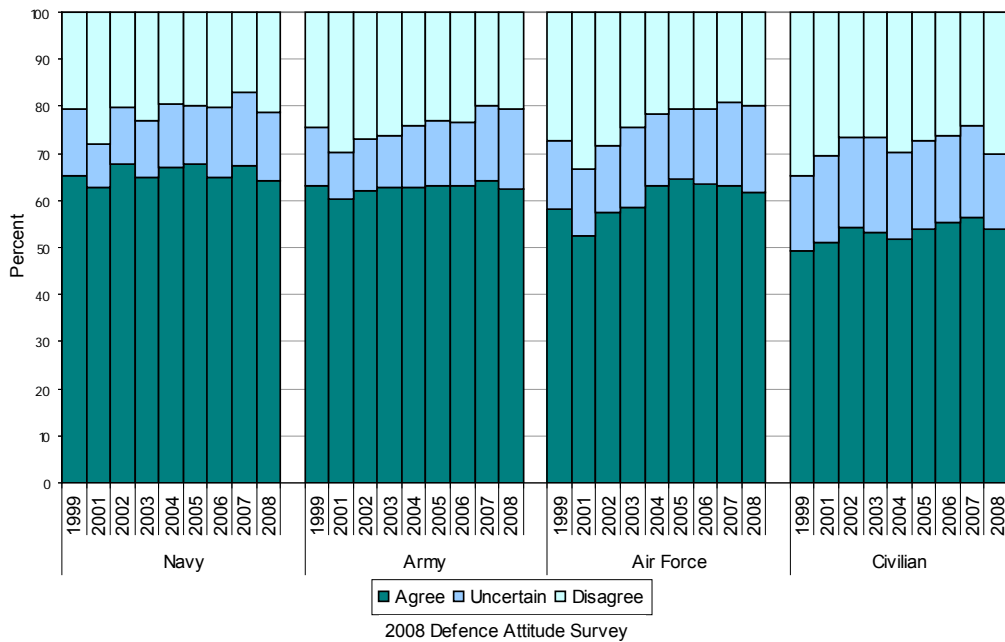
My work schedule often conflicts with my personal life



Legend: Agree (Dark Green), Uncertain (Light Blue), Disagree (Light Cyan)
2008 Defence Attitude Survey

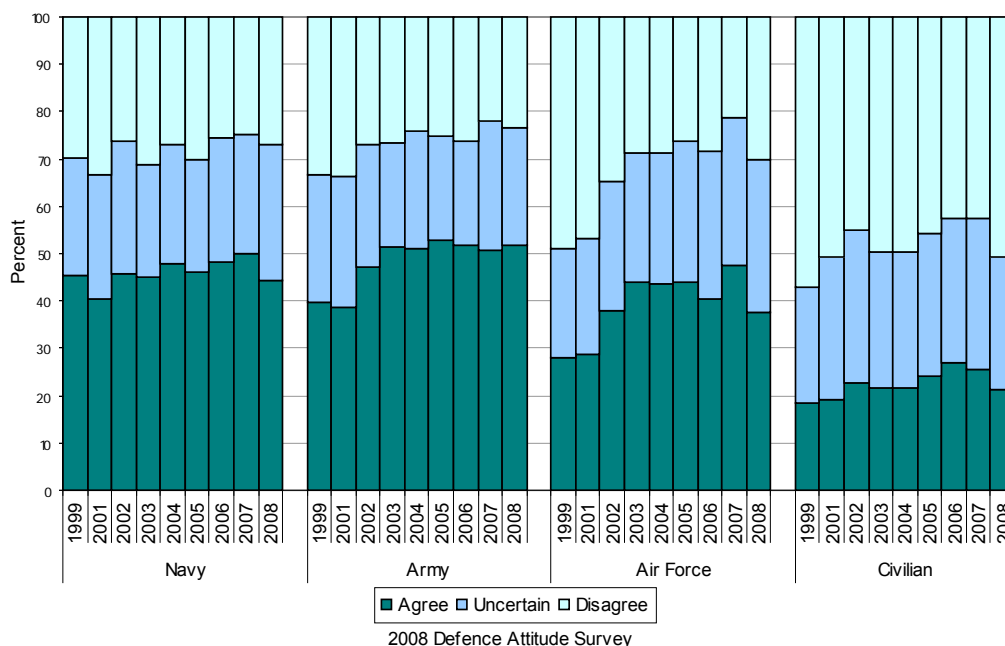
- Over 60 percent of ADF members believed their career development had been good, compared with 54 percent of Civilians.

My career development has generally been good



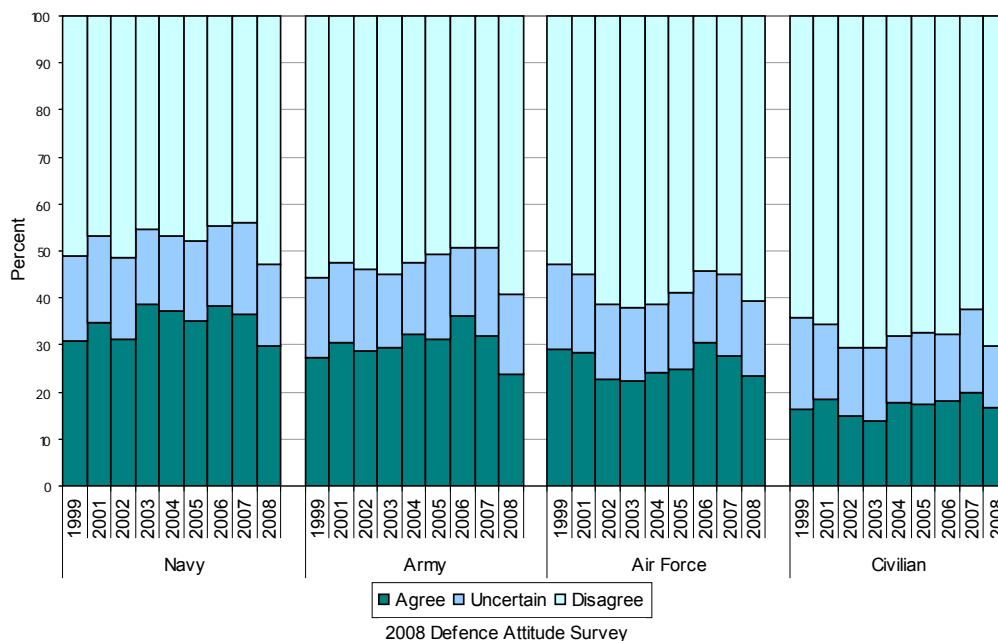
- Civilians were much less likely to agree that their promotion prospects were good (21 percent) than their ADF counterparts (between 38 and 52 percent).

