

DEFENCE FORCE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

RAN ELECTRONIC WARFARE TECHNICAL CATEGORY

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) sought changes to the Royal Australian Navy's Electronic Warfare Technical (EWT) category which we have decided to approve. We give brief reasons as follows.

BACKGROUND

In 2001, the Tribunal determined a structure for the EWT category consisting of five competency based skill groups across Pay Groups 3-7. The structure linked training and development activities to increases in the level of skills, qualifications and responsibilities of members employed across the category.

Under the structure members advanced to Pay Group 3 after approximately 32 weeks' training and then Pay Group 4, after a further 52 weeks' training.

SUBMISSIONS AND EVIDENCE

The Australian Defence Force (ADF)

The ADF submitted that, following a newly realised capability requirement, the EWT category has been refocussed on two streams, requiring amendment to the training continuum.

The ADF sought a revised six tiered structure for the category and a change to current pay group placements whereby members would advance directly to Pay Group 4 after approximately 42 weeks' training.

The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth supported the ADF proposal.

The Armed Forces Federation of Australia (ArFFA)

The ArFFA supported the ADF proposal to advance members to Pay Group 4 after 42 weeks' training. However, it argued that members currently in training should nevertheless be advanced to Pay Group 3 after 32 weeks, because this was their understanding in entering the category.

Transition Arrangement

In light of the ArFFA submission, the ADF amended its proposal to include a transition arrangement to ensure that members in training would not be disadvantaged. Under the proposed transition arrangement these members are to advance to Pay Group 3 after 32 weeks' training and then Pay Group 4 after a further 10 weeks' training.

The Commonwealth submitted that it was not in a position to support the transitional arrangement on the basis that it was unable to assess any financial advantage or disadvantage for those members affected.

DECISION

Considering the circumstances of this case, we prefer the revised ADF approach to assure the interests of members in training. On the basis of the evidence and submissions we adopt the revised structure as sought by the ADF. The transitional arrangement will apply to a small number of members currently training under the new structure. As soon as these members complete training, the transitional arrangements will cease to have effect. The new structure and pay groups will apply on and from 31 August 2005.