

# Safety Risk Management In the NZ Army

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# Research: background and methodology

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- Approved by Chief of Army October 2015
- Qualitative, cross-sectional, intrinsic, organisational case study
- Anonymous, non-attributable
- Semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis
- Purposive sampling: commanders at all levels of the deployable army
- Documentary review of 30 safety-related military Courts of Inquiry

# Research: purpose, aim

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## **Purpose**

Research formed basis of dissertation for MSc in Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management, University of Leicester, UK

## **Aim**

To determine the effectiveness of safety risk management in the New Zealand Army.

# Research: focus

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## **Four primary research questions:**

1. How do perceptions of risk affect safety in the NZ Army?
2. Does the NZ Army have a strong safety culture?
3. Does the NZ Army learn from its mistakes?
4. How effectively does the NZ Army manage safety-related risk?

# NZ Army safety

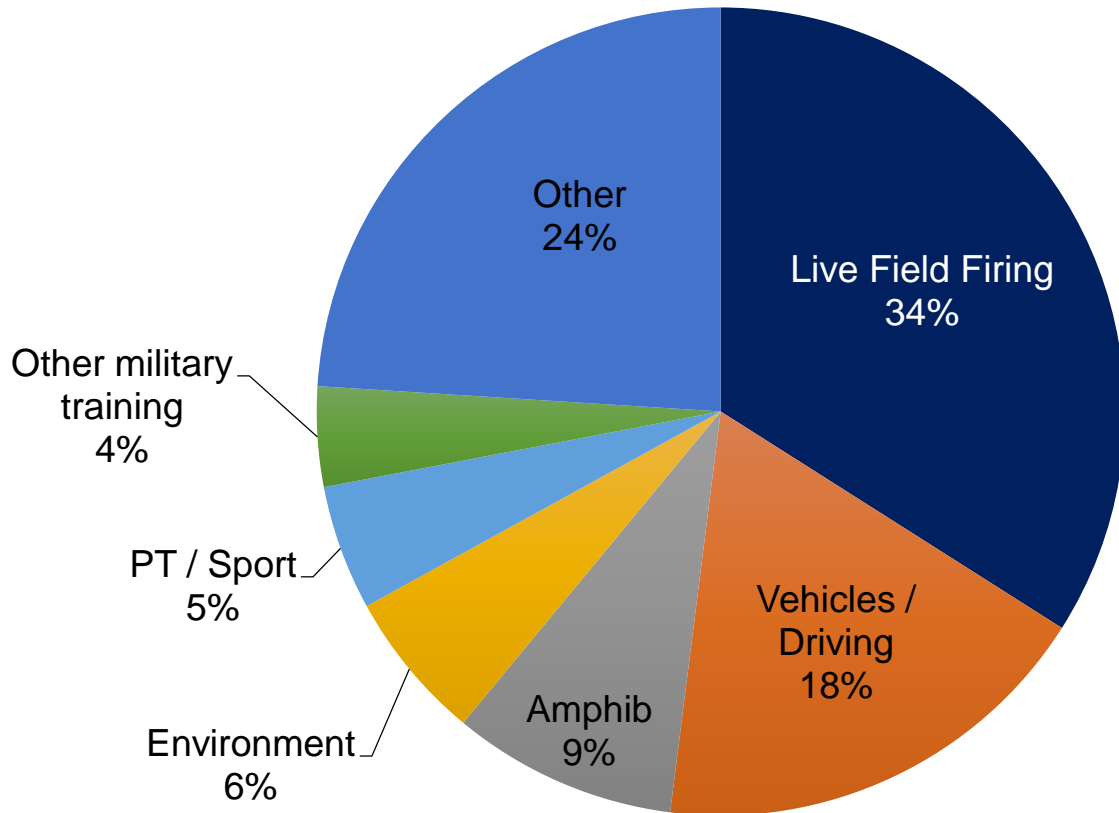
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- Safety is central to effective military training
- Research identifies weaknesses, plenty of strengths
- Some activities meet HRO criteria
  - Live field firing
  - Airborne operations (parachute)
  - Airmobile operations (helicopter)
- Much has been / is being addressed by Army and NZDF leadership.

