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Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Defence Subcommittee
Concerning Royal Australian Air Force F-111 Workers and their Families

Reply to Request for Public Comments to the Parliamentary Inquiry, Defence Subcommittee of Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT)

Reference: *Loss of Promotion and Work Opportunities*

1. Reference the public hearing on Monday 28 July 2008 of the parliamentary inquiry into the F-111 deseal-reseal (DSRS) workers and their families by the Defence Subcommittee of JSCFADT. Statements have been made by former and current serving members concerning promotion and work opportunities. Upon reading one member's testimony I am compelled to write this response to the Defence Subcommittee as it is an issue I have raised with the Air Force Advocate (AFA) when he was allowed to represent my husband.
2. Using my husband's experience as a tier one DSRS tradesman, who has diagnosed solvent related chronic encephalopathy and a neurocognitive disorder caused by the Air Force's negligence and using documentation from the AFA I can offer support to one witness's claim that may have been undermined. After prolonged (months) exposure to solvents, fuels additives and chemicals in confined spaces with out or with incorrect personal protective equipment, my husband's promotion prospects ended eight years before his discharge after a rapid rise to his terminal rank. This is as opposed to those who are working on F-111s in support of the airframe fitters/ aircraft technicians who perform the preparation work for specialized technical trades.
3. The AFA when investigating my husband's claims sent him to a psychiatrist who was a Royal Australian Navy officer. After reading the AFA documentation and assessing [REDACTED] he reported that [REDACTED] lack of promotion could be linked back to the effects of his exposure to solvents, fuels and chemicals used in the DSRS process.
4. [REDACTED] has now been classed as totally and permanently incapacitated by his last employer the Department of Defence but the Department of Veteran's Affairs does not accept his condition as related to eligible service! Hence as a wife and mother I have had to endure the consequences of financial loss but most importantly the loss of a man who is ashamed of his military service which was the only thing he wanted to do: serve in the Australian Defence Forces.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]