



Volume 30 | Issue 2 | Winter 2022

TPI *News*



Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Service Men and Women

Disabled in our Service – United in our Cause

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Departed Comrades

At the going down of the Sun we will remember them.

VALE-LEST WE FORGET

"I tell you they have not died,
They live and breathe with you,
They walk here now at your side,
They tell you things that are true."

ARMY

A.J. HUDSON
A. CALLUS
R.G. WILLIAMS
M.J. HICKS
B.J. SELBY

RAAF

R.C. OLSEN

NAVY

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TPI Office

(08) 8351 8140

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Brett Grosser



Dear Members,

This is my first issue of the TPI Magazine as both your President and Editor, so feedback is welcome but go easy! I'm the first Middle East Veteran to hold the position as President in the TPI-SA Association, so the pressure is on now to fill the building with the next generation of Soldier, Sailors, and Airmen. We already have a number of strategies in the pipeline to make this happen.

First, Leon Eddy has been the President for the last 11 years and Treasurer prior to that, a more dedicated and conscientious Veteran you won't find. Leon has led enormous changes to our Association including moving us to our current location and streamlining our wealth strategies. No doubt these initiatives have provided a stable and robust financial platform for the Association to sustainably move forward into the future. However, as is the case with all dedicated people, he will continue as our deputy-treasurer and focus on our investment strategies. On behalf of the Association Leon, thanks for contributing so much to TPI-SA and for your continued efforts supporting your mates I know I speak for all when I say THANK YOU for your service.

Over the coming weeks and months you will see the new website and membership database come into service. We are modernising our online presence which will include social media integration and a greater focus on modernising how the office works. This will in turn allow our volunteers to focus on different activities supporting our members. Volunteers are precious and form the backbone of how we operate and function successfully. The social media presence will enable us to participate in a broader range of marketing opportunities and get the word out to Veterans that, for whatever reason, are not aware of who we are and what we do. It will also enable us to reach people from all around the state more effectively.

As you will all be aware the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide is taking submissions. What does that even mean and how can we assist are the first questions that hit my mind. To that end I have been in contact with the Veterans Legal Services Commission here in South Australia and they have informed me that there is one dedicated solicitor funded by the Royal Commission to assist in the drafting of submissions. At a recent meeting I invited them to come and work out of our offices in TPI House as of now they are still considering this offer. There will be more information to follow on how they can be accessed and what services they will be able to provide. Additionally, they will also be able to provide legal advice for other matters that may be required from time to time, when I have the specifics, I will let you all know.

Out

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Editorial J.F GENOVESE RFD JP

G'Day all,

The first edition of The TPI News I edited was in 2005, the June Winter edition. Now, precisely seventeen years on, I am writing my last editorial.



The time to hand over the editorial reigns to someone else has arrived. We have a new President. He is an experienced returned serviceman with service in Iraq. He is a retired Major with a Law Degree and excellent business experience, having been the CEO of a major hospital.

Brett is ideally equipped to progress our organisation into the future challenges we will face. He came to us with a clear vision and ideas that would attract contemporary TPIs. I like the path Brett has proposed by which we can better serve and invite younger ex-defence personnel. We are fortunate Brett Grosser came to us when he did.

I feel comfortable relinquishing my editorial role, knowing it will be in good hands with Brett.

I have experienced much and shared much with you during these past years. It has been a pleasure watching the progress and direction of our Association. I am grateful for the support I have received from the Committee, the Executive and the secretariat.

I thank those members that have contributed timely editorial content. Les Laube deserves a special mention for providing us with his regular contribution to military history.

I look forward to reading the future digital news of our story. Those of you that don't have access to a computer, laptop, tablet, iPad or mobile phone will be able to be still supplied with a paper copy; It may take some time to set up. Please be patient.

