



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President's Report

August 2018

It has indeed been a busy few months. The various Government inquiries have kept many on their toes. There are currently inquiries into ADTP (Advocacy Training & Development Program (previously known as TIP)) Scoping Review, Transition Senate Inquiries on Transition and another on Mefloquine and the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) has just completed their review of Efficiency of Veterans Service Delivery by DVA. The ANAO's final report can be found at <https://bit.ly/2MgLxNc>. The TPI Federation has recently lodged a major submission to the Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans Productivity Commission. The TPI Federation's submission can be found on our website at www.tpifed.org or at <https://bit.ly/2LXIwRv>.

The TPI Federation has continued to push for major priority which is to obtain a fair and equitable Economic Loss compensation for our TPI/SR Compensation payments. The Government, including the DVA Minister and the DVA Department, have continued to prosecute the argument of our so-called compensation 'package'. A Member recently sent me a copy of a letter he received from the DVA Minister quoting our so-called compensation 'package' as being valued at over \$83,000 per annum. This is absolutely ludicrous and foolhardy for the Minister and the Department to continue on this path.

I have yet to be able to meet with the Minister personally on this issue but I have made my views known to both his Office and the Department. The Department has now offered to have an analysis of our rightful claim assessed by KPMG in order to progress the claim to the Minister in the form of a submission. This submission, if approved by the Minister, can then be forwarded to the Department of Finance for assessment. Following this our submission may go to the Treasurer for his assessment.

This is the process that is required these days to obtain funding for claims such as ours. This process takes time. Of course, if the Government has the will to approve our rightful claim for a fair and equitable compensation then they could bypass most of these delaying processes. It ultimately becomes the *'will of the Government'*. The fact that the economic loss compensation for all 27,000 TPIS is now more than the originally stated 65% of the minimum wage is a national disgrace. The Government, its MPs and Senators and the Department should be ashamed that they have not followed their own stated obligation as laid down in their own Budget Papers –

“Outcome 1: Maintain and enhance the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of eligible persons and their dependants through access to income support, compensation, and other support services, including advice and information about entitlements.”

The Minister and the Department no longer have any issues with the contention of our claim. The final hurdle is purely a financial issue. The TPI Federation has addressed all arguments and financial contentions and now only Government processes are delaying any further progress.

The TPI Federation, and all of the 27,000 TPI/SRs, await some type of sensible response from either the Government, the Minister, the Department or the Productivity Commission.

The TPI Federation is becoming more informed on the issue that the younger TPI/SR Veterans are having with the offsetting of their superannuation payments against their TPI/SR compensation under Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act (2004) (MRCA). In the majority of cases, it means that the TPI/SR compensation payment is zero because of this offsetting. Their compensation is negated by this legislation. This may well be legal under MRCA but the Federation is concerned that it is immoral to remove a Veterans compensation in this manner. This does not occur under VEA and therefore it is discriminatory for the younger Veterans to be affected in this manner. As a result, the TPI Federation is asking the Government to amend the MRCA to allow the

younger veterans to retain their eligible compensation. This has also been included in the TPI Federation's submission to the Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans Productivity Commission.

I thank the many Members who have contacted me about the exorbitant additional payments that they have been asked to make for their hearing aids. The TPI Federation is working with DVA to have the Fact Sheets on hearing aids rewritten, in plain English, so that both the Audiologist and the Veterans are fully aware of their entitlements. I would appreciate any information if TPI/SRs are still being asked for additional funding directly from the Audiologists. Please take a copy of this letter to your Audiologist so they can contact me at federation@tpifed.org.au or 0417 291 546 if further information is required.

Remember there is never a need for Veterans to pay for your hearing aids. The Audiologist must put into medical terms the need for an above basic hearing aid and request prior approval for that before the hearing aid is supplied to you. If you have any further examples of this still occurring please email me at federation@tpifed.org.au or call 0417291546 with details.

It would appear that this might also be occurring with some Diabetic requirements. If you have any examples where you are being asked to fund you own medications or medical requirements can you please contact me with the details. No TPI/SR should have to pay for any medication or medical requirement that has been requested by your GP or Specialist.

DVA is currently conducting a review of the RAP (Rehabilitation Appliance Program). If you have something to contribute to the review or you know of a product that can be added, removed or changed to compliment the current RAP appliances that are available, can you let me know at the contact details listed at the end of this report.

There is also to be a DVA review into the DVA provided transport arrangements. Again, if you have any items to submit to this review please contact me at the details listed. There is currently provision for you to ask a taxi driver who has provided you transport to a medical appointment for a "Right of Return" card. This card will give you his phone number so that you can arrange for your return trip from that medical appointment. You will still need to call DVA or book online at MyAccount for your transport bookings. The "Right of Return" card only applies to return trips.

I would like to thank The TPI Victoria President, Mr John Poland, his Committee and Members for the invitation to attend a memorable launch of the wonderful VC - Australia Remembers book. This book celebrates the lives, bravery and families of our heroic 100 VC winners. I highly commend this book to you. Should you be interested in purchasing the book, details can be found at <https://bit.ly/2MhCcER>. The author of the book, Michael C Madden, travelled the world to obtain the history of all the VC winners and their families. They photographed all their headstones and gained further historical information from 60 VC winner's families. The launch of this book entailed work and promotion of the ideals and history that can be utilised for all Veterans, past, present and future.



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