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Safety Recommendation:

The loss of Dauphin experience identified in this report has been recognised and reported on previously by others. However it has not been successfully dealt with to date. The Department of Defence should urgently develop personnel management strategies which adequately address this issue.

Response:

The Department of Defence informed the AAIU by letter dated 31 March 2006 that: "*The Service Commitment Scheme was introduced in 1997 for pilot officers of the Air Corps. The Scheme applied primarily to experienced Air Corps pilots currently rated on and flying the principal operational aircraft of the Air Corps i.e. Gulf Stream IV, Beechcraft, CASA and Dauphin. The Scheme was introduced with a view to assisting in the retention in service of experienced operational pilots in key areas such as Search & Rescue, Maritime Surveillance and Ministerial Air Transport. The gratuities available under the Scheme were designed to strike a fair and reasonable balance between the demands of the external commercial environment and the need to exercise due responsibility in relation to public service pay.*

The first phase of the Scheme was originally offered to selected personnel over a two year period, from August 1997 to July 1999 inclusive. As a significant and innovative incentive scheme, it both stabilised the loss of key pilots from the Air Corps and created an environment of some predictable manpower certainty for the medium term.

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