I will be away visiting relatives and friends in Italy and Slovenia for a while. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Safe and Prosperous New Year. **Ed**

Disclaimer - The material in this publication is in the nature of general comment only and neither purports nor is it intended to be advice on any particular matter. Readers should not act or rely upon any information this newsletter contains or implies without taking appropriate professional advice relating specifically to their specific circumstances. The publishers and authors expressly disclaim all liability to any person, whether an Association member or not, who acts or fails to act due to reliance upon the whole or part of this publication. Views, opinions or claims expressed in any editorial, article or advertisement are not necessarily the views held by the Committee of Management of the TPI (S.A.), nor are they necessarily the views or opinions of the editor.

Federation President's Report...

By Pat McCabe OAM

The DVA Minister, Andrew Gee MP, enabled the passing of legislation on the last day of the 46th Parliament for the expansion of the DVA Family Support Package that aims to harmonise these benefits across all three Veterans Compensation Acts – VEA, DRCA & MRCA. Further information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3E7gNdi>. The DVA Veteran Family Advocate, Gwen Cherne, announced:

"I'm so pleased to advise that the Family Support Package is being expanded under this Budget to even more families, and is being enhanced to allow families greater choice in how they use the services. The funding supports increased access to childcare, providing much needed assistance for widowed partners. The Family Support Package includes covering any gap fees in childcare, household services such as garden maintenance, cleaning and meal preparation, and capacity building support. This builds on the announcement in the Budget 2021-22 to expand eligibility and increase choice for families, but ensures families have access to the same financial support under the program."



It should be noted that this expansion is limited to Veterans and their partners who are under the age of 65. The TPI Federation has discussed with the Minister, and the DVA Secretary, the discriminatory nature of such a restriction on all three Acts. Even the current younger Veterans will reach 65 one day and then no longer be eligible for this! The TPI Federation will continue to advocate that all DVA benefits be assigned equally to all Veterans who need to utilise the DVA system and their services. This legislation is still to be passed in the Senate and this is expected on the resumption of Parliament. The legislation is set to commence on 1st July 2022.

Budget Report

The recent tabling of the 2022/23 Federal Budget enabled the following –

- The budget for DVA is to remain at \$11.5bn for compensation and income support payments and the healthcare, wellbeing and rehabilitation needs of Veterans. A further \$58.5m was allocated for commemorations. There is an additional funding of \$378.6m for DVA administration.
- There is now a total of 338,463 DVA clients made up of 244,190 Veterans and 95,348 dependants.
- The lowering of the Medicare Safety Net for pharmaceutical scripts by 12 scripts annually or \$81.60 per annum cost of the pharmaceutical co-payments for TPIs or \$326 to \$244.80 for the general population to commence 1 July 2022.
- Provision of \$70.5m over 4 years as an interim increase for Veterans Home Care providers to align more closely the payments made to providers such as NDIS and MyAgedCare.
- An allocation of \$22m for DVA's Psychiatric Assistance Dog's Program.
- \$33.6m to continue the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment to 30 June 2024.
- \$36.8m for additional support for widowed partners, and families in crisis.
- \$22.8m for additional public service staff over two years to assist with completion of claims.
- \$9m grant for the support of the Australian team at the 2023 Invictus Games and 2024 Warrior Games.
- \$13.7m for Kookaburra Kids to assist Veterans and Defence Kids' mental health program for 8-18 year olds.
- \$4m to support Legacy to commemorate its 100th Anniversary in 2023.
- \$4m for operational and maintenance costs for the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Sydney.
- It was also announced that the temporary reduction in superannuation minimum drawdown rates is to be extended.
- The provision of a Cost-of-Living Payment of \$250 You'll get it if you're living in Australia on 29 March 2022.

At the budget announcement, the DVA Secretary announced that DVA's priorities for the upcoming financial year are –

- Reducing the claims backlog
- Putting Veterans and Families First – Continuing their transformation
- Implementing and measuring the investment in Veteran and Family lifetime wellbeing priorities and strategies
- Preparing and planning for the future generation of Veterans and Families.

