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Sent: Wednesday, 22 September 2021 5:37 PM
To: 'scott.morrison.mp@aph.gov.au' scott.morrison.mp@aph.gov.au
Cc: 'barnaby.joyce.mp@aph.gov.au' barnaby.joyce.mp@aph.gov.au;
'peter.dutton.mp@aph.gov.au' peter.dutton.mp@aph.gov.au;
'andrew.gee.mp@aph.gov.au' andrew.gee.mp@aph.gov.au
Subject: Deception of ex-servicemen and women

Dear Prime Minister,

From 1973 to 1991, members of the Australian Defence Force were told by the Department of Defence that if they served for 20 or more years they would receive a defined superannuation benefit determined by their length of service.

However, Defence manipulated the governing legislation and its subsequent amendments by:

1. Incorporating ambiguous and obscure wording;
2. Referring to outdated life expectancy tables;
3. Linking cost of living adjustments to the unrepresentative Consumer Price Index; and
4. Excluding from the cost of living adjustments a substantial part of members' benefits.

The result of this sustained attack by Defence is the erosion of the defined benefits by up to more than 40% over a member's average lifespan, discriminating by gender, age, and date of separation from the Defence Force.

Affected members have for years sought redress, but their pleas have largely fallen on deaf ears because, regardless of the Government in power, Defence always produced the response.

Separate inquiries by the Commonwealth Ombudsman in 2019 and the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee in 2021 found that Defence misled serving members regarding their entitlements. However, the terms of reference of those inquiries ensured that the full extent of the deception and the reduction of members' benefits would not be addressed.

This pretence of addressing members' concerns has strengthened the belief of ex-service personnel that they will never receive a fair go while a majority Government is in power.

The Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc. (ADFRA) was formed when the Ex-Service Organization Round Table forum, hosted by the responsible Minister, failed to address members' concerns. ADFRA, a properly constituted incorporated association and the largest ex-service organization advocating those concerns, has the support of an increasing number of other ex-service organizations, including RSL NSW and RSL QLD. However, the new Minister responsible, The Hon Andrew Gee, has not even shown the common courtesy of replying to ADFRA's correspondence, reflecting his Department's contempt for the affected ex-service personnel.

Prime Minister, please show some moral fibre and honor the commitment made to these ex-servicemen and women for devoting a substantial part of their lives to the service of their country.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Hislop OAM

President



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