My promotion prospects are good

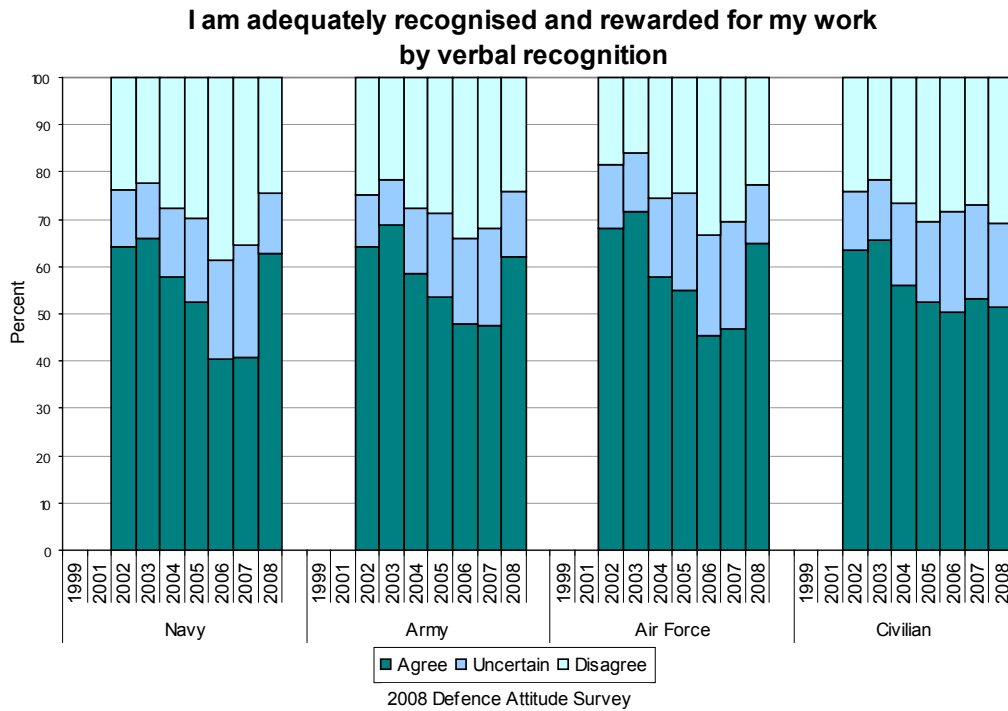


- In general, improvements in intentions to stay in the Service were evident, particularly for ADF members. The proportion of ADF personnel actively looking at leaving the Service has trended downward since 2006 (to between 23 and 30 percent in 2008). For Army in particular, these are the lowest figures reported since the DAS was first administered in 1999.

I am actively looking at leaving the Service

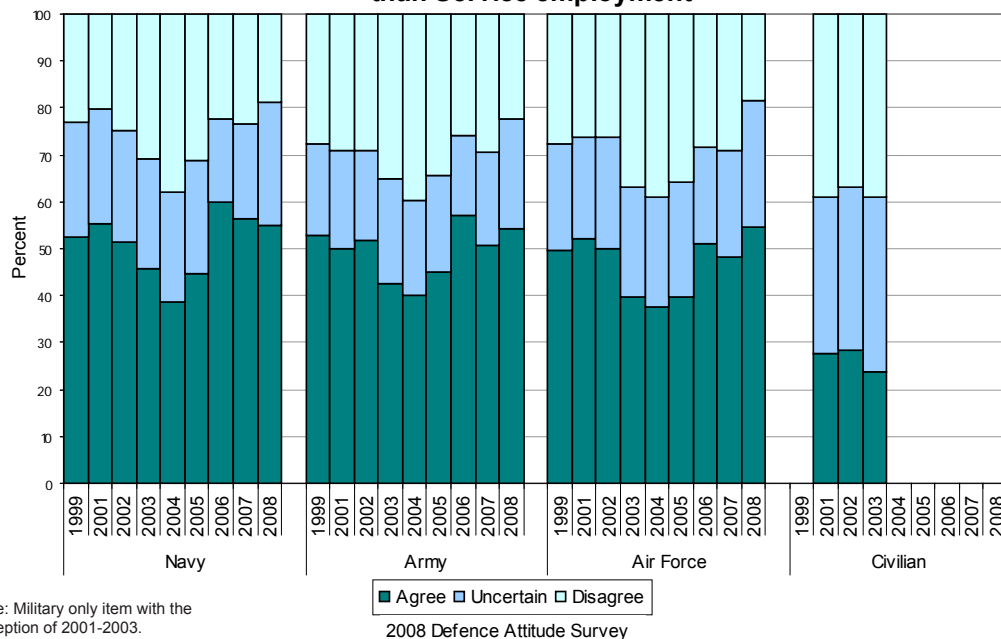


- There were considerable improvements in perceptions of adequate recognition and reward for work through verbal feedback for ADF members. This year, more than 60 percent of ADF personnel agreed that they were adequately rewarded through verbal recognition. After a negative response trend for ADF personnel since 2004, the 2008 results represented a return to levels similar to those reported prior to 2004.