Continued on page 6

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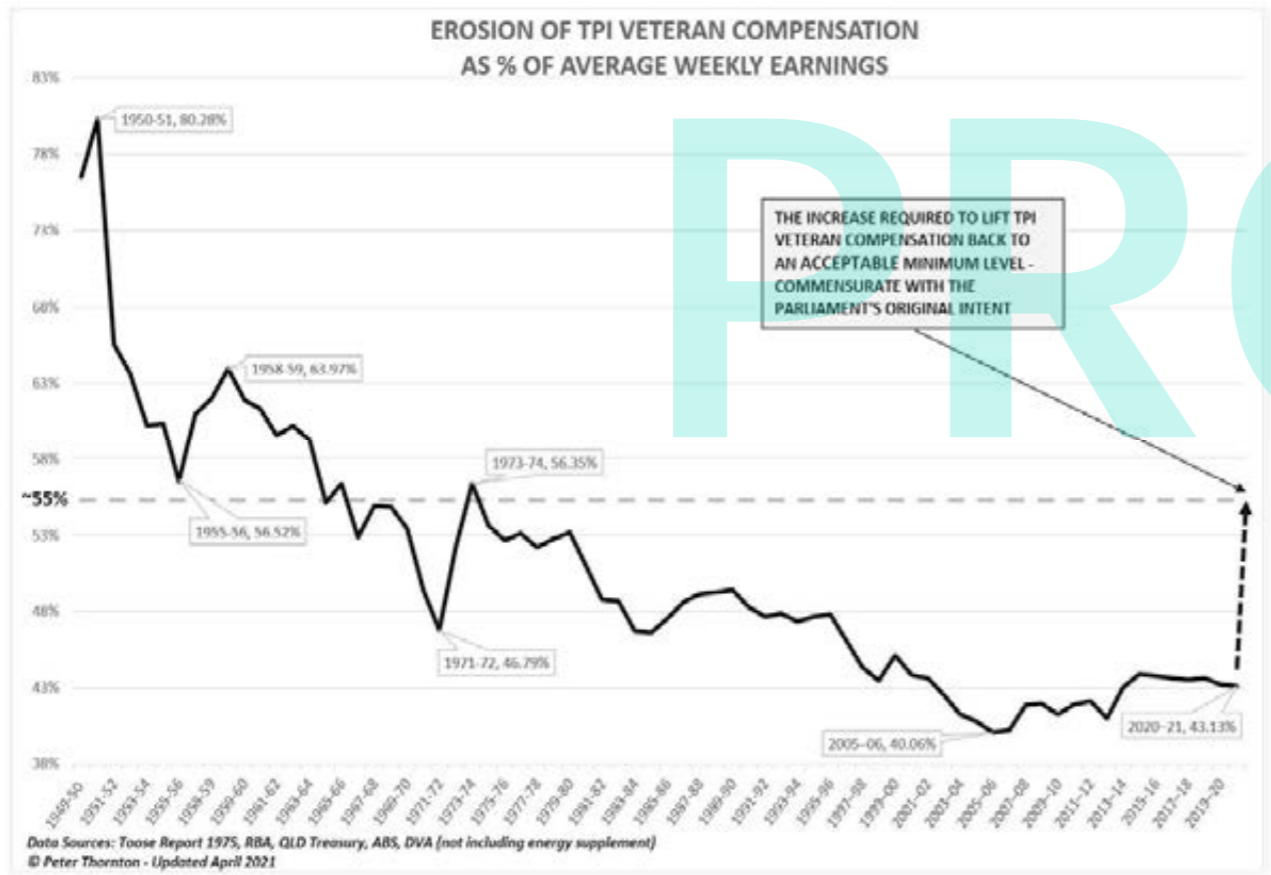
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OH WHAT A FEELING

Unfortunately, the TPI Compensation Payment inadequacy issue has not been addressed in the 2022/23 Federal Budget. The Government, despite the recommendation from the Senate Inquiry into the payment, that there is a need for an increase to the TPI payment has again been ignored.

You are aware that the Above General Rate component of the TPI Compensation payment – i.e. the amount over and above the 100% pain and suffering component – is compensation for never being able to work again and, for many, to never build that retirement superannuation nest-egg.

