



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President’s Report

September 2023

“When governments listen, they make better decisions and get better outcomes.

And when governments listen, we fund more effective programs.”

Anthony Albanese MP – Prime Minister – Australia

4 August 2023

The TPI Federation’s AGM and Congress Meeting was held in Canberra in September 2023. The TPI Federation thanks Phil Thompson MP who was most generous with his time and was able to respond to most of the Director’s questions. Thanks Phil.

The meetings continued at Parliament House the following day with Barnaby Joyce MP, Andrew Wilkie MP and Matt Keogh MP in attendance. Those meetings, though short, enabled the Directors to meet them and make themselves known to them. It was most unfortunate that due to a scheduling conflict that Senator Ross Cadell’s appointment was not able to occur. Hopefully, this will be rectified in the coming weeks.

The TPI Federation appreciated all those who attended our annual Commemoration at the Australian War Memorial. Thanks go to Matt Anderson PSM, Matt Keogh MP, Matt Thistlewaite MP, Barnaby Joyce MP, Andrew Hastie MP, Phil Thompson OAM MP, Senator Lambie, General Angus Campbell AO DSC, CDRE Robb RAN, Brig Kelly, AIRCDRE Marshall, DVA Secretary, Alison Frame and DVA Repatriation Commissioner, Glen Ferrarotto. The TPI Federation thanks the AWM staff for their co-ordination and conduct of our Commemoration.

DVA Repatriation Commissioner

The Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, the Hon Matt Keogh MP has today announced the appointment of the next Repatriation Commissioner. The Governor-General appointed Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM as the Repatriation Commissioner on 14 September 2023 to replace the outgoing Commissioner, Don Spinks AM and the Acting Commission, Glen Ferrarotto.

Hearing Aids Update

At a recent ESORT meeting, advice was received that DVA are now approving hearing aids for two categories of Veterans –

- a. Clients with dexterity issues and
- b. for individuals who need them for their employment.

The TPI Federation continues to advocate intensely for the abolition of other barriers that continue to deny Veterans their compensable entitlements of full access to hearing aids.

Should any Veteran continue to have limitations placed on their hearing aid needs, can you please contact the TPI Federation or your local TPI Association.

Victoria Government Concessions

The Victorian Government thanks the Australian Defence Force (ADF) members for their service. They have introduced a digital Veterans Card which entitles all past and present ADF members living in Victoria to discounts and benefits. For further information see – <https://service.vic.gov.au/services/veterans-card-victoria>

Diabetes

The DVA RAP program has amended the method of assisting Veterans with funding of Veterans diabetes memberships. Veterans do not require the diabetes membership to access diabetes products. Veterans can receive

all the diabetes products they need, free of charge, through their DVA card arrangements via the DVA Rehabilitation Appliances Program, or through their local pharmacy with their NDSS registration.

Should the Veteran decide to continue to use the NDSS registration process, they will need to pay for this themselves and then seek reimbursement from DVA using the Diabetes Membership Reimbursement – Form ID D9413.

Centrelink Changes

Changes to Centrelink entitlements includes measures to:

- expand eligibility for Parenting Payment Single by allowing single parents to remain eligible until their youngest child turns 14; up from the current cut-off age of eight;
- provide a \$40 per fortnight increase to the base rates of JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance, and other working-age payments;
- allow long-term, single JobSeeker Payment recipients aged 55+ to access the higher rate currently paid to those aged 60+; and
- provide a 15% increase in the maximum rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

The measures were announced as part of the 2023–24 Budget and are being led by the Department of Social Services (DSS). The measures will apply from 20 September 2023.

For eligible veterans and families, Rent Assistance is paid as part of their Service Pension, Income Support Supplement or Veteran Payment under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA), and Education Scheme payments under the VEA and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). The rate of Rent Assistance is different depending upon the family situation of the recipient. These amounts are indexed every 20 March and 20 September.

Eligible veterans and families entitled to an increase in their Commonwealth Rent Assistance will be advised in writing by DVA.

Royal Commission Update

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide will be holding hearings in Sydney from 20th November 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.

New powers for Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

The Parliament has today passed new laws that will support the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide to complete its important work ahead of its reporting date of 17 June 2024.

The new laws will do this by making it possible for more people to participate in face-to-face private sessions.

Private sessions enable individuals to share their personal experience with a royal commission in a trauma informed and less formal setting than a hearing

Currently, only a Commissioner can hold a private session. The *Royal Commissions Amendment (Private Sessions) Act 2023* will change this by enabling a suitably qualified, experienced, and appropriately senior staff member of the Defence and Veteran Suicide Royal Commission to be authorised as an 'Assistant Commissioner' to conduct private sessions

Since it commenced in July 2021, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has carried out 535 private sessions with another 400 remaining to be done before the Commission reports

The Albanese Government is committed to supporting the important work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and this new power will make it possible for the Royal Commission to conduct all the registered sessions face-to-face

Defence Amendment: Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Bill 2023

The Deputy Prime Minister introduced to Parliament the proposed Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets) Bill 2023. For further information see [Bills Search Results – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](#). Also see the Defence website which will be updated as more information is available at <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/governance/defence-amendment-safeguarding-australias-military-secrets-bill-2023>

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

September 2023

Important Dates

Royal Commission started	–	8 July 2021
Royal Commission Interim Report - Completed	–	11 August 2022
Royal Commission Hearings – Sydney	–	20 Nov 2023
Royal Commission Private Session – Closed	–	28 April 2023
Royal Commission Submissions – Almost Closed	–	13 October 2023
Royal Commission Final Report	–	17 June 2024

For further information call 1800 331 800