



TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

“Disabled in our Service - United in our Cause”



Federation President's Report

May 2019

The Federation has certainly hit the ground running in the first quarter of 2019.

The release of the Productivity Commission (PC) Draft Report was in mid-December 2018 – just before Christmas. The need to address that report was of the highest priority. There was a meeting on the PC Draft Report on 15th January, when DVA called an extra-ordinary Ex-Service Organisation's Round Table (ESORT) meeting. This meeting brought a number of ESOs together to discuss the pros and cons of the PC Draft Report. DVA facilitated this meeting so that a consolidated viewpoint of the report, along with an appreciation of all the various opinions, could be discussed. It was most helpful in the production of our submission on this report.

This, along with the many viewpoints that I received from many TPIs nationally, enabled a submission to be put forward to the Productivity Commission from the TPI Federation. This submission is available from your State/Territory TPI Association office or on the TPI website at <https://bit.ly/2Y2DTMI>.

Since the response submission was lodged at the end of February, the Federation has been involved more deeply with the TPI campaign for a fairer and more equitable 'economic loss' compensation. To this end, the Federation was finally granted a meeting with the Prime Minister, in Melbourne, on Wednesday 13th March 2019.

I, along with the Director from West Australia, John Kelly, and the Victorian Directors, John Poland and Terry Wilson, attended. The independent researcher, Peter Thornton, also attended. The Prime Minister generously gave the Federation 30 minutes of his time. He noted, as the Gold Card is valued at approximately \$23,000 per annum, that this would be suitable for now. It was pointed out to the Prime Minister that the Gold Card cannot be used at an ATM or put bread on the table but, unfortunately, the Prime Minister would not be moved.

The cost to the Federation for all, except for the Victorian Directors, to attend this meeting regrettably turned out to be a waste. The only bright side to all this, is that there is no longer any argument to our contention that the TPI 'economic loss' Compensation needs to be restored to the gross minimum wage. It is now a matter of how to pay for it. Was this considered when soldiers, sailors and airmen and women were sent into danger that would lead them into a life of pain and lack of quality of life? We will keep on trying with our justifiable claim.

The Prime Minister, the DVA Minister and the DVA Secretary are now only discussing how to pay for such a restoration. DVA, unfortunately, is still proceeding with the expensive KPMG report in an effort to negate our claim. To date, this has proved fruitless. I hope that there is something in the budget that is to be tabled on 2nd April as many, many TPIs are seeking such financial relief.

The normal parliamentary sitting days changed for 2019 from March to February. Because of this, the TPI Federation Congress also changed its meeting date to February 2019. The TPI Federation welcomed the Directors and held a very successful conference on which the Directors will report through their magazines.

The TPI Federation thanks the DVA Minister, Darren Chester MP, The Opposition DVA Minister, Amanda Rishworth MP, Andrew Wilkie MP and Senator Dean Smith for taking time to address the TPI Directors. Most were in election-mode, but did address the issues raised by the Directors. It was disappointing to be advised by the Opposition DVA Minister that should they be elected in May that they would have to look at the budget before making comment on our current claim.

The TPI Federation thanks the DVA Secretary, Liz Cosson AM CSC, who provided a number of staff members who provided information to the Directors that they could take back to their States/Territory for their Members. Ms Cosson advised that Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC would be leaving and will be replaced by Don Spinks AM. Don has just left the Army where he was RSM(A) for the last three years following almost 40 years' Service in the Army. Mr Spinks will replace Major General Kelly who was first appointed Repatriation Commissioner in July 2010. This position is responsible for managing Open Arms (previously known as Veterans and Veterans

Families Counselling Service (VVCS)), Applied Research Program, National Consultative Forums, commemorative grants and commemorative activities. Mr Spinks will take over this role on 1 July 2019.

The position of TPI Federation National President is due for election this year. Nominations forms will be sent to the TPI Offices by 9th July 2019. The Returning Officer must receive all nominations by 9th August. Results of the election will be declared at the next Congress meeting on 18th September 2019. All financial TPI Association Members are eligible to nominate for this position.

The Honouring Women Under Defence (HWUD) dinner is to be held again this year. Last year 500 women attended the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial and the dinner that followed. This year the Last Post Ceremony will be held again, and the dinner to follow will be held at the Australian Parliament House Great Hall in Canberra. Tickets will not last long, so it is recommend that any female current or ex-serving ADF member, or any female relative of a current or ex-serving ADF member, of any era, should contact the following addresses in order to get your tickets. All are most welcomed to attend. For further information see the HWUD Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HonouringWomen/> or email lroberts@warwidowsnsw.com.au.

Regrettably, the TPI Federation accepted the resignation of our long-standing Director, the TPI Association of Victoria President, John Poland, with effect from the end of March 2019. The assistance that John has provided to the TPI Federation over many, many years has been invaluable and will extend into the annals of the Federation for years to come. Thank you John and the TPI Federation wishes you, and Barb, good health and happy travels long into the future. We now look forward to meeting the new Victorian Director who will, again, represent Victorian TPIs to the best of their ability.

Finally, I revisit the hearing aid issue. The Veteran community seems to be slowly learning of their entitlements. Please pass this along to your Veteran and War Widow friends and families. They must know that they –
NEVER, NEVER, EVER – pay for their hearing aids.

If there are any problems with obtaining fully subsidised hearing aids please contact me.



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24th March 2019