



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President's Report

September 2022

Now that the Government is back at work the TPI Federation has managed appointments with a number of politicians.

Over the two-week period of the first sitting of the 47th Parliament, and in the order in which the appointments were conducted, the TPI Federation met with, Brian Mitchell MP (Tas), Senator Jacqui Lambie (Tas), Senator Jim Molan (NSW), Nola Marino MP (WA), David Smith MP (ACT), Gavin Pearce MP (Tas), Luke Gosling MP (NT), Phil Thompson MP (Qld), Barnaby Joyce MP (NSW), Keith Wolahan MP (Vic) plus 2 other appointments with the DVA Minister's Advisor and Chief of Staff. The TPI Federation thanks all these Members and Senators for making the time for us to introduce ourselves to you, and to hear the issues of TPI/SRs in the hope of garnering support for all.

The enthusiasm of some, especially Senator Lambie, Gavin Pearce MP and Phil Thompson MP was pleasing to see and it is hoped that we can continue this positivity into the future. Unfortunately, the one-hour appointment with our new Minister was reduced to fifteen minutes due to other commitments that he had. The follow-up appointments with his staff were appreciated. It is hoped that he can allocate time for a subsequent appointment at our Congress and/or during the next sitting session in September.

It should be noted that some of the newer politicians will have much to learn as they settle into their new surroundings, so it will take time to fully appraise them of the needs of our community. Our new DVA Opposition Minister, Barnaby Joyce MP, was very interested and will be approached again to reinforce our concerns and alert him to the needs of the TPI/SR community over the next few months.

Legislation

The new Government met for the first time in Canberra on the 26th July 2022 and quickly tabled a number of pieces of legislation.

The Defence, Veterans' and Families Acute Support Package Bill 2022 has now been tabled. This Bill “provides more vulnerable veterans and their families with more flexible support through the Defence, Veterans' and Families' Acute Support Package, extending to a wider eligible group the levels of financial support available through the current Family Support Package.

The measures in this Bill will increase access to support when it is needed most. It will ensure support is provided on the basis of need rather than service type, supporting vulnerable veterans and their families to adjust to challenging life circumstances.”

This Bill one of the results of the report from the Productivity Commission's “*A Better Way to Support Veterans*” Report tabled in June 2019. The Bill was specifically designed to provide supports to the family unit as a whole, rather than specifically to the veteran. This is the first Bill that encompasses all 3 DVA Compensation Acts for all Veterans and their families. That is, except if you are over 65 years of age.

The combined efforts of the Australian War Widows, the Partners of Veterans and the TPI Federation wrote to, and lobbied, the Government, and the new Minister, Matt Keogh MP, to have the six instances of the words “*under 65*” removed from the legislation. This discrimination of the older generation of Veterans and their families, who also may have a need for emergency crisis assistance, does not encompass the entire Veteran Community as it was alleged that this Bill enabled.

Regardless of our efforts the Government has now tabled this Bill with the words “*under 65*” remaining in the legislation. The TPI Federation is most disappointed in this result which goes against the Human Rights Act and discriminates against at least 65-70% of the DVA Veteran and families.

The Government will also soon introduce legislation to ensure that no Veteran pays higher income tax because of the Federal Court decision in *Commissioner of Taxation v Douglas* (the Douglas decision). Before it does so, the Government has released the draft legislation for consultation.

The consultation process is being led by the Treasury. The draft Bill – *Treasury Laws Amendment (Measures for a later sitting) Bill 2022: Taxation of military superannuation benefits* – and associated draft explanatory material can be viewed on the <https://bit.ly/3JwbGpy>. The draft Bill reflects the Government’s commitment to ensure veterans are not left worse off due to the Douglas decision and that veterans who benefited from the decision retain these outcomes. Further information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3zV1rYP>.

The exposure draft, explanatory materials and more information about the consultation process is available on the <https://bit.ly/3JwbGpy>. Submissions are invited by email to superannuation@treasury.gov.au. Submissions close on 5 August 2022. As only 10 days’ notice for such a submission was given by Government, the TPI Federation has requested an extension of the closing date. No response has been received at the time of writing this report.

Pension Increases

The TPI Compensation payment was increased on 20th March 2022 in line by approximately 2% in line with the usual CPI/MTAWE Indexation increase. The Government also applied a cost-of-living adjustment to the income support payments of approximately 2% as of 1st July 2022. The deeming thresholds also increased from 1 July 2022. This means that the value of financial assets deemed to be earning the lower rate of 0.25 per cent has increased. The higher deeming rate of 2.25 per cent is applied to the balance of financial assets over these thresholds. Further information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3d6fVfo>.

Royal Commission Update

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide is continuing, and will recommence in Hobart on 1st August 2022 and then in Darwin on 17th October 2022. An interim report will be provided by the Commissioners on the 11th August 2022. The final report is due to be tabled on 17th June 2024.

Veterans Home Care Update

On the 27th July 2022 the Government committed \$70.6m in funding, over four years, to increase Veterans’ Home Care (VHC) fees for domestic assistance and personal care services. This funding is not being allocated to additional services but rather to improve the VHC providers ability to provide the services to the Veteran Community.

Long Tan Bursary

The Long Tan Bursary application process will commence on 18 August 2022. The Long Tan Bursary helps eligible children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans pay for their tertiary education. Each year 37 bursaries are awarded to successful applicants across Australia. Each bursary is worth up to \$12,000 over 3 years of continuous full-time study. Further information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3xJGPS7>

TPI Federation Congress

The TPI Federation welcomes a new Member of the Federation with the acceptance of an application from the *Regional TPI Associations of Victoria* which will run out of the TPI Association in Geelong. The TPI Federation will be conducting their next Congress 14-16th September 2022 in Canberra. Should you have any issues that you would like discussed at the Congress, can you please contact your State or Territory TPI Association member or the national office.

Conclusion

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



Ms Pat McCabe OAM

Email: federation@tpifed.org.au

Ph: 0417 291 546

August 2022

Important Dates

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