

18 Feb 2010  
Hon Lindsay Tanner MP  
Minister for Finance  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT. 2600  
Dear Mr Tanner,

## **INDEXATION OF DEFENCE FORCE SUPERANNUATION**

Firstly, allow me to congratulate you on your performance on Q&A on the ABC on Monday night last. It was the greatest piece of obfuscation that I have ever witnessed.

Secondly, I would like to take umbrage with you over your insensitivity, your insincerity and your selective use of the truth on that same programme.

Your whole answer to the question of just and equitable indexing of DFRDB Superannuation was a regurgitation of the same old party line and waffle that we have had from you on so many occasions. You based your statements on the findings of the Mathews Report that more and more critics are holding in contempt as being a seriously flawed document, in both content and methodology. Indeed I suspect that the Report was done to Terms of Reference (TOR) which led Mathews to come to the conclusions he reached and the recommendations he drew from them. An old trick; one that I have used myself on occasions, to good effect.

Either the TOR were engineered, or quite simply, Mathews made a mistake. Did you ever consider that possibility? Did you ever consider the possibility that you also made a mistake by accepting the Mathews recommendations? If you do consider that to be possible, would you be able to admit it? Your integrity should help you to decide.

You said that to increase the DFRDB superannuation indexing would cost \$ billions which the taxpayer cannot afford. That \$200 billion figure you stated is “rubbery” at best. What you conveniently failed to mention was that “claw-back” from various sources would

reduce that figure by an estimated 50%, plus it would be further reduced by the increased spending power available to the superannuants. If we cannot afford to give the defenders of our great nation an equitable superannuation how can you spend billions like you do? We seem to be able to find the \$500 million for politicians' superannuation and the outrageous \$25 million for the Taliban to try and convince them to stop killing our Troops. God help us!

I won't repeat the statistics here on the yawning gulf between your superannuation, the aged pension and DFRDB superannuation; you already have the figures. Just a glance at them reveals a shameful situation which has existed for the last 20 years and growing steadily worse and widening year by year. These figures were recommended for correction by all 5 inquiries held prior to Mathews, yet ignored by him. And continue to be ignored by you.

It is inconceivable that members of Australia's Defence Force should be treated in such a manner. They put their lives in your hands when they serve in a theatre of war yet the best treatment they receive from you is to be used as a back drop for your (and your fellow Ministers) photo opportunities when they leave, and then they are treated as second class citizens, behind aged pensioners and even unmarried mothers, when they return,. We seek no better treatment than that which is the right of all Australians. We only ask that we are granted the same indexation formula as at least the aged pension. Not to grant us that is blatant discrimination, it is unfair and it is unjust. I would think that your Discrimination Act would have something to say about that.

You should be aware that there are some 600,000 DFRDB and ComSuper superannuants plus dependents out here in the voting community. At the last election we targeted Liberal seats which our analysis shows helped to get Labor elected; witness Eden Monaro amongst others. We did so because we heard Labor's election promise that you would correct this unfair anomaly in our indexation. This you have failed to do and, judging by your performance on Q&A, you remain intransigent. There are a lot of very angry and disillusioned superannuants out here (remember the thousands of emails Tony

Jones received?) and I can assure that we, as a group, will do our utmost to garner as much support as we can in an attempt to remove Labor from office at the next election, because of the lies you have told to us and continue to do so.

I have no idea if you will answer this letter. You certainly failed to respond to my last communication. If perchance you do condescend to reply, please don't add insult to this injury by including any of the usual party line platitudes in that reply.

Yours faithfully,

Peter G. Snowdon  
Colonel (Retd)  
Vietnam Vet and DFRDB Superannuant