



The Forge: Lives in Leadership Podcast - Australian Defence College

SHOW NOTES

Episode Summary, Highlights and Full Transcript

SEASON 01: EPISODE 01

Guest: RADM Lee Goddard

Host: Dr Lucas Marie



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Lives in Leadership explores leadership in demanding environments, featuring insights from experienced practitioners drawn across Defence, government, industry, and academia. Through sharing compelling stories and perspectives, the podcast explores military leadership, ethics, culture, and service in the Profession of Arms. The podcast focuses on insights in joint and integrated appointments at the operational and strategic level. It complements existing single-service professional military development platforms.



S01E01 - RADM Lee Goddard – Episode Summary

Duration: 37 minutes

Key Themes: Leadership fundamentals, High performing teams, Command presence, Absent leadership, Career transitions, Inclusive leadership

Overview: In this inaugural episode of Lives in Leadership, Dr. Lucas Marie sits down with Rear Admiral Lee Goddard to explore military leadership, ethics, and service in the Australian Defence Force. With 34 years of naval experience spanning operational command, strategic policy, and private sector leadership, Lee offers profound insights into what it takes to lead effectively across different environments.

Key Discussion Points

The Essence of Leadership

Lee distils leadership into five core principles:

- always turning up and setting the tone,
- taking daily accountability for leading,
- giving people what they need (not always what they want),
- knowing your people deeply, and
- unblocking barriers so teams can succeed.

He emphasises that leadership failures often stem from not knowing something critical about team members.

High Performing Teams

Drawing from both naval command and offshore sailing (including chairing the Sydney to Hobart yacht race), Lee identifies five essential traits:

- common purpose and vision,
- good processes that become principles and behaviours,
- effective communication,
- high trust, and
- role clarity.



He notes that role clarity is often the missing ingredient, even in otherwise strong teams.

Command Presence and Adaptation

Through vivid stories from the bridge of HMAS Perth and HMAS Parramatta, Lee reveals the "act of command"—projecting calm authority even in moments of personal uncertainty. He candidly shares how observing his Captain's composure during a crisis shaped his own leadership approach decades later.

Transitioning Between Worlds

Lee discusses the challenges of adapting leadership styles across military, government, and commercial sectors. From commanding the Surface Fleet to working in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, he learned that "what got you here won't get you there." He emphasises the importance of unlearning certain military habits, moving from directive command to collaborative influence, and earning credibility through action rather than rank.

The Inclusive Leadership Review

As lead of the ADF's Inclusive Leadership Review, Lee examined why some personnel felt excluded despite the organisation's strong leadership reputation. He identified three critical concerns: junior leaders unprepared or unwilling to lead, leaders too busy with administrative tasks to actually lead, and the "centre" losing awareness of conditions in less visible units. The overarching issue: absent leadership.

Practical Leadership Wisdom

Lee advocates for five meaningful daily conversations with team members, emphasizing that the disproportionate return in performance and loyalty is remarkable. He stresses the importance of "rounds"—regular, visible engagement with teams—and warns against the dangers of leaders being too occupied to know their people.



Four Dimensions of Leadership

Beyond leading, effective leaders must also manage well, mentor their successors, and practice followership—both modelling how to follow and creating environments for active followership where diverse voices contribute.

Memorable Quotes

"When you first come on board, people say 'that's the captain.' Three months later, if you're successful, they say 'that's my captain.'"

"What got you here won't get you there—you need to rewire, and as much as you need to learn new things, you have to unlearn things."

"Your stories get you a couple of weeks' worth of credibility. After four weeks, people say start doing something."

About the Guest

Rear Admiral Lee Goddard's distinguished 34-year Royal Australian Navy career includes commanding warships, managing maritime operations, and shaping defence policy. He has served as CEO of the Australian Missile Corporation and led significant reviews, including the ADF's Inclusive Leadership Review. His experience spans operational command at sea, whole-of-government roles including the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and leadership of Maritime Border Command.

Resources & References

[Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race](#)
[Australian Missile Corporation](#)
[Minderoo Foundation](#)
[Operation Sovereign Borders](#)
[HMAS Perth](#)
[HMAS Parramatta](#)
[HMAS Anzac](#)
[HMAS Tobruk](#)



S01E01 - RADM Lee Goddard – Time Stamped Highlights

01:16 - What Leadership Means: Turning Up, Leading, Knowing People, Unblocking.

02:39 - Unblocking Explained: Removing Barriers for Your Team.

03:22 - Knowing Your People: When Behaviour Changes, Look Deeper.

04:42 - How Leadership Evolves with Seniority: From Self to Systems & Culture.

05:55 - The 5 Traits of High-Performing Teams (Sydney–Hobart Lessons).

08:24 - Calm Under Pressure: The ‘Act of Command’ on the Bridge.

