

Subject: Concern Regarding Department of Defence's Contractor Moratorium

Dear Competition Taskforce,

I am writing to express concern about the Department of Defence's 12-month moratorium on hiring industry contractors who recently separated from the Defence Force. Reference:

<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/defence/budget-policy/defence-imposes-moratorium-on-industry-hirings>

<https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/industry/12549-australian-dod-confirm-12-month-contractor-crackdown>

This issue is extended to the Defence Support Services panel, which, under the deed in paragraph 2.4, restrains all members of the ADF, regardless of their role, for a period of six months after their discharge from the ADF.

[https://www.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/dss\\_deed.pdf](https://www.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/dss_deed.pdf)

This policy effectively restricts the job mobility of these individuals and imposes a restraint of trade, similar to non-compete clauses.

These policies have significant negative implications for veteran mental health and employment. Many veterans possess specialised skills primarily applicable to Defence roles, making Defence one of the few viable employment options post-service. By limiting their ability to secure these roles, these policies contribute directly to increased veteran joblessness and associated mental health issues. The challenges of transitioning to civilian life are well-documented, and restricting employment opportunities exacerbates these difficulties, leading to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns among veterans.

Furthermore, the policy undermines the economic investment the Government has already made in training these individuals. Veterans are highly trained and experienced, representing a valuable asset to the Department and the broader Defence industry. By driving veterans away from working in the Department of Defence, this policy wastes the economic resources spent on their training and forces veterans to seek employment elsewhere, often in roles that do not fully utilise their skills and expertise.

Government departments should not only be accountable to Australian legislation but should hold the highest standards and be a place of best practice. Policies like that the Department of Defence have engaged on former members of the ADF should not exist and are in direct conflict with existing legislation on restraint of trade.

I urge the Competition Review to consider the broader implications of this policy on veterans and the Defence industry. These policies restrict fair competition, limit job opportunities for veterans, and ultimately result in a loss of economic and human capital for the Department of Defence and the Australian economy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.