

Waiving the Standards: The Effect of Recruitment Waivers in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)

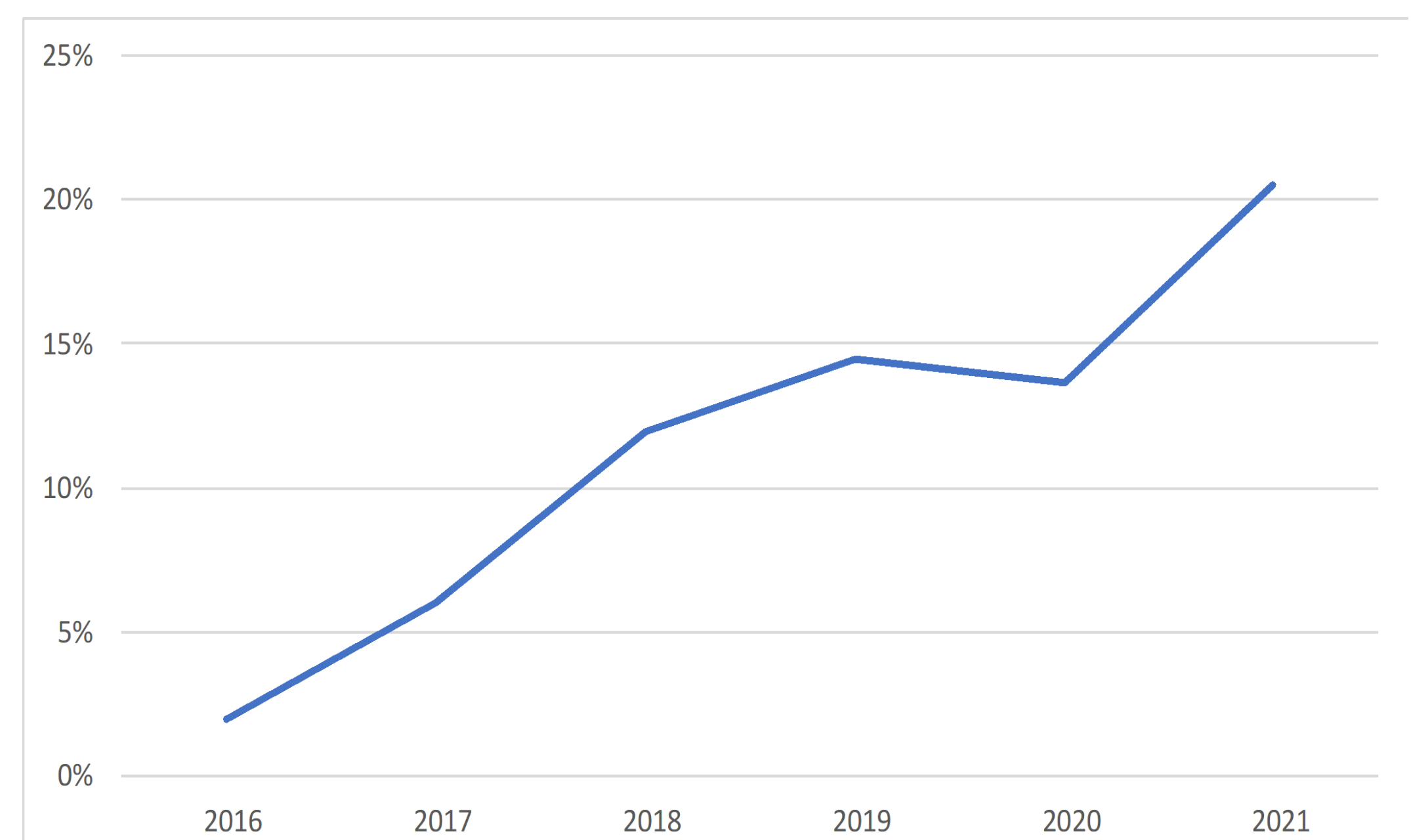


Naval
Postgraduate
School

Abstract

The Australian Defence Force is confronted with a recruitment challenge. The challenge is driven by shifts in the labor market, increasing civilian competition and a declining eligibility for service. Simultaneously, the Australian Government has mandated a 37% expansion of the permanent workforce by 2040, adding further pressure.

To mitigate labor shortages stemming from entry requirements, RAAF is intensifying its use of recruitment waivers. Waivers enable the enlistment of more aviators, however their effectiveness in aiding long-term workforce goals remains unknown.



Waiver Liberalization Trend: Percentage of Recruitment Waivers Issued as a Ratio of Annual Enlistments for Years 2016 through 2021

Methods

An initial analysis of RAAF enlistment behavior and recruitment waivers spanning 2016 through 2021 was conducted to identify trends in waiver liberalization.

This included characterizing the trend by waiver category and employment occupation group, and a comparison with annual success rates.

Linear probability models were employed to assess the differing success rates between aviators enlisting with recruitment waivers and those without. Beta coefficients were interpreted to determine the change in the probability of successful service. Successful service, in this context, was defined as the completion of both initial military and initial employment training.

Results & Their Impact

- There is a discernable trend towards waiver liberalization, although usage varies across category and occupation group.
- Broadly, a recruitment waiver decreases the probability of successful service by 5.5 percentage points, a statistically significant yet negligible effect.
- Medical waivers emerge as the most influential, negatively impacting success. Driver's license, education, physical fitness, security background and criminal history waivers can positively influence success.

	Successful Service
Any Waiver	-0.055*** (0.022)
Demographic Controls	Yes
Yearly Fixed Effects	Yes
Observations	3082
R ²	0.171

Highlight of Initial Regression Results

Recommendations

- Recruitment waivers can support RAAF in meeting recruitment and workforce targets, while maintaining training success.
- Caution is advised regarding medical waivers use, while strategic use of other waivers should continue.
- In further mitigating risk, RAAF should expand in-service tailored support programs to better support the workforce.
- Recruitment waivers can enhance RAAF's future recruitment strategy, but they are not the sole solution to the challenge.
- RAAF should consider a review of entry requirements based on the positive results, ensuring the current standards do not unnecessarily deter potential applicants.