10:38 - From ‘The Captain’ to ‘My Captain’: Earning Trust Over Time.

11:53 - Command Presence vs Collaboration: Adapting from Sea to Canberra.

13:11 - Leading in PM&C: Dropping Assumptions and Learning People’s Stories.

16:40 - Cross-Agency Leadership: Respect, Bias, and Working with Border Force.

18:17 - Practical Habits: Five Meaningful Conversations a Day.

18:37 - Know Your People: Performance, Loyalty, and Reading the Room.

19:06 - Rewiring for New Environments: Military to Government to Commercial.

20:33 - What Makes Transitions Work: Credibility Wears Off, Then the Real Work Starts.

21:53 - Inclusive Leadership Review: Why Defence Took a Hard Look in 2023.



25:18 - Three Findings: Unprepared Leaders, Admin Overload, and the 'Last 20/40' Gap.

28:26 - Just Lead': Visibility, Rounds, and Why Presence Changes Morale.

32:25 - Inclusion as a Force Multiplier: Leadership, Management, Mentoring & Followership.

34:22 – Advice: to Future ADF Leaders.



S01E01 - RADM Lee Goddard – Full Transcript

[00:00:00] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Welcome to Lives in Leadership. This podcast is dedicated to promoting thoughtful and strategic conversations about military leadership, ethics, culture, and service in the profession of arms within the Australian Defence Force. My name is Dr. Lucas Marie, and in today's episode, I'm joined by Rear Admiral Lee Goddard.

His 34 year career in the Royal Australian Navy has been characterised by leadership at sea and in strategic national security roles. Lee has made significant contributions across operational policy and strategic domains. His leadership experience includes commanding warships, managing maritime operations, and helping to shape defence policy.

Beyond his military service, Rear Admiral Goddard has brought his expertise to the private sector; serving as CEO of the Australian Missile Corporation and working on innovative projects on sovereign defence capabilities.

Lee, welcome to the Lives in Leadership Podcast. Thank you for joining us.

[00:01:10] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Thanks Lucas. I really appreciate that introduction. So probably more than I deserve, but I'll take it. So, cheers.

[00:01:16] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Lee. Having commanded ships, led crisis responses and now reviewed leadership across the ADF, I really want to ask, what does leadership mean to you?

[00:01:25] **RADM Lee Goddard:** As I reflect on my leadership journey, and it's been far from perfect, I look forward to sharing some of my stories of when things went well and perhaps when they didn't go so well. I think there's probably five things.

One is, leadership is about always turning up, setting the examples, setting the tone.

Secondly, is just simply leading, making sure that you, every day realise that you have an accountability and responsibility as a leader to simply lead.



Leadership is also about giving those who work, and I guess that you actually lead giving them what they need every day, not necessarily what they want. Sometimes they're the same, but they're quite different.

Leadership's about knowing your people. And in fact, I think that's been a strength of mine and sometimes it's been a shortcoming.

And then finally I think as a leader at my stage in the career is actually every day reflecting and looking down saying, how can I unblock so that the people I'm leading can get on and do the jobs that they need? Especially when you're working in the Government or the Canberra environment, how can you unblock, and as a leader, you have an accountability and responsibility to do that every single day.

[00:02:39] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Can I ask what you mean by unblock?

[00:02:42] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Well, you often find that your team want to do things and they want to do it really well, but there's always a barrier that maybe, perhaps is either artificial or it's real, or maybe you are even contributing to as a leader.

So, you look down and think if you want to move more effectively and faster, more efficiently, how can you unblock as a leader on behalf of your team. So, looking down, and of course, you know, managing up, managing sideways, managing down, of course, is all part of leadership. But in particular, unblocking down is a really critical part of leadership in the Canberra whole government and in the environment that we find ourselves when, especially in the national security environment.

[00:03:22] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And I really like the point you said about knowing your people. I feel like, in terms of, you know, having oversight on some of the units and some of the, I guess, organisations that you've had to lead, knowing your people can be, it's an easy thing to say, but what does it actually look like in practice? Are there any examples you have of, of knowing or not knowing your people and how that's kind of led to success or failure in some kind of particular way?



[00:03:47] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Yes, I think when I've been best as a leader, it's because I've really known my people. And perhaps from time to time when I failed as a leader because I didn't know something about somebody in my team, and for an example is that somebody might turn up at work and they do something, which is, it could be insubordinate, it could be they could be late, and often your inkling is to perhaps throw them under the bus and deal with a bad behaviour. Sure. Sometimes you have to address it, but often you have to reflect why is that person behaving or different today?

What didn't I pick up? Take a moment to go back and find out. And you often find that people, if they're behaving differently, it's because there's an issue in their life or there's some kind of maybe external or internal factor that perhaps you should have picked on. And good leaders, they're not perfect, but if they know their people, they'll pick up on those factors.