# Findings: Risk Perception

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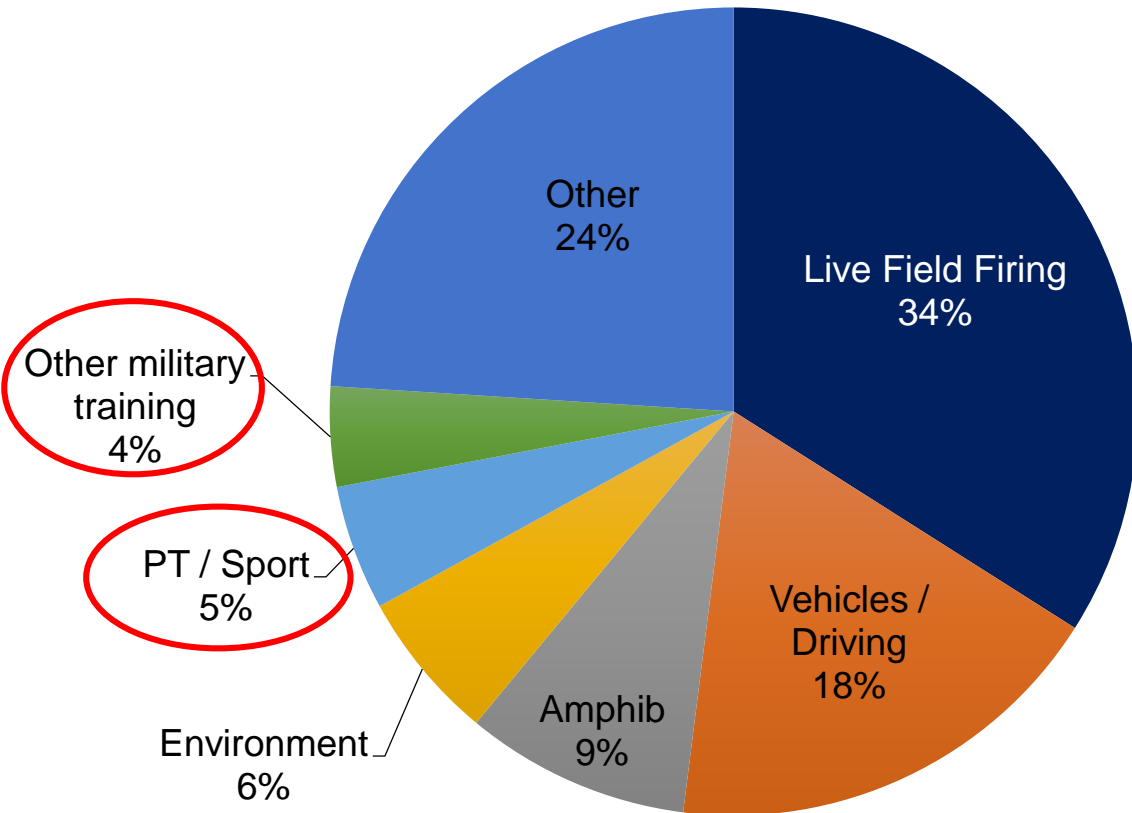
## Perceived



