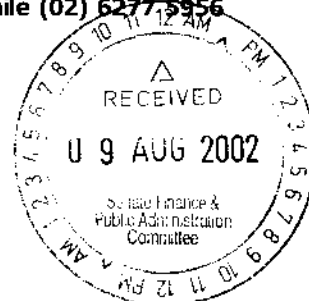




Association of Former Members of the Parliament of Australia

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Senator Brett Mason
Chairperson
The Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
SG 60
Parliament House
Canberra

Dear Senator Mason

Our Association, represents over 300 former federal parliamentarians in its membership. We are actively concerned with the retirement benefits of both current and past federal parliamentarians, including Life Gold Pass holders.

We are very grateful for the opportunity to place this submission on the Members of Parliament (Life Gold Pass) Bill 2002 before the Committee and the further opportunity for our National Committee members, President Tony Lamb, the Hon. Kathy Sullivan and the Mr Manfred Cross to give evidence at the hearing of the Committee at 9.45 am on 23rd August 2002.

In considering the Bill, we understand the right of the Parliament to change the entitlements of Gold Pass Holders but urge the Committee not to accept changes which would apply to those who have retired prior to the bill becoming law and to carefully consider the retirement entitlements of current parliamentarians. We also ask you to take into consideration the activities of many Life Gold Pass Holders and their partners.

We make the following points:

1. We urge the Committee to reject any retrospectivity in relation to the entitlements of former parliamentarians.

Retrospectively is not based on the proper role of an employer in contract law and is not consistent with the traditional principles of employment. Any reduction in benefits to those already retired is unjust, wrong, may be legally challengeable in that the action would break an industrial code. Retrospectivity also sets a very bad precedent.

2. Changes to existing benefits would not be acceptable to employees, including executives in the private sector. Nor would changes be acceptable to the public service.

3. **Pro bono work very often becomes an important part of a former parliamentarian's life.** Former Parliamentarians are asked to take on tasks because of their experience in the parliament and their local, regional and/or national profile. Life Gold Pass holders, many of them former Ministers, are asked to perform many tasks which they would not be able to perform if they had to pay for transport, including transport to an air terminal. We ask the Committee to take this into account in relation to the retirement entitlements of both current and former parliamentarians.

4. **We believe that the definition of 'spouse' in the Bill restricts partner travel.** Restriction of travel entitlement to partners in only one form of genuine continuous cohabitation exhibits a moral bias and should be reviewed.

We thank the Committee for its consideration and our representatives look forward to meeting with the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Snow". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Jim Snow
Secretary

Antony Lamb
President

9th August 2002