

EMPLOYERS HOLD ONTO HATS WITH HARD WORKING RESERVISTS

Rap jumping face down a vertical drop, running through an obstacle course and pushing a zodiac dingy to its limits on Darwin Harbour are not everyone's idea of a relaxing weekend.

But for 13 Top End employers on Exercise Executive Stretch, watching NORFORCE soldiers in action went a long way towards explaining why Reserves make such outstanding civilian employees.

"The professionalism and motivation of the NORFORCE people who showed us around, their energy and motivation, was indicative of the quality of defence staff generally," said Todd Sinclair, a Palmerston resident who works in Human Resources for the NT government.

Exercise Executive Stretch is coordinated by the Directorate of Reserve Support in conjunction with the Defence Reserves Support Council.

Colonel Peter Herdon, who led the team running this year's NT EES, said the event had met its goals of educating civilian decision-makers.

"The exercise was all about developing these employers' understanding of the vital roles played by Reservists in the Defence Force," Colonel Herdon said.

"The activities demonstrated the transferable skills Reservists bring to the civilian workforce from their defense training. Leadership, organisational capacity, occupational health and safety and logical decision-making are as applicable to civilian employment as they are to serving in the Navy, Army or Air Force.

"The NORFORCE activities in zodiacs on Darwin Harbor showed the employers some of the skills used by personnel patrolling Australia's borders. Transferring between boats and traveling at high speeds were exciting experiences. EES was an opportunity to educate employers about Reserves but was also good fun."

"It was awesome," Mr Sinclair agreed. "You'd pay hundreds of dollars to do the same thing in Sydney Harbour for half an hour and we were out there for more than three hours!

"The men and women operating the boats just love what they do, all the equipment was superbly functional and reliable and we were in safe hands," he said.

A keen outdoor enthusiast, Mr Sinclair's only prior experience with the Defence Force had been "a few years as an Air Force Cadet".

"The ADF has certainly come a long way in the past 20 years," Mr Sinclair said.

“I was very impressed with the level of technology Defence is successfully employing to train its people.

“When we were having a shot on the weapons training facility, realistic simulations and dedicated software gave us instant, relevant feedback not only about how accurately we were shooting but also how we could improve. These facilities (flight and weapons simulators) are a massive benefit to training.

“Before I went on the exercise, I wasn’t aware of the extent of Reservists’ involvement in the permanent Defence Force. The weekend was an effective demonstration of the transferable skill sets that Reservists bring back from their Defence work to their civilian jobs.”

For more information on this and other employer support programs coordinated by the Directorate of Reserve Support go to www.defence.gov.au/reserves or call 1800 83 485.