# Findings: Risk Perception

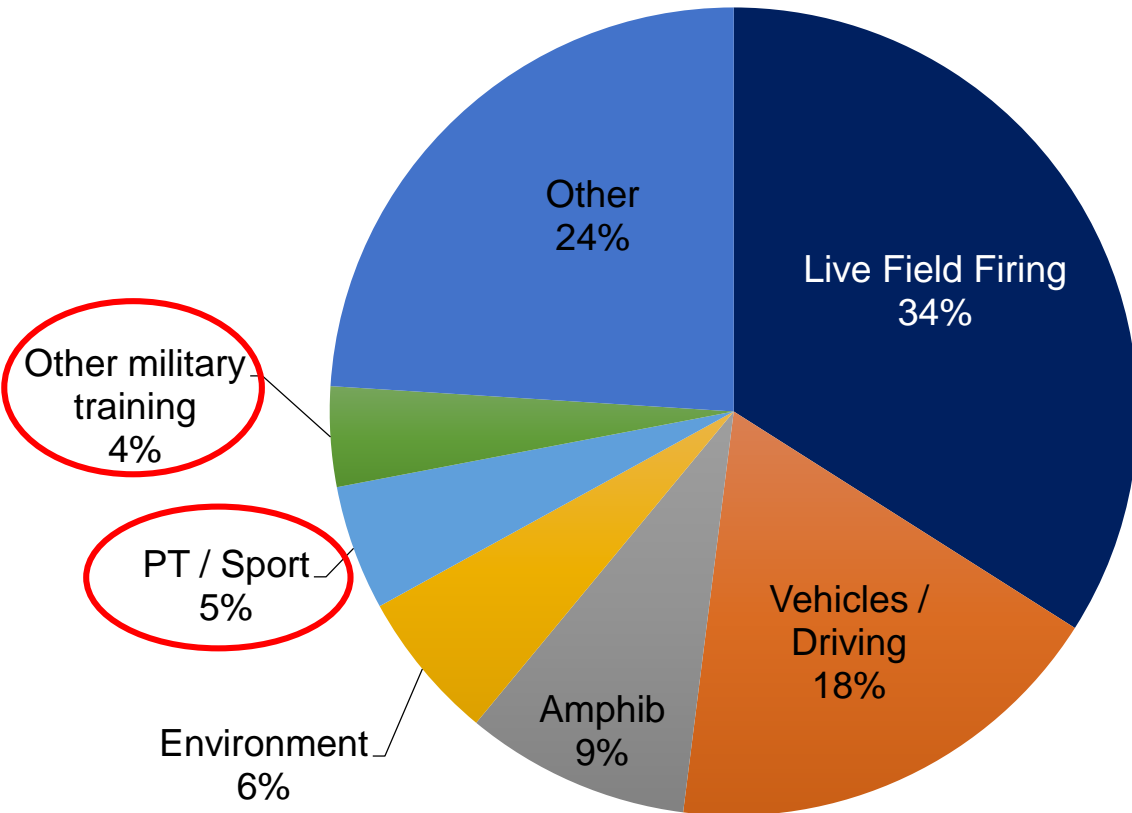
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## Perceived

