



Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal

DECISION

Defence Act 1903
s.58H—Functions and powers of Tribunal

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE: AIR INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS (Matter 22 of 2020)

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT

MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER

CANBERRA, 22 MARCH 2021

MAJGEN G. FOGARTY AO RETD, MEMBER

[1] This decision arises from a listing application¹ made by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for a determination to be made under Section 58H of the *Defence Act 1903* to add two skill grades to the current Air Force Intelligence Officer employment category structure and realign the training and career milestones within that structure. At the same time, Air Force wish to change the name of the employment category from ‘Intelligence Officer’ to ‘Air Intelligence Officer’.

Background

[2] The role of Air Force Intelligence Officers is to provide intelligence and staff support and advice to commanders at all levels during Air Force operations. They are considered to directly contribute to Air Force capability by providing intelligence support essential for the safe and effective application of air power.

[3] We considered this matter in hearing on 4 March 2021 when Mr J Phillips SC appeared for the ADF and Mr P Hoang for the Commonwealth.

Submissions

[4] The ADF specifically proposes to:

- a. expand the current intelligence officer skill grade and pay grade structure within the Graded Officer Pay Structure (GOPS) to add skill grade 4 (at pay grade 5) and skill grade 5 (at pay grade 6), including the associated Command placements;
- b. re-align training and employment milestones through the five skill grades associated with the five pay grades in order to progressively reward specialisation, competence, acceptance of responsibility and expertise; and
- c. re-name 'intelligence officer' to 'Air Intelligence Officer' in the GOPS.²

[5] The submission further describes the rationale for change as:

- a. a significant net increase to work value of the roles and duties performed by Intelligence Officers;
- b. the need to attract high quality Intelligence Officers to the most complex and accountable positions;
- c. the requirement to align skill and pay grades with a modernised Intelligence Officer training and career development continuum;
- d. the need to deal with retention and separation issues that are impacting on the Intelligence Officer employment category; and
- e. the need to grow the Air Intelligence workforce.³

[6] The Commonwealth "*supports the ADF's proposition and notes that both Navy and Army support the proposal as well*".⁴

Consideration

[7] Firstly, we accept that the Air Force Intelligence Officer workforce has not been reviewed since their placement in the Graded Officer Pay Structure in 2007⁵ despite subsequent reviews of other categories in the same 'battlespace management' workgroup.⁶

[8] We accept that the roles and responsibilities have changed significantly since the workforce was last considered and agree that there has also been significant organisational change to support the workforce, including an increase to three intelligence squadrons rather than one. We agree that the duties as submitted have also expanded with the technological advances to more complex 'fifth generation' weapon systems and as a result there is even greater reliance on intelligence than previously.

[9] We considered the evidence that “*today’s intelligence officers are expected to attain a far higher level of technical expertise, fulfil a wider range of more complex and responsible roles and accept positions of leadership with broader spans of control than previously expected*”.⁷

[10] We accept that Intelligence officers in the Reserves are exclusively recruited from members transitioning from the Permanent Air Force and that retention of those personnel also plays a critical role in the intelligence capability.

Conclusion

[11] We agree that the proposal will address the increased skill, knowledge and responsibilities of the intelligence officers, as well as the challenges being experienced by the workforce.

[12] Further we accept that the structure agreed in 2007 is no longer viable and that this submission recognises the significantly increased complexity and demands of intelligence officer work and training, and meets future workforce growth for Air Force.

[13] We agree with the amended nomenclature of Air Intelligence Officer.

[14] Accordingly, Determination 2 of 2021 will give effect to these changes from 1 April 2021.

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT

MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER

MAJGEN G. FOGARTY AO RETD, MEMBER

Appearances:

Mr J. Phillips SC for the ADF assisted by Mr P. Blady

Mr P. Hoang for the Commonwealth assisted by Ms E. Beresford-Jones.

¹ DMR/OUT/2020/37 Listing application – *Air Intelligence Officer Employment Category* dated 3 December 2020.

² ADF Submission *Royal Australian Air Force Air Intelligence Officers* undated page 2 paragraph 1.9.

³ ADF 1 page 10 paragraph 4.2

⁴ Commonwealth submission *Matter 22 of 2020 Royal Australian Air Force: Air Intelligence Officer* (CWLTH1) page 5 paragraph 21.

⁵ <https://dfrrt.govcms.gov.au/sites/default/files/GOPS-ADF-Officer-Placement-Decision-31-Oct-07.pdf>

⁶ <https://dfrrt.govcms.gov.au/sites/default/files/OARS-Reasons-for-Decision-16-Oct-09.pdf> and

<https://dfrrt.govcms.gov.au/sites/default/files/Decision-OAPS.pdf>

⁷ ADF 1 page 1 paragraph 1.5.