

26 July 2002



Duncan Kerr MHR

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Chair & Members
Finance and Public Administration
Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Senators

I write following correspondence from committee secretary Sue Morton dated 15th June 2002 advising of the Inquiry into Members of Parliament (Life Gold Pass) Bill 2002.

The fundamental point I would seek to make by way of this submission is that it remains best that entitlements granted to and the remuneration paid to members of parliament are not the subject of determination by the either House.

This is particularly important in relation to issues that go beyond simple remuneration as the nature of any such entitlements are such that they should be decided neither by self-interest nor by self-denial.

A better course is to leave such matters to the determination of an established and independent tribunal. Members and senators should not engage in a very destructive process of trying to second-guess those determinations.

I note that the entitlement for a life gold pass for members who have served for extended periods has been a feature of the parliamentary system for many decades. It was and remains a foundational element upon which all members and senators commenced their service in the parliament. A number of current members and senators will in due course have an entitlement to that upon the conclusion of their parliamentary service.

It would not be lawful to remove such accrued rights. I have already an accrued entitlement so I write as a disinterested observer. As such, it seems to me that it is wrong in principle for the Senate or the House to second guess the independent tribunal.

For those who submit to you that such entitlements are no longer fitting, I submit that your Committee should note their views and request their permission to refer those submissions to the Remuneration Tribunal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Duncan Kerr'.

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