



Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal

DECISION

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

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE: SECURITY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY STREAMS

(Matter 9 of 2019)

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT

MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER

CANBERRA, 16 DECEMBER 2019

RADM J. GOLDRICK AO CSC RAN RTD, MEMBER

[1] This decision arises from a listing application¹ made by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) under section 58H of the *Defence Act 1903* to create three streams within the Air Force Security employment category: Security Operations, Protective Security and Military Working Dog Handler. At the same time, the ADF seeks to provide an enhanced career pathway for Air Base Protection category members by enabling their transfer into the Air Force Security category.

[2] An inspection in this matter was conducted at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland on 23 September 2019.² The hearing was conducted in Canberra on 6 November 2019. Mr J Philips SC appeared for the ADF and Mr J O'Reilly for the Commonwealth. Group Captain A Houghton, Director Security Air Force, appeared as a witness for the ADF.

BACKGROUND

[3] Air Force Security roles are directly involved in supporting security operations, protective security and security management and supervision. These roles include patrolling and guarding aircraft and facilities as well as a deploying a range of detection, surveillance and search

technologies. Security Forces are made up of Air Force Security, Air Base Protection and Air Field Defence Guard employment categories for Other Ranks and Ground Defence and Security Police for officers; each provides a different aspect of security for Air Force.

[4] The Air Force Security employment category was last considered in Matter 7 of 2012 – *Air Force Security and Air Force Police* in which the Air Force Security category was established and the separate Security Police category was re-titled as Air Force Police. The Security Police employment streams of Military Working Dog Handler, Security Law Enforcement and Service Investigator were disbanded at the same time.³

[5] The Air Base Protection category was endorsed by the Tribunal in Matter 7 of 2009 – *Graded Other Ranks Pay Structure*.⁴ It was initially established as a Reserve only category and revised for Permanent Force members in Matter 7 of 2012. In 2015 the Air Base Protection category was adapted to allow Air Force Gap Year participants.⁵

SUBMISSIONS

ADF

[6] The ADF submits that the intent of the application is to “*formalise the specialist streams within the category and slightly modify the training requirements so as to generate a workforce that has greater flexibility*”. Specifically the ADF seeks to :

- a. remove core military working dog handler training from initial employment training and replace it with contemporary security skilling and awareness;
- b. formalise three specialised streams within Air Force Security:
 - i. Security Operations
 - ii. Protective Security
 - iii. Military Working Dog Handler;
- c. de-couple skill and pay grade progression from rank; and
- d. create a new pathway for members in the Air Base Protection employment category to allow for seamless transfer into the Air Force Security category.⁶

COMMONWEALTH

[7] The Commonwealth supports the ADF proposal in its entirety.⁷

WITNESS EVIDENCE

Group Captain (GP CAPT) A P Houghton

[8] GPCAPT Houghton expanded on the ADF submission and the roles of the respective streams in his written evidence. He outlined that security roles “*sit in a domain that is broader than policing. It is focussed on ensuring the security and protection of people and property, particularly where a breach of that security/protection could result in the integrity of a physical*

structure or IT system being compromised which could also compromise the ADF's ability to protect an aspect/element of Australia's national security".⁸

[9] In summarising the proposal in the hearing GPCAPT Houghton detailed that *"for the Air Force Security employment category, we're looking to restructure the training and stream people to provide a clearer pathway for them, and also to enable the Air Base Protection to then join that stream and have a fuller career, either in a Reserve capacity or in a Permanent capacity".⁹*

[10] GPCAPT Houghton explained that, in regard to the decision to remove dog handler training from initial employment training, *"we have realised we can do things better by targeting the limited resource of dogs, and the specialised training, to those who chose to specialise in either dog patrol teams or explosive detection dog teams. Moving dog handler training to a specialist skill is consistent with the intent that Air Force Security have a range of security measures and skills at their disposal, some are performed with, and some are performed without a dog".¹⁰*

CONSIDERATION

[11] Throughout our considerations we gave regard to the requirement for Air Force to constantly revise and update its training for the Security workforce, based on the number of high security assets operated by Air Force and which result in the need to realign security operations to support these generational changes.

[12] We considered the evidence that the de-coupling of skill and pay grade progression from rank progression allows skill grade flexibility across the ranks.

[13] We accept the evidence that while the principal task of responding to security threats is currently achieved by employing a military working dog, having basic dog training as a core element of initial employment training has been *"assessed as being unnecessary at that stage of member's career and training continuum"* noting that *"two out of three streams of Air Force Security do not utilise dogs in the work".¹¹* Additionally we accept that dog handling training is required to be intentionally limited to a small number of trainees so as to maintain the intensive instructor supervision and the requirement to team trainees with their own dog.

CONCLUSION

[14] We accept that Air Force needs a category that can deal with emerging security requirements and threats across airbases and asset types and one that is able to accommodate new platforms and emerging technology; we agree that the proposal *"supports the continued evolving organisation and the delivery needs of Air Force Security capability".¹²*

[15] We agree that de-coupling skill grade advancement from rank promotion will provide for greater depth of skills across the ranks and therefore also provide for greater workforce flexibility. We remark on this trend within other ADF categories previously considered by us and are encouraged by this approach to an adaptable and contemporary ADF workforce.

[16] We agree that returning dog handler training to a specialist skill is *"consistent with the intent that Air Force Security duties are performed with or without a dog and allows for flexibility to deploy a security workforce without a dog".¹³* We accept that dog handler training

remains a critical component of security operations but as a distinct capability rather than a core function.

[17] We agree that the career pathway proposed is likely to support members in the Air Base Protection employment category to make a seamless transition to the Air Force Security category, allowing a “*broader workforce for Air Force to draw upon as operational requirements change*”.¹⁴

[18] We agree that the changes which de-couple skill and pay grade progression from rank progression do not affect the nature of work for any current skill or pay grade placements. Therefore these, and all other adjustments proposed in the ADF submission, do not require any amendment to be made to DFRT Determination 2 of 2017 – *Salaries*.

[19] The changes prescribed in this decision are to take place with effect from 9 July 2020.

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT
MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER
RADM J. GOLDRICK AO CSC RAN RTD, MEMBER

Appearances:

Mr J Phillips assisted by Mr P Blady *for the ADF*

Mr J O'Reilly assisted by Mr N Calleja *for the Commonwealth*

Witness:

Group Captain A P Houghton, *Director Security Air Force*.

¹ DMR letter DMR/OUT/2019/33 2019/BN9464452 Listing Application – *Air Force Security Employment Category Streams* dated 19 September 2019.

² <https://www.dfrt.gov.au/inspections>

³ <https://www.dfrt.gov.au/sites/default/files/Matter-7-of-2012-AFSEC-and-AFPOL-Decision-17-June-2013.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.dfrt.gov.au/sites/default/files/Statement-Matter-6-and-7-of-2009-GOPS-and-GORPS-15-Oct-2009.pdf>

⁵ ADF Submission Air Force Security Employment Category streams (ADF 1) pages 11 and 12 paragraphs 3.15 – 3.22.

⁶ ADF 1 page 2 paragraphs 1.5 - 1.7.

⁷ Commonwealth Submission *Royal Australian Air Force Air Force Security Employment Category Streams* (CWLTH 1) dated 30 October 2019.

⁸ Affidavit of Group Captain A P Houghton (ADF 2) dated 30 October 2019 page 3 paragraph 14.

⁹ Transcript 6 November 2019 page 2 lines 21 - 26.

¹⁰ ADF 2 page 6 paragraph 25.

¹¹ ADF 1 page 15 paragraph 4.11.

¹² CWLTH 1 page 6 paragraph 36.

¹³ ADF 1 page 19 paragraph 5.8.

¹⁴ CWLTH 1 page 6 paragraph 38.