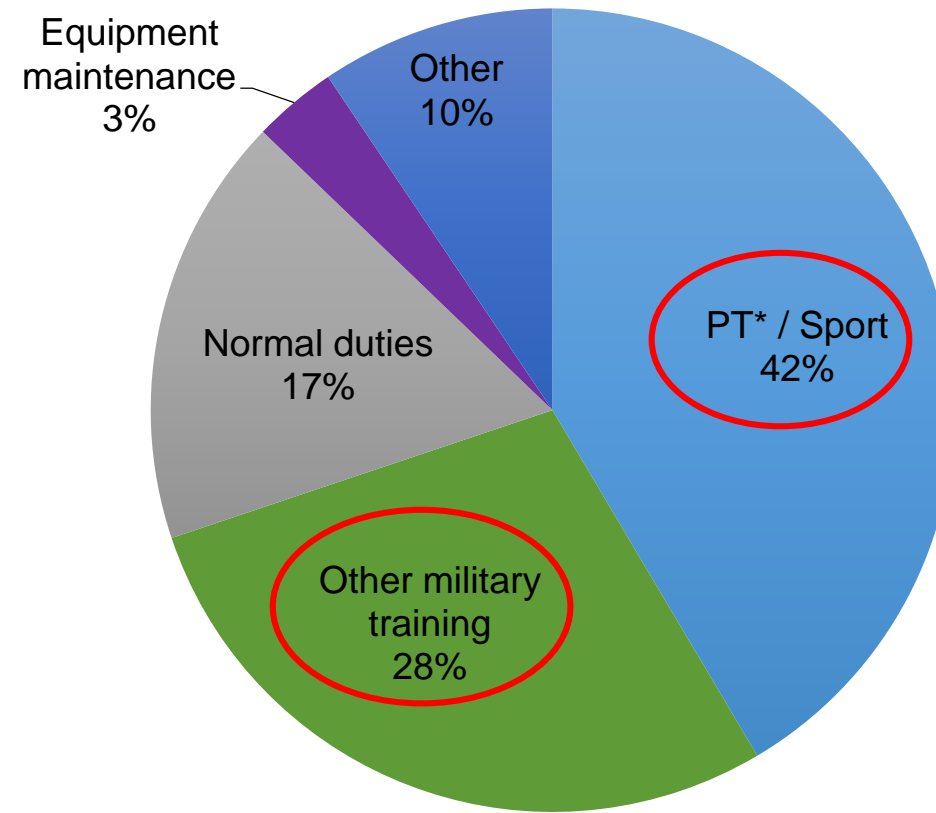


# Findings: Risk Perception

Perceived



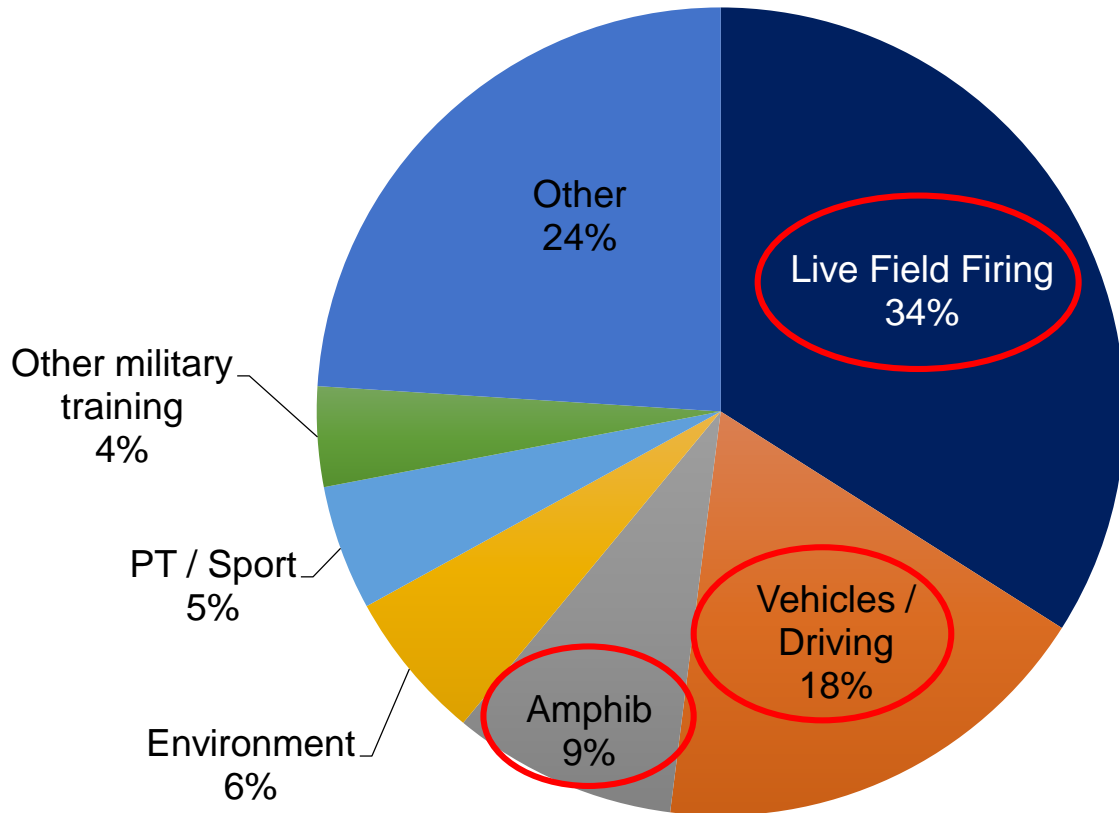
Actual



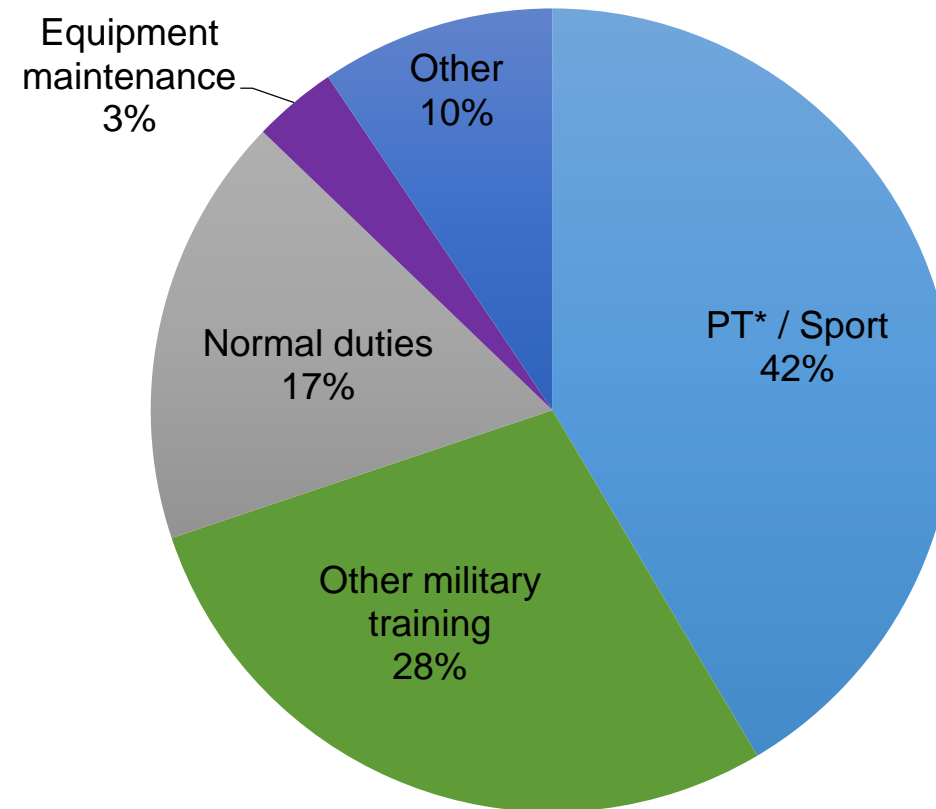


# Findings: Risk Perception

Perceived



Actual



# Findings: Risk Perception

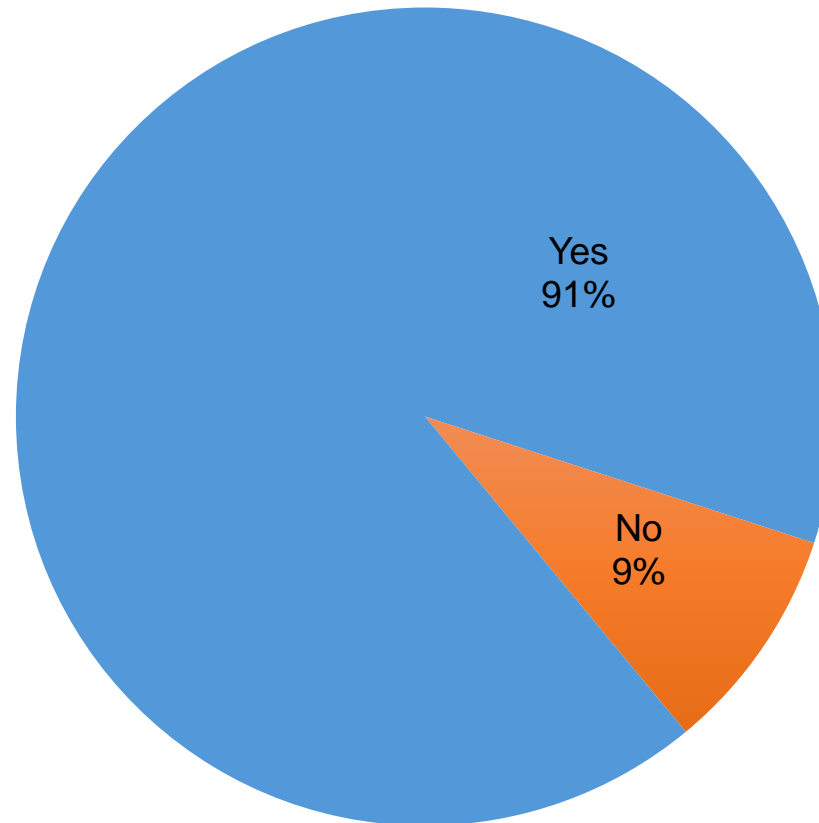
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1. Risk focus is on consequences not probability of harm
2. High-probability, low-consequence events are insignificant to the individual..
3. ... but highly significant to the organisation
4. Military training influences off-duty behaviours
5. Perceptions of risk can change in certain conditions
6. Exposure to higher-risks increases risk tolerance.

# Findings: Safety Culture

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Does the NZ Army have a strong safety culture?