I ask that all TPIs and their families approach politicians, especially those in marginal seats, during this time of the election process, to remind your politicians of possibly the final Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade References Committee recommendation that the late Senator Kitching chaired, is still being ignored by Government and that following 70 years – yes 7-decades- of decline when compared to the Australian Average Weekly Earnings, is a sad indictment of the care and responsibility that the Government political parties over those 7-decades has for their most disabled Veterans. The updated graph below indicates the dire situation that the TPI Compensation payment is in. This proposed restoration to the minimum wage currently represents more than ~\$150 per week to equate to the current minimum wage level. To suggest less than this is not being honest with the Veteran.



Again, our plea for hearing aids for Veterans has also been ignored. The Government feels that regardless of the fact that the two-most-claimed-for conditions – hearing loss and tinnitus – are accepted disabilities for the Veterans, and of the atrocious work health and safety conditions that many Veterans work/ed in over many decades, that the only hearing aids they require are the base level hearing aids that an aged pensioner can receive as a welfare measure.

Our plea for pharmaceutical assistance has also been ignored. TPIs still only receive a pharmaceutical allowance of \$6.20 per fortnight (or less than one script per fortnight) for a single Veteran or \$3.10 for each part of a couple of a Veteran (or less than a script per fortnight each) to assist with their medical needs. This is exactly the same as the digger who has just discharged and doesn't yet need pharmaceuticals, but receives the pharmaceutical allowance of \$6.20 to go with their automatic White Card allocation. It is noted that the pharmaceutical co-payment has not risen since 2016 when it became \$6.20. Is this truly compensation?? When will the pharmaceutical compensation be restored to the full compensation measure that ever other Australia compensation recipient receives?

Rent Assistance

The Rent Assistance for TPIs began on 1st January 2022 and eligible TPIs are reminded to complete the DVA form at <https://bit.ly/3jqsi60> and send it to DVA. Further information on this provision can be found at –

- a. TPI Federation Letter – Rent Assistance Information - <https://bit.ly/36bHIUR>;
- b. DVA Fact Sheet – Help with your Rent - <https://bit.ly/3wjYlJs>;
- c. DVA 'How-To' Accommodation Information - <https://bit.ly/3AfJQZM>.

Conclusion

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

LATE NEWS:

The Morrison Government announced on the 11th April 2022 that it will extend the final report date for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide to 17 June 2024. The Attorney-General, Michaelia Cash MP said, "This extension will allow more individuals to come forward and share their experience with the Royal Commission. I thank all those who have already come forward," she said.

Ms Pat McCabe OAM
Email: federation@tpifed.org.au
Ph: 0417 291 546

Important Dates

- Royal Commission started – on 8 July 2021
- Rent Assistance Eligibility for TPIs began – on 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 – 15 June 2023

Service - United in our Cause

TPI Noticeboard

New Members

NAVY

W.G.DONNELLY

ARMY

J.A. BURT, M.S. MARSHALL, T.M. NEWTON, B.L. PORTLOCK

RAAF

M.D. ROBERTS

FROM THE MINISTER OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS... The Hon Andrew Gee MP

The body of a Victorian soldier killed in action during the First World War has been identified in an unnamed grave in France, more than a century after his death.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee today confirmed the identification of Lieutenant James Mark Kennedy, 26th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, born 16 April 1879.

"Thanks to painstaking research over a number of years, Lieutenant Kennedy's family now know his final resting place, and he can be given the memorial he deserves," Minister Gee said.

"It is pleasing that, as we commemorate Remembrance Day, we have been able to bring some closure to another Australian family whose loved one lost their lives fighting for our nation.

"Born in Clarendon, Victoria and recruited in Queensland, Lieutenant Kennedy dedicated most of his life to service, including fighting in both the Boer War and the First World War.

"He was 37 when he was tragically killed near Flers on 5 November 1916, after his unit attacked German trenches near a defensive position known as 'The Maze'.

"Due to the dangerous conditions from heavy bombardment and thick mud, Lieutenant Kennedy's remains could not be recovered following the battle, and he was commemorated on the VillersBretonneux Memorial.

