

Family First Dissenting Report

The Rudd Government's plan to merge the boards of the two military superannuation schemes, the Military Superannuation and Benefits Scheme (MSBS) and the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme (DFRDB), with the board of the civilian superannuation scheme, Australian Reward Investment Alliance (ARIA), is a policy that clearly does not have the support of the members of the MSBS and DFRDB.

The enormous number of submissions received by the committee in such a short period of time demonstrates that this is an issue of great importance to the members of these military superannuation funds.

There is clearly widespread member dissatisfaction with the proposed changes by members of the MSBS and DFRDB, as highlighted by National President of the Defence Force Welfare Association, Colonel David Jamison (Retired) who stated:

"We are getting communication from our members and other elements within the veteran community strongly opposing this initiative."

Family First is also concerned about the lack of consultation with military representative groups in regards to merging the military superannuation schemes with a non-military superannuation scheme.

Rear Admiral Kenneth Doolan (Retired) National President, Returned and Services League of Australia stated:

"We were not consulted about this merger before the proposal was put forward. We do not have the details available to us and we would seek to have those details so that we can make a more considered decision about the very point that you raise".

The real concern is that this legislation as a policy undermines the well regarded and long standing principal that military service is unique and should not be blurred with civilian service.

For these reasons, Family First does not support the bill.

Recommendation 1

Family First recommends that the bill not be passed.

Senator Steve Fielding