[00:04:40] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah, that's a good point. You also talked about the differences of leadership in different sorts of, whether it's defence or government or industry. What have you come to understand about leadership perhaps that you didn't like, appreciate fully earlier in your career? You know, maybe joining the defence forces as a vision of leadership, a version of leadership may perhaps that works well in that context and has that changed over time? Or what have, what have you learned about the journey that you've been on?

[00:05:05] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Well, I think early in your career you know, your leadership journey's very, very personal about you as a leader and maybe perhaps how you're directing a team and driving things into black and white versus ambiguity.

In fact, as a leader you should be very good at working in ambiguity, but trying to provide as much black and white, uh, direction and environment to the team that you actually are leading, but of course, as you get more senior or more experienced, you then focus on the organisation; you know, creating systems, processes, cultures to allow others to lead.



And that's a critical thing as you know as you move through your career, rather. Sure, it's still a personal journey, you've still got to focus on yourself. From time to time look in the mirror and still turn up and do all those, those traits that I spoke about, you know, as a leader. But yeah, that's where the change is, how you are setting the tone for the organisation.

High performing teams have five attributes, and I'm involved of course, in offshore sailing and I chair the senior Hobart yacht race and, and often get asked a question, how can you get a team together saying early December, and two or three weeks later, they're taking on one of the most physically and challenging sporting events in the world as a high performing team?

And there's five traits that I focus on. One is to make sure that team has common, a common purpose, a common vision, and that you as a leader are articulating it well and everyone owns it.

The second is that you have good processes in place, which then turn into good principles and then turn into good behaviours. Everyone goes straight to behaviours and principles, but you still need to have good processes. Everyone knows their job and does it well.

You've got to have good communications. You got to be talking to each other. You and in any organisation, externally. Internally, good communications.

Forth, you've got to have a high level of trust and that's hard earned sometimes.

And the fifth one, which I find is often the shortcoming in high performing teams is role clarity. If you get role clarity and that's why in even those toughest situations in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race, and even I've seen it at sea, and when I've been on a bridge, when it gets really tough.

If you have those five traits of the high performing team, things just happen and they happen really well, especially with role clarity, trust, good communication, good processes and common vision. You know, when it's not going well because those who normally talk a lot shut up, and those who normally don't say much, start talking.



You think, well, this isn't going so well. So how's your leader? How are you going to bring it back to that high performing team and getting those five traits back into place again.

[00:07:33] **Dr Lucas Marie:** That's wonderful. I really like those five traits. Is there like a particular example that but you know, particularly in the ADF, that that might be useful to think about those traits in practice?

[00:07:44] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Well, I think, well, again, as a leader, when things aren't going well there's a lot of ambiguity and you are trying to drive the situation into a black and white environment for those who you are leading, so they can then get on and do the things. They then revert to good processes; they revert to good communication. They trust each other and they revert to, you know, role clarity. People know what to do when they, so I think that's really you're setting the tone member. As a leader, though you are coming to work in that ambiguity, that's fine. That's sometimes an advantage. Um, but often in those kinds of crisis situations, it's driving back to those traits of a high performing team.

I can give plenty of examples where I have had to act very calm in a situation when you're actually as a leader, you're anything but calm. But of course, you've got to turn up, and you've got to make sure your team sees you as a leader and starts to drive these outcomes.

I've told the story before, one of my first memories of being on a warship was in the Malacca Strait. It was on HMAS Perth in 1990, and then, the captain, he wouldn't mind me saying his name because I've just been working with him, was Captain Chris Embold. And I remember it was all going bad at three o'clock in the morning in the middle of the Malacca straight, the busiest sea lane, then in the world, literally a Singapore Rait.

And I remember, um, the officer of the watch and I was the junior officer, called the captain to the bridge and Captain Oxen bowl came to the bridge at three o'clock in the morning. Everyone said, that's my captain. Um, the bridge parted, he put on his binoculars. Went to the uh, bridge window, said a few things, sat down and the tone was set and it was just calm again and everything, everyone reverted to the high performing traits.



[00:09:31] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right?

[00:09:33] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Fast forward about 20 years later, I was commanding HMAS, in fact, it was actually HMAS Parramatta. I did command an HMAS and it was one of the first times I'd gone to see it was about three o'clock in the morning, not far actually from where I'd had that incident. Uh, you know, in 1990. I think it was in 2007, again, I was called to the bridge.

The, the junior officer of the watch was doing the right thing. Captain, I need your support. This isn't going well. There's ships everywhere. Bridge parted. I calmly grabbed the monocular, went to the bridge window. Everyone looked to the back of my head, and all of a sudden, the tone was calm. I. Me, I'm looking through the binoculars going, what the hell am I going to do now?