"It is remarkable that after 105 years, his final resting place has now been identified. It says much about Australia that we are still honouring our sacred national commitment after more than a century, never to forget those who gave everything for our nation.

"I want to thank Fallen Diggers Incorporated, the Office of Australian War Graves, the Australian Army, and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, whose detailed research and support made this identification possible and has given some closure to Lieutenant Kennedy's family."

In consultation with Lieutenant Kennedy's grandchildren, arrangements will be made to replace the previously unmarked headstone with one bearing his name and service details.

Lieutenant Kennedy's grandson Mark Kennedy said learning of his grandfather's burial location was a minor miracle. "Since 1987, I've tried here and there to search for information regarding my grandfather's whereabouts. But like thousands of others like him, he vanished in the trenches," Mr Kennedy said.

"I'd grown up with many stories of him from my father, so I think it's fair to say he was lost but not forgotten. "The love story between my grandfather and grandmother was a great wartime romance. It's a great shame they couldn't be together very long, having only been married nine months."

Margaret White, Mark's sister and the granddaughter of Lieutenant Kennedy, said she was grateful and surprised by the news.

"I find it amazing they were able to discover my grandfather's final resting place after so many years. I've got my grandfather's medals, bugle, and other memorabilia at home, and it's quite incredible how much information is still available more than one hundred years later," Mrs White said.

"I am hopeful I am one day able to visit my grandfather's grave and pay my respects and continue to share these memories with my own children and grandchildren."

The First World War remains the costliest conflict for Australian lives and casualties. In a country with fewer than five million people, 416,809 men enlisted of which more than 60,000 were killed.



Welfare & Hospital Report by Mick Curry

Cannabis Oil:

There was an article, last edition re: some GP's not wanting to issue a prescription for Cannabis Oil. I suggested it may have been ethical reasons. There is another issue recently brought to my attention.

To have the authority to do this, considering legality, dangers of misuse and other sensitivities, GPs are required to do a particular training course. If this is not done, they cannot provide an authority. We are going to keep a list of those who can and will. It will not be advertised. If you have a GP name & contact details advise me. I will maintain an up-to-date list for the office and members on request. We have one on the list. Please help if you have another.

"Veteran welfare" help in outer Metropolitan, and Country - home and Aged Care:

There are times when we have a member in need and being city-based we cannot immediately respond. We are after regional volunteers as contact persons in these areas. If you can help and are happy to be on a contact list, please forward your name and details to the office or me. The work is not too onerous, simply acting as a contact point so we can try and keep tabs on veterans/members in care or at home who need support. The task is not onerous but can be useful.

Veteran Visitations Modbury & Lyell McEwin hospitals:

Ministerials have been written and forwarded to our new State and Health Ministers to try and get access for our Welfare Visitation team members to these two sites. We can get into the others with COVID restrictions.

COVID and RAPID ANTIGEN TEST (RAT) packs: as per the item on the website, please

- Ensure you have your free entitlement of packs from participating pharmacies. Check before you ask.
- For any medical/dental/allied health etc booking, check if a RAT test has to be done prior. You could be asked to do a test, pay and then seek DVA reimbursement.

Veterans Home Care and associated paperwork

caught up with other DVA processing delays. If you have providers who have not been paid, the best option is for the providers to contact DVA Veteran Services on 1800 550 457 and select option 4. Yes, less than satisfactory, but a call from them will have more impact than the client, strange but true. If help is still needed, contact me.



DFRDB UPDATE – MAY 2022

Federal Court Hearing – 11 May 2022

A reminder that the hearing of Clinton McKenzie's Federal Court matter has been set down for Wednesday, 11 May 2022, at 10:15 am (EST).

The hearing will be live-streamed, and we will email the link as soon as it is made available to the public on the previous afternoon.

We have now upgraded our email system, but we will also post the link on the ADFRA website. If you do not receive the link in time, go to <https://www.adfra.org/>, then click on Federal Court Hearing - 11 May 2022 under LATEST NEWS.

As we learnt from the directions hearing on 11 March, the live stream won't begin until the proceedings commence. So, if there's a technical 'glitch' or another delay, you will have to wait until the stream starts.

