

# FPA References Committee Hearing 19 Feb 2026

Opening Statement from John Lewis Acting President of Qld Branch of the Defence Force Welfare Association

Good Afternoon Chair, Senators. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

My name is John Lewis, I am the Acting President of the Queensland Branch of the Defence Force Welfare Association. I assisted with the DFWA National submissions which covered all super schemes and ADF Cover.

I am a DFRDB retiree and commuted. I commend the research done by ADFRA on the impact of a lot of behind-the-scenes changes made to DFRDB with no transparency but all to the detriment of retirees.

Specifically inadequate indexation, deficient Ombudsman modelling, lack of support regarding Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA) process as recommended by the last Senate Inquiry – and the continuing culture of non-transparency and misinformation.

DFWA, in pursuing use of current life expectancies in the calculation of DFRDB retirement pay reductions after commutation, has resulted in Defence publishing in the VetAffairs newspaper to the DFRDB community, totally incorrect information opposing such a change. Requests to get DVA/Defence to publish a retraction have failed and present the true account – backed up by the Ombudsman Report. This is in spite of a CDF and Secretary issuing an apology for misinformation as identified the Ombudsman report.

The misinformation and lack of transparency concerning DFRDB and MSBS has also been raised in other submissions as outlined in our submission 68-3. The CSC incorrect information and total lack of explanation provided to the court in the Douglas Case hearing was adversely commented on by Justice Logan.

We endorse earlier evidence from Advocates On-line concerning the administrative nightmare of retrospective medical discharges, which involves recalculations involving DVA, CSC, and ATO then sometimes impacting on other benefit payments. It is stressful for veterans and staff. There is no organisation with responsibility for case management and helping the veteran navigate through the process. To fill the gap, DFWA organized with DVA, CSC and the ATO to provide input to an RSL Qld publication, ( mentioned in the DFWA and RSL submissions) to assist advocates. It operates more on individual good-will from staff in those organisations rather than good governance arrangements. More needs to be done.