So, so that's, there's actually a bit of an act of command But the fact that I was actually able to lie the tone, I actually, um, spoke to now Admiral Chris Embold about it years later and asked about him and he said, I did exactly the same thing, you know, interesting. Learned the tone, but the same thing.

Looked over the binoculars and thought, my goodness, this is, this is a tough situation, but just portrayed, you know, that act of calm to make sure that Yeah. As, as a leader. Because everyone's watching you, it's interesting. On a warship. I often, get asked about when, you know you've succeeded as a captain by commanding officers.

And it's, I always say there's an example that I had early in my command on HMO's Parramatta was when you first come on board, uh, people referred to you as the captain,

[00:10:58] **Dr Lucas Marie:** right?

[00:10:58] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Because you are the captain, you're a person of authority, and you go down the, main passageway and you may find a sailor, and it may be with his parents or his girlfriend or boyfriend.



And as you walk past, they say, that's the captain. You know, you're successful because three months later they've observed you, they've observed you in those tough situations. You've set the tone. You've, um, uh, provided the framework for those traits of a, you know, of a high performing team. And that three months later you go past that same junior sailor with his mom or dad or boyfriend or girlfriend.

And I don't say that's the captain. They say, that's my captain.

[00:11:30] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right.

[00:11:31] **RADM Lee Goddard:** It changes the whole dynamic. 'cause now you are. Very important to them as their leader. It's my captain, not the captain. And I reckon that's when you know you're being successful as a leader on board, a warship.

[00:11:42] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah. That connection to the team.

That's correct. Yeah. Really interesting. That's a great story as well to think about the practical, the practical nature of holding that sort of command role. Mm-hmm. Right? That you're dealing with an uncertain, ambiguous, maybe high pressure environment, but how. Yeah. What practices or what things that you do you need to do to kind of perform a sense of, um, I, I guess I know what you, what word you'd call it?

Leadership. A command. Um, a sense of stability for the team so that they know that they can trust you and that it's, um, you know, to do their job well. They can't be dealing with that uncertain, ambiguous environment. That sort of, maybe something you need to take on. I think that's really fascinating

[00:12:22] **RADM Lee Goddard:** and that's command presence.

And of course that's very different from, uh, maybe a leadership demeanour. Here in Canberra. Right. Or, or in, you know, the whole of government space. It works very effectively at sea.

[00:12:33] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yep.



[00:12:34] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Very effectively, maybe in that military environment, but then you need to adapt to a different environment when you're here in Canberra.

So that, I guess that directive style or command presence, versus the, collaborative influencing style that you then need to shift to. It's very important that you don't conflate the two. I was very privileged to, um, I guess command the surface force. A surface fleet in Sydney. Yeah. And it was, um, you know, it was, yeah, 18 warships, lots of sailors, soldiers, public servants in Sydney.

Very operational and a fantastic role. My next position was actually to arrive in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. So from, and they often say that the most iest people in Canberra ex-com commanding officers and ex ambassadors, because you go from this very privileged position, uh, you know, as a, as a commander

[00:13:27] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:13:27] **RADM Lee Goddard:** To really to working maybe in an office environment in Canberra. And, and, and unlike you know, when you're a say commander for the Surface Force, everyone wears uniforms. Everyone wears name tags. You actually can tell everyone has medals. You can tell a lot about a person before they've even spoken to you.

You go to somewhere like Prime Minister and Cabinet for the first time. Everyone's in a suit. No one wears name tags, no one wears uniforms. You cannot assume anything. Yeah, you actually have to get to know people. Um, and that's when I made some mistakes. I actually misjudged a couple of people from, you know, the first or second day I met them because of way I engaged them.

Um, an example would be I met a young professional public servant who'd been in PMC Promise and Cabinet for about 12 months.

[00:14:10] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yep.



[00:14:11] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Uh, when I first met him, I, I thought I was, you know, I was meeting Smithers to Montgomery Burns out of The Simpsons. Just the way he dressed and conducted himself was very Australian Defence Force.

People can be very judgmental. You are not like us. but within a week, um, I got to know this person. He turned out to be one of the hardest-working people. He'd come up from a single-parent family. He'd worked hard. His mother had worked hard, and boy oh boy, could he write. And he, it turned out to be, you know, a very close professional, um, colleague, but also a close friend.

And he made me look good. I mean, I thought I could write, I did the, uh, ONA or this, the o then ONA, now ONI, riding course, and got taken apart like most military officers. Um, versus me completely right. Relying on this individual. And the more I got to, uh, know him, as I said, the more I liked him as a human, as a person.

[00:15:05] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And it was,

[00:15:06] **RADM Lee Goddard:** you know, there was a, and a very di even though he was working for me, our relationship was very different from say, my relationship with that sailor. It was with his parents saying, that's my catch.

[00:15:15] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:15:16] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Yeah. So, and, and it was, and I really enjoyed that period of adaption.

