

**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE  
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT & RETENTION  
OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL**

**SUBMISSION**

**Submission No:** 70

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Retention Issues

**Sea time**

Sailors today seem to be more disgruntled with the sea time they are faced with than they were ten years ago. When I joined ten years ago it was the tired, wet, and homesick advertising campaign which was on the television. The general feel of those at sea was that when you were at sea then it was your duty and you did the hard yards required, sure you still had a bitch as sailors always will but you were under no illusions as to what was required. Today's sailor has the Maritime Command promising school holidays alongside, not sailing on weekends, only so many days at sea each year and other promises which at the end of the day the Navy can't keep because the greater need is for the Navy to do whatever is required operationally. Making promises that can't be kept upsets a sailor more than being told it won't be easy but its an important job you have taken on so lets just get it done. **Let's stop dangling the carrot.**

**Housing**

For years the issue of housing entitlements has raged between single sailors versus Married sailors. The ADF answered with Rental Allowance, which I think everybody except those that implemented it were aware that it was not feasible and that the ADF could never afford such a scheme. Now we have ORA which puts single sailors behind married ones again, that's if they can get it based on the service accommodation available.

All single sailors receiving some form of housing subsidy are grateful, however a single sailor outlays the money required to set up in a flat. The sailor buys the furniture and then gets told that there is accommodation available so he then loses his entitlements and has a house full of furniture, which the Navy is graceful enough to place in storage. A security issue married sailors are not concerned with. I believe the easiest way to make it all fair in love and war between married and single would be to give single sailors an amount of money equal to that received by married sailors when they produce a lease to prove they are indeed renting.

Other ideas they may have legal reasons pulling them up and indeed face the FBT factor. But what about the idea that you join off the street, sign a contract that locks you in for twenty years service. The Navy gives you a home worth \$200,000 it is yours in the fact you may rent it out or live in it. You may not sell it and indeed to that extent the Navy holds onto the Deeds to the property until 20 years of service has been completed. There is no other form of housing assistance given, it is abolished. That way if you are posted to another region then the rent received on the property is for you to use as subsidy for the rent where you are posted. The Navy holding the Deed makes it easy to recover the property for those sailors going AWOL.

I am aware that not all will sign for twenty years so both schemes would need to run but if the Navy retained 20% of people for twenty years then surely the money saved on training, and recruiting alone would be worth while.

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