



## TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

*“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”*



# Federation President's Report

August 2021

Ph: 0417 291 546

Email: [federation@tpifed.org.au](mailto:federation@tpifed.org.au)

The events of the last few months have been many and varied for the TPI Veteran community.

### **New Minister**

The TPI Federation welcomes the new Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel who was sworn in on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. Minister Andrew Gee MP's profile can be found at <https://bit.ly/3hXenmD>. The TPI Federation has asked for a meeting with the new Minister and, it is hoped, that he will be able to attend the TPI Federation National Congress in September 2021.

### **Royal Commission**

The second issue of the TPI Federation Royal Commission Newsletter will be released shortly. The inaugural edition can be found at <https://bit.ly/3f610BZ>.

The Defence and Veteran Suicide Royal Commission has been established following agreement by the Governor General on 8 July 2021. The official website for the Royal Commission can be found at <https://bit.ly/3psRHya>.

The Royal Commission's Terms of Reference can be found at <https://bit.ly/3i33wYz>. Mr Nick Kaldas APM has been appointed as Chair of the Royal Commission and is a former Australian Police Officer and former Deputy Commissioner of the NSW Police Force. The Prime Minister's media release of the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 announcing the Royal Commission can be found at <https://bit.ly/3r5e1OV>. The Royal Commission is due to provide an interim report on 11 August 2022 and a final report on 15 June 2023.

Submissions close 31st March 2022, and can now be made to the Royal Commission website either through an online form found at <https://bit.ly/3i6W8eL>, or a paper version can be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/3xD54PE> or mailed to: GPO Box 3273, Sydney NSW 2001.

All TPIs, and your families, are strongly encouraged to tell the Government your stories, your thoughts and concerns and, if possible, suggestions and recommendations on how your concerns could be addressed.

### **Senate Inquiry into TPI Compensation Payment**

As a result of the last 8-years of campaigning by the TPI Federation (that showed the 7-decades of decline of the TPI Compensation payment) and three Government reviews (Productivity Commission, KPMG Review and the Tune Review) the Labor Party requested that a Senate Inquiry into our TPI Compensation payment occur. A Senate Hearing was subsequently held on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The Hearing video can be found at <https://bit.ly/3ub0ENc> or the written Hansard report at <https://bit.ly/3oMcP24>. The TPI Federation submission to this Inquiry can be found at <https://bit.ly/2SlaxLe>.

This report confirmed the need for an increase into the TPI Compensation payment and negated the previous three reviews findings.

The TPI Federation thanks the Labor Party for instigating this Inquiry and all those TPIs, and their families, for their contributions and assistance they have provided in this campaign to achieve this successful result. Of particular note, the TPI Federation extends our appreciation and thanks to Peter Thornton for his enormous contribution to this campaign.

The TPI Federation is now calling on the Government to confirm the Prime Minister's letter of 2 April 2019 (of our "compelling case") and now the Senate Inquiry report to provide greater TPI Economic Loss compensation than the current 61% of the tax-adjusted Minimum Wage.

The TPI Federation is also asking all TPIs, and your families, to help by calling upon you local Federal Members to ask the Government for the rightful restoration of the TPI Compensation payment as recommended in the final Senate Inquiry Report of June 2021.

## **Rent Assistance**

As part of the October 2020 Federal Budget, the Government finally agreed, after 15 years of campaigning by the TPI Federation, and as from September 2022, to allow TPIs eligibility of the Federal Governments Rent Assistance allowance. The TPI Federation disagreed with the length of time this provision would take to be implemented and, as a result, as part of the May 2021 Federal Budget, this timeline was bought forward so that this initiative could commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

This provision will enable all eligible TPIs to have their TPI Compensation payment not included as income for the purposes of the income and assets test for this allowance. This will enable approximately 2800 TPIs to utilise this allowance.

Further information on this provision can be found at –

- a. TPI Federation Letter – Rent Assistance Information - <https://bit.ly/36bHIUR>,
- b. DVA Fact Sheet – Help with your Rent - <https://bit.ly/3wjYIJs>.
- c. DVA ‘How-To’ Accommodation Information - <https://bit.ly/3AfJQZM>,

## **VEA Disability Optional Assessment Model (OAM)**

DVA announced that as of the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021, the new VEA Disability Optional Assessment Model is now available for all TPIs. This will enable all TPIs who wish to add medical conditions to their DVA Accepted Disabilities will no longer be obliged to have a full-body reassessment. Previously such a reassessment meant that it was possible that, for some, previously accepted disabilities to be reassessed as they were no longer an issue for the TPI.