[00:15:20] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Definitely. It's interesting because I do think, I mean, I've only been.

Working for the Department of Defence for two years. But I understand that honours and awards are a useful way, not just to know, you know who I'm speaking to, but to understand the experience of how long they've perhaps been in a certain unit, what they've done where, and I think it's a useful way to kind of start to build a sort of connection with that person.



They're kind of understanding them, whereas Yes, of course, and I'm sure in PM and C, that's, it's really hard. You've got to. You, you don't really know where they've come from, what, what they've done, what their skills and strengths are, and you have to kind of, I don't know, what would, what would you say are sort of the, the qualities of leadership that you need to, to navigate that space?

[00:15:59] **RADM Lee Goddard:** People just get to know your people. Yeah. I think, and first of all, just what you said, Lucas is incredibly respectful for you to talk about the Australian defence source and realise that medals and uniform is important to them. And it's a story that's high EQ and by to tell a DF people, they've got to do the same.

They've got to actually appreciate, they're now in maybe a different environment and find out the stories of, you know, and you'll be surprised about where people, why people join the Department of Defence as a public servant. And you'll find that there's a lot of great Australians who care about their country, worked hard and they may have a reason they couldn't join the military. There might've been a physical reason or some other reason, et cetera as well, but they're still there in focus and that kind of mutual respect is really important.

I had the privilege, again, of commanding the Maritime Border Command and Operation Sovereign Borders, and that covers about 14 or 15 government agencies in terms of intelligence agencies and other supporting groups. But primarily, it's the Australian Border Force and the Australian Defence Force. And when I arrived, there was always a natural tension between the defence force and the border force because they're different and different focuses. But I realised that with the Border Force, all they wanted was respect. To respect who they are, where they joined, where they came from. That disproportionate respect versus a return of loyalty and performance was quite significant. So you just have to remind yourself of that. I'll go back to my point that, you know, it's not a fault by the Australian Defence Force; we actually are a high performer.



We, we, most of us join 'cause we wanna serve our country. Um, and we, um, and we want to, you know, um, uh, be in high performing teams. Um, and then when we perceive that somebody isn't quite like us, we have this unconscious bias, you've gotta try and get over that because there's a lot of upper really good people trying to do really good work, and you need to respect that.

[00:17:53] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Definitely. And it's, it is, I think what you said about role clarity earlier speaks to that we, you know, we want to know what. We all have skills and strengths. We've had certain, you know, expertise is a word that's often flown like that. I hear a lot at the training centre. You know, what, when, what's your SME?

And I wonder if you can speak to that in terms of the work you've done in government and, and with Border Force because,

[00:18:17] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Well, firstly, um, and going back to my military experience, you know, as a, as a commander, as a leader, to have five really meaningful conversations. So in a warship with its say, 200 people, with five people every day.

And find out what's important to them. Mm-hmm. And whether it be their family, their work, you should do it because it's a right, 'cause you should know your people. But the disproportional return in terms of performance, I guess loyalty, commitment to, you know, the common purpose, it's remarkable.

And also, you will pick up when people are not. Uh, either performing to their potential or they're having a bad day. As I said, most people do not start the day saying, I'm gonna make it bad for you as a leader.

[00:19:02] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right?

[00:19:02] **RADM Lee Goddard:** It's because there's something generally happening in their life, but if you actually understand them.



Again, my transitions in leadership have been from, um, you know, from, from a very military environment, you know, at Sea Joint Task Force to then coming to the government, you know, doing two kind of, uh, back, well, three kind of back to back holder government roles from Prime Minister and Cabinet, you know, leading the APEC task force.

[00:19:24] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:19:25] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Um, maritime border command operations, sovereign borders, and then that was, you know, act two in some ways,

[00:19:31] **Dr Lucas Marie:** right.

[00:19:31] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Act three then of course was transitioning again from. Military into, uh, the, the, I guess the philanthropy and commercial world when I joined, uh, Andrew Forrest's MRU Foundation. Yep. And then, you know, but is ju technology.

So I've actually had to make transitions in terms of my leadership style, um, and also how I've, uh, my journey and actually understanding the people I'm working with as well. Yeah. And, and the, the other thing, um, as a general rule as well, when you, you in the military, you are. U usually the leader is the most experienced and generally older.

Um, not always, but that's often been a common trait. Of course, when you move into, say, holy government, or in the commercial world, that doesn't ring true and you've actually gotta adapt. Um, as a, as I've often told people who ask my advice about transitioning, you know, from different phases of, of your career or, or life, what got you here didn't get you there,

[00:20:25] **Dr Lucas Marie:** right?



