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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600.

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I am writing to you on behalf of the Jimboomba RSL Sub-Branch to object to the proposed changes being implemented next year by the Government to bring military superannuation under the same umbrella as other commonwealth employees, via the proposed *Government Superannuation Schemes Bill 2010*. To combine all retirement and superannuation schemes into the one basket would undermine the unique status of those who enlist in the Defence Force, who on doing so sign away their basic rights to YOU the government and the Nation.

It is often contended that Defence service is no different to other Emergency Service. However, military personnel, unlike their civilian counterparts, are required to take up arms and defend our country and/or its interests, putting their lives at risk more so than those who enter into other government departments, including the police or fire services. As I have explained before a fire, in the case of the fire service has no malicious intent or as in the case of police, I agree that at times criminals may use deadly force against police service personnel, however, they do this in an effort to avoid capture as opposed to Defence service where an armed enemies sole intent is not to get away but to engage and kill you at all costs.

This combined with the unique training requirements and lifestyle of military service brings greater risk of injury, personal and family hardship to Service personnel. Military service impacts not only impacts on their entire life but also on their family who suffer hardships alongside their partners related to war service as well as the rigors of military life. Politicians seem all too eager to emphasize the amount of family disruption they endure when parliament sits. Military personnel however are required to perform as much if not more time away from family during 'lead up' and general training, as well as having to move their families usually interstate, (as part of the posting cycle) every three years or so thus disrupting not only themselves but their partners employment and their children's schooling. Imagine if you **had** to move every three years.

This discrepancy and intermarriage of benefits is entirely out of proportion to those who do not have to place themselves in harm's way or endure the rigours and stressors of military service. Therefore to reiterate, it is an unfair proposal that would disadvantage those past members and future military enlistees who elect to serve in our military.

Why should a young person enlist into a military service that places their lives at risk when they could stay home, hold down a government job and receive the same benefits?

Military service needs separate considerations and, as you once stated, Military service is of the highest calling our country can ask of its citizens. It is the Government's responsibility to ensure that our country employs and properly trains the right people to do what is asked of them (including the ultimate sacrifice) and then it is also the responsibility of governments to ensure these men and women are treated fairly during their engagement and well after the call to duty is done.

This new proposal will be resisted by all ex-servicemen and women along with their family members within our organizations, particularly where the Board is stacked with 3 ACTU members to 2 Service members who would easily be out voted on matters addressing Service related issues.

Our ex-service numbers are twofold as they include families so we are many throughout Australia and whereas we do not riot, demonstrate or scream to get our way like most groups; instead we are the loyal but silent protectors of our Nation and freedoms.

In summary I wish to lodge my objection to merge all military superannuation schemes with other superannuation schemes. I also strongly object to the proposed composition of the Board of Directors, in that there will be three ACTU Directors, only two Defence Directors and five Directors appointed by the Minister for Finance. In my view this could, yet, be another step in the diminution of the traditionally accepted "uniqueness of military service" Despite all guarantees and undertakings, history is replete with examples where Governments, for whatever reasons, change such arrangements for financial reasons. I am very concerned that, one day, military superannuates will be treated exactly the same as Commonwealth Public Servants and trade unionists.

Military superannuation schemes must, remain separate from all other schemes, and be controlled by a separate governing body (Board of Directors).

Respectfully Yours,

Peter Davies
Deputy President
Jimboomba RSL Sub-Branch