This new OAM enables any TPI who wishes to have additional medical conditions added to their Accepted Disabilities to opt for either or a full-body reassessment, or just an assessment of the new condition. Further information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3hVWYek>.

There is no compulsion to do anything and for you to continue with your current Accepted Disabilities. Should you wish to travel overseas – when we can – is possibly the only reason you may wish to consider this option. If you wish to utilise this facility then you will need to contact a Compensation Officer at an Ex-Service Organisation in your area for the appropriate paperwork to be completed.

This does not change any of your current entitlements.

## **Australian War Memorial Redevelopment**

The AWM Director, Mr Matt Anderson PSM, has provided a letter at <https://bit.ly/3xxiP21> and a promotional video which can be found at <https://bit.ly/2UHAVQH> as an update on the AWM redevelopment project. This redevelopment of the AWM is vitally important especially to the post-Vietnam Veterans and their families. Without such a record of history that the AWM is, no Veteran would be honoured and remembered in the way that we know it should and has been in the past.

## **Australian War Memorial Sufferings of War and Service Recognition**

Following three years’ work with veterans, their families, ex-service organisations (including the TPI Federation) and the Departments of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs, a new sculpture will be placed on the grounds of the Australian War Memorial recognising the sufferings of war and service that can occur for many families over many decades.

The previous Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Darren Chester MP, said the sculpture would provide a permanent place at the Australian War Memorial in recognition of those who have experienced and witnessed the ongoing traumas that can result from military service. This is of particular importance to the TPI Veterans, their families and friends.



*Artist's impression of the memorial to be sculptured by Alex Seton an Australian sculptor best known for his marble sculptures*

“The commission will take two years to craft and be a significant work of site-specific, contemporary art and a major addition to the Memorial’s National Collection. Alex Seton’s proposal, *Every drop shed in anguish*, will be a field of sculpted Australian pearl marble droplets in the Memorial’s Sculpture Garden.

“Every droplet has a unique shape, defined by its delicate surface tension, as if about to burst. Their rounded liquid forms suggest blood, sweat or tears — for every drop ever shed in anguish,” artist Alex Seton said. “Most importantly, when touched these forms reveal themselves to have an inner strength and resilience that provides hope and promise of healing.”

Subject to final approval by the National Capital Authority, the installation is expected to be completed in the second half of 2023.” (DVA Minister’s Media Release – 16 June 2021)

### **Council of the Aging**

The Royal Commission into Aged Care has been finalised and reported to Government. A result of some of the findings, enabled COTA to be assigned as an Aged Care Provider for the ‘*Aged Care Navigator*’ program. More information on this can be found at <https://bit.ly/36ysRUI>. COTA is a national organisation that can assist Veterans and their families in navigating the MyAgedCare maze that can, at times, be confusing.

### **What’s important and what’s not**

You and your families are important. Australia has another Federal election coming in the next 12 months. The TPI Federation would like to hear from you, and your families, on what you think is most important for you that you would like to see occur as a result of this election. We need you to tell us what is important to you. Can you please drop an email, or make a call to the TPI Federation or to your local State/Territory TPI Association, to advise us of what you and your family need and, if possible, how you think what you need can be achieved. Any, and all, information will be treated confidentially.

### **Final Comments**

Should you require hard copies of any of the documents referred to by computer links in this report, please email the TPI Federation or contact your local State/Territory TPI Association.

Should you wish to speak to the TPI Federation, or your local State/Territory TPI Associations, on any of these, or any other issue, please contact us.



Ms Pat McCabe OAM  
August 2021

Ph: 0417 291 546

Email: [federation@tpifed.org.au](mailto:federation@tpifed.org.au)

### **Important Dates**

Royal Commission started –	8 July 2021
Rent Assistance Eligibility for TPIs begins –	1 January 2022
Royal Commission Submissions close –	31 March 2022
Royal Commission Interim Report –	11 August 2022
Royal Commission Final Report –	15 June 2023