[00:20:25] **RADM Lee Goddard:** You need to rewire. And as much as you need to learn new things, you have to unlearn things. Final observations, if I may. Just about transitions. Yeah. And, um, having seen my kind of cohort, say from the military transition into either whole of government or, um, or the commercial world or to do something different, I, I have been surprised, again by those who I didn't think would do it so well, who've done it brilliantly and others who I thought would do it well, who did not do it as well; and there's probably three reasons.

One is, um, when you transition, especially, you know, into say a government agency, your stories get you a couple of weeks' worth of credibility and gravitas. And then, uh, but after about four weeks, people say, start doing something. Yeah, start working. Pull your sleeves up.

Even as a Commodore in Prime Minister and Cabinet, you know, I was still expected to write and get in there, et cetera as well. And I found that those, uh, leaders who actually, do very well, can start things, actually can start things from scratch, actually, have the ability to do it, not just inherit something and make it a little bit better time iteratively.

So I've found that you need to rewire unlearned. Um, get over yourself, tell your stories, then get 'em outta the way.

[00:21:39] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:21:40] **RADM Lee Goddard:** And then actually start working hard again and have the ability to start things, and then you actually will become a much better leader and a much better performer in your new environments.

[00:21:49] **Dr Lucas Marie:** It's a great point, I think about unlearning. I think it's really useful. I think it might be a nice, um, place to talk about inclusive leadership actually. Mm. And talk about this concept of unlearning or different sorts of, you know, priorities that people have. And I wonder if you could just maybe talk about the Inclusive Leadership review.



[00:22:07] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Mm.

[00:22:08] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Um, if there's anything else you want to add about unlearning or, um, 'cause I, I think it's such a useful and interesting concept in, in terms of not just working across the ADF environment, but in the environments you talked about.

[00:22:20] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Yeah. Look, um, and when I say unlearning, there's so many good qualities and, and experiences that, you know, military people or, or whole government people or, you know, bring.

You know, not just to the Canberra environment or you know, to the Australian society, but there are things that you do need to let go, you know, uh, you know, from a military perspective, and there's no kind of hard and fast rule for each person.

[00:22:43] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right.

[00:22:43] **RADM Lee Goddard:** But there are, you know, you know, as I said, you, you're influencing people rather than directing people for a start.

[00:22:48] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:22:49] **RADM Lee Goddard:** And you said gravitas. Well, I didn't get so far in terms of the inclusive leadership review. I was asked to do that in early 2023. By then Chief of the Defence Force, Angus Campbell. Yep. Who had reflected on, a number of surveys in particular of, of ADF people leaving the Defence Force. And perhaps saying, look, you know, um, my experience was okay, but I wasn't included as much. So I could have been if I had a different kind of leader who kind of had led me and perhaps had looked out for me or knew me better. Perhaps I would've stayed on. I mean, there were other reasons for doing an inclusive leadership, but I think there was a sense that, uh, there were examples, um, perhaps overseas of what militaries had done to adapt in terms of inclusive leadership, and also other parts of Australian society.



And I'd already looked at leadership in the fly-in, fly-out industry. And I've also looked at it in the building industry as well. Small teams. Far from the centre and how they behave and how they look after their people and how they, maintain the values and the core objectives of the centre.

So that really was the, uh, catalyst for the review. Um, and to be frank, I think there was an assumption, the Australian Defence Force, we must be the, you know, the exemplary academy for leadership. And, no one can tell us leadership. I think Angus Campbell is saying, well, no, I think we just need to challenge, have we got the right settings in place? Especially those small teams furthest away from the centre, where there had been, um, to be frank, some disappointing issues perhaps with bullying.

[00:24:30] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:24:30] **RADM Lee Goddard:** With high separation rates and, and it's worse people feeling really bad about themselves and therefore leading to other significant issues, which of course have been reviewed. So, through that journey, we formed a small team, to be frank, a couple of high-performing Australian Defence Force individuals. And a couple of people who were high performing but had experienced, um, those negative

[00:24:58] **Dr Lucas Marie:** right,

[00:24:58] **RADM Lee Goddard:** um, experiences that, that I just alluded to. So we got them together, um, with a few others and we actually did some surveys.

We went out, spoke to people. We went out and looked at the fly in flight industry. We looked at a police force, we looked at a couple of other militaries about world's best practice and, and Australian best practice, et cetera. Um. And there's probably three major outcomes which concerned me, which I reported on.

One was, especially our junior leaders in those small teams far from the centre, some of them weren't being prepared or trained or educated for the role.



[00:25:32] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:32] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Um, and to be frank, uh, some of them didn't even want to be the leader. But we just because of their rank or their experience. Right. They were just told, you will lead that team at 20.

[00:25:42] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yep.

[00:25:43] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Um, and because of that, you actually had in some cases where, uh, another person took over that leadership role. It could almost be alpha male, alpha, alpha, alpha female behaviour, and it really changed the dynamics. Mm-hmm. And the core values of the Defence Force or of Australia were being lost.