Federal Election

We sent these questions to the leaders of the major Political Parties. Go to the following Link https://www.adfra.org/docPDF/Questions_to_Major_Parties.pdf

ADSO Policy Objectives

The Alliance of Defence Service Organizations (ADSO) circulated these Policy Objectives for the Government to consider and agree to during the next Parliament of Australia.

We had submitted these Recommended Changes to ADSO regarding the policy objectives related to DFRDB. But without consulting their member Organizations, or the members of those Organizations, the ADSO leadership retained what the Defence Force Welfare Association first put forward several years ago.

There is still no consideration given to the very detrimental effect CPI linked indexation has had on all DFRDB benefits from 1976 to 2014 or the impact of excluding a significant part of DFRDB benefits from indexation.

And no explanation has been given as to why 'updating' the DFRDB Act life expectancy tables would be easier to achieve and 'be more beneficial to the greater good' than confining the reduction period to the originally legislated life expectancies. Both require legislative change, but only the latter results in an outcome consistent with the Jess Review recommendation, which is proportionate rather than permanent reduction.

.Jim Hislop OAM

President



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ANZAC Day at the Repat Chapel



Many would have spent time on the 25th of April this year remembering and paying our respects to the great sacrifices ourselves, our mates and our families have made to help defend this great country we call home.

For some of us this duty/calling has also spilled over in a commitment to support veterans suffering now, none more so than our Welfare and hospital visits team. This year some of Welfare team visited the Repatriation Hospital Chapel to represent the Association on ANZAC Day. As always a big thankyou to our Welfare team for exhibiting the ANZAC spirit every day through their benevolent service to their country. For never forgetting their mates and for being there when our colleagues need them, if just to remind us that we are not alone in our time of need.

L-R, Jim Fisher, 9 RAR, Darren Renshaw SA Veterans Health Advocate, & Warren ("Feathers") Featherby, also 9 RAR. Pictured after the Repat Chapel service in the refurbished SPF Hall.

Dates to remember

<p><u>June</u></p> <p>6 Bomber Command Commemorative Day 6 D Day Landings at Normandy, France 1944 6 Battle of Binh Ba, Vietnam 1969 14 TPI General Meeting 2014 10 Battle of Shah Wali Kot, Afghanistan 28 Centenary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles 1919</p>	<p><u>August</u></p> <p>2 Deployment of ADF personnel to the Persian Gulf 1990 4 Britain declares war on Germany 1914 9 TPI General Meeting 15 Victory in the Pacific Day. 18 Vietnam Veterans' Day. Battle of Long Tan, South Vietnam 1966. 31 Malaya & Borneo Veterans' Day.</p>
<p><u>July</u></p> <p>1 Sinking of the Montevideo Maru 1942 1 Reserve Forces Day 4 Battle of Le Hamel France 1918. 12 TPI General Meeting 2014 9 Allied Invasion of Sicily 1943. 10 Formation of Royal Australian Navy 1911. 10 June Battle of Shah Wali Kot, Afghanistan 23 Kokoda Track Campaign, New Guinea 1942. 24 First arrival of RAMSI forces in the Solomon Islands 2003 25 First arrival of Australian contingent of UNAMIR in Rwanda 1994 27 Korea Veterans' Day.</p>	<p><u>September</u></p> <p>2 Battle for Australia Day, Milne Bay, Papua 1942. 2 Battle of Khaz Oruzgan, Afghanistan 2008 3 Britain, France & Australia declare war on Germany 1939 3 Merchant Navy Day 6 Dardanelles Cenotaph Commemorative Service 13 TPI General Meeting 14 Australian Peacekeepers' Day 14 Loss of HMAS AE1 off Rabaul 1914 15 Formation of the Second Australian Imperial Forces 1939 15 Battle of Britain Day 1940. 16 Capture of Lae, New Guinea 1943. 20 Arrival of INTERFET in East Timor 1999 26 Battle of Al Rumaythan, Iraq 2006</p>

ComSuper To Finally Implement Douglas Decision

On 12 April 2022, the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) announced that it would follow the law and implement the tax changes following the 2020 Federal Court *Douglas* decision.

