

DEFENCE FORCE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

CREW ATTENDANT

REASONS FOR DECISION

In this matter the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has sought the introduction of a trade structure and pay groups for a new Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Crew Attendant mustering.

In broad terms the role of the proposed classification of Crew Attendant is the care and supervision of passengers on aircraft operated by 33 and 34 Squadrons RAAF as well as undertaking responsibilities for numerous other activities associated with aircraft operation and safety. The proposed new category will have an establishment of 45 with members in all ranks up to and including Flight Sergeant.

The ADF sought the introduction of the new mustering and pay groups by 1 July 2000 to enable recruitment to the category from that date. The Tribunal heard the submissions and evidence in relation to the matter on 20 June 2000 and at the conclusion of proceedings approved the new mustering and pay groups sought. We now publish our reasons for that decision.

BACKGROUND

Until 1993 some of the functions to be carried out by the Crew Attendant were the responsibility of Stewards who received additional training and were designated as Flight Stewards. However, they received no recognition for their enhanced role and were remunerated at the same level as the basic trade of Steward at Pay Group 2. In 1993, as a result of a shortage in numbers, and to introduce enhanced employment flexibility, the Flight Steward sub-specialisation was opened to other non-technical RAAF mustering who retained the pay group relevant to their parent mustering. Currently as a result of this initiative there are Flight Stewards on pay groups ranging from 2 to 5.

The present structure for Flight Stewards is set out at Attachment 1.

As a result of the continuing development of the Flight Stewards' role and duties the ADF contends that there is now a requirement for a dedicated mustering with its own structure and pay groups.

THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The new structure proposed by the ADF is set out at Attachment 2.

By way of general explanation of the new structure Crew Attendant applicants will undergo psychological aptitude testing and a selection board process. The Crew Attendant Grade 1 will have completed recruit training or will have remustered from another RAAF category and will undertake Airman Aircrew Training and the Crew Attendant Basic Course before being placed in Pay Group 2.

On completion of the Ground Phase and Air Phase Aircraft Conversion Courses on either the Boeing 707 or the F900 Falcon aircraft, as well as 12 months on-the-job training, the Crew Attendant will progress to Crew Attendant Grade 2 and be placed at Pay Group 3.

At 33 Squadron, which operates the Boeing 707 aircraft, the Crew Attendant Grade 2 is expected to exercise independent judgment in the performance of their duties and is responsible for the training and supervision of the Grade 1 Crew Attendants. At 34 Squadron, which operates the Falcon F900 VIP aircraft, the Crew Attendant Grade 2 is required to be the sole Attendant on short flights and to instruct the Grade 1 Crew Attendants on long flights.

Further training which may be undertaken at the Crew Attendant Grade 2 level includes the Loadmaster Phase 1 Course and the Dangerous Goods Packaging and Acceptance Course.

SUBMISSIONS

ADF

The ADF submitted that a new category of Crew Attendant is needed to meet RAAF operational requirements and to overcome structural problems inherent in the Flight Steward employment category. These structural problems were stated to be:

- a. a small diverse number of personnel without a specialised employment category who have inequitable promotion prospects;
- b. the loss of experienced, highly reported non-Steward Flight Stewards who have limited tenure in this field of employment;
- c. the attraction and retention of suitable personnel for supervisory duties;

- d. salary inequities between the various employment categories in the field of employment;
- e. the lack of Flight Steward experience of some Corporal Flight Stewards as they are promoted in competition with their parent category peers, not their Flight Steward peers; and
- f. the lack of recognition of the responsibilities associated with passenger operations especially VIP operations.”

The ADF contended that the new structure recognises:

- The operational need to establish an expanded task specific employment group capable of undertaking a wider range of aircraft related duties which provides employment flexibility and resource efficiency.
- The need to address an anomaly in the non-recognition in remuneration terms of the additional work value of the Flight Steward over and above that of Stewards.
- The need to establish a sustainable employment category.

Further, it was contended there has been a significant change in the work value of the Flight Steward and that new functions and training include tasking, cooking of fresh meals, instructional roles, loadmaster and dangerous goods training, contract management responsibilities and operation of scissor lift vehicles.