Um, the second phenomenon which concerned me was that leaders these days are very busy with other things outside of leadership. Sure, there's a core professional, um, uh, responsibilities, uh, but in terms of administration, et cetera as well, the time to actually lead and know the people is, uh, is, is being lost.

Um, and then, yeah. And then thirdly, um, I think, uh. The, uh, the centre of an organisation sometimes isn't fully aware of what the last 20 and last 40 is truly doing, right. In particular, it is the more unloved units. Sure, there's the loved units, which everyone's focused on, which probably have high morale, et cetera, but there could be unloved, maybe not as interesting units to the centre or to society.

Where, some of those attributes we want to send high performing teams are kind of lost. So the overarching concern I had was absent leadership. Yeah. People actually not being prepared for leading, sometimes not actually wanting to lead, but being told they were the leader and then leaders being too busy to actually lead.

And so we address that through, um, you know, some, some recommendations. About how the Australian Defence Force could perhaps reflect, perhaps could be, could be better. And certainly there was a, naturally, there's an army, there was an Air Force and a Navy perspective which we incorporated as well.



[00:27:37] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah, I'd love to hear a little bit about that.

And particularly, you know, this notion of absent leadership is interesting because, you know, maybe from one perspective there is the sense that the ADF. You know, at the higher ranks that you go, you become more time poor. And so there is a lot more emphasis to say, you know, you need to be on top of all these.

Whether it's administrative tasks, knowing your team, the actual, you know, meetings and other things you need to go to, and what time does one have to really put into any reflective thinking or problem solving? You know, something that's often said about leadership in a, in a business sense is, you know, they're not just problem solvers, but they're problem finders.

And I mean, that's great to say. In what context did the ADF leadership have time to do that sort of stuff? What did the review say about absent leadership in that regard?

[00:28:26] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Well, first off, if I just turn it around, I found the number of, um, especially junior-ranked people in the Defence force said they just simply wanted a leader.

They wanted to see leadership. They wanted to see, I don't want to use the word strong, but you know, uh, they wanted to be led. Yeah. You know, and when they weren't being led, they were disappointed. That's when you know, So I think we have to remind ourselves, and again, I go back to early in my career, things that really stuck with me.

And I, again, I think it was on HMAS Perth, and essentially it was the night before I was being promoted from Mid Shipman to Sub Lieutenant, may have actually been HMAS Tobruk, and a Leading Seaman, and we'd been living with the sailors, and the next day I was about to become a Sub Lieutenant rather than a Mid Shipman, which is rather than living with the sailors, I was about to live with the officers and the officers' mess, or the Ward Room.



And I remember a Leading Seaman, (a corporal) who'd I got quite close to as you know, someone who kind of looked out for me, et cetera, said:

"Lee. (cause I was just merely a midshipman) tomorrow I'm gonna call you sir, and because you are an officer tomorrow, this is the Australian way, I'll probably have a go at you because you're an officer. But I tell you what, the moment you stop behaving like an officer and the moment you stop leading, that's when I really have a go at you. Now you need to lead. You need to lead this environment. Because we've nurtured, we've worked with you. I need you to lead. I need you to know as sailors, as men (and women, but it was just men back then), going forward."

So the common theme is just simply lead.

[00:29:59] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Mm.

[00:30:00] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Um, another example, actually, I go back to my Navy time, um, on that, on any ship every day.

Um, we do rounds and, and that's, um, you know, you have a ship and rounds is actually an inspection of, of domestics. Where we do rounds every day might be 6:00 PM I think it's for three reasons. One is because you are checking the ship to make sure it's clean, it's, you know, and people. You know, it's in good order.

Sure. That's traditionally, that's why you do rounds, you know, whistles and inspections, and it's one time a day. The second is either the captain or another officer with a petty officer, a chief petty officer will go through every single metric and talk to people, and you'll get a sense of how things are happening.

And the third one, and hopefully this comes across right away, is. The sailor's standard attention and you go through as an officer and everyone knows for that one moment who's in charge, right? Who's the leader? Yeah. That is my leader. That person is accountable to actually lead me.

[00:30:53] **Dr Lucas Marie:** They're not just in some office far away



[00:30:54] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Absolutely. They are leading me and out there. I think that's actually when you do it. Yeah. So when you actually have absent leadership, you first of all, who actually is truly leading? Is that person really well prepared and wants to lead?

And thirdly, are they too busy to actually, to have those conversations? Or, on a ship could say, I'm too busy to do rounds today. And you, if you don't do it for three or four days, you can tell morale changes. You know, people kind of, you know, they, they, you need to continually be engaging your people. I'll give you one other example. Fly and fly out. Um. And I've been to some of those sites.

