

DEFENCE FORCE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

ARMY ILLUSTRATOR REPROGRAPHIC TRADE RESTRUCTURE

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) sought a restructure of the Army Illustrator Reprographic Trade and the Tribunal approved a new structure and pay groups for the trade, including a retitling of the trade as Multimedia Technician, on 3 May 2006. I give brief reasons as follows.

BACKGROUND

The Army Illustrator Reprographic trade has a current strength of 54 ranging in rank from Sapper to Warrant Officer Class 1 and consists of a two graded structure at Pay Groups 3 and 4. The trade has not been reviewed since 1979 when the Committee of Reference for Defence Force Pay (COR) placed it at Pay Level 5.

The Tribunal had the benefit of comprehensive briefings and demonstrations at an inspection of the trade at the School of Military Engineering on 2 March 2006.

On 3 May 2006 a joint submission was made to the Tribunal on behalf of the ADF and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

SUBMISSIONS AND EVIDENCE

The Australian Defence Force (ADF)

The ADF submitted that the Illustrator Reprographic Trade has assumed significantly greater responsibility since last reviewed by the COR, particularly within the last decade. The trade members provide support in operational and non-operational environments with the role developing from that of an artist skilled in illustrative methods required for training publications to that of a broad multimedia specialist

with increased employment responsibilities, particularly in Land Command units. The inspections referred to served to illustrate the important contribution made by multimedia technicians to the communications efforts of troops deployed to operational waters.

It was said that a modern Multimedia Technician is a skilled member who produces multimedia products such as written communications (circulars, news bulletins, illustrative cartoons, conveying a specific message), visual communications. Multimedia Technicians are expert in still and video imagery, graphic design, web design, interactive products, 3D and virtual capabilities and CD based learning tools. Much of their operational involvement supports and enhances the effectiveness of physiological warfare specialists. It is as valid in warlike conditions as it is in peacekeeping and other non-warlike situations.

The ADF sought a revised three-tiered structure as follows:

- Multimedia Technician Grade 1 – PG4;
- Multimedia Technician Grade 2 – PG5; and
- Multimedia Technician Grade 3 – PG5.

The ADF submitted that the tiered structure reflects the qualifications, experience and work value at each skill grade and aligns the trade with similar trades in Navy and Army maintaining the structural relativities across the ADF Other Ranks structure, in particular with the Army Geomatic Technician trade and the Navy Photographer category.

The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth fully supported the structure and pay groups proposed by the ADF submitting that “we don’t see this as a matter which is simply the introduction of technology to an existing Illustrator Reprographic trade group. In fact, it is the introduction of technology which has created an entirely new group altogether”.

The Armed Forces Federation of Australia (ArFFA)

ArFFA supported the ADF proposal with one exception. It was submitted that the proposal not to seek pay group advancement for the proposed Skill Grade 3 level and as a consequence the ADF proposal “ignores and undermines the increased skill and work value of personnel qualified for employment at this level”. The Federation held the view that Pay Group 6 would be more appropriate for the Skill Grade 3 member.

DECISION

On the basis of the evidence and submission, I have decided to adopt the structure and pay groups as proposed by the ADF and supported by the Commonwealth. I note that the trade members’ skills are now utilised by Land Command units in operational settings. In coming to this decision I have had regard to other ADF employment groups, in particular to the Army Geomatic Technicians and the Navy Photographers.

In regard to the ArFFA submissions on the Skill Grade 3 level I agree with the ADF and Commonwealth view that no significant net addition in work value was present to sustain a pay group movement. Furthermore, I note that the Geomatic Technician Grade 3 has a much broader skill base and undergoes a significantly higher training regime to warrant progression to Pay Group 6.

The new structure and pay groups will apply on and from 3 May 2006.

APPEARANCES: R Kenzie QC, Defence Force Advocate with Lieutenant
Commander H Cameron for the Australian Defence Force.

M O'Neill with B Jennings for the Commonwealth.

G Howatt for the Armed Forces Federation of Australia.

INSPECTION:

2 March 2006 – School of Military Engineering,
Moorebank NSW

DATE AND PLACE OF HEARING:

3 May 2006 - Canberra