

## **SUBMISSION TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION FOR VETERANS**

The scope of the DVA mission is well inferred by the Inquiry ToR to include all present and former ADF personnel. But the opportunity for service on warlike operations outside Australia is somewhat of a “lottery” – depending on the ADF unit to which a person is assigned, the particular capabilities required of a deployed force and the defined Theatre of Operations (or AO). Notwithstanding, in many cases individual and collective preparation for such roles (inside an AO, outside or en-route) can be equally hazardous both physically and mentally. Personnel from other arms of government are also being increasingly drawn into “force structures” for deployed operations; e.g. AFP personnel, ASIS operatives, DoD specialist civilians, et al. Their needs must be provided for too.

Statistically, about 50 percent of all ADF casualties on warlike operations are due to accidents. Death or injury arising from accidents should lead to DVA outcomes which are no different to losses arising from enemy action.

DVA has an important role to rehabilitate ADF personnel for resumption of their role in civil society including their placement in a suitable post-ADF job. Rehabilitation may need to be more robustly defined to encompass the full gamut of rehabilitation including psychological counselling/coaching and retraining/preparation/re-rolling to resume one’s place in society after ADF service. All related legislation should be clear, consistent and unambiguous.

The ADF presently offers some generic transition training which would be better handled by DVA. The current ADF/DoD “resettlement training” role and budget should be migrated to DVA for delivery and management because such training when associated with job search and placement services is not the core business of Defence. The specialist counselling resources available to DVA would also offer better likely outcomes.

Inability of many ADF personnel to secure gainful employment post their ADF service is a sure pathway to loss of self-esteem and other associated mental trauma which in turn impacts future demand for other health support.

DVA should establish job placement agencies at major ADF bases/concentrations.

DVA should invite selected Ex Service Organisations (ESOs) to collaborate with DVA in providing volunteers to assist with job search and veteran job placement services. As well as having a deeper understanding of ADF workplaces and employment demands, such volunteers are bound to have stronger and more trusted links with their Service peers facing transition.

Presently, it is understood that star-ranked ADF retirees receive redeployment assistance and substantive post-Service job placement opportunities supported and managed through the Dept PM&C with the assistance of the HQADF Defence People Group. Such services should not be confined to a privileged few but broadened to include all retiring ADF personnel and managed by the DVA.

In cases where employment cannot be secured following a program of “resettlement training”, suitable compensation should be considered.

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