Um, I've met some of the best leaders and you know, and I've met someone who might seem like they're a, you know, an alpha female or an alpha male when you first meet them, but my goodness, they know their people. Mm-hmm. And my goodness, they care. They really do. And you can see that. And they, you know, high morale, high spirited because that leader really cares about the person.

Sure. Some tough love sometimes as well. Uh, but there has to be, but they actually do really know there's nothing absent about it.

[00:31:58] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah, it's wonderful because, you know, a good leader personally, you might think, well, I'm, I'm fighting for my team. You know, I'm, I'm representing them in all these meetings. But, you know, the team don't maybe see those sorts of fights, but they see, they see who's walking the halls, you know, who's, who's sort of part of their team day to day.

And so I think that that idea of rounds, not just checking, but just, just being seen Yeah. Is really important. Um,

[00:32:21] **RADM Lee Goddard:** and engaging, you know, yeah. Having a genuine, uh, conversation. Can I just say one other thing about inclusive leadership? Yeah. Obviously, when we talk about diversity, it's diversity in every respect, including diversity of thought, but it's also inclusivity of actually ideas and thought, et cetera.



Military, of course, there's a hierarchical system; even in the public service and even in business, there can be hierarchical systems, but you're a far better warship. You're a far better, um, army unit, air Force, you know, squadron, you're a far better, uh, uh, organisation here in Canberra. If you are inclusive and you're getting that diversity of thought, and I always talk about leadership, four aspects.

One is obviously there's leadership. The second part is management, making sure you're a good leader, but you have to be a good manager. You can't, you know, and probably the number of Secretaries of Defence who probably turn to the Defence Force that said, "gee, you produce good leaders. Can you start producing some good managers as well?"

Yeah. You know, so you've got to have both those trades. You've got to lead and manage. Third, you've got to be able to mentor. You know, bring people. You know, and, and in particular, you know, when you're, you're in a captain warship or um, or a leader, you've got to make sure that if you aren't there, will the ship or the unit be as good or if not better, because you are not there.

But the fourth concept, leadership, managing, mentoring, is followership. Followership, I reckon, is in two parts. One is actually showing your team how to follow, how you are loyal, how you are, you know, how to follow and be a follower. The other part of a follow is, is encouraging people to be active followers when they have the opportunity that they get to say things and say it well, because you're creating an environment for active followership, which really is an inclusivity as well.

Mm-hmm. Making sure that you are not missing, you know, this rich, uh, tapestry that you have in a team. And you know, again, especially in Australia, because of our makeup, because of who, you know, we serve a country, but we also reflect a country. When you reflect in the nation you serve that diversity and our, and, and getting that inclusivity of thought is really a false multiplier.

[00:34:22] **Dr Lucas Marie:** I just want to ask sort of one final question, and you've answered it in a bunch of ways, but I'd just like to, like to see if it resonates or there's any other thoughts you have about what advice you'd like to give future leaders in the Australian Defence Force who are striving to make a positive impact.



[00:34:36] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Well, first of all, leadership is an incredibly positive and rewarding experience. I would not, for example, like, someone to say “The best day of my two-year leadership role was the last day” because nothing bad happened, versus the best day should be the first day. Because you've got two years of actually you're either in a Department or in a Navy, Army, Air Force unit to actually lead.

It's a really positive experience. You shouldn't be worried or, you know, because the ADF actually does prepare people well for leadership, much better than we actually give ourselves credit. Um, it's just, uh, sometimes it seems like our leaders are being, you know, held to account, and it's, you know, and it's almost, my goodness, why would I want to do that?

Please don't think like that. It is a wonderful experience, and I look back now about not just the, the, you know, not every day was a good day, you know, the Navy or. With government, et cetera, my career. But my goodness, over great months, great years, I was led by amazing people. I was mentored by amazing people, and I got the opportunity to lead amazing people as well.

So, my reflection really is, um, yeah, just, uh, when you join the Defence Source, um, essentially, at some stage, we are all leaders. Um, and you could be a quiet leader, you can be a loud leader, you can be. You know, a leader of the whole defence. You can be a leader of a small, troop, whatever it may be.

Uh, take those opportunities and, because it's really important that, you know, um, that we continue as Australians, um, you know, continue to nurture and produce good leaders.

[00:36:20] **Dr Lucas Marie:** That was wonderfully said. It was lovely speaking with you, and you spoke so eloquently about so many of the topics. So thank you for joining us, and thanks for your time.



[00:36:28] **RADM Lee Goddard:** Look, and I, can I just say back to you Lucas as well, just, um, you know, your. You're a defence public servant. Yeah. You know, deep experience in anthropology, even the way that you've conducted it's, it's made it really enjoyable for me. Oh, I might not have came across this, but you actually are quite nervous when you're talking about leadership because you're opening yourself up to your own experiences.

Um, but I've actually really enjoyed this interview, so thank you.

[00:36:51] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Thanks, Lee.

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