



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President’s Report

November 2022

The 2022 election promise by the Labor Party (following some excellent work from our previous DVA Opposition Minister, Shayne Neumann MP) of an increase to our TPI Economic Loss Compensation payment, of approximately 2% or \$1,000 per year or \$19.38 per week to commence on 1st January 2023, was announced in the 2022-23 Federal Budget.

This follows the 5.2% increase to the Minimum Wage as at 1 July 2022 and a 3% increase for Australian Public Servants which commences on 1 September 2022. The current cost-of-living increases across the spectrum is in the realm of 30-40% as you are all aware.

The TPI Federation thanks the Labor Party for at least acknowledging that an increase was required following the Senate Inquiry last year regarding the 7-decade decline of our TPI compensation which now sits at 63% of the tax-adjusted minimum wage. The TPI Federation will continue to advocate on your behalf on this issue and many other issues and hopefully the Government will listen.

The TPI Federation also arranged a meeting with the DVA Minister, Matt Keogh MP, where his office scheduled an hour for the meeting. Unfortunately, the Minister felt it necessary to leave the meeting after approximately 20 minutes as he had other issues to pursue.

At this meeting the TPI Federation along with the Partners of Veterans and the Australian War Widows presented the Minister with a letter on the unified issue of the then proposed Defence, Veterans’ and Families’ Acute Support Package Act that was due to be tabled. The previous Minister had proudly announced that this Act is the first piece of legislation that crosses the bounds of all three Veteran’s Compensation Acts – VEA, DRCA & MRCA. We acknowledged the need of this legislation for all Veterans and their families but asked the Minister to remove the six instances which stipulated the benefits would be available only for ‘Under 65’ Veterans and family members. The letter asked the Minister to remove these six instances so that the benefits could be for all Veterans and their families. The next day the Minister tabled the legislation but there are now twelve instances of the ‘Under 65’ stipulation. The TPI Federation, Partners of Veterans and the Australian War Widows are most disappointed that our letter and the needs of the older Veterans and families are to be disregarded when there are older members who may also such require assistance.

Following this disappointment, Senator Jacqui Lambie arranged for a meeting with the Human Rights Commissioner, Ms Lorraine Findlay. Ms Findlay was most generous with her time and many topics were discussed. Ms Findlay has advised she will make further enquiries after which we will meet with her again. Topics such as the discrimination mentioned above in the Family Support Package, the disparity of the TPI Compensation payment and the discrimination of the non-supply of suitable hearing aids were just a few of them.

The politicians, in general (but not all), are leaving no avenue for advocacy by the Ex-Service community by disregarding the needs of the TPI community. Such disappointment is exacerbated by the total disregard of the TPI Federation’s Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran’s Suicide bitly links have not even been accessed by them. A full list was provided to them of the numerous submissions that have been made just over the last 20 years by the TPI Federation to many Inquiries and Reviews, both Departmental and Parliamentary, and which have been summarily and in the main ignored.

TPI Federation Congress

The TPI Federation Congress was held in September 2022 in Canberra. Unfortunately, due to the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Parliamentary Sitting Session that was due to be held in that week was cancelled. As a result the most politicians were not in Canberra and could not attend our Congress.

The TPI Federation was most grateful that Phil Thompson MP and Senator Jacqui Lambie made the effort and attended our TPI Commemoration at the Australian War Memorial and then Senator Lambie attended our Congress. Senator Lambie was most generous with her time and contributed greatly to our Congress.

All State and Territory Directors were able to attend in person, except for Tasmania and the Regional TPI Associations of Victoria, and with the extra time available enabled more robust discussions on many subjects.

Also attending were DVA Secretary, Liz Cosson AM, CSC. Deputy Secretary, Vicki Rundle, Repatriation Commissioner, Don Spinks AM and a number of the DVA staff. DVA is thanked for their contribution to our Congress.

Reports from the Congress will be presented to you by your State/Territory Directors.

The dates for the next TPI Federation Congress will be known when the 2023 Parliamentary Sitting Calendar is released.

Hearing Aids

For over 8 years the TPI Federation has asked the various DVA Ministers, DVA Secretary, and many DVA staff members for a copy of the DVA Policy document on the provision of hearing aids to Veterans. At the Congress in September the DVA Secretary advised that DVA does not have a policy on hearing aids. The DVA Secretary advised that she will ascertain why Veterans are unable to gain the full hearing aid needs from DVA and are only restricted to the extremely limited hearing aids from the Hearing Services Program.

Now that it is known that there is no DVA Policy on hearing aids, we await advice why the VEA & MRCA Treatment Principles are ignored in lieu of the Hearing Service (restricted) Program.

Legislation

Now that the announced increase in the TPI Compensation was announced in the recent Federal Budget we await the legislation to be tabled in November so that the increase can commence on the 1st January 2023.

Royal Commission Update

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide is continuing, and will recommence in Wagga on 28th November 2022. The interim report was provided by the Commissioners on the 11th August 2022. The final report is due to be tabled on 17th June 2024.

Conclusion

The TPI Federation will continue to assist all TPIs and should you have any questions, please forward them to the email address below.



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Nov 2022

Important Dates

Royal Commission started –	8 July 2021
Rent Assistance Eligibility for TPIs begins –	1 January 2022
Royal Commission Interim Report –	DONE 11 August 2022
Royal Commission Submissions close –	14 October 2022
Royal Commission Hearings – Wagga –	28 November 2022
Royal Commission Final Report –	17 June 2024