



DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

A member of the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO)*

MONTHLY UPDATE #269 – 15 March 2012

UPDATE is a monthly e-letter produced by the Defence Force Welfare Association containing current items of interest to the Service and ex-Service communities. It is widely distributed to Members of Parliament, media outlets, senior Service and Public Service Officers, DFWA members and supporters.

PROOF THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL DATA CAN'T BE TRUSTED

In the latest edition of the Association's magazine *Camaraderie*, compelling evidence was presented in an expose, written by an independent researcher on matters relating to Commonwealth and Military Superannuation matters, that outlined very serious parliamentary reporting issues and matters concerning the explicit lack of quality assurance of Commonwealth financial and demographic data. As was clearly shown, these errors amounted to (at the very least) many tens of millions of dollars!

Equally disturbing was the clear evidence of severe inaccuracies contained within demographic data held by the Commonwealth; data that the Government and the Parliament rely heavily upon (indirectly) in making policy decisions. The evidence showed data (received by the author under FOI provisions) where retirement pay was still being recorded against deceased persons; where some former members apparently joined their respective superannuation schemes well before they were even born (e.g. (minus) 75 years of age); and where Commonwealth data set new world records in life expectancy (e.g. somebody actually lived to 125 years). If the evidence was not so serious it would be humorous to a point of where it could be turned into a new cartoon strip called "Commonwealth Bloopers".

However, the matter is not cause for mirth, because if such data is used by Governments to frame budgets and to justify their fiscal decision making, then the implications are glaringly obvious. It adds further fuel to Lindsay Tanner's (the previous Minister for Finance) recent words where he wrote of "the dark art of misusing government spending information using some of the standard tricks employed to maximise political appearances." (see UPDATE #261 of 16 June 2011).

On 28 February 2012 Thornton's expose was also presented to the Defence Sub Committee of the Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee when the National President of the Association, David Jamison, appeared before the Committee.

WAYNE SWAN SPEAKS AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB - 5 MARCH 2012

At the National Press Club, Mr. Swan spoke about the fair go for all Australians, and support for an egalitarian society. He was asked a question about fairly indexing military superannuation pensions. His answer was an example of political speak and of course the essence of the question was ignored.

What Mr. Swan failed to cover was the basic fact that what we have been campaigning for is affordable (e.g. \$19M in FY 2010-2011) and the restoration of a basic service (read employment) condition that was unilaterally removed in 1997 when the government recognised changes to the CPI made it unsuitable to use in measuring living costs and altered the way it indexed other regular payments such as age/service pensions but excluded Commonwealth funded superannuation. The piece to resistance in Mr. Swan's answer was his, reference to our "Veterans Group" as "*Vested Interest Group*" – does our Treasurer and the Government he represents really care about Fair Indexation for Military Superannuation Pensioners?

He also carefully avoided the group of ADF superannuants waiting to greet him as he arrived at the Press Club.

DEFENCE TRAINING PACKAGE ENDORSED

Government Skills Australia (GSA) implements ongoing consultation processes to ensure that industry needs and views are represented in all our work.

The role of Industry Advisory Committees (IACs) in GSA is to provide a strong connection between the work of GSA in developing and promoting Training Packages and training resources and the needs and interests of our industry sectors.

IAC's provide advice to GSA on the vocational training needs of industry sectors and contribute to planning and budget allocations for sector projects and product development. IACs meet periodically to support the management of projects and their consultation and endorsement processes.

DFWA is the Defence employee representative on the Public Safety Industry Advisory Committee. Public safety industry coverage includes:

- Defence
- Australian Police Forces
- Fire Services and Land Management Agencies
- State/Territory Emergency Services
- Emergency Management
- Aquatic Search and Rescue.

The public safety industry requires a sustainable workforce of competent and capable career and volunteer personnel, trained to safely fulfil their roles. The industry needs a pool of highly trained operational personnel who are committed to teamwork and safe work practices, and capable of working across multiple hazards, using advanced technology, and applying risk management principles and processes.

Defence Training Package: GSA has announced that the DEF12 (version 1) Defence Training Package was endorsed 24th February.

The endorsed Defence Training package will be available on www.training.gov.au .

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*ADSO comprises the Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA), the Naval Association of Australia (NAA), the RAAF Association (RAAFA), The Royal Australian Regiment Corporation (RARAC) and the Australian Special Air Service Association (ASASA).