

Please accept this submission to the Senate Inquiry. I am detailing how the bargaining delay for new Defence Employees Collective Agreement has had a significant impact on myself and my family.

Impact on my family as a result of stalled bargaining:

During the time since the expiration of the last DECA, which has effectively frozen my salary, I have experienced two increases in rent. I have seen a significant increase in my families food bill beyond our budget. I have experienced a significant increase in the cost of utilities (electricity and gas). So in essence my salary of over two years ago is being impacted by these demonstrable rising costs and placing significant pressure on our family budget and our well-being. Our savings have dwindled as there is little contribution to saving and often savings are accessed to meet rising bills and costs.

As a result of this situation I am far less likely to utilise any flexible working arrangements by reducing hours as I simply cannot afford to do so. This too has had a significant impact on my family life and our well-being. I am far more likely to choose work over family because of the financial pressures we face.

The other aspect of this situation is the impact on workplace morale. I would assess it, and I have worked in Defence since 1992, as the lowest I have ever seen. The notion in the workplace common to APS staff is that this government is cynical, mean and tricky. There is little trust of the government and very little trust or respect for the senior management of Defence. This is because all we see, at the coalface is the workers being squeezed. We are expected to do more with less and accept a situation where our salaries have fallen way behind the CPI. This situation is totally unacceptable. And it has real consequences for the workplace. Demoralised staff are unlikely to be motivated to go that extra yard. They are far less likely to champion the brand. They will be far less likely to trust and accept what their seniors and the government says in the future.

*Graeme Tunks*