

In relation to Indexation:

Q&A Program. The backlash from the Q&A program continued unabated. David Jamison was interviewed on ABC Brisbane Drivetime Radio (this should have been advised in last weeks' report) and over the weekend ED worked on a short and also a longer brief for Alan Jones (2GB) who asked to be briefed on the issues. A number of "bitews" from other media organizations was also followed up on.

We wrote to Minister Tanner asking him to clarify comments he made on the Q&A program.

On Monday NP and ED met with Michael Johnson MP, then Senator Fielding and then the Defence correspondent for The Australian, Mark Dodds. On Tuesday NP and ED met with Louise Markus MP and Kevin Thompson MP. A direct outcome of these meetings was Senator Fielding's question in the Senate on Wednesday 24 February and an article in The Australian on Thursday 25 February.

Resulting from the Senate Question and then The Australian article, the DFWA issued a press release on 24 February dealing with questions we have regarding the financial and operational aspects of the Matthews Review, and also wrote to the Prime Minister. On 25 February we issued another press release following up on Senator Sherry's comments reported in The Australian article and his response to the Senate question.

On Tuesday ED and NP hosted a meeting with SCOA and ACSPRO to discuss the way ahead.

All the documents referred to above were uploaded onto our website. Finally, on Thursday we sent an email out to as many as possible - but specifically to a number of Veteran agitators that maintain email lists - asking that a short note from DFWA be distributed, providing an update on what we are doing, attaching some of our Press Releases and finally asking to consider joining !

The RSL position paper on Indexation as submitted to the Prime Minister, is expected to publicly released on Friday 26 February. It is expected to be available on the RSL website (www.rsl.org.au).

Other matters:

Camaraderie went to print during the week, with deliveries expected next week. It also has been uploaded onto the web.

As a result of our lobbying, the Bill allowing for the proposed Amalgamations of the Military and Superannuation Boards will go to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry on 11 March. We have been invited to provide a written submission by 5 March and to appear to the Committee on 11 March.

Following on from an item in the last UPDATE, regarding the release of service records by Archives Australia, we were presented with information that a veteran's medical and other history was released. We now believe that the matter is sufficient to initiate urgent representations to the Privacy Commissioner, the Minister for Vets. Affairs and others with the aim of having the Archives Act amended to give protection to the private/personal parts of ADF personnel records, but obviously that would take some time to achieve. In the interim, perhaps the representations to the PM, the Ministers for Defence & Vets Affairs and the D-G of Archives could include a proposal that, to provide an immediate block to the release of private/personal information, a determination be made under S.35 of the Archives Act that such parts of ADF & ex-ADF personnel records be classified as "exempt records" during the open access period. ED hopes

to progress this next week.

On Monday NP and ED met with the RSL Conditions of Service Committee to hear a briefing from the Department of Defence on the review of ADF allowances.

Media: see Indexation above.

Administrative / Office matters:

a. Branches are again reminded that Capitation Fees / Donations for the quarter ending Thursday 31 December 2009 are due. Thank you to those Branches who have submitted theirs so far.

b. An amended membership application form was uploaded onto the website. Some additional documents were also uploaded on the Secure Page for the use of Branches and Executive.

Finally, ED trudged home at COB today after a busy week ! ... hopefully for a break for a couple of days ... wonder what next week will bring ??

Les Bienkiewicz
Executive Director
Defence Force Welfare Association
PO Box 4166
Kingston ACT 2604

Tel: 02 6265 9530
Fax: 02 6265 9776

E-mail: national@dfwa.org.au

Website: www.dfwa.org.au