

Senator Alex Gallacher
Senator the Hon Eric Abetz
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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By eMail

Dear Committee Chairmen, and Committee

I take this opportunity to make some brief personal comments based on my observation of today's Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee's Hearing about the ***Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019 [Provisions]***. I do so noting Senator Abetz's request that any additional material for the Committee should be submitted within 24 hours.

The Committee received 19 considered Submissions, many from ex-Service organisations, as well as a number from individual citizens. These organisations and individuals went to significant trouble and expense to proffer their suggestions to assist the Committee.

It is to be regretted that the Department may not have considered all of the detailed amendments to the Bill suggested in the Submissions, or to offer the Committee its views on them, other than that they might be considered 'down the track'. Those who made Submissions deserve better than that. DVA's own Submission #16 broadly discussed only those from the Air Force Association, the Defence Families [sic] Welfare Association (DFWA) and Defence Families of Australia.

I would have liked to see the Department's response to each suggested amendment before the Committee's Report is finalised. It seems improbable that none of them offered valid suggested amendments, which the Committee could recommend for incorporation in the final version of the Bill; especially given the bi-partisan approach taken to the Bill.

I take comfort from the fact that the Committee will itself give due consideration to suggestions made in Submissions, and incorporate any appropriate amendments in the finalisation of this Bill. Doing so later would seem to be an inefficient way of doing this important business of ensuring that the Bill is the best possible.

I thank all members of the Committee for their time and consideration in carrying out their duty.

Yours sincerely

Bert Hoebee
Military Veteran