

06 S Turner

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Question 1:

A further principle should be to avoid cost shifting - any recommended policy changes should not result in simply shifting costs from one public expenditure to another public expenditure. For example (please see my answer to Question 2 below) - increasing the age eligibility to a Service Person without a similar increase in compulsory retiring age will, in all likelihood, only result to the compulsorily retired Service Person moving to unemployment benefits until they catch up to their new Service Pension eligibility age.

Question 2:

No. Unless there is a consequent change to the compulsory retiring age in the Australian Defence Force that incrementally raises compulsory retirement age for Australian Defence Force personnel in line with the incremental increase in Pension Age. A major difference between civilian employment and service in the Australian Defence Force is the legislated power the employer (Chief of the Defence Force and Service Chiefs) has to terminate a service person's employment on their reaching compulsory retiring age. In 2007 the then Government increased compulsory retirement age in the ADF to 60 years of age based on the following: (*reference 02 April 2007 media release by The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for Defence*):

- "Ongoing service will now be encouraged by having a clear ADF career path until age 60"; and
- "A retirement age of 60 better reflects community standards and allows the ADF to retain the skills and experience of its highly trained people longer. It also recognises that age can be an unreliable predictor of ability to perform and that ADF members are remaining fit, motivated and capable of serving beyond the current general retirement age of 55 years."

Given the clear evidence of employer reluctance to take on older employees, the risk with increasing the the Service Pension eligibility age without similarly increasing the compulsory retiring age for ADF personnel is to force compulsorily retired ADF personnel (age 60 years) onto unemployment benefits until they become eligible for their Service pension.

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