



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President's Report

October 2017

I must firstly apologise for not advising, in my previous report, how a Veteran's family member can access mental health treatment under the new DVA eligibility criteria. Any Veteran, who has served more than one day, their spouses/partners and their children can now have access to DVA provided mental health care.

To gain this access phone VVCS on 1800 011 046 to register the need for the mental health treatment. Once registered and treatment has been approved, a psychologist will be allocated and an appointment will be made.

If you have any problems with this please advise your local TPI Association, or myself, at the contact details below.

Many Veterans are still being asked for top-up payments for the provision of their hearing aids. Remember, if you are requested to pay any additional monies for your hearing aids you must ask the audiologist to send an approval request to DVA stating the reason for the top-up requirement. If the audiologist does not do this, for any reason, then advise the audiologist that you will go to your TPI Association to seek assistance on this. When this happens, refuse to pay for any top-ups and you may find that they relent and say that the top-up is no longer required, or you may need to get a second opinion.

Remember, if there is a 'clinical need' for any additional services or requirements for any Veteran then DVA will pay for it. Also, remind the audiologist of the DVA provision for Audio Listening Devices. Devices such as the Sound Oasis Sleep Sound White Noise Machine. This machine is fully funded by DVA and assists those Veterans who have Tinnitus issues. There are also other appliances available through the Repatriation Appliance Scheme that you may have to remind audiologist are available to you.

It is vital that you know that you do not have to pay any additional costs for a DVA provided hearing aid. There have been some complaints received that even having done this the audiologist still does not provide a hearing aid that is suitable to the Veteran. You are entitled to have the best possible hearing aid to assist you with your hearing. If you are not satisfied with the hearing aid that has been provided you can find another audiologist that will provide what you require.

Again, if you have any issue with your provision of your hearing aids please contact your local TPI Association, or myself, at the contact details below. It is important that we know of these issues so that I can present them to DVA in the hope of having the situations rectified.

Can I suggest that you print this page, take it with you to the next audiologist appointment, and ask that they call me if they need verification of these facts?

The TPI Federation began on a sad note with our Secretary/Treasurer, Bob Johnston, having to stand down due to ill health. We wish Bob well and hope he gets well soon.

The TPI Federation Congress was extremely robust in discussion and decisions. I will leave it for your Directors to report on the Congress fully for you. I would like to thank the DVA Minister, Dan Tehan MP, for enabling the Federation the use of a conference room within Parliament House for us to meet with Ministers and Senators during the Congress. All the Directors appreciated this courtesy.

A major issue that developed through the latest TPI Federation Congress is the lack of knowledge by many Veterans of the Income Support Supplement that is available to those Veterans who are not eligible for the Service Pension as they do not have Qualifying Service – i.e. they did not serve in an operational area.

The first requirement for the Income Support Supplement is to apply to Centrelink for the Disability Support Pension (DSP). Information on this can be found at <http://bit.ly/2gDDoaE>. The DSP is based on an income and assets assessment.

Because you are a TPI there will be no medical requirements to obtain this DSP as Centrelink accepts your medical assessment as made by DVA.

This is where it becomes complicated. The DSP is assessed using all your income and your assets including your TPI compensation. DVA acknowledges that this should not happen. As a result, once the DSP is approved you need to advise DVA that you now receive the DSP and a further payment called DFISA (Defence Force Income Support Allowance) will be calculated by DVA. DVA then reassesses your DSP as if the TPI was not included in the assessment. DVA will then pay the difference as DFISA.

I realise that this is very complex so if you have any questions and feel you need assistance with the processes then please contact me at federation@tpifed.org.au or call 0417 291 546.

There have been a number of issues within the MyAgedCare system this year. Negotiations with the Department of Health have been very productive and are ongoing. Thankfully, many of the issues have been resolved for the betterment of the Veteran. There are still some outstanding issues that are still being investigated.

The DVA Minister, Dan Tehan MP, has assisted the Federation with arranging for me to meet with the MyAgedCare Minister, Ken Wyatt MP, to discuss the DVA specific issues that many Members have when they enter the MyAgedCare system.

If you, or your family, have ongoing issues with the MyAgedCare system can you please let me know as your input the issues cannot be addressed.

Medicines that contain codeine, like Nurofen Plus, Panadeine and Aspalgin, will only be available with a prescription after 1 February 2018. This change will affect the majority of users who do not abuse codeine, and it will require all consumers who need pain relief to visit a GP and incur additional costs. Increasing rates of misuse and overuse have prompted the Commonwealth Government to make these changes. Again, if you have any comments on this please email or phone me.

The DVA Female Veterans and Veteran's Families Forum was held in Canberra on the 11th and 12th of October. The female Veterans and the Veteran's Families issues that were discussed at the forum by a number of most articulate women was most inspiring and moving. Mr Tehan MP and DVA, especially Liz Cosson (DVA Chief Operating Officer), are to be congratulated on listening to the women and giving them the respect that their Service deserves.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the State/Territory Associations for all the assistance they have given to all TPI/SRs and their families throughout the year and I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.



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15th October 2017