



Senator Jacqui Lambie
Senator for Tasmania

17 December 2014

The Hon. Tony Abbott
Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I bring to your attention a media statement by the Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA) (see attached) which reports that the Defence Department has, *"imposed married quarter rent increases up to 4.2% to take effective from early 2015, in addition, charges imposed on members living in barracks will increase by up to 2.5% for lower standards."*

Of course the percentage increases to rents and charges levied by your Government on our ADF members are 1.6 and 2.8 times greater than the diggers' 1.5% pay increase that (as the DFWA points out) is less than CPI and is therefore effectively a pay cut.

These deliberate married quarter rent and barracks' charge increases (which far exceed your unfair pay offer) only rubs salt into a gaping wound already created in the psyche of our Defence members and their families.

These increases and effective ADF pay cuts also hurts every Australian and further undermines your credibility as Australia's leader.

In light of the season and Christmas spirit, I once again ask that you please reflect deeply on the hurt you have caused to individual members of our defence forces and our national security – and reconsider your position.

Your argument that Australia can't afford a fair pay rise for our diggers was once again contradicted with the release of your official MYEFO figures.

They still confirm that your Government will continue to send approximately \$4.2B every year to overseas countries or nearly \$22B over the forward estimates, in foreign aid – while an ADF pay rise will only cost at most \$121M p/a.



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In addition and with reference again to the recent release of MYEFO, I would also ask that you instruct your Treasurer Mr Hockey to restore to Tasmania the \$86M in health funding over 4 years - which he reportedly took.

Unfortunately, official figures show Tasmania's health system is under extreme pressure. The Tasmanian media, in reporting your new decrease in our Federal health funding says, *"The decrease comes despite a Tasmanian elective surgery waiting list of about 8500 people who wait an average of 46 days for surgery."*

There are also up to 25,000 people on a so-called "hidden waiting list", waiting to see a surgeon after being referred by a GP."

I struggle to find words that will influence your actions.

I've tried to be reasonable, honorable, measured and compassionate in my requests, but increasingly I'm left with the hollow and numb feeling that reason, honor and compassion are not playing a part in your decision-making.

And if that is the case – then I'm genuinely sad for you, Tasmania and our great Nation.

I hope you find peace this Christmas.

Yours Faithfully,

Senator Jacqui Lambie
Senator for Tasmania

Cc: The Government Cabinet