



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President’s Report

June 2023

*“If we are to truly honour our veterans, we owe them something more than just gratitude.
Just as they stepped up for us, we must step up for them.”*

Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister – Australia
25 April 2023

DVA 2023-24 Federal Budget

The DVA budget for 2023-24 has been tabled. The 2023-24 Federal Budget has made significant investments that will further reduce the Veteran compensation claims backlog. Other measures in the Budget 2023-24 package supporting health and wellbeing include:

- \$500,000 over four years to expand eligibility for the Acute Support Package introduced in the October 2022 Budget to include grandcarers – grandparents who are also full-time carers of children of veterans,
- \$2 million over two years to allow DVA to continue important mental health awareness and suicide intervention training for volunteers supporting veterans.

DVA’s budget priorities are eliminating the claims backlog, reforming veteran legislation, modernising information communications technology and planning for the future

The Federal budget supports bulk billing in General Practice with the Veterans’ Access Payment (VAP). This provides \$33.3 million for DVA over four years. This measure triples the current bulk billing incentive –and the corresponding Veterans’ Access Payment - for certain GP attendances, from 1 November 2023. The increased VAP payment will also for some telehealth services, for Veterans registered with *MyMedicare*. For Veteran Card holders, this means that the amount paid to their GP for some of the most common attendances will increase.

The budget provides for \$0.5 million over four years to expand eligibility for the Acute Support Package. The eligibility for the Acute Support Package will be expanding to include grandparents who are full-time carers for children of Veterans. The Acute Support Package is designed to support families who are experiencing new and challenging life circumstances that mean the family unit needs support to get back on track.

Another benefit is the increased support for Commonwealth Rent Assistance Recipients. From 20 September 2023, the Government will increase the maximum fortnightly rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 15% for all recipients.

For Veterans families there is also the lowering of the cost of medicines through changes to maximum dispensing quantities. Veterans and their families will benefit from fewer visits to their GP and pharmacist to get the medicines they use the most and will save up to \$43.80 a year, per medicine.

DVA Legislation Reform

The process for the DVA Legislation Reform is progressing. Most of the DVA Minister’s consultations have been completed. The DVA Veterans Legislation Reform Consultation Pathway – <https://bit.ly/3HkrCeK> – is a guide for the process. Further information on this is available at the DVA website at - <https://bit.ly/3ABAzww>.

It would appear that the Government is set to ‘grandfather’ the Veterans’ Entitlements Act (VEA) and the Defence Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (DRCA) as of possibly 1st July 2025. If this is achieved then, after that date, no further VEA or DRCA claims can be lodged. Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA) will be the Veteran’s Compensation ACT going forward. Many issues and details have yet to be discussed on such a transition and the final decisions have not yet been made on this.

At this stage, the legislation and transitions requirements should be in draft form early in 2024. There will be further consultations before it is presented to Parliament for final ratification. There may well be a need for some Parliamentary Committees (in both Houses) before it is accepted.

Also at this stage, following discussions with DVA, it would seem that should a TPI or EDA under VEA pass away after the 'grandfather' date, then the spouse/partner would still have an entitlement under VEA for the War Widow's entitlements. The TPI Federation will watch this closely to ensure the needs of our Members are protected.

If any TPI/SR or member of your family wish to have a particular issue or concern raised on your behalf, by the TPI Federation, can you please contact your State/Territory TPI Association or forward the information to the contact details at the end of this report?

It is hoped that the Parliamentary process remembers the words of the Prime Minister – quoted above – during the most recent National Dawn Service of the Anzac Day Commemorations.

TPI Federation President Election

The TPI Federation invites all eligible TPI/SRs who are Members of a TPI Federation Member States/Territory Association, to consider nominating for the position of the TPI Federation President. Please approach your State/Territory President and request a *Schedule 3* from the TPI Federation Constitution to enable the nomination process to commence. Nomination forms need to be signed by the State/Territory TPI Association President before forwarding to the Returning Officer no later than **4th August 2023**.

50th anniversary of the proclamation to end Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War

The link – www.dva.gov.au/vietnam50 – will direct you to the National Mailing and Marketing website. National Mailing and Marketing have been engaged by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to coordinate the production and distribution of the commemorative medallions and certificates for the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. You will note that this website displays the DVA logo and the Vietnam50 logo, along with the National Mailing and Marketing logo.

Anyone encountering difficulties with this process is encouraged to call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) between 9am and 5pm AEST, Monday to Friday, and when prompted say the word 'medallions'. A member of the commemorations team will then assist them with the application process.

Royal Commission Update

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide will be holding hearings in Perth from 16th May 2023. 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 your families. Should you have any questions, please call or forward enquiries to the email address below.



Ms Pat McCabe OAM

Email: federation@tpifed.org.au

Ph: 0417 291 546

June 2023

Important Dates

Royal Commission started	–	8 July 2021
Rent Assistance Eligibility for TPIs begins	–	1 January 2022
Royal Commission Interim Report	–	11 August 2022
Royal Commission Hearings – Perth	–	16 May 2023
Royal Commission Private Session Requests	–	28 April 2023
Royal Commission Submissions – Closed	–	13 October 2023
Royal Commission Final Report	–	17 June 2024

For further information call 1800 331 800