

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

Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in protest about the proposed alteration to our superannuation schemes within Defence.

I am concerned what this will do to our national interests. We have enough problems retaining skilled personnel without altering yet another condition of service. Manning 12 new submarines would not be nearly so difficult if the older superannuation scheme was in place. That system of "20 years and retirement on 75% of salary" was a major attraction. Then we replaced it with the present scheme: a marked reduction but still a fair performer. Now we hear that this is to be aligned with an overall civilian scheme.

Secretary, with respect, I was surrounded by gunfire every day on my combat tour of Baghdad. My American counterparts - I was "embedded" with their units - took deaths of around three to five every day for months. For any civilian who served with us I have no hesitation in saying that they should enjoy many of our conditions of service. But the argument does not work the other way: we should not be treated in the same way as any other person in "the public service". We sacrifice a lot: we do not enjoy overtime; penalty rates, and flexitime in "peacetime"; just a cessation of income tax and an extra allowance when we enter a combat zone. And we have our own super scheme.

We don't complain much to outsiders - just to each other - but we are different. Warriors always have been.

Please leave our superannuation scheme alone.

Respectfully,

Lieutenant Commander Tom Lewis, PhD, OAM, RAN