It was also submitted that Crew Attendants are now required to be multiskilled. It was stated that the role of 33 Squadron has changed significantly and that as a result the duties of Crew Attendants have changed from being related solely to aspects of passenger care and safety to including responsibilities in the areas of weight and balance calculations, dangerous cargo handling and certification and operation of external cargo handling equipment. In particular it was submitted that, depending on the Squadron, Crew Attendants may perform some of the following duties:

- “a. loading and lashing of cargo;
- b. weight and balance calculations;
- c. supervision of loading and handling of dangerous cargo and maintenance of dangerous cargo documentation;

- d. pre-flight planning including flight documentation, menus, and individually specified requirements;
- e. supervision of passengers from their arrival in the vicinity of the aircraft until they leave the aircraft area.
- f. Air to Air Refuelling observation;
- g. assistance during aircraft taxiing operations, including “wing walking”;
- h. monitoring of Auxiliary Power Unit operations;
- i. assisting pilots with after flight inspections and preparations;
- j. loading all baggage for passengers in the baggage hold and the cabin;
- k. arranging quarantine and customs requirements;
- l. provision of in-flight emergency first aid to passengers;
- m. performance of emergency procedures (EP) briefings for passengers;
- n. EP operations, should an emergency arise;
- o. VIP in flight service;
- p. cabin and exit security;
- q. checking for any defects or hazards, including ice build up, cracked windows, leaks, smoke etc;
- r. fire fighting in the cabin or baggage hold;
- s. toilet and water servicing;
- t. reporting aircraft status at regular intervals to flight deck crew;
- u. passenger health monitoring; and
- v. provision of duty of care responsibilities for passengers in terms of OH&S.”

Other responsibilities for some members were stated to be weapons handling training and driver instructor training for the Scissor Lift Vehicle.

The ADF submitted that the cost of the new structure would be around \$82000 a year and that non-reduction provisions would apply to present members from outside the Steward category.

The ADF sought the approval of the new structure on an interim basis with the ADF reporting back to the tribunal “when the training structure and a mature category structure is in place”. This process is to be concluded by 1 July 2001.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth supported the proposed Crew Attendant structure and Pay Groups. It was submitted that the matter could be progressed pursuant to clause 29, Employment Category Review Matters of the ADF Productivity Arrangement: 1999 - 2002 and that it satisfied the provisions of the Work Value Changes Principle and application of the Structural Efficiency Principle of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

The Commonwealth’s submission stated that amongst other things:

- the new structure established a dedicated employment category “with clear attraction and retention benefits for members transferring .. [within] .. the RAAF or direct entry persons”;
- removed the anomaly that some senior personnel are receiving less than subordinates transferred from their parent mustering who retained their substantive remuneration and the anomaly that in some cases retention of substantive remuneration from a parent category meant those concerned were “over-remunerated in terms of the value of the work performed as Flight Stewards”;
- the new structure provided a career path where advancement was dependent on the acquisition of proficiency, skill and competence;
- the “nature of the work, skills, responsibility and the airborne environment under which the work is performed by crew attendants represent(s) a significant net addition to the work requirements of RAAF Stewards, Grades 1 and 2 and Flight Stewards post-circa 1993”;

- having regard to “the training required, the broad range of duties to be performed and the experience and skills required in the new employment category, the pay group placements proposed for crew attendant are justified”;
- the Crew Attendant mustering will have a greater operational focus and this will result in an expanded role and increased responsibilities. The new structure recognises and compensates multi-skilling and the broadening of the range of tasks of Crew Attendants and also establishes appropriate internal pay relativities;
- the proposed structure and Pay Groups for Crew Attendants were not inappropriate when compared with the pay and duties of commercial flight attendants and that the additional cost of introducing the new structure would be modest.

Finally, the Commonwealth agreed with the translation process proposed by the ADF.

**Returned and Services League of Australia
Armed Forces Federation of Australia**

The Returned and Services League of Australia and the Armed Forces Federation of Australia were both granted leave to intervene in the proceedings and supported the introduction of the new mustering and pay groups.

CONSIDERATION

In addition to the detailed submissions of the principal parties the Tribunal had the advantage of an inspection of the work of Crew Attendants at 33 Squadron at RAAF Richmond and at 34 Squadron at RAAF Fairbairn. During the inspection the Tribunal was briefed on the roles and responsibilities of the Crew Attendants and had the opportunity to speak with a number of members about the proposed Crew Attendant mustering. Detailed notes of the inspection are contained at Annexure K of Exhibit A1 the casebook tendered by the ADF in the hearing.

The Tribunal also heard evidence from Acting Flight Sergeant Jones and had before it witness statements of Leading Aircraftwoman SE Murray and Corporal SP Rundle. That evidence was unchallenged.

Given all of the circumstances we do not consider it desirable or necessary to canvass the evidence of the witnesses at length. Sufficient to say however that in our view it provided an adequate foundation for the submissions made by the principal parties highlighting in particular:

- the lack of appropriate recognition for persons presently undertaking the role of Flight Steward in light of their training and expanded roles and responsibilities as canvassed in submissions;
- the anomalies created by the existing structure and in particular as a result of persons transferring to the sub-specialisation from other musterings who retained their substantive remuneration;
- difficulties in retention of skilled personnel in the existing sub-specialisation and
- unqualified support amongst Flight Stewards for the new structure.

