



31st July, 2012

Ref: TB5.757:84

Mr Brian Paule  
Director General,  
Personnel Policy and Employment Conditions  
Department of Defence  
Brindabella Park Offices  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via Email:

Dear Brian,

Re: Agenda Item for NWRC

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the National Workplace Relations Committee (NWRC).

**Context**

Section E4 of the DECA is headed "Alignment with the National Training Framework". Its paragraph E4.1 reads in relevant part as follows:

- "E4.1 Defence will ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that training and career development programs are consistent with the National Training Framework, in order to:
- ...
  - b. provide employees with the opportunity to gain nationally-recognised statements of attainment, qualifications or other forms of recognition that can support employees' mobility and advancement within their chosen career field ..."

You will note that in sub-paragraph b a distinction is made between statements of attainment and qualifications. This is appropriate, the first being potentially available with 40 nominal hours of training compared to the 960 nominal hours of training to complete a trade certificate at AQF Level III (not to mention the further requirements to gain higher level qualifications).

Elsewhere, paragraph E1.1 of the DECA reads in relevant part:

- "E1.1 The provisions of this part of the Agreement are designed to:
- ...
  - b. support the development of tools which more accurately target training and address skills gaps and career development needs;
  - ...
  - g. identify employees with the potential to develop capabilities quickly in order to expand the pool of employees competitive for higher level roles ..."

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The paragraphs from the DECA cited above are consistent with a presentation made to the NWRC at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2010 by Adrian Wellspring, Director Leadership Values and Cultural Engagement. That presentation concerned career and talent management.

### The National Training Framework

As you would be aware, the National Training Framework extends from Levels 1 to (now) 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Degrees are recognised at Levels 7 and above. That leaves another six levels of competency-based qualifications. For example:

- AQF Level III is commonly associated with the trade level; and
- AQF Level VI is that of the Advanced Diploma, commonly associated with technical employees and paraprofessionals.

In addition, there is now a Vocational Graduate Diploma which is competency-based. It is recognised at AQF Level 8. It is appropriate to private industry's Principal Technical Officer classification level and its equivalents elsewhere.

### PMKeys Self Service and Reporting Portal

An AMWU member who works within DSTO has drawn the AMWU's attention to the "My Qualifications" page on PMKeys. That page apparently has seven headings on it, as follows: Proficiencies; Degrees; Languages; Professional Memberships; Honour and Awards; Approved and Awarded Achievements; and Instructions. The Instructions apparently carry the following text:

"Vocational education qualifications such as Certificates, Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas appear under Proficiencies."

The AMWU does not have access to PMKeys. If the advice given to it is accurate, then it suggests that the My Qualification page is not consistent with (at least) the spirit of Part E of the DECA. To list statements of attainment with completed qualifications is not "to more accurately target training and address skill gaps". Nor are the relative emphases given to degrees and other AQF qualifications sending a message of encouragement to non-degree qualified but nevertheless skilled and committed employees. Quite the opposite, on the advice of the union's members.

The AMWU proposes that Defence consider the addition of an eighth heading of Completed Vocational Education Qualifications to the My Qualifications page. The text of the Instructions cited above could then be altered to have statements of attainment listed under the heading of Proficiencies.

Finally, the AMWU notes that paragraph E4.1 of the DECA recognises the National Training Framework as one source of improvements in the Department's productivity. It would be strange indeed if the Department were to deny itself access to the most basic of data to tap this source.

The AMWU requests that this matter be placed on the agenda for the meeting of the NWRC to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August. Perhaps the relevant page of PMKeys can be shown on a screen at that meeting.

Yours faithfully,

**MIKE NICOLAIDES**  
**ASSISTANT NATIONAL SECRETARY**