



DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

MONTHLY UPDATE #253 – 19 August 2010

UPDATE is a monthly newsheet produced by the Defence Force Welfare Association containing current items of interest to the Service and ex-Service community. It is widely distributed to politicians, media outlets, senior Service and Public Service officers and DFWA members.

THE 2010 ELECTION

SPECIAL EDITION

As advised in UPDATE #252 of 20 July 2010, the Association along with our partner organizations embarked on a public awareness campaign calling on all parties for their intentions in regard to four key matters affecting the Defence Family:

- ***Fair indexation of military superannuation pensions*** - because, unlike the Age Pension and other welfare and superannuation pensions, the purchasing power of military superannuation pensions is not protected.
- ***Equitable treatment of veterans' disability pensions*** – because the pensions of men and women who were disabled in the service of Australia have lost their relative value.
- ***Certainty in military compensation*** - because ongoing indecision and uncertainty is stressful, unnecessary and unacceptable.
- ***Veterans' health care*** – because mental health and residential accommodation for younger veterans in particular are issues that are increasing in frequency and severity.

The Association worked with a series of Local Action Groups in 49 marginal electorates to pursue these matters. In particular we called upon the political parties to commit to improve the indexation of all military superannuation schemes without further delay. In many cases this involved public meetings, local media coverage, direct approaches to the candidates etc.

The table below is a brief summary of what we have identified as the major new policy initiatives announced during the election campaign, up to 18 August 2010. It has been written in good faith and every attempt has been made to objectively state the party positions. Fair Go! recognizes that the major Parties have announced a larger number of other policies relevant to the defence and veteran portfolios, many of which are outside the above four Fair Go! policy areas. In addition, the ALP (by virtue of being in Government) have repeated some policies that are either already in place or previously announced. These are not listed in the table.

For further detail and information readers can examine the relevant policy documents on the major parties' websites.

The Association is concerned with issues, not Party politics. It is each Party's choice as to the policies it puts forward to the Australian people. Fair Go! is a vehicle for informing those in the Defence Family the policies announced, nothing more and nothing less. To that end the Association has passed on the policies to its members so that they may make an informed choice on 21 August. It is then their decision, in the light of all issues affecting them, as to how they vote. The Association has taken great pains to ensure that all political parties and candidates are treated equally. It will continue to do so.

A summary of the 3 major Parties' positions is found overleaf. The Association also acknowledges the strong support Family First has given to the aims of the Campaign.

“FAIR GO” ISSUES	AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY	LIBERAL – NATIONAL COALITION	GREENS
<i>Fair indexation of military superannuation pensions</i>	No acceptance of our fundamental case for change. No support to changing the current CPI Indexation formula.	Acceptance of our fundamental case for change. Beneficiaries of the DFRDB / DFRB schemes over the age of 55 from 1 July 2011 will have their pensions indexed as the Aged pension.	Strongly believe that the Government should now act to provide wage-based indexation on the same terms as the Aged Pension for all Commonwealth and Defence Force superannuation pensions.
<i>Equitable treatment of veterans’ disability pensions</i>	No change to continual denial of a “catch up” payment to ADF Disability Pensions to remove the last of the erosion suffered between 1997 & 2007 and to take account of increased community living standards since 1997, as it has for Age and Service pensioners	No specific initiative on this policy area	No specific initiative on this policy area
<i>Certainty in military compensation</i>	Committed to taking all appropriate action in response to the Review when it is released.	Will respond to the Review when it is released, and consult with ESOs.	No specific initiative on this policy area
<i>Veterans’ health care</i>	Annual reimbursement out of pocket expenses for pharmaceuticals for war caused disabilities from 2010, payments commence from 2013.	Remove out of pocket expenses for pharmaceuticals of disabled veterans in receipt of 50% of the General rate or higher from Jan 2012 (over 30 scripts).	No specific initiatives in this policy area
	New program of enhanced support and services for wounded ADF members (Simpson Program).	The Coalition said it supports this new program.	
	<u>Related issue: ADF Family Healthcare</u> Examine the results of the current trial.	<u>Related issue: ADF Family Healthcare</u> Provide free basic health and dental care to all ADF members and their families in close proximity to Defence establishments	

VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP OFFERED TO ALL ADF MEMBERS

The Association is offering serving members of the ADF free “virtual membership” of the Association. Further information is available on our website.

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