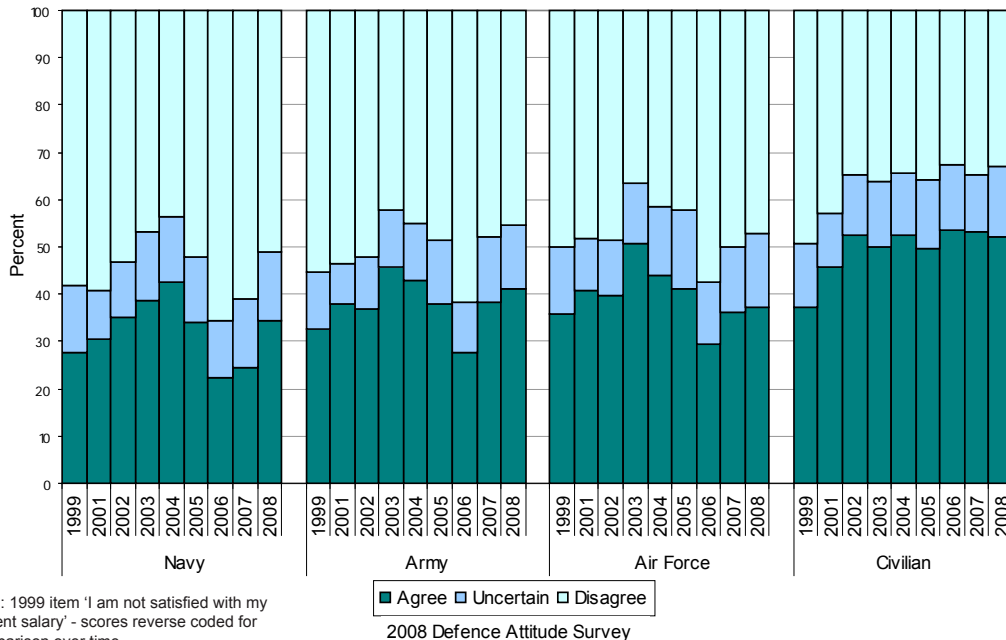
- Approximately half of ADF personnel believed civilian employment was more financially attractive than Service employment.

Civilian employment seems to be more attractive financially than Service employment



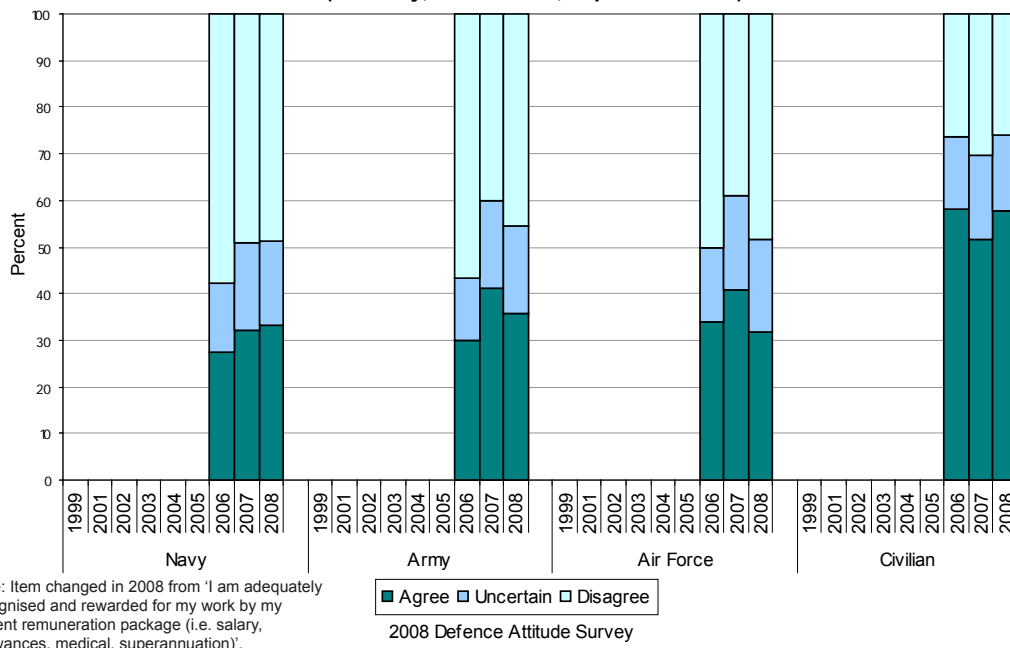
- Civilians (52 percent) were more likely than their ADF counterparts (between 34 and 41 percent) to be satisfied with their salary. However, a growing proportion of ADF members were satisfied with their salary, compared with the previous two years.

I am satisfied with my current salary



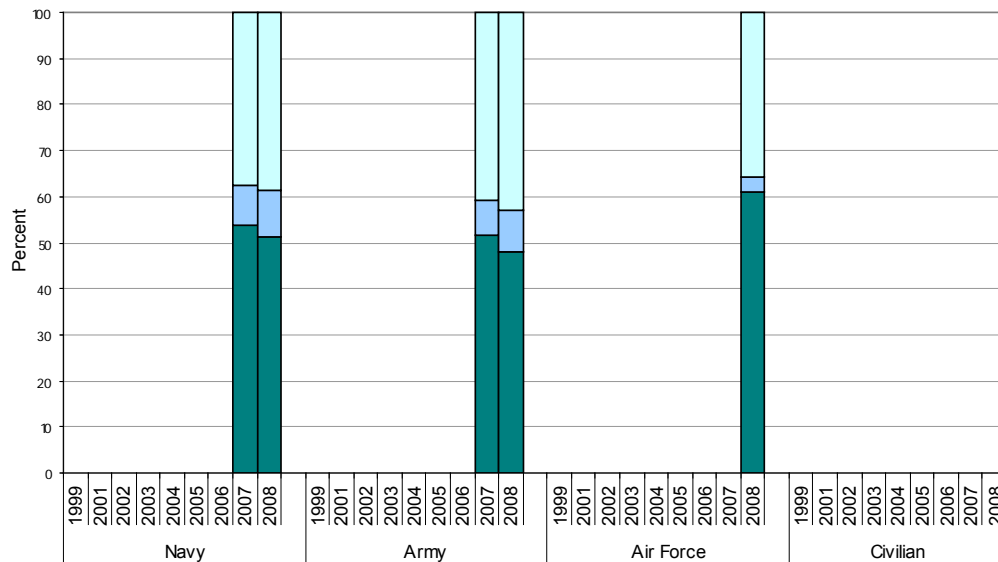
- ADF members were also less likely to agree that they were adequately recognised and rewarded for their work by their current remuneration package (approximately one third agreement compared with over half for Civilians).

I am adequately recognised and rewarded for my work by my current remuneration package (ie salary, allowances, superannuation)



- Air Force members who had received a retention bonus were most likely to report that it had influenced their decision to stay in the Service (61 percent, compared to approximately 50 percent of Navy and Army personnel).