Having considered the submissions and evidence presented we were satisfied that the proposed structure should be implemented effective from 1 July 2000. Our approval was given on the date of the hearing being 20 June 2000.

We note however that the structure is an interim one and will be subject to review and report back to the Tribunal on a date to be fixed in January 2001.

APPEARANCES: R Kenzie QC, Defence Force Advocate, with Lieutenant Commander M Duncan, for the Australian Defence Force

M Frawley with R Rendell for the Commonwealth

J Dainer, AM RFD for the Returned and Services League of Australia

G Howatt for the Armed Forces Federation of Australia

DATE AND PLACE OF HEARING

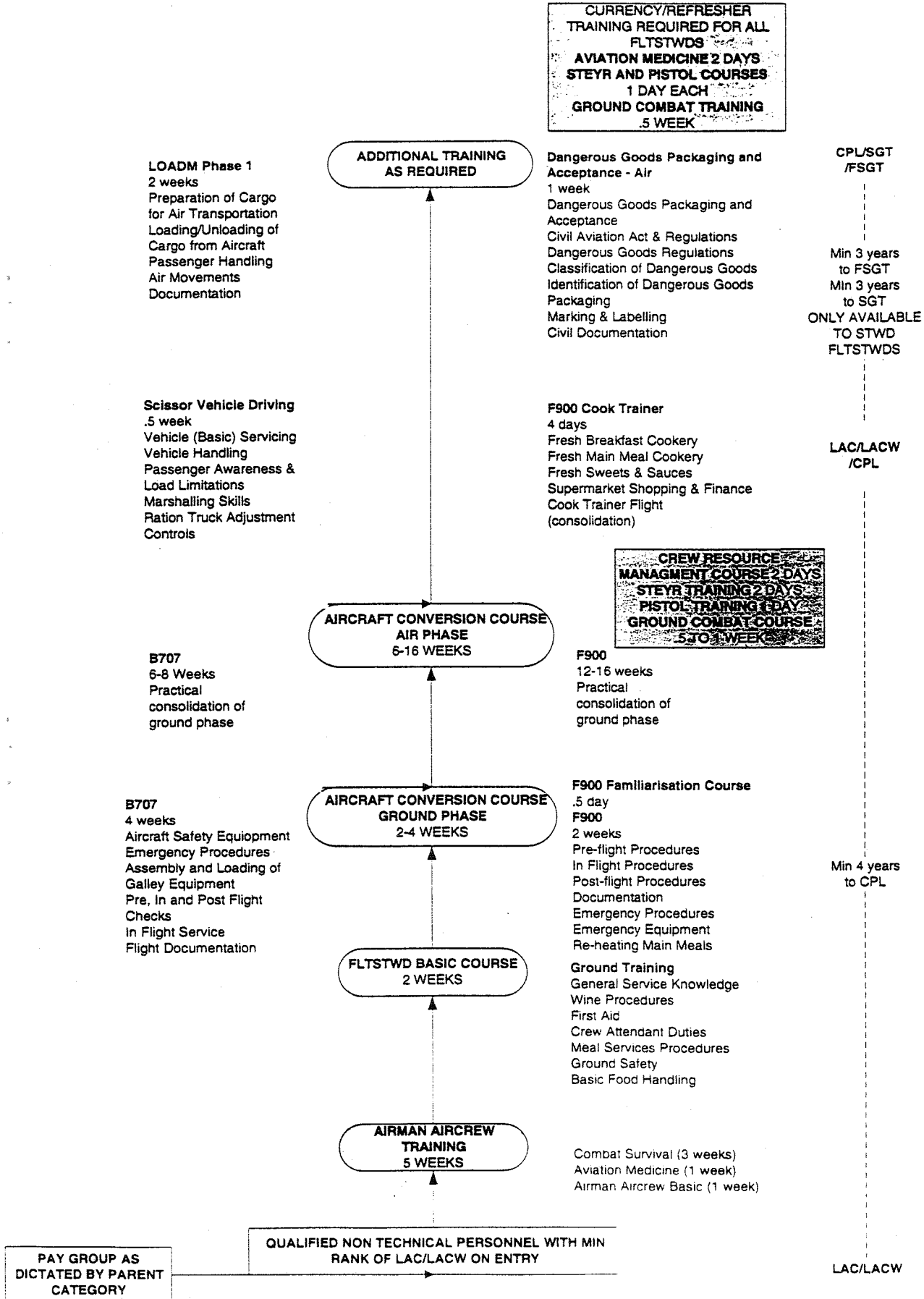
20 June 2000 Canberra

INSPECTION

1 June 2000 RAAF Richmond

RAAF Fairbairn

CURRENT FLIGHT STEWARD CAREER STRUCTURE



PROPOSED CREW ATTENDANT CAREER STRUCTURE

