



## **Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal**

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# **STATEMENT**

*Defence Act 1903*

s.58H—Functions and powers of Tribunal

### **ADF: AIRCREWMEN AND LOADMASTER EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES – DIRECT ENTRY**

(Matter 19 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 application<sup>1</sup> made by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) under s58H of the *Defence Act 1903* seeking the approval of this Tribunal to introduce a direct entry pathway for the Aircrewmen and Loadmaster employment categories across all three Services.

#### **Background**

[2] Navy and Army refer to these members of the aviation workforce as ‘Aircrewmen’ while Air Force use the nomenclature of ‘Loadmaster’. Within Navy an Aircrewmen is a member of the helicopter crew and fulfils key specialist functions of sensor operations, data analysis and utility operations; in Army, Aircrewmen are the aircraft cabin and mission payload specialists; and in Air Force the Loadmasters are responsible for aircraft payloads and, in combat missions, assisting with threat detection and deployment of counter measures.

[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] Previously, in the submissions made by the ADF in Matter 26 of 2008 – *Graded Other Ranks Pay Structure*<sup>2</sup>, all three Services stated that the entry pathway and pay grades for members into the Aircrewmen and Loadmaster employment categories were to be predicated on a member having an existing Service career in another employment category prior to transfer into the aviation category.

[5] It is now submitted by the ADF<sup>3</sup> that prior Service experience is no longer considered to be mandatory for Aircrewmen and Loadmasters to perform their roles and responsibilities and that the introduction of a direct entry pathway into the category will “*open up a larger talent pool of recruits*”. Additionally the ADF proposes that this change also “*relieves some of the pressure on other ‘feeder’ employment categories to provide an increasing supply of candidates to meet future Aircrewmen/Loadmaster growth*”.<sup>4</sup>

[6] The Commonwealth supports the proposed changes sought by the ADF and notes that “*by diversifying the career pathways this should increase workforce supply to meet future shortfalls or hollowness*”.<sup>5</sup>

## Consideration

[7] We initially questioned whether there was a need for the ADF to return to us in this matter when there were no proposed changes to pay or skill grades. We proceeded to consider this matter in the context of the ADF submission that “*when the Tribunal is presented with evidence upon which the basis of the case in that the changes are made, and that which underpin the salary placement, if something changes which is of sufficient magnitude, then really one is duty-bound to bring it back to the Tribunal to make sure that the Tribunal’s processes are not compromised*”.<sup>6</sup>

[8] We also considered the evidence that “*the current pathway limits of in-Service transfers are restrictive and there is limited return on investment associated with training a member in two employment categories noting they will only use one of them*”.<sup>7</sup>

[9] We acknowledge the impact on those feeder categories which may now be experiencing workforce hollowness or shortfalls and agree there is a resultant positive impact if members are no longer transferring out of those categories.

[10] We note the evidence that the use of simulation based technology and training has evolved since the in-Service requirement was established in 2008 and that contemporary training “*more than adequately prepares the member to undertake the roles and responsibilities of an Aircrewmen/Loadmaster and preserves the integrity of the graduating standards regarding responsibility and maturity, regardless of entry pathway*”.<sup>8</sup>

[11] We also note the evidence that while this submission is inclusive of the Army Aircrewmen category, Army state that at present it remains able to meet the needs of the category through in-Service transfers. We agree that Army may, in future, instigate the option of direct entry transfer on the basis of this submission and accept that can be done without the need to return to us to effect that change.

## Conclusion

[12] We agree that broadening the entry pathway will reduce over-investment in the training of candidates because they will now train for a single category rather than retraining in a second employment category when they will only ever be employed in one category.

[13] We agree that a direct entry pathway will increase the available talent pool, provide greater flexibility to meet operational requirements and reduce the impact on the workforce status of other 'feeder' employment categories across all three Services.

[14] We thank the ADF for advising us and seeking approval for these changes despite there being no impact on pay or skill grade. There is no determination required in order to provide for these amendments and we agree that they will take effect 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.*

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<sup>1</sup> DMR/OUT/2020/41 Listing Application – Aircrewmen and Loadmaster Employment categories – Direct Entry dated 18 November 2020.

<sup>2</sup> <https://dfat.govcms.gov.au/sites/default/files/Decision-Matter-26-of-2008.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> ADF submission Aircrewmen and Loadmaster employment categories – Direct Entry Pathway undated (ADF1).

<sup>4</sup> ADF 1 page 4 paragraph 23.

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth submission Aircrewmen and Loadmaster Employment categories – Direct Entry Pathway dated 17 February 2021 (CWLTH1) page 3 paragraph 15.

<sup>6</sup> Transcript 4 March 2021 page 3 lines 24 to 30.

<sup>7</sup> ADF1 page 3 paragraphs 21 and 22.

<sup>8</sup> ADF1 page 4 paragraph 28.