

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees  
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## **A submission to the Senate Inquiry into superannuation claims of former and current Commonwealth Public Service employees**

**Under Term of Reference: (a) the number of employees in the Commonwealth Public Service impacted, because they were not aware or correctly advised of their eligibility to Commonwealth superannuation prior to the introduction of compulsory superannuation in 1992, including, but not limited to, employees of the following Commonwealth departments and statutory authorities:**

I joined the ABC News department in Adelaide in 1973 as a graduate cadet journalist after graduating in Law at the University of Adelaide in 1972. I resigned from the ABC in 1990 and throughout these 17 years I was led to understand and believed I was ineligible to join the Commonwealth superannuation scheme as I was classified, like other ABC news journalists, as a temporary employee.

I was told on my engagement by the senior managers in the news department that as "temporary" employees, journalists were ineligible to join the super scheme, and this was subsequently reinforced on a number of occasions. This was the general belief among the journalists I worked with. It was discussed, often with some resentment, that other "permanent" staff were entitled to enter the scheme which was considered to be generous. I was never informed by the ABC either verbally or in writing that in fact I could have joined the scheme after one year as a temporary employee. I never heard during this time that some journalists had in fact been allowed to join the scheme.

Many former ABC news journalists can attest to this situation.

I certainly would have joined the scheme if I had known I was eligible.

It was only in 2007 that I learned from a former ABC colleague of the Cornwell case and that we had been entitled to join the super scheme and that in fact a small number of journalists had.

Even the "temporary" status of journalists seemed spurious, as we qualified for sick and long service leave and the other entitlements of "permanent" staff. Like permanent staff we signed staff regulations 24 and 59 swearing allegiance to the Queen and declaring secrecy. As "temporary" employees, the majority of journalists made long-term careers at the ABC.

On leaving the ABC in 1990 I immediately took out superannuation with my then employers, the South Australian Government. I subsequently also took out private super with retail schemes which have not proved that successful.

**Under term of reference: (b) the impact on the retirement incomes of these employees as a result of not being aware or correctly advised of their eligibility to the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme;**

I have suffered considerable financial loss through what is at the least the ABC's negligence in not informing me of my right to join the super scheme.

I consider I have lost at least 16 years of superannuation benefits and subsequent accruals from what was well known as a generous super scheme for employees and a scheme which I would have certainly joined if I had known I was eligible. It seems that some elements of ABC management had an agenda to keep the majority of journalists out of the scheme.

At the age of 60 I now have limited superannuation savings, and having suffered a very serious illness which has impaired my earning capacity, being excluded from super scheme for 16 years has exacerbated the situation.

I consider I would now be in a far superior financial position if I had been given the correct information by the ABC about superannuation eligibility.