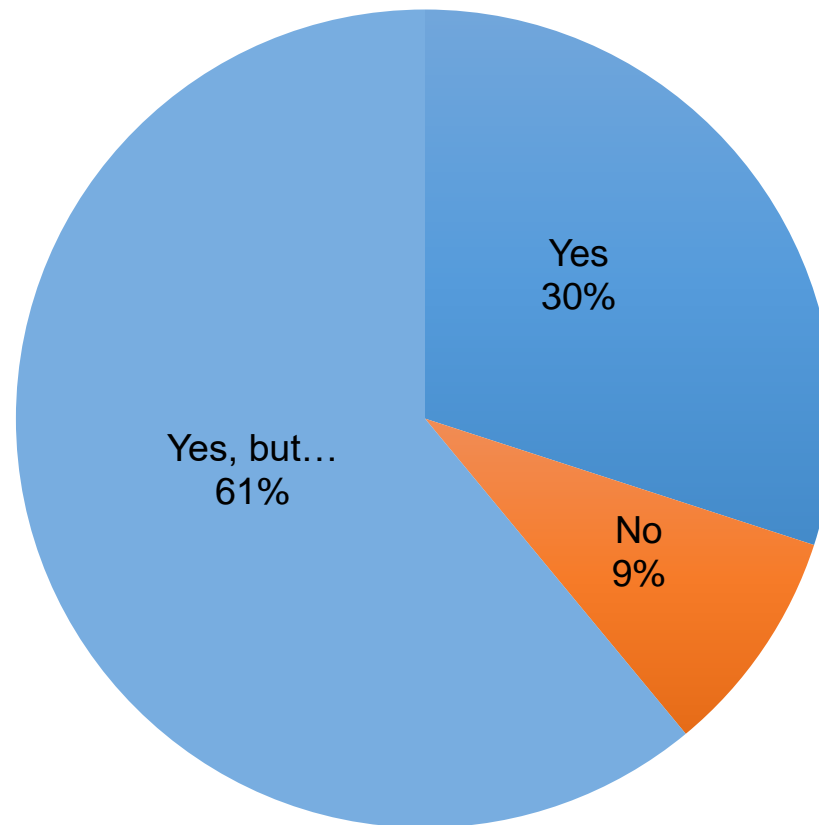
# Findings: Safety Culture

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Does the NZ Army have a strong safety culture?

Yes, but:

- ...only for high risk activities
- ...only in some things
- ...it's not quite there yet



# Findings: Safety Culture

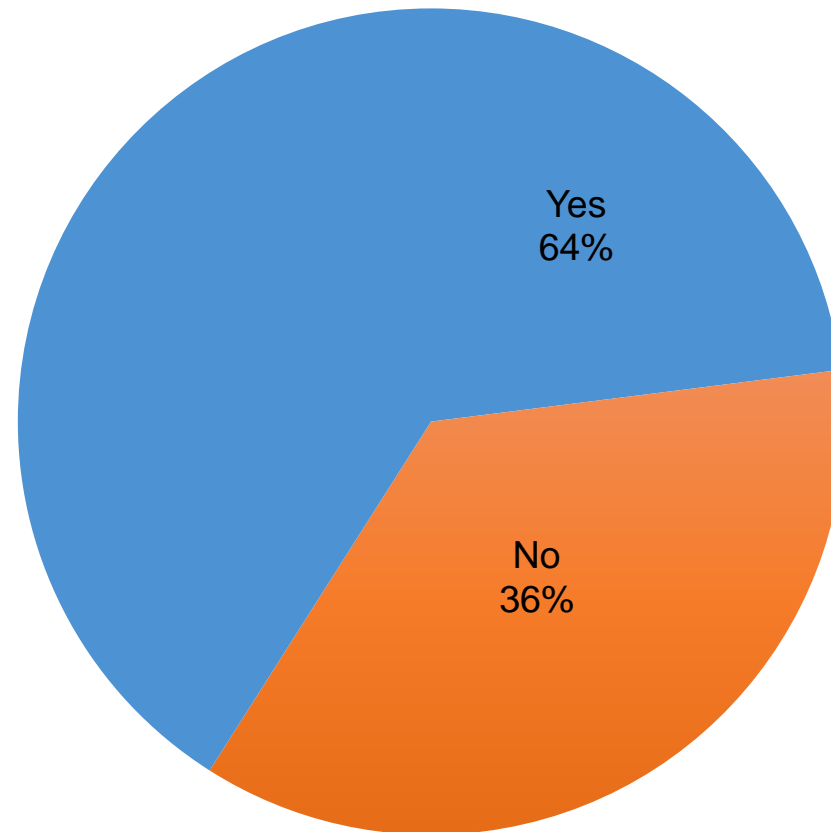
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1. Organisational culture → effect on safety (Antonson)
2. Positive 'safety culture' in some parts of the army
3. Positive 'safety culture' around perceived high-risk activities
4. Poor 'safety culture' around the mundane and routine
5. Safety culture can spread under certain conditions
6. Areas for improvement:
  - Reporting
  - Speaking up
  - Conflict between 'can-do' and 'right thing'
7. Army's strong organisational culture an advantage.

