



Police Federation
of Australia

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The Secretariat
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade Committee
Suite S1.57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

SUBMISSION RE INQUIRY INTO THE MILITARY REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION BILL 2003

I make this submission on behalf of the Police Federation of Australia (PFA) representing 47,000 serving Australian Police Officers, all retired officers and the United Nations Police Association of Australia (UNPAA) who deal with the interests of Australian Police Officers who have served in overseas Peace Keeping Missions.

We have for some time been discussing with the Minister for Veteran's Affairs the Hon Danna Vale MP the issue of the full stopping of the current Veteran's Entitlements Act, its being replaced with the Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Act and the affect that will have on Australian Police Officers serving in overseas deployments that would normally be covered by the VEA.

It is our understanding from meetings with Minister Vale and subsequent meetings with the Minister for Justice and Customs Senator Chris Ellison that no coverage of police officers will be afforded under the new Military Bill. We have been discussing with them the development of a Police specific Bill along the lines of the Military Bill to ensure that post the enactment of the Military Bill, police officers to be deployed overseas will have appropriate coverage.

Our concern is that, even though much dialogue has taken place and correspondence has been exchanged between the PFA the UNPAA & Minister's Vale & Ellison, we are no closer to a Police Bill. We have on an ongoing basis had fruitful discussions with Major General Bill Crews AO, National President of the Returned & Services League of Australia Ltd. Major General Crews was very supportive & helpful in those discussions.

The committee should note that Australian Police have served approximately 3,000 missions overseas since Cyprus commenced in 1964 with a significant increase in numbers over the past several years with plans for a large number of officer deployments planned for the future. As a result of those missions approximately 100 officers are currently receiving some level of disability pension through the VEA.

We seek that this committee note the concerns of the PFA & UNPAA & seriously consider whether the Military Bill should continue through the Parliament until such time as some arrangement has been made to ensure police officers have affective coverage following the enactment of the Military Bill. It is our view that coverage for police could be achieved by either a new specific Police Act or by some short amendments to the current Veteran's Entitlements Act that will enable future deployments to be covered with benefits matching those offered in the Military Bill.

The PFA and the UNPAA would be happy to appear before your inquiry should that be deemed necessary by the Committee.

Sincerely yours

Mark Burgess
Chief Executive Officer