The retention bonus system has influenced my decision to stay in the Service

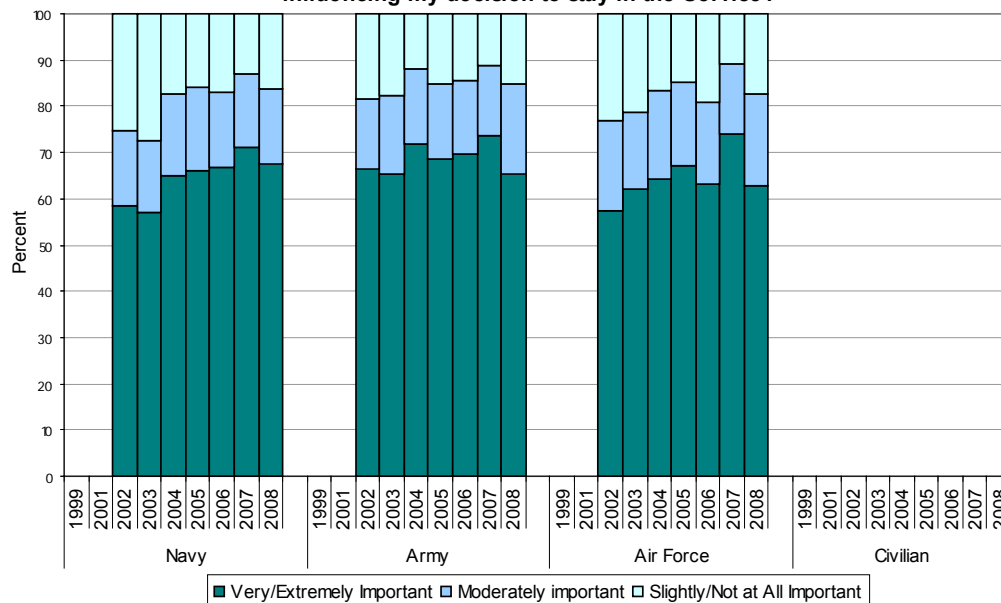


Note: Calculated including only those indicating they had accepted a retention bonus. 2007 item 'Retention bonuses have influenced my decision to stay in the Service'. Calculated excluding those responding 'N/A' to this item in 2007. Air Force members were not asked to answer this item in 2007. Military only item.

2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Overall, there were decreases in the importance of subsidised housing, spouse employment assistance and Defence sponsored childcare as ADF retention influencers.
- Subsidised housing remained an important influence for over 60 percent of ADF members.

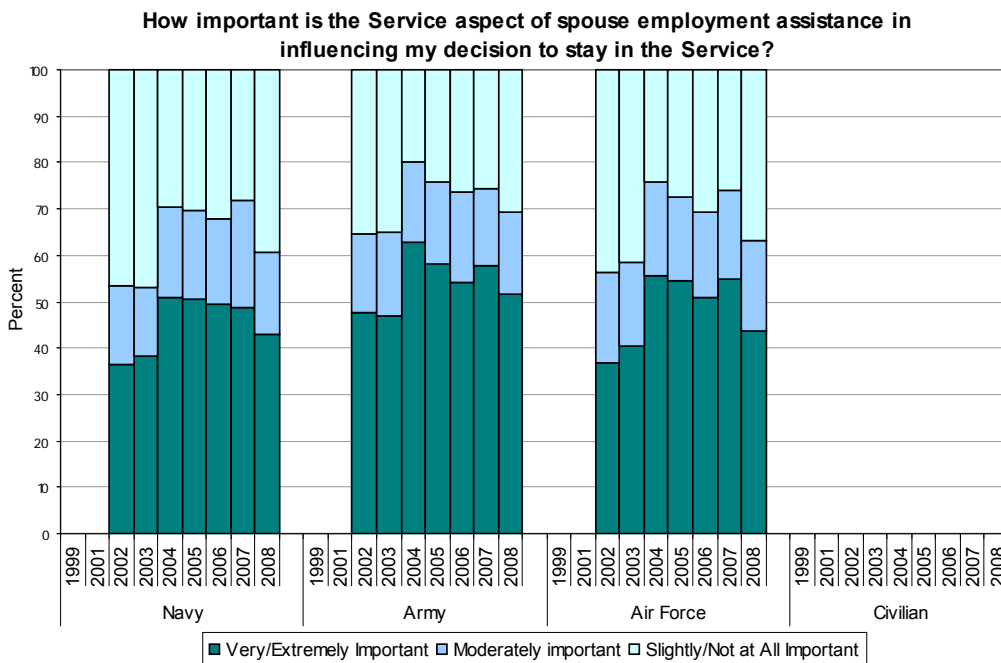
How important is the Service aspect of subsidised housing in influencing my decision to stay in the Service?



Note: Calculated excluding those responding 'N/A' to this item. Military only item.

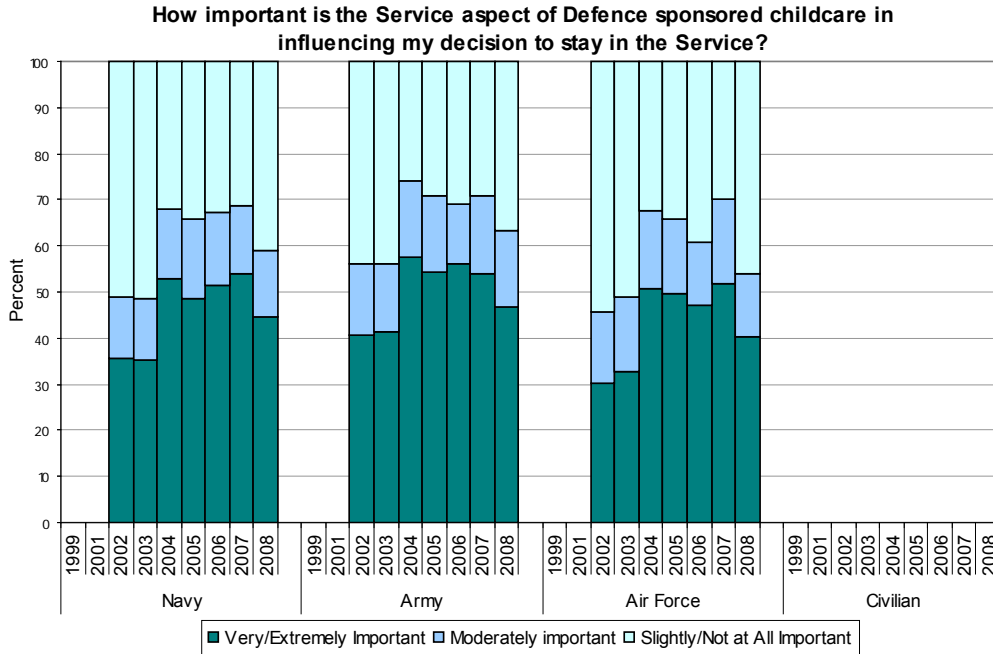
2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Spouse employment assistance continued to show a general downward trend in importance (between 43 and 52 percent of ADF members rated this important in 2008).



