

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO SUPERANNUATION REFORM

I wish to express my strong objection to the proposal, that management of civilian and military superannuation schemes be merged into one new authority. Over many years I have been aware of the ongoing struggle for realistic indexation of service superannuation. I have also observed the broken promises of politicians who have compromised their integrity. I have also witnessed the service associations and their advocates present well thought out arguments in their efforts to look after the interests of retired service personnel. Many going cap in hand in an effort to look after their fellow veteran. At the end of the day it comes down to what governments are prepared to handout. Regardless of all the eloquent speeches, the overriding consideration is and always will be the dollar cost. Having said this and accepted the reality, my objection is primarily one of honour which I shall write about later. It is my understanding that if the proposal is adopted, a 10-person board comprising three trade union representatives, two Defence representatives and five chosen by the Finance Minister will head up the board. Whether this is fact or not, it is clear that the proposed board would have to include both defence and trade union representatives, given that the proposed authority would represent both former military personnel and civilian employees from a wide range of working backgrounds.

There are many differences between the military and civilian workplaces excluding the more obvious ones such as the military's key role of defending Australia, assisting internally, internationally and so on. Two major differences include firstly, ***the absence of trade unions and secondly, the concept of the 40 hour week, overtime, penalty rates and other conditions that are intrinsically linked to civilian workers rights.***

Honour

To many it is an antiquated concept but, my 23 years service in Australia and overseas was based on a sense of duty and honour and not how much I would earn a fortnight. I get rather incensed when I see what to me is another attempt to diminish my service by lumping 'us' together with non-service personnel. The proposal offers no radical changes to benefit retired service members. If it is the government's intention to 'improve' superannuation management by merging, then perhaps politicians need to be setting the example and merge as well. Regardless, I would request that at least let 'us' keep our honour and remain separate. We were 'different' from civilians as are the current service personnel.

Richard J Brittain