

22nd April, 2013

Dear Editor,

ANZAC Day leads us to reflect upon not only the sacrifice of past members of the Defence forces but also the conditions provided to currently serving personnel and to retired veterans.

Too often as a nation we state how grateful we are to our Defence personnel. However, we do not always follow through with appropriate support. Consequently, personnel often depart the forces early. This also impacts upon the capacity to recruit new members.

I would suggest the following policy initiatives in order to help address this problem :

- a. Pay increases in the Defence forces should not be based upon comparisons with civilian jobs but rather upon the special environment in which Defence personnel must operate ;
- b. Bring the indexation of superannuation payments for former defence personnel into line with old age pensions, and
- c. Back date indexation to the actual date of retirement so that all future payments are at the fully indexed level ;
- d. Increase the amount of subsidised home loans for defence personnel and increase the amount annually, indexed to increases in property values ;
- e. Extend the volunteer ADF gap-year program and link the numbers involved to the core authorised combat training strength of the defence force ;
- f. Actively promote the extension of the regionally-based ADF cadet scheme back into schools ;
- g. Re-introduce apprenticeship-level entry and trade training into the ADF ;
- h. Re-invigorate and fully fund in-service education and vocational training schemes so that ADF members are better prepared for eventually leaving the defence force.

Let us remember not only those who have gone before but also those who are with us now.

Yours sincerely,

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