

25 AUGUST 2004

## **DEFENCE FORCE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL**

### **DIVING ALLOWANCE**

### **MATTER NO 4 OF 2004**

### **STATEMENT**

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has sought changes to the existing Diving Allowance Determination.

The ADF is seeking:

- to define diving duties to include a reference to diving in a recompression chamber; and
- to widen the eligibility to the allowance by including a reference to therapeutic treatment that a member provides as a medical attendant in a recompression chamber.

The Tribunal had the benefit of inspecting the work of Underwater Medical personnel on 13 July 2004 at the Submarine and Underwater Medicine Unit at HMAS PENGUIN and onboard HMAS HAWKESBURY, a mine hunter coastal, at HMAS WATERHEN. During the inspection the Tribunal was briefed on the disabilities associated with treatment on the various platforms where recompression chambers are utilised within the ADF.

The Commonwealth did not agree to the definitional changes nor to the extension of the payment of Diving Allowance to underwater medical personnel.

The ADF proposal was supported by the Armed Forces Federation of Australia. In addition we have been separately informed that the Returned and Services League of Australia and the Regular Defence Force Welfare Association also support the proposed structure.

On the basis of the submissions and evidence we have decided that Underwater Medical personnel who are required to be in attendance during treatment within a recompression chamber should receive a disability payment. We do, however, consider that the disabilities experienced by divers involved in underwater operations and encapsulated within Diving Allowance are more extensive than those experienced by medical attendants in a recompression chamber. We have decided that a payment of \$30 will be the appropriate level of payment for Underwater Medical personnel providing treatment in a recompression chamber and for Underwater Medics undergoing recompression chamber training.

The parties should provide the DFRT Secretariat with an appropriate Determination within 7 days.

We will publish our reasons for decision in due course.