

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a retired RAAF Flight Lieutenant of 20 years (including 2 overseas deployments) service to this country and I object strongly to the proposed bill to merge the management of civilian and military superannuation schemes into a new 10-person board authority.

I object most strongly that 3 members of this proposed board are Trade Union representatives. What value can a trade unionist bring to a Military based Superannuation Fund and why is the union representation (33%) greater than the military representation or any other focus block on the board? The thought of trade unionists having influence over military conditions of service is abhorrent to me and I would assume to most of my retired military colleagues. We still have very vivid memories of trade unions blocking supply ships during the Second World War and the Vietnam War. Union actions that were designed to promote union causes whilst placing active Military personnel at serious risk and actions that were detrimental to the national interests at that time. The track record and reputation of unions, in promoting Military causes, is not good and their motives will always be doubted.

That said however, my strongest objection is to the fact that military and civilian public service superannuation benefits are governed and managed under the same conditions as though their employment conditions, standards and life styles are of equivalent rank. Clearly, they are not!

This merger will simply further erode and obscure the unique values, occupational risks and personal sacrifices involved with Military Service. Civilian Public Service cannot be compared as an equivalent of Military Service on the simple presumption that they are both employed by the same employer. If that premise was valid we would all be on the same benefits as politicians. There is no logical comparison and Military Service should be treated individually, with the same respect and concern that all politicians publically display (on television and in the print media), when grieving the death or injury of service personnel.

These public political affirmations, of outstanding and valued service to the country and appreciation of the personal (and family) sacrifices, are merely opportunistic vote-grabbing, insincere, two-faced political accolades. Out of the public eye, this touted recognition and appreciation of national service and sacrifice is nonexistent and inadequately supported by merging and aligning military retirement benefits to those gained by civilian public servants. It is offensive and humiliating!

Civilian public servants perform a great service to the country however, unlike the Military they;

1. Don't get deployed to war zones or shot at.
2. Don't get transferred interstate or overseas, at the drop of a hat, unless they specifically apply and want to go.
3. Have the choice of consistency in domestic and occupational location.
4. Have consistent regular working hours and conditions and are paid overtime.
5. Have greater opportunity for spouse careers.
6. Have domestic and educational stability for their children and dependants.
6. Have the opportunity for extended family support via a less transient occupation.

The Matthews Report, on Pension Indexation Arrangements in Australian Government Civilian and Military Superannuation Schemes, has made recommendations that the current disadvantageous CPI indexation methodology is maintained. This recommendation, if (as likely) accepted by the government, seriously disadvantages Military superannuates in our ability to maintain the purchasing power of our pension and is contrary to the PBLCI indexation principles (that replaced the inadequate CPI) applied to the aged pension.

The proposed bill to merge all civilian and military schemes into one new authority is just another degradation of military service and its recognition. Is it any wonder that military recruitment is at an all time low. I am a third generation serviceman. My father served in the RAAF and my two grandfathers served in the Army. Unfortunately for the country, my children and grandchildren, having experienced and witnessed Military life, conditions and support, will break this line and never volunteer for a military career.

Please recognize Military Service superannuation as a standalone benefit commensurate with the values and sacrifices that military personnel make for this country and please do not merge it into a union dominated, civilian focused, authority.

Yours Sincerely

James Simpson
Flight Lieutenant (Retired)