

INTEGRATED SERVICEPEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (Inc)

New South Wales



*Official Patron: Mrs. Kay Hull MP
Federal Member for Riverina*

Senate Enquiry into Superannuation Reform

3rd March 2010

Dear Senate Enquiry

One of the most burning issues with our Veterans Affairs pensioners at present is the inequity of the rate of the Special Rate or TPI pensioners as compared with the average full-time rate for a working person. The percentage rate of the TPI pension as compared to the Average Full Time Wage has steadily decreased since the year 1941 and especially since November 1977. From 77% of average male weekly earnings to 43% of average weekly earnings is a shameful display of non-support from government (all of them since 1943 in fact), towards their very important national treasures, OUR ADF personnel. I am not going to go on and on about the disrespect and arrogant hypocrisy displayed towards our serving and ex-serving members of the ADF by government, just that you and I both know and accept that the disrespect and inequity of compensation for the ADF and former members will go on and on until someone in government is brave enough to stand up to those in power, whom continually seek to destroy the very inadequate compensation system we have at present, and of course the Military Superannuation schemes. It will not be a long time down the track when all our ADF personnel will be serving and dying for this great Australia, and with NO RECOMPENSE OR SATISFYING RETIREMENT PAY FOR INJURY-DISEASE AND SERVICE RESPECTIVELY. The progressive movement within government to deny service-people their just rights to adequate compensation had started in 1942 and now we are at the stage of permanent decline UNLESS someone in government assists our Ex Service Organisations (ESO's) with our fight to improve the systems/ methodology, and improve service and ex service conditions, and rates of pay for compensation and superannuation. ADF superannuation CAN NOT be compared with any other civilian job. The myth of productivity gains which are used in the civilian equation of superannuation benefit is ludicrous. The serious fact of a service person having to train for war or any other disaster/confrontation under the most hazardous of conditions, and that they serve outside of Australia for Australia, and are willing to pay the supreme sacrifice (their lives) is justification enough for an equitable superannuation system which is linked to The Average Weekly Wage in the least, and NOT THE CPI which DOES NOT account for the actual cost of living rises we all incur.

The present government wants to restructure the whole of the superannuation system in Australia, virtually linking the ADF with our civilian worker mates. They want to intentionally stack the superannuation board with three (3) civilian members, and only two (2) military members. This will prove to be the end of Military Superannuation, period! By doing this, the government has shamefully and disrespectfully denigrated the work that the ADF does in the service of their country, Australia! There is NO CIVILIAN EQUIVALENT to the tasks our service-people must endure seven days a week and twenty four hours every day of each year. The civilian worker can say no to any given task, the military member cannot. The civilian worker can criticise government publicly, the military member cannot. Even the police and fireman have a choice of whether or not to do a particular job, the serviceperson

cannot. For the government to even suggest that we military members are in the same category as our civilian friends is insulting. This is not to demean our civilian friends at all, just to illustrate a difference in occupations. The government has always praised the ADF, and have always agreed that our jobs within the services are unique and quite different to that of any civilian job on the outer, and, that we deserve a separate and different compensation and superannuation scheme to the rest of the populace. My god! The politicians have their own scheme, much more beneficial and lucrative than any other in the country. All politicians are happy with their conditions of superannuation. If they are not, then its greed that motivates for sure. I have never seen a politician willing to give their life even for a political ideal.

The time for reality check has passed and is here again. The ESO lobby can do just that, lobby for a better deal. The ADF is Australia's first line of defence in any emergency, including war. Our service-people have to endure physical and mental damage to their bodies and minds on a regular basis. They must endure and continue to endure until its time to go. Most of the time it is these dual conditions which are the final decider in the persons fitness to be deployed, or even continue in peacetime service. Many times he or she cannot continue in civilian life due to the inability to work and lead a normal life after service in the ADF.

Military Superannuation must remain its own separate entity and earnings related pensions must be linked to the average weekly wage. The military Superannuation Board should have three Military Members and not necessarily all of them being officers or ex officers.

Linking the superannuation payment with the CPI is regressive to the superannuant and takes them one step further towards government induced poverty. The purchasing power of Military Superannuants has diminished considerably. The surviving spouse entitlements have diminished severely also.

Honesty and Integrity in government have been Absent With-out Leave for far too long. Let us bring the two positive characteristics of humanity back into the fold in order to acknowledge our Military family fairly and equitably.

Yours Faithfully

Robert Bak

President