Note: Calculated excluding those responding 'N/A' to this item. Military only item.

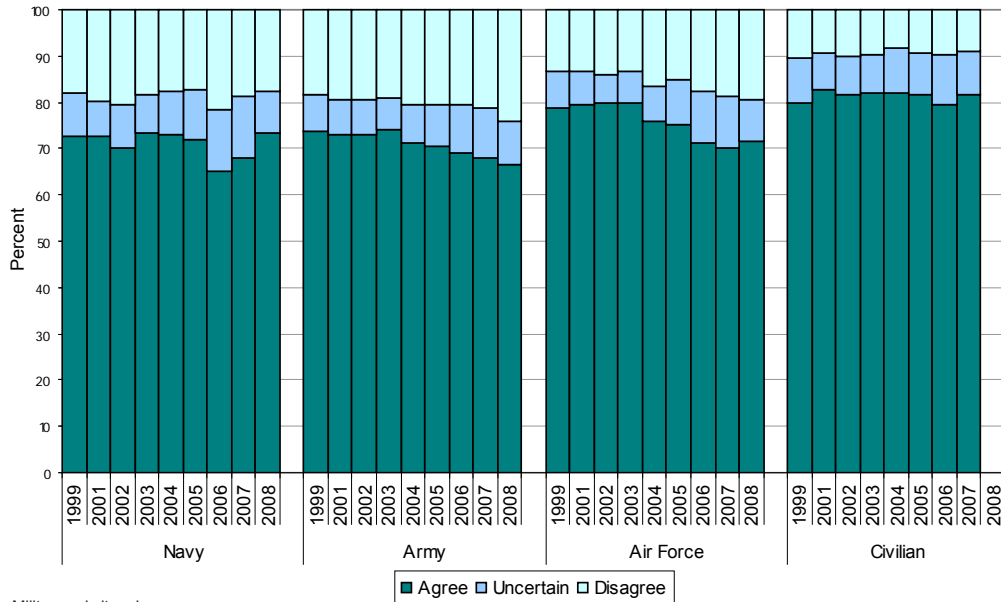
- Defence sponsored childcare was a less important influence in 2008 than the previous four years, with between 40 and 47 percent of ADF personnel rating it as particularly important, compared with approximately half or more of personnel in previous years.



Note: Calculated excluding those responding 'N/A' to this item. 2002-2003 item did not provide 'N/A' option. Military only item.

- In general, job satisfaction was high amongst both ADF and Civilian personnel. Most ADF members, including a growing proportion of Navy members, were happy with the work they did in their postings, although Army results did show a slight negative trend for this item.

I like the work at my present posting

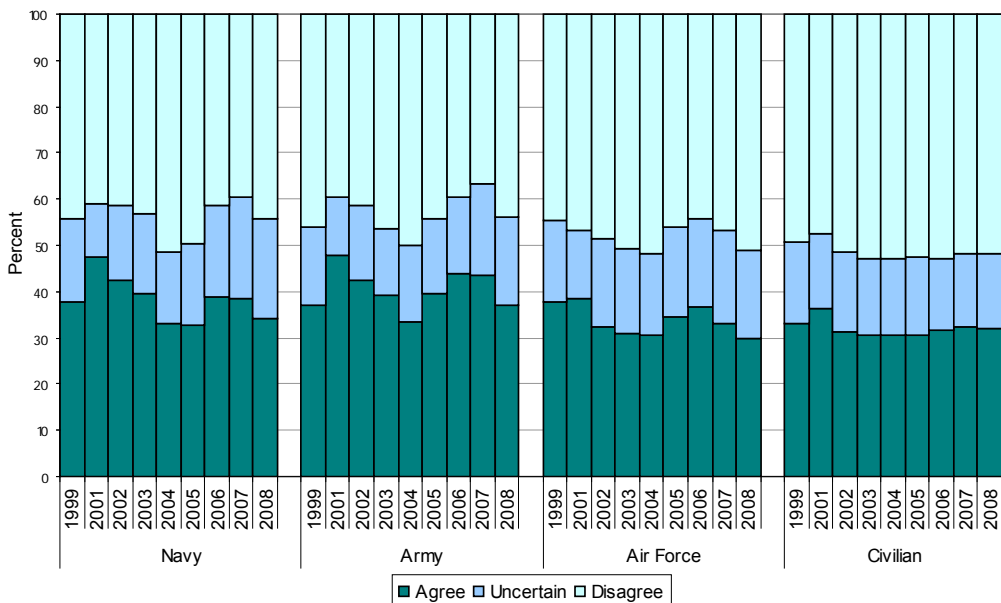


Note: Military only item in 2008. 1999-2007 civilian item 'I like the work in my present position'.

