



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**

**PROOF**

**BUSINESS**

**Consideration of Legislation**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 3 December 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Wednesday, 3 December 2014	<b>Source</b> Senate
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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Lambie, Sen Jacqui	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Senator LAMBIE** (Tasmania) (10:03): The Defence Amendment (Fair Pay for Members of the ADF) Bill 2014 is a critical and important piece of legislation, which deserves precedence and priority to the other general business of this Senate. As the title of the bill indicates, if this legislation is passed by this parliament, it will guarantee that the men and women of our Defence Force receive a fair pay rise, rather than an effective pay cut in the near future—perhaps before Christmas.

Apart from Liberal and National Party members, who have wrong-headed priorities and twisted loyalties to political parties and who have not fought hard enough in their party rooms for their ADF families, who would want to stop this parliament from immediately debating and passing legislation that provides a solution to the ADF pay crisis, created by Australia's Prime Minister and Defence Minister? What debate could be more important than a debate that fundamentally affects the national security of Australia? If we do not have national security, then we do not have anything.

As the Senate, we daily choose to debate to pass or not legislation which affects education, health, social security, TPV, RETs, the sky-rocketing costs of electricity and fuel and the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme. But if our nation is not properly secure and our Defence Force has been weakened, either by incompetence or by design, then the best health, education, social security systems in the world will ultimately be off little value to the nation.

Ordinary Tasmanians and Australians 100 per cent support the men and women of our Defence Forces 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. That is unlike some in this chamber, who by their actions or lack of actions and their silence and cowardly behaviour in their party rooms choose to live off the Anzac legend rather than live up to the Anzac legend.

I am looking forward to hearing every word, every syllable and every sentence of those members of this Senate who choose to deny this chamber a debate this morning on the fair pay of members of the Australian Defence Forces, with the help of a magnificent Hansard team, who skilfully record our words for Australia's history. I will make sure that every full-time member of our Army, Navy and RAAF, approximately 57,000 souls; all of their families and friends; the 20,000 reservists and all their family and friends; and every one of our 200,000 veterans out there and their all of their families and friends—all of those Australians, hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions—will get an opportunity to read or hear the poor excuses of those in this Senate who oppose a debate about a fair pay deal for our diggers this morning.

The facts before this chamber are clear. Earlier this week, I meet with Mr Tony Dagger. He is the father of a serving Australian Defence Force member. Mr Dagger presented me, the opposition leader and other members of this parliament with a petition containing almost 60,000 signatures calling on this government to fix the Australian Defence Force pay injustice. Apart from Mr Dagger and his petition supporters, the hundreds and thousands of phone calls and emails to my office and to other senators offices prove why we should have this debate right now.

Importantly, the hundreds of troops serving overseas, who are in harm's way for our benefit and who have been absolutely gutted by this government's and this Prime Minister's decision to take away \$17 million of leave and entitlements and then give back the \$17 million, are still facing a future with an effective pay cut. Those Australian Defence Force members and their families would like to hear the news of a debate on the Defence Amendment (Fair Pay for Members of the ADF) Bill 2014 today—not a day later and not an hour later. Right now, this government and their members must explain to Australian people why they cannot afford to invest an extra \$121 million dollars a year—that is it—into the pay of the men and women of our Defence Force.

The time has now come for the senators in this chamber to live up to the Anzac legend and not off it.