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**Sent:** Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:02 PM  
**To:** 'Barnaby.Joyce.MP@aph.gov.au' [Barnaby.Joyce.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Barnaby.Joyce.MP@aph.gov.au)  
**Cc:** 'Senator.Hughes@aph.gov.au' [Senator.Hughes@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.Hughes@aph.gov.au)  
**Subject:** Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefit (DFRDB) Scheme

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Dear Mr. Joyce

I refer to your letter [Ref: NE47083, dated 4 September 2023](#), which Senator Hollie Hughes forwarded to me.

In your letter, you said that the Coalition has long listened to the concerns of recipients of the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefit (DFRDB) scheme and mentioned the former Coalition Government's request for the Commonwealth Ombudsman to conduct an investigation. But I doubt that the responsible Minister at the time, your colleague the Hon Darren Chester, comprehended our concerns when we met with him just weeks before he approached the Ombudsman.

Our primary concern is the benefit reduction measures incorporated in the legislation, which diminish, over their lifetimes, the entitlements DFRDB members were led to believe they would receive if they served a minimum of 20 years.

The terms of reference, arranged between the Ombudsman and the Minister's Department, related only to the accuracy of the information provided about commutation by the scheme administrators and relevant departments to DFRDB members.

The partial indexation of benefits and whether the legislation is fair and just was outside the scope of the Ombudsman's investigation. Yet the Minister's Office asserts that the DFRDB scheme has been thoroughly reviewed multiple times.

Mr. Joyce, we want to meet with you in Canberra, your Electorate Office or other location of your choice to:

1. Ensure you understand the concerns of DFRDB recipients and
2. Ask if you, as the Shadow Minister, will represent them.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

*Jim Hislop* OAM

President, Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.