



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President's Report

October 2021

Senate Inquiry into TPI Compensation Payment - Update

The TPI Federation appreciates the in-depth and well-considered Government Response Inquiry. The full report can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3BwBf51> where the Government in the last paragraph of their 4-paragraph response stated –

“The Government notes the Committee’s recommendation that the Australian Government consider an increase in the TPI payment, and will take this recommendation together with the views of the ex-service community as presented to the Committee into account when considering future policy options for support to TPI veterans.”

The TPI Federation is extremely disappointed in this response and will be, as the Government is, *considering* future options. All TPIs should *consider* contacting their local Federal Members on this 8-year campaign that has been stifled, without criticism or conjecture of the TPI Federation’s contention, to the point of it being effectively shelved. When this campaign began the TPI Economic Loss Compensation was 65% of the minimum wage and today it is **61%**.

How long do TPIs have to be ignored following 7-decades of decline in their compensation?

Senate Inquiry into Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) - Update

Regrettably, there has not yet been a Government response to this Senate Inquiry.

Hearing Services Program Review – Update

Department of Health has conducted a review into the Hearing Services Program. Information on the review can be found at <https://bit.ly/2GKwMES>. The TPI Federation and DVA both produced submissions for this Review. The final report from the Review does not provide any changes for the Veteran community. The TPI Federation had asked the Review panel to consider including Veterans into the Community Service Obligation Program (CSO), which sits within the Hearing Services Program, so as to address Veteran’s complex hearing needs. The Review final report states that consideration will be made to review the CSO program and which may be reviewed at a later time. The Review’s final report is available at <https://bit.ly/3DgFQZN>. The TPI Federation is most disappointed that, again, the Government has reneged on their pledge to care for the Veterans’ compensable health needs.

Veterans Home Care Review

The Department has announced The Review of Veterans’ care and support programs which will be conducted over the 2021-22 period. The Review was announced by Government as part of the 2021-22 Budget and has now commenced. The Review will consider DVA’s Veterans Home Care (VHC) and Community Nursing (CN) Programs and related arrangements. Further details can be found at <https://bit.ly/3jaeInw>

Changes to exercise physiology arrangements from 1 September 2021

DVA has advised that clinical experts routinely provide advice to the department about various musculoskeletal services. Under DVA arrangements, musculoskeletal professions include physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic and exercise physiology. From 1 September 2021, exercise physiology – as a musculoskeletal treatment service – will be considered in a similar way. This means that DVA will not pay for the second service where a person has exercise physiology and another musculoskeletal service on the same day, for treatment of the same condition. DVA will continue to pay for an exercise physiology service on the same day as another musculoskeletal treatment, where the treatment is for **different** health conditions. For more information – <https://bit.ly/3a7NN6Q>.

Carer's Allowance - Update

DVA advised on the 9th October 2021 that as of 20th September 2018 the Carer's Allowance is no longer automatic for TPIs and is now income tested using the Centrelink Income test facilities. The Department advised –
“An applicant for Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance under the Act is required to complete the claimant questionnaire of the ADAT and the care receiver's Treating Health Professional (THP) must complete the Health Professional Assessment (HPA) component (Schedule 1 Part 2). A minimum qualifying score must be achieved on the THP component as well as a minimum qualifying total ADAT score.

Department of Social Services Policy has confirmed there is no discretion to vary the requirements of the Act when assessing applicants for Carer Allowance and there is no ability to determine a Carer Allowance assessment without a current THP report completed in the format specified within the ADAT.

Carer Allowance has been subject to an income test since 20 September 2018 (see section 957A Carer allowance income test of the Act). The income test requires the carer's and their partner's combined Adjusted Taxable Income (ATI) must be under \$250,000 a year. The same income limit applies if the carer does not have a partner.

Services Australia is not aware of any previous decisions or agreements made in regard to TPI veterans and their partners for assessment purposes regarding Carer Allowance.”

For further information on the income test see <https://bit.ly/2YIXAyf>.

Two reports provide valuable insights into veteran suicide

On 29 September, two reports were published that will help the Government tackle the tragedy of suicide in the Defence and veteran community. For further information on the AIHW fourth annual update and the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention's report - <https://bit.ly/3la22hN>.

ADF Firefighter Scheme

A new scheme commencing 20 September 2021, will provide better health and wellbeing support for Australian Defence Force (ADF) firefighters who participated in fire training at Royal Australian Air Force Base Point Cook between 1 January 1957 and 31 December 1986. For more information – <https://bit.ly/3BcZ3ee>.

Veterans' Home Care services available

Our Veterans' Home Care (VHC) program provides eligible DVA clients and eligible dependants with access to services to help them remain independent and in their homes. For further information - <https://bit.ly/3FhFbjJ>.

Rent Assistance

This is a timely reminder and a repeat of a comment in my August Report –

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 1st 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>,

Conclusion

The TPI Federation is disturbed by a number of the above-named issues and will continue to prosecute them, to the fullest, on behalf of all TPIs. But we need your help. We ask that you support us in our quest for Government to recognise the needs of all TPIs by writing and talking to your Federal Members. How long are we going to sit back while our compensable benefits and income are being surreptitiously downgraded and/or removed?

I invite all TPIs, and your families, to bring my report to the attention of any, and all, Federal Members.



Ms Pat McCabe OAM

Email: federation@tpifed.org.au

Ph: 0417 291 546

October 2021

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 |