# Findings: Learning Organisation

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Does the NZ Army learn from its mistakes?



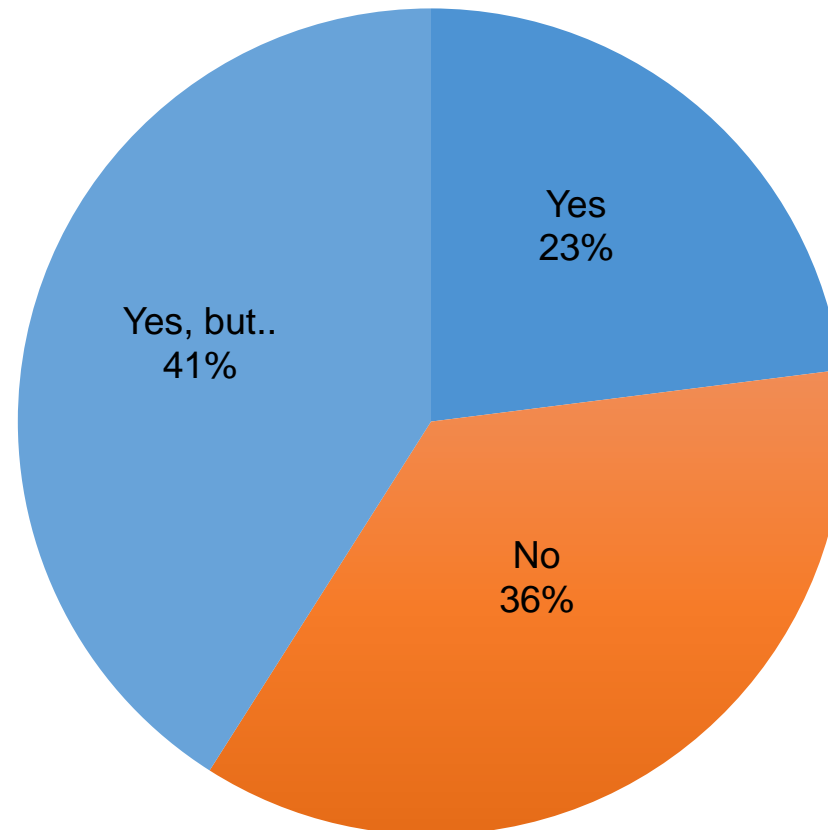
# Findings: Learning Organisation

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Does the NZ Army learn from its mistakes?

Yes, but:

- ...it takes a serious event
- ...the process could be better
- ...it's slow



# Findings: Learning Organisation

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1. Learning from mistakes could be improved
2. NZDF Lessons System – not well used within Army
3. Post Activity Reports not used to potential
4. Army Lessons Centre under-resourced, underutilised
5. Learning process too slow
6. Courts of Inquiry – need to enable reporting during the process
7. Vulnerable to loss of organisational memory.



# Findings: Risk Management

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1. The military has a comprehensive Risk Management process (Military Appreciation Process) for tactical and operational activities
2. Not easily adapted beyond tactical scenarios
3. Local, ad-hoc risk management processes used
4. Comprehensive approach is needed
5. New approach must:
  - enhance current system – not be a discrete process
  - be simple and practicable
  - be seen to add value
6. Allied militaries have good examples.

# Challenges and opportunities

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## Challenges

1. Changing the perception of risk – the probability side of the equation
2. Addressing high-probability, low-consequence events while not impacting activities central to military culture
3. Spreading the positive safety culture through all aspects of military life
4. Providing realistic ways for people to raise safety concerns
5. Embedding safety risk management within the existing process

## Opportunities

1. NZ Army culture is a powerful force to help effect this change
2. Lessons system – all the requisite parts exist
3. Allies' systems easily adapted.



**Do you have any questions?**

*A copy of the dissertation is available upon request from [hmorete@qsirisk.com](mailto:hmorete@qsirisk.com)*