

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee

Senators

Re: Enquiry into Superannuation Reform

I write in reference to the above.

As a 18 year-old, I enlisted in the Australian Army in a time of war- Vietnam. I served my country as an infantryman- and was severely wounded as a consequence. After more than two years in hospitals, I was left permanently and manifestly disabled.

I trusted that the country I had served would repay that sacrifice with respect of lost income and earnings for the rest of my life- including superannuation. This has not been the case, and my family and I have always been severely financially disadvantaged.

Because of that, I strongly object to the proposed changes military superannuation- putting service personnel in the same category as other Commonwealth employees, as per the proposed Government Superannuation Schemes Bill 2010.

The fact is, my war service was vastly different to the working experience of most others- there can be nothing nobler than risking one's life on foreign battlefields. And while other occupations may contain some risk- none can compare with the risks of death or wounds in battle, often in the harshest of terrains and under the most trying of conditions.

But it doesn't end when one's time in the military is up. The effects of military life, and war service impacts partners as well, and children, far more so than other 'normal' occupations might do. How can any politician possibly conclude that military superannuants should be on an equal footing to those who do NOT place their lives at risk, who do not suffer the hardships of active service?

Such a marriage of benefits would be entirely disproportionate.

And who would enlist in the armed forces in years to come, when they see what has been done financially to those who have gone before? This proposed Bill may well result in the decimation of the armed forces.

Over the years, war veterans have been severely disadvantaged by governments. It must not continue.

The other consideration is the proposed make-up of the Board. It is obvious that the government is proposing a Board which will do its bidding on any service-related issues. Having military types outnumbered by trade unionists is the final insult.

I strongly urge the Committee not to treat military superannuants in such a cavalier fashion, and respectfully request a more equitable make-up of the Board.

Yours Sincerely
Don Tate