

Super inquiry ignores concerns, vets say

TWO North East veterans campaigning against Defence superannuation injustice say the present investigation is less than the government promised.

Wodonga's Jim Hislop and Rutherglen's Herb Ellerbock, of Australian Defence Force Retirees Association, said Minister for Defence

Personnel Darren Chester announced in March an independent inquiry that would consult with ex-service groups on its terms of reference and consider other relevant concerns.

Since then, the Commonwealth ombudsman Michael Manthorpe began investigating the issue of commutation

following a request in April from Mr Chester.

Commutation allowed members to exchange part of their pension for a lump sum, but Mr Hislop and Mr Ellerbock felt this amount was repaid beyond what it was worth. Their association also believed a flawed indexing system was denying

veterans their full benefits, but this issue was not mentioned by the ombudsman.

Mr Hislop said a letter from Mr Chester's chief of staff indicated the government had no plans for further investigations.

"The part the ombudsman's doing, I don't have any problems with that," he said.

"It's what isn't being done, they're only giving us a partial investigation.

"We believe that there are no terms of reference that the ex-service organisations have had any input into."

A spokeswoman from Mr Chester's office said the government consulted with the Ex-Service Organisations

Roundtable to develop the terms of reference for the ombudsman's inquiry.

"The public had the opportunity to provide input, this has now closed and the ombudsman will consider this information as part of the investigation," she said.

■ Letters: P27

— JANET HOWIE