

04 March 2010

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

Dear Secretary,

SENATE INQUIRY INTO SUPERANNUATION REFORM

I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the changes proposed by the Federal Government to bring military superannuation under the same umbrella as other Commonwealth employees by means of the proposed *Government Superannuation Schemes Bill 2010*. Combining all government retirement and superannuation schemes undermines the unique status of those who enlist in the services and who thereby, offer their lives in the service of the Nation.

When the servicemen and women of Australia sign on in their various capacities, they actually offer their own lives in the service of the nation, to be used as, how and when the democratically elected government decides. Should death and/or disablement and/or disfigurement and/or mental disability be our lot, we understand and accept that; but that acceptance is made on the assumption that the nation values our service and will look after us (and our dependents) when our useful service life is past.

This superannuation reform proposal would unreasonably disadvantage those past, present and future members of Australia's defence forces who offer themselves for military service. Why would any young person enlist for military service to place their life at risk when they could stay home, hold down a safe government job and receive the same benefits?

There is now serious disquiet in the veteran community: a great many of my compatriots object strongly to this proposal, due to its unrepresentative nature and its abject failure to properly recognise the unique nature of military service. The proposed Board is to be comprised of three union members and only two military members who could easily be out-voted on matters pertaining to military service: such a Board would diminish the traditionally accepted unique nature of military service.

In my view, it will be a sorry day for Australia when military superannuants are treated exactly the same as public servants and trade unionists. Military superannuation schemes must remain separate from other like schemes and be controlled by a dedicated governing body which understands, recognises and values the nature of military service.

In conclusion, I request that the Inquiry note that this proposal was announced with extraordinary haste, allowing merely one week for interested parties to make representations.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Government fully intended to limit or stifle any contrary input or viewpoint.

Yours faithfully,

D. N. LASCELLES