

## MUSIC LEADERSHIP ESSAY BY THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

I wish to create some discussion about the aspiration of Senior Sailors as they prepare to move into the band's important Bandmaster positions, and what I see as a capability weakness within that cohort. In particular, I am concerned that our Bandmasters have become more comfortable in the field of administration and management to the detriment of 'music leadership'.

Over the last 10-15 year period I have observed a significant capability gap emerging between the level of music skills of our Senior Sailors and Junior Sailor. This has developed, in part, as a result of higher enlistment standards; but as yet, those higher skills have not fully progressed through promotion into the Senior Sailor cohort. It may also have developed because of the growing workforce demands, expectations, mandatory requirements and very generous geographic posting stability enjoyed by our musicians. Of course, good administrative and management skills are vital to our success as an organisation; but our core skill rests in the art of music, and delivering high quality music products requires maintaining a good balance in both of these fields. The main thrust of my argument rests in my assessment that the balance has shifted too much towards the administrative requirements of our Senior Sailors, and in particular, the Bandmasters.

Here is what I see are the main music roles of our Senior Sailors. The core music responsibility of a Petty Officer Musician is in the role of a Group Leader. The core music responsibility of the Chief Petty Officer Musician is in the role of an Assistant Band Leader (in the full-time detachments) and Bandmaster (in the part-time detachments). Our Group Leaders should be actively involved in rehearsing and training our musicians, and on some occasions actually leading small ensembles or groups such as a rock group and small jazz or chamber ensembles. The Assistant Band Leaders should be actively involved in rehearsing and training the Concert Band, Big Band and Parade Band, and on some occasions actually leading and directing the Parade Band and Big Band. Bandmasters are expected to be fully engaged in actually leading all of the music ensembles within the part-time detachments. This is a long-standing model for military bands around the world and for which our training is based. There may be an argument that this model and training requirement is also due for an overhaul, and this too may also need to be addressed.

During my visits to the various detachments my observation has been that few of our Senior Sailors are actually engaged in their core responsibility either as Group Leaders, Assistant Band Leaders or Bandmasters. This may be because they have become more comfortable in the management discipline and haven't been driven (self or directed) towards maintaining the 'music leadership' energy to enable them to maintain the confidence to rehearse, train and lead what is unquestionably a highly skilled group of Junior Sailors. It is clear to me that where I have observed 'music leadership' from within the Senior Sailor cohort that higher standards of output have also been present.

In the Chief Petty Officer cohort, it is my assessment that there are only two out of the eight Chief Petty Officers who have demonstrated the drive and passion to seek out 'music leadership' opportunities. Of the current (and soon to be promoted) 12 Petty Officers only five are actually engaged in 'music leadership' activities with the remainder seemingly more comfortable in non music related tasks. This drives my assessment that a significant number of our Senior Sailors appear more comfortable behind a computer or involved in administrative tasks rather than in front of a detachment of music ensemble.

I believe that this situation, if my assessment is correct, is the Achilles heel to our future capability needs. Unless I can be convinced otherwise (through weight of argument and persuasion) I intend to address the 'music leadership' imbalance, as I did previously with instrument/rank imbalances, through posting action over the next six month period in combination with also managing other capability risk issues and in order to grow and encourage our future music leaders. Please give this some thought so that your voice and argument is fully heard during discussion of this item.

This is an agenda item at the forthcoming combined Senior Leadership Group and Bandmasters meeting for which I look forward to some healthy discussion.