

House of Representatives

HOUSE DEBATES

Wednesday, 19 September 2018

Constituency Statements

Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme



[Cathy McGowan](#) (Indi, Independent) [Share this](#) | [Link to this](#) | [Hansard source](#)

Colleagues, in 2016 two constituents came to my office—Herb Ellerbock and Jim Hislop—to brief me about their concerns about the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme, which is fondly known as **DFRDB**. These two men have been tireless in advocating on behalf of Defence Force retirees on what they believe is the detrimental impact on **DFRDB** payments. In February 2017 they made a submission 'The gross reduction of benefits' to the then veterans' affairs minister, [Dan Tehan](#). Having made an assessment of individual case studies, these two men estimate that, if nothing is done, some \$10 billion to \$15 billion will have been stripped from recipient benefits over the life of the **DFRDB** Scheme. They believe this to be irrefutable evidence of a gross denial of superannuation benefits owed to former service personnel.

Their research formed the basis of a petition to the House of Representatives earlier this year. That petition was signed by thousands of former service personnel from around the country. My constituents have continued to make representations to ex-service organisations as well as to the government. They have presented to the Ex-Service Organisations Round Table, ESORT, and been in contact with the new veterans' affairs minister, [Darren Chester](#). Mr Ellerbock and Mr Hislop have been disappointed with what they believe to be a lack of response to their petition and their other representations.

They have continued to seek my support to get their evidence into the parliamentary forum and they have asked me personally to bring this issue to the floor of [Parliament House](#). Gentlemen, I'm here today on your behalf. As an Independent member of parliament it is my privilege to represent the interests of everyone in my electorate, regardless of policy or background.

In closing, I am now calling on Minister Chester to consider this evidence and to provide a definitive response to the questions of my constituents that have been

raised in research. This is a matter that has gone on for far too long. We need an answer. My constituents are asking me to be the messenger between the minister and my defence community, and it gives me great pleasure to bring this matter to the House.

Also in closing, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of members of the [Australian Defence Force](#) who are currently doing a secondment in our office. It's lovely to have you here. Please know that we respect you and we are grateful for your service. It's fantastic for us to have you learning about our job, and we look forward in the future to learning about your job as we come out and share our time with you. Thank you.