The changes have been implemented effective pay-day the 19th of May 2022.

The *Douglas* decision impacted the tax treatment of DFRDB and Military Super invalidity benefit pensions that commenced on or after 20 September 2007. The pensions became a series of superannuation lump sum payments. Giving the members a much more favourable tax treatment.

Of primary benefit to qualifying members is the Disability Superannuation Benefit (DSB) treatment. This classification arises when a veteran has been certified by two doctors as unlikely to ever be gainfully employed in their trade or profession, for example is unable to undertake their duties in the defence force. Where this is the case, part of their pension becomes tax free. The tax-free proportion depends on how long they served and how old they were at the time of discharge.

The examples below set out the practical effect of the Douglas decision and the DSB classification on Military Super invalidity benefit pensions.

Example one:

Without DSB classification

John was born on 1st of March 1990 and joined the Navy on 20th of January 2009. He was medically discharged on 1st of June 2016. John receives a Military Super Class A Invalidity Benefit. John’s fortnightly Invalidity Benefit pension of \$2000 (without the DSB modification) is made up of:

Tax-Free Component..... \$0 (Current Tax-Free Component as lump sum)
Taxable Taxed Element..... \$50
Taxable Untaxed Element.....\$1,950
Pre-Tax Invalidity Benefit..... \$2,000 (Current Benefit)
Less Tax Payable..... - \$311
Fortnightly Pension..... \$1,689

Example two:

With DSB classification

As John now has two doctors certificates, John is entitled to the modification of a DSB-LS according to the compensation formula taking into account the days served before medical discharge and days to retirement from date of discharge. This is used to determine the tax-free component of the current benefit. John served from 20th of January 2009 to 1st of June 2016, which is 2,690 days. Had John served until compulsory retirement age, he would have served until his 60th birthday on 1st of March 2050, which is another 12,326 days. Resulting on John’s modified fortnightly pension becoming:

Modified Tax-Free Component		
=		
Current Tax-Free Component		Days to Retirement
x		
+ Current Benefit		
		Service Days + Days to Retirement
Modified Tax-Free Component =	\$0 + \$2,000 x	12,326 days
		2,690 days +
		12,326 days

Tax-Free Component.....\$ 1,641 (The new Modified Tax-Free Component)

Taxable Taxed Element.....\$ 50

Taxable Untaxed Element.....\$ 309

Pre-Tax Invalidity Benefit.....\$ 2,000

Less Tax Payable.....- \$ 7

Fortnightly Pension.....\$ 1,993

Jayden is \$309 better off each fortnight as a result of the Disability Superannuation Benefit modification available as lump sum.

In some cases, veterans who do not qualify for the DSB may have a higher amount of tax withheld each fortnight but receive a refund after submitting their tax return. There are several options available to veterans who fall into this category. CSC advises those affected to consider:

- claiming the Medicare levy exemption
- claiming the tax-free threshold
- claiming the disability super tax benefit
- seeking a private determination from the ATO to decrease withholding.

There are some veterans who have ended up worse off under the decision primarily based on the decision SCS executives made last year to not pass on the advantageous withholding tax arrangements to qualifying veterans, at best this may have been due to payroll systems and other internal CSC limitations at worst they simply didn’t fathom the benefit this would have for veterans in an economy with rising cost of living pressures.

Author Brett Grosser

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Operation Overlord & the Battle of Long Khanh

MAY 3, 2022 BY RAY PAYNE

By June 1971 Australia had been involved in the Vietnam War for nine years. With no end in sight to an unpopular war, the Australians – like the Americans – were reducing their forces as they prepared to pull out of Vietnam.

The withdrawal would take time and would not be easy. Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces began preparing to move troops from Long Khanh Province back into Phuoc Tuy Province, hoping to lure the Australians into a large-scale ambush to inflict a heavy defeat and a propaganda victory.

Aware of the enemy movement, the Australians launched Operation Overlord – named after the 1944 invasