



Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal

DECISION

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

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS MODERNISATION (Matter 5 of 2020)

MS I. ASBURY, PRESIDENT

MR A. MORRIS, MEMBER

CANBERRA, 6 MAY 2020

RADM J. GOLDRICK AO CSC RAN RTD, MEMBER

[1] This decision arises from an application¹ made under s.58H of the *Defence Act 1903* (the Act) for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to make changes to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals in order to recognise and reflect the evolving and contemporary nature of select employment categories within the Corps.

[2] We considered this matter on the papers on 21 April 2020.

Background

[3] The Royal Australian Corps of Signals provides communications and information systems and electronic warfare and cyberspace operations support to Army and the wider ADF.

[4] The Tribunal last considered the Royal Australian Corps of Signals in Matter 10 of 2014 – *Royal Australian Corps of Signals – Electronic Warfare*² when redundant skill grades were removed and four selected categories streamlined into two.

Submissions

ADF

[5] The ADF states that the submission “*primarily seeks to update naming conventions of employment categories for consistency across the Corps and to revalue some skill grades.*”³

[6] Specifically the ADF proposes the following changes to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals employment categories:

- a. disestablish the Combat Signaller employment category;
- b. rename the Communications Systems, Telecommunications Systems and Information Systems employment categories;
- c. modify some skill grades and pay grade placement and their prerequisites for selected employment categories;
- d. establish a new Telecommunications Network Planner employment category at pay grade (PG) 6;
- e. establish a new Battlespace Communications Specialist Supervisor Grade 3 at PG5; and
- f. update the associated training and career continua and job profiles for each of the Signals Corps employment categories.⁴

[7] The ADF further states that in 2017 Army conducted a Corps of Signals Employment Category Review which identified, in part, that “*in order for the Signal Corps to be viable and capable in this modern operating environment, new thinking about the structure and the interdependencies of the Corps is required: how does the Corps embrace and adapt to change; how can the Corps be flexible in fighting the network, electromagnetic and cyberspace threat; how can the Corps achieve levels of integration with the land and joint operations not previously required.*”⁵

Commonwealth

[8] The Commonwealth supports the ADF submission “*in light of the clear recommendations from the Review.*”⁶

Consideration

[9] We considered the evidence that the Employment Category Review had identified “*the Signals workforce was impacted by significant environmental and threat influence.*” Additionally, the Review stated that at an “*urgent need was identified for changes as a result of cyberspace vulnerabilities and the requirement to protect, assure and defend networks and mission systems.*”⁷ We accept that “*the Review found a number of inefficiencies and suboptimal structures and career pathways that prevented the Signals Corps from achieving the required effectiveness and efficiencies for a future-ready Corps.*”⁸

[10] We considered in detail the roles and responsibilities of the current⁹ and proposed workforces and agree with the proposal as submitted¹⁰ and outlined in paragraph 6 of this decision.

Conclusion

[11] We accept that the Signals Corps must continue to deal with rapid technology changes which introduce new threats and vulnerabilities and also create new opportunities. We agree that the workforce therefore “*needs an operating construct that embraces and promotes flexibility within its workforce, employment categories and organisational structures*” and are assured this revision and amendment of the structure goes towards achieving that across the Corps.¹¹

[12] We agree with the ADF’s proposal to report back to us on the progress of the Corps in 2022 with a final review in 2025.¹² We accept the intention of the ADF to apply non-reduction provisions to the workforce for a five year period under s.58B of the Act and ask them to return to us on the progress of this application during the review processes.

[13] Determination 5 of 2020 gives effect to this decision from 9 July 2020.

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

¹ DMR/OUT/2019/BN11901185 *Listing Application – Royal Australian Corps of Signals Modernisation* dated 11 December 2019.

² <https://www.dfrt.gov.au/sites/default/files/Statement-RASIGS-EW-12.11.14.pdf>

³ ADF submission page 1 paragraph 1.5.

⁴ ADF submission page 30 paragraph 7.2.

⁵ ADF submission page 10 paragraph 4.10b.

⁶ Commonwealth Submission *Army Royal Australian Corps of Signals Modernisation* dated 23 March 2020 page 4 paragraph 18.

⁷ ADF submission page 3 paragraph 2.8.

⁸ ADF submission page 10 paragraph 4.10d.

⁹ Categories of Combat Signaller, Information Systems, Electronic Warfare and Telecommunications Systems.

¹⁰ ADF submission Part 5 *Proposed Role, Employment and Structure* pages 13-25.

¹¹ ADF submission page 9 paragraph 4.8.

¹² ADF submission page 33 paragraph 7.8.