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### Moral Injury within the RAAF and the Role of Chaplains: Exploratory Findings

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#### Abstract

Moral injury (MI) is gaining greater recognition as a trauma related syndrome that can be multifaceted involving physical, psychological, social and existential/spiritual symptoms (Jinkerson, 2016, Carey, et al, 2016). It is believed to be caused by significant moral dissonance following perceived violations of deeply held moral beliefs by oneself or betrayal by trusted individuals (Shay, 2002; Litz et al, 2009; Hodgson & Carey, 2017). This paper will present an initial study into moral injury and preliminary research findings gained from currently serving RAAF veterans. The research approved by the University of Queensland and the Australian Defence Force Human Research Ethics Committee (ADHREC), with the assistance of La Trobe University, sought to identify if any evidence exists of MI within the Australian military context by collecting, documenting and analysing self-reported data obtained from deployed RAAF personnel. A 'Modified Military Moral Injury Questionnaire' (M3IQ) was developed based on previously validated MI scales to consider any evidence of potential moral injury. The overall findings indicate that a number of RAAF military personnel have been exposed to, or involved in, a potentially morally injurious event (PMIE) of one type or another, and some remain troubled by their experience post-deployment due to experiencing one or more morally injurious events (MIEs). This research also sought to consider the potential rehabilitation and recovery role of military chaplains in conjunction with other health care personnel for addressing MI as a community public health issue (Carey & Hodgson, 2018; Carey et al, 2018). Finally, recommendations are provided for the development of a pastoral restorative model to help facilitate the rehabilitation of military personnel who may be suffering moral injury.

#### Biographies

Dr Lindsay Carey, MAppSc, PhD, is Head of Public Health and Health Promotion Disciplines and Senior Research-Fellow with the Palliative Care Unit, School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University, Melbourne. Dr Carey served as RAAFSR Chaplain at Laverton (2001–2017), undertaking attachments at Wagga Wagga, East Sale and Butterworth. He is currently Senior Chaplaincy Research Advisor to Joint Health Command (2018–). He has previously served as Research-Fellow for 'Caring for Caregivers' (Victoria), the RACGP Evaluation Program (Victoria), plus Chaplaincy-Researcher Northern General Hospital Sheffield (UK) and National Research-Fellow with the Australian Health & Welfare Chaplains Association (now 'Spiritual Care Australia'). He is an Honorary Scholar, Duke University (US), and Life Member of 'Spiritual Care Australia'. In 2018, he was acknowledged in the Australian Research Report as 'National Field Leader' for his research into religion and public health.

Rev. Tim Hodgson, MTh, MIntSecStud, has served as a Specialist Reserve Chaplain and Permanent Air Force Chaplain for a total of twelve years, with deployments to the Middle East and Timor-Leste. He is currently the Executive Officer of Uniting Care, South Australia, while also undertaking his doctorate in Moral Injury with the Department of Religious Studies, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Queensland.

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### Navy Employability and Deployability 1996–2019: What's going on?

**Dr Neil Westphalen<sup>1</sup>**

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#### Abstract

This presentation briefly compares the employability and deployability of Navy personnel as of 30 June 1996 with that as of 31 March 2019, with questions for the audience to follow.

#### Biography

Dr Neil Westphalen graduated from Adelaide University in 1985 and joined the RAN in 1987. He