



Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal

STATEMENT

Defence Act 1903

s.58H—Functions and powers of Tribunal

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE: NETWORK TECHNICIAN EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY REPORT BACK

(Matter 6 of 2022)

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT

MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER

CANBERRA, 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

MAJGEN G. FOGARTY AO RETD, MEMBER

[1] This statement should be read in conjunction with our decision in Matter 6 of 2019 – *Royal Australian Air Force: Network Technician Employment Category*.¹ In that decision we required the ADF to report back to us “*within two years of implementation to provide evidence of the work value of the Warrant Officer Networks, and the progress of the non-reduction provisions*” as determined.

[2] This report back meets that requirement and provides an assessment against five key performance indicators (KPIs) set by the ADF in Matter 6 of 2019:

- a. the effect on capability as measured by the number of members who successfully transition to the new employment category;
- b. work value assessment for the Warrant Officer Networks skill grade;
- c. the number of members still on salary protection provisions at the five-year review;
- d. data from employment satisfaction surveys relating to career progression and development, remuneration and training; and

- e. stability of the network technician (Permanent Force), Communications Electronic Technician (Permanent Force) and Communications Information and Systems Controller (Reserve Force) employment categories at the time of the reviews.²

We considered this report back on the papers as submitted on 16 August 2022.

[3] The Commonwealth submission reviewed the KPIs and considered two to be ‘met’ (b. and c. above), two partially ‘met’ (a. and e. above), and one ‘not met’ (d. above).³ We considered that assessment.

[4] Summarising our evaluation of the KPIs, we:

- a. accept that of 614 members who have transferred to the Network Technician employment category, 408 were required to undertake transitional training. 285 have completed training with 123 yet to do so, and a further 206 having transferred without requiring transition training;
- b. accept only four members have advanced to Warrant Officer Network positions and therefore agree this does not provide the ADF with enough evidence to provide an accurate assessment of the success, or otherwise, of the implementation at this time;
- c. accept that 108 members have accessed salary protection and 37 members remain on non-reduction provisions;
- d. note Air Force will “*conduct a review of the entire Network technician category beginning in late 2022*”; and
- e. accept, with some concern, the evidence that “*whilst recruitment and progression through initial employment training for Network Technician has been satisfactory, separation rates for Network Technicians since June 2020 have remained well above the Air Force average and that the category is now deficient by approximately 75 positions, principally at the Corporal Rank*”.

[5] While we are always willing to work with the ADF to develop remunerative options for remediation of any workforce challenge, we accept Air Force has already implemented a ‘retention bonus’ targeting the Network Technician workforce, along with five other employment categories.⁴ The bonus offers Network Technicians (between the ranks of Leading Aircraftman/woman to Sergeant) who have completed their Initial Minimum Period of Service, with a payment of \$50 000 in return for undertaking a further three years of service.

[6] We agree with the ADF proposal to provide a final report back on this workforce in 2025, unless any findings of the review require the earlier consideration of this Tribunal.

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT
MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER
MAJGEN G. FOGARTY AO RETD, MEMBER

¹ [Matter 6 of 2019 - Royal Australian Air Force Network Technician Employment Category](#)

² ADF Submission *Royal Australian Air Force Network Technician Employment Category Report Back* page 1 paragraph 3.

³ Commonwealth submission *Royal Australian Air Force Network Technician Employment Category Report Back* pages 4 and 5, paragraphs 20 to 34.

⁴ Enlisted Employment Categories Retention Bonus of 6 April 2022 (Airborne Electronics Analyst, Air Intelligence Analyst, Cyber Warfare Analyst, Communications Electronic technician, Movements and Network Technician).