

2 May 2019

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION,
MINISTER, AND OPPOSITION SHADOW FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS

Recently, the Government put out a Joint Media Release about Support for Our Veterans and their Families.

Its final paragraphs, describing ‘an extensive record support for veterans’, are decidedly underwhelming. For example, delivering support for 280,000 veterans is nothing more than what is required under existing legislation; and improved processes and claim procedures in DVA are self evidently needed. Any Government that did not do these things would be derelict in its duty.

The statement it made that the Coalition is “delivering [its] \$1.4 billion in fairer indexation for military superannuants”, if not deliberately misleading, certainly avoids telling the entire truth about what is happening with military superannuation. Assertions like these conceal the real situation, and it is disingenuous to make it appear to be otherwise.

The Release made no mention of any intention to deliver:

- a plan to restore a proper level of TPI/SR economic loss compensation payments. [It is reprehensible that this particular issue was not dealt with long ago.];
- fair indexation for MSBS superannuants also, [the now infamous ‘Ronaldson second step’ never taken!!];
- fair indexation for under 55 year old DFRDB superannuants, let alone anyone on MSBS;
- proper indexation for preserved funds in Commonwealth hands; or
- restitution for any substandard super indexation, dating at least back to 1990 for MSBS and 1990 – 2014 for DFRDB.

All of these long standing issues have a direct, incontrovertible and deleterious effect on veterans’ cost of living. They all deserve a very high priority, well before any consideration of expenditure on memorials is placed on the agenda.

And yet, neither the Coalition, nor Labor, make any undertaking in their election promises to settle these matter once and for all.

Is this really the ‘Fair Go’ that our veterans, like all Australians, deserve? Does it really reflect how we ‘honour the service and sacrifice of our service personnel’?

Bert Hoebee