



RSL
Australia

THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA LTD

Patron from 1952-2022, Her Majesty The Queen

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Ref: O 025/24

18 March 2024

Senator Marielle Smith
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Legislation
By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Smith,

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Military Invalidation Payments Means Testing) Bill 2024

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has long advocated for the welfare and well-being of serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), veterans and their families.

The RSL welcomes the opportunity to support the submission made by the Defence Welfare Association (DFWA) to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee's inquiry into the provisions of the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Military Invalidation Payment Mean Testing) Bill 2024 (the Bill).

The RSL has seen multiple veterans who have been overwhelmingly negatively impacted because of complex military superannuation schemes that most tax and financial planning professionals have little understanding of.

In addressing the issues raised in the DFWA's submission, and in considering the Bill, we ask the Committee to acknowledge that service in the ADF is unique and distinct. Military entitlements and benefits are made available to serving and ex-serving members, and in some cases their family members, in recognition of the impact of ADF service. Military invalidity payments are provided to compulsory discharged individuals from the ADF because of physical and/or mental health circumstances that prevent them from continuing to serve.

While the RSL welcomes the simplification that is intended to be delivered by the Bill, we are concerned that many of the issues raised by DFWA and Peter Thornton have not been appropriately addressed. We also advocate that the proposed amendments must not negatively impact or reduce the existing payments that are made available to veterans and their families. Accordingly, we ask that the committee require greater clarity about the treatment of military invalidity payments in family law and child support matters.

Yours sincerely,

Greg Melick
National President
The Returned & Services League of Australia