



ALLIANCE OF DEFENCE SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

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MEDIA RELEASE

SENATE TURNS ITS BACK ON THE NATION'S SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Today this Parliament revealed its true nature and its attitude towards serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force who it so willingly sends into harm's way. The House of Representatives just last week expressed its support for fair treatment for members of military superannuation schemes and today the Senate rejected a Bill which would start the process of removing the discrimination faced by ADF members in their superannuation schemes. It seems we endure a directionless Parliament bereft of vision and unable to cooperate and agree on measures that will benefit our service men and women.

We are very disappointed at the intrusion of party politics into today's debate as well as employing (in the words of Mr Tanner, the former Minister for Finance) "the dark art of misusing government spending information using some of the standard tricks employed to maximise political appearances: switching between cash and accrual accounting; using nominal, real or proportion of gross domestic product indicators of spending according to which indicator suited the argument better; classifying yearly spending as capital; making commitments beyond the forward estimate years."

Placing politics above the wellbeing of our service personnel is detestable and devalues the work our ADF men and women undertake on behalf of us all.

We utterly condemn those who have opposed even this limited measure to provide relief for some of our service and ex-service personnel without providing any suggestion of how to rectify this inequity they acknowledge is real. Where is the leadership and care that we expect from our elected leaders ?

Those MPs and Senators who have pressed for fair and equitable treatment for ADF military superannuation members have our appreciation and we will continue to work with them to achieve a positive outcome. Whilst he voted against the Bill today, we will watch closely the progress on the constructive suggestion made by Senator Xenophon for Parliament to identify "in the next 6 to 12 months" savings to pay for fair indexation

We call on all MPs and Senators to restore hope for our serving and ex-serving ADF members by looking beyond the "dark arts of misusing government spending information" and take positive measures to remove all discriminatory provisions in the ADF superannuation schemes and resolve the funding issue.

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* The Alliance comprises the Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA); the Naval Association of Australia (NAA); the Royal Australian Regiment Corporation (RARC); the Australian Special Air Services Association (ASASA); and the RAAF Association (RAAFA).