2008 Defence Attitude Survey

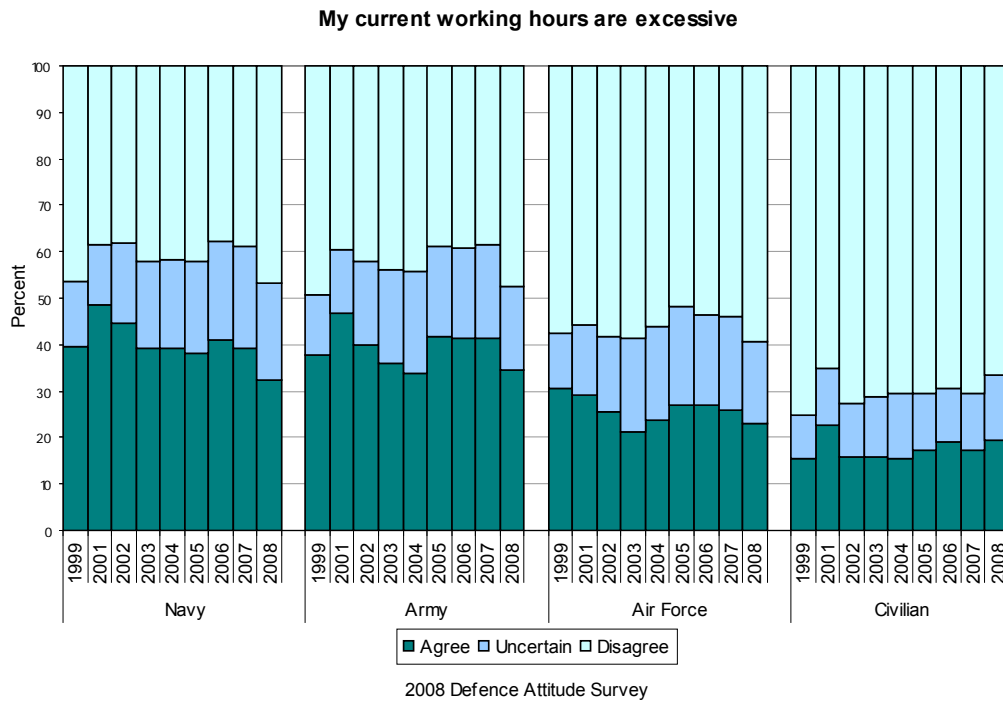
- Approximately one third of ADF and Civilian personnel believed their workload was excessive. While agreement has fluctuated in previous years, ADF members were less likely to feel they were overworked in 2008, compared with the previous two years.

My overall workload is excessive

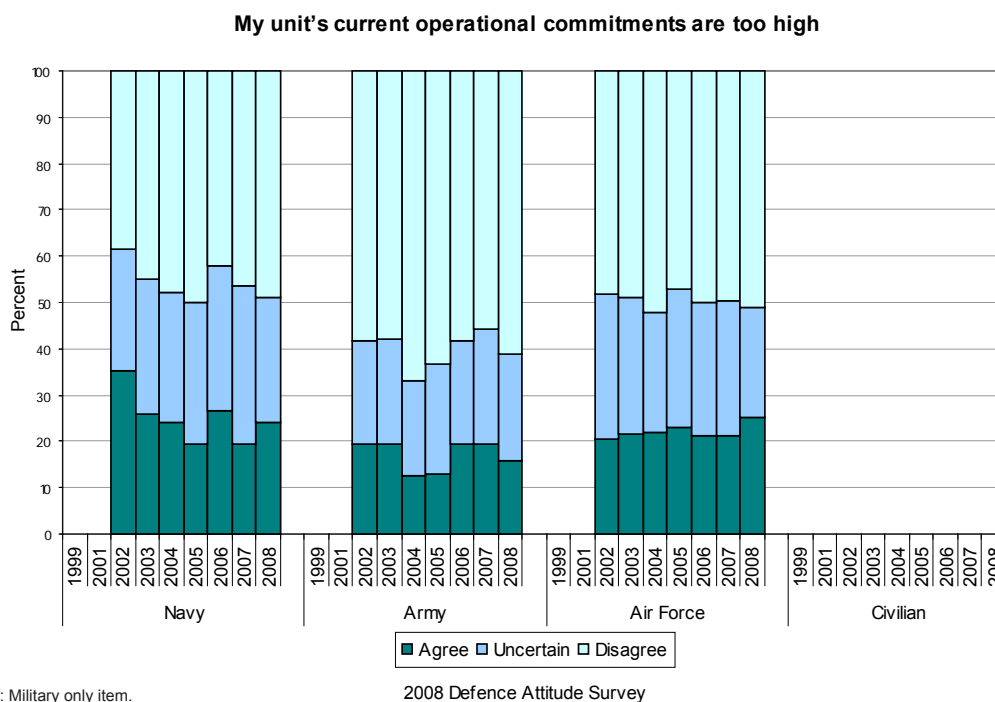


2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Similarly, ADF members were less likely to feel that their current working hours were excessive in 2008. Consistent with previous years, working hours were considered excessive by a greater proportion of Navy and Army members than Air Force and Civilian personnel (approximately one third agreement compared with around one fifth, overall).

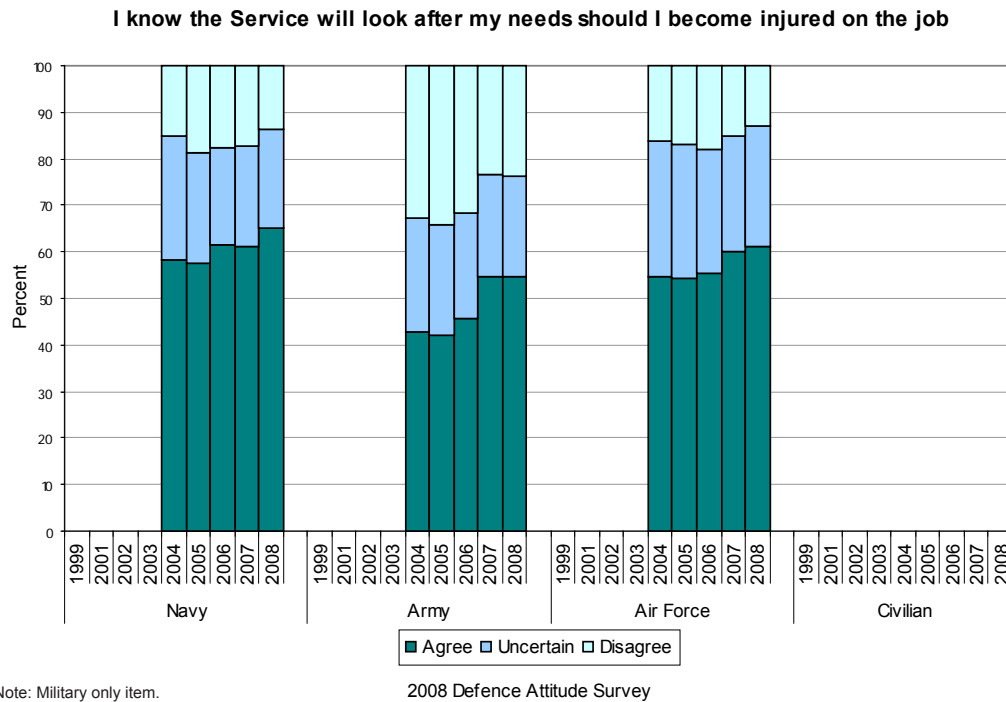


- Comparable with previous results, one quarter or less of ADF members felt their unit's operational commitments were too high.

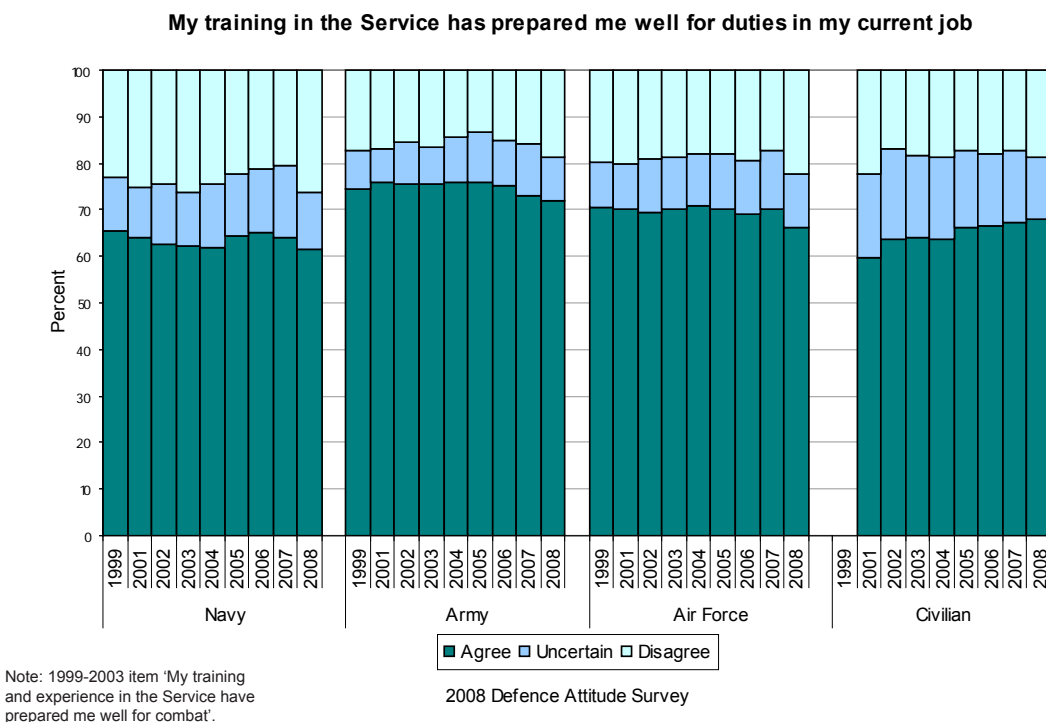


Note: Military only item.

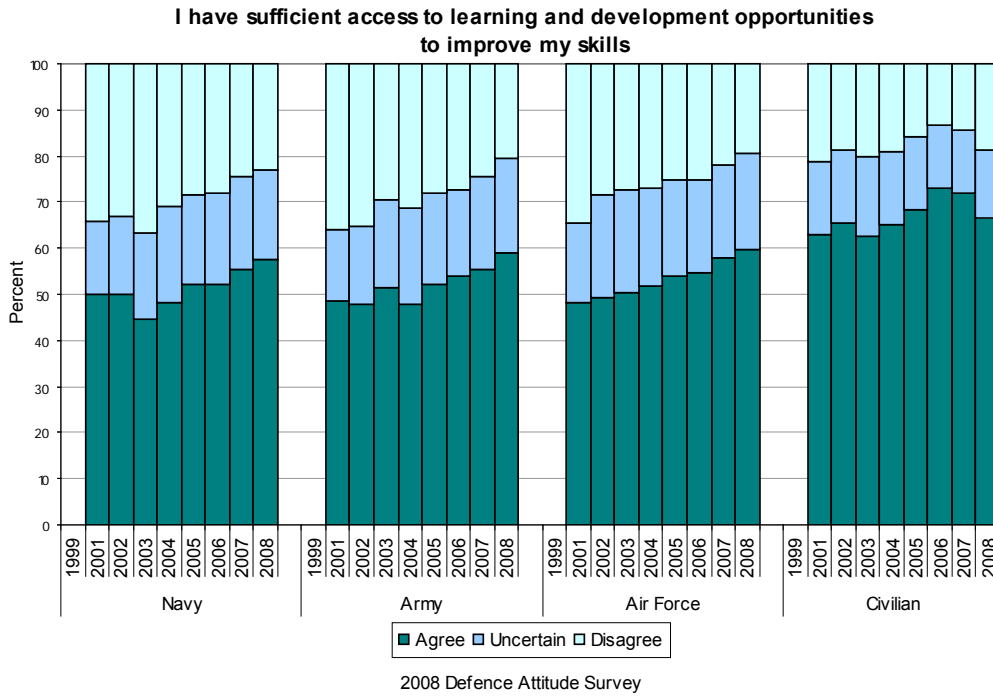
- In 2008, a growing proportion of ADF members (more than 50 percent) believed the Service would look after their needs if they became injured on the job.



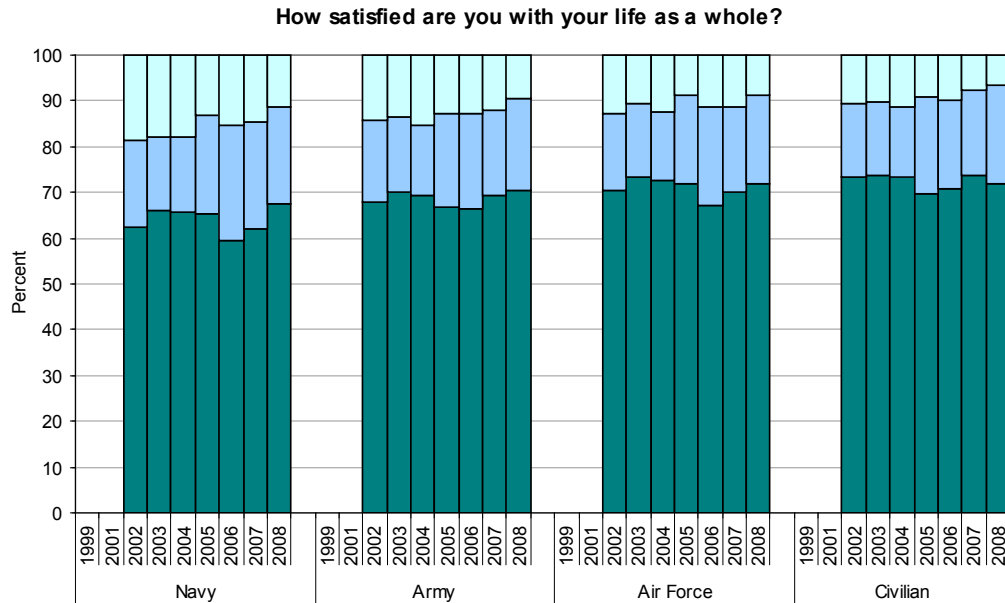
- Approximately two thirds of ADF and Civilian personnel believed their training prepared them well for their duties, consistent with previous years.



- In 2008, there was a continuation in the positive trend in perceptions that ADF members had sufficient access to learning and development opportunities to improve their skills.



- Approximately 70 percent of ADF and Civilian personnel were satisfied with their life as a whole, with the ADF showing positive trends since a trough in 2006.

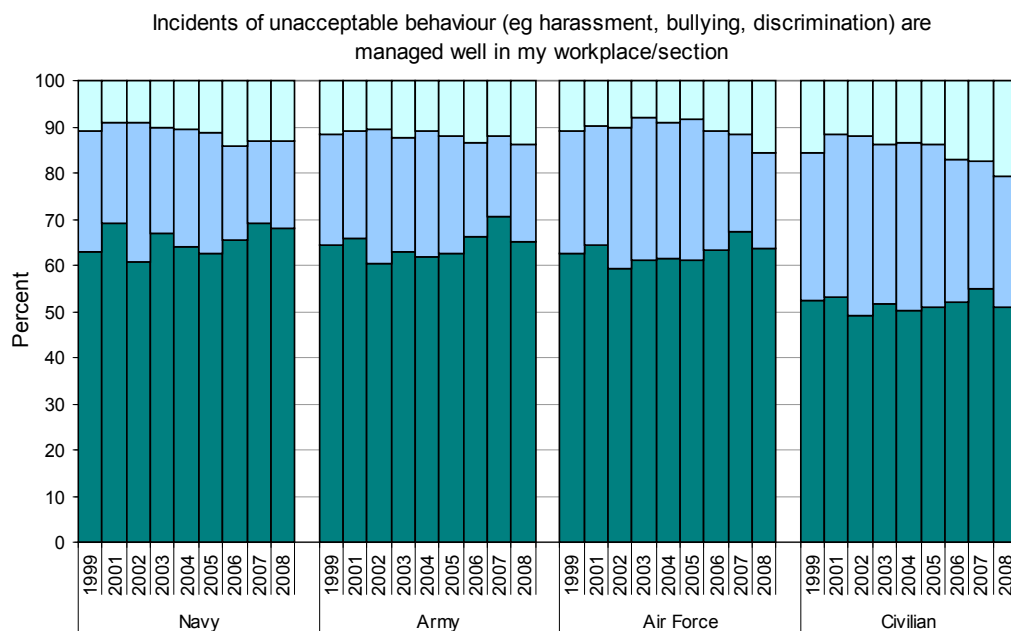


Note: Item changed in 2008 from 'Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?'. 2005 item used a 5-point scale of 'very dissatisfied' to 'very satisfied' with mid-point of 'neither', changed to 11-point scale of 'completely dissatisfied' to 'completely satisfied'; collapsed for purpose of comparison.

■ Satisfied ■ Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied □ Dissatisfied

2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Consistent with previous results, Civilians were less likely than their ADF counterparts to believe incidents of unacceptable behaviour were well managed in their workplace (51 percent, compared with approximately 65 percent of ADF members).



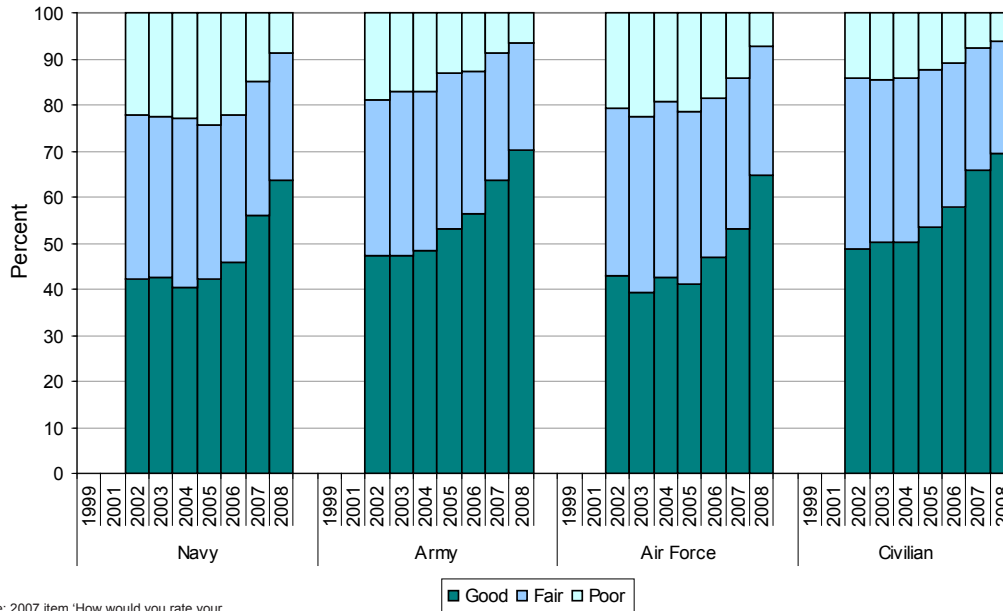
Note: 2005 item 'Incidents of discrimination or harassment are managed well in my workplace/section'. 1999 item 'Incidents of discrimination or harassment are not managed well in my workplace/section' - reverse coded to allow comparisons.

■ Agree □ Uncertain □ Disagree

2008 Defence Attitude Survey

- Knowledge of mental health issues continued the strong positive trend that has been apparent since 2004. More than 60 percent of ADF and Civilian personnel reported they had good knowledge of mental health in 2008.

How would you rate your knowledge of mental health issues?



Note: 2007 item 'How would you rate your knowledge of mental health issues? (Mental health covers a range of conditions or experiences such as depression, anxiety, stress levels, alcohol or drug usage etc.)'

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