

1 March 2010

The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
P.O. Box 6100, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

E-Mail: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

RE: GOVERNANCE OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUATION SCHEMES BILL 2010

Honorable Senators,

I can add very little to what has already been said in such a reasoned, well thought out, articulate manner.

I do, object very strongly to the above bill and all that it implies.

The erosion of Conditions of Service, by both sides of Government, contributed very highly in my decision to leave the Defence Force (Army) after 20 years service.

That these Conditions of Service continue to be eroded, or changed so significantly, they are no longer recognised as specific to service in the Defence Force, is a disgrace and denigrates the service of men and women in the past, present and future.

Why would the young men and women of Australia continue to serve the nation, now and in the future, when they have nothing but memories and a pittance to support them through the remainder of their lives, whilst those who make the decisions on where Military Personnel serve (The Politicians) gain benefits and Superannuation which far exceed anything Military Personnel might receive.

The Hon Peter Lindsay MP stated," **"I call on my colleagues on both sides of the Parliament to join with me to accept that military service is a *special service* to our Nation and to push the government to modernise the indexation rules for military pensions. It is inequitable to have our DFRDB recipients, who contributed 5.5% of their salary to the DFRDB scheme, receiving less than our Old Aged Pensioners and that their meagre income is indexed against the CPI, while the Old Aged Pensioners' income (to which they made no contribution) is indexed against the CPI or the MTAW, whichever is the greater." *Hon. Peter Lindsay, MP.***

To place all retirement and superannuation schemes under one broad bill would undermine the unique status of those who enlist in the Military and sign away their basic rights to the nation. Previous enquiries and Terms of Reference have all agreed that the nature of military service is UNIQUE and therefore warrants pay, benefits and conditions according to that UNIQUE service. To match Military service with that of the Private and Government sectors shows scant regard for the service and sacrifice of ANZACS past, present and future.

The unique requirements of Military Service bring greater risk of personal injury to Service personnel that impacts on their entire family who suffer alongside their partners related war services and the rigors of military life.

This discrepancy and the combining of benefits is entirely out of proportion to those who do not have to place themselves at the nation's beck and call. Therefore, it is an unfair proposal that would disadvantage those past Defence Members and future enlistees who volunteer to serve our great nation.

As Prime Minister Rudd once said, "**Military service is of the highest calling our country can ask of its citizens.**" It is the Government's responsibility to ensure that our country employs and properly trains the right people to do what is asked of them, it should therefore follow that having served their country, it is the responsibility of Government to ensure that these people are treated fairly and equitably during and well after their duty is done. This comes through pay and benefits and access to a caring and well financed Veteran Affairs system.

I note that the **GOVERNANCE OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUATION SCHEME** will comprise of a Board stacked with 3 ACTU members and 2 Service members. This would mean that the Service members would easily be outvoted on Service related matters. In my view, this is another attack on the UNIQUENESS OF MILITARY SERVICE. We do not have the ability to form a union so why are we being subject to the power of the union, who in my opinion, do not have the experience or interest in acting in the interests of Service Personnel and will in all cases act in the interest of their own members.

Despite all enquiries, guarantees and undertakings, history is full of examples where Governments, for whatever reasons, change such arrangements for financial reasons. I am very concerned that in the not too distant future, military superannuants will be treated exactly the same as Commonwealth Public Servants and Trade Unionists. Military superannuants deserve better, after all, they lay down their lives, each and every day, somewhere in the world. Who sends them, the Government, why, to project power and sway over those belligerents that choose to try and take away those freedoms earned by our Service Personnel (ANZACS).

Our ex-service numbers are twofold, as they include our families, we are many throughout Australia and whereas we do not riot, demonstrate or scream to get our way like other minority groups, instead, we are the loyal but silent protectors of our nation and its freedoms.

We also vote.

Yours Respectfully,

M.J. Borrett

Veteran