

16 December 1999

DEFENCE FORCE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

MATTER NO. 3 OF 1999

SUBMARINE SERVICE ALLOWANCE

Statement

In the decision of 4 June 1999, the Tribunal approved changes in the structure of Submarine Service Allowance and new rates of the allowance. These changes were sought by the ADF in part to address personnel shortages and other crewing problems then being encountered in the Submarine Arm.

The Tribunal said in its decision:

“Given the basis for the present case and the submissions made, there should be a report provided to the Tribunal in six months time on the implementation of the various measures to address the current personnel shortages in the Submarine Arm and on the impact of the changes now made to SSA”.

We have now heard a report on these matters including the testimony of Rear Admiral P D Briggs, Head of the Submarine Capability Team. A written statement was also provided to the Tribunal by Captain R A Shalders, Commander of the Australian Submarine Squadron.

Submissions were also made to the Tribunal in the report proceedings by the Defence Force Advocate on behalf of the ADF and by the Commonwealth and the Armed Forces Federation of Australia.

We recognise the difficulties faced by Navy with the Submarine Arm and the operation of the new Collins Class submarines. We also recognise the enormous effort which is being required of all those serving in the Submarine Arm and the commitment and dedication shown by submariners in seeking to meet these challenges.

We note the progress made by Navy in addressing the personnel shortages in the Submarine Arm and the various management initiatives which are being pursued. The initiatives include the establishment of manning priorities with shore billets, a trials crew and a postings plan; measures to encourage attraction to the Submarine Arm through recruiting and training; the use of female submariners; and various measures regarding financial recompense including the changes to Submarine Service Allowance and the introduction of a completion bonus. We accept what Rear Admiral Briggs has said, namely that “rectification of the Submarine Arm manpower situation is necessarily a long term exercise”.

We are pleased with the progress which has been made and emphasise the need for the continued implementation of the management initiatives and other measures to address the problem surrounding the personnel shortages and other difficulties in the Submarine Arm.

The Tribunal notes the report by the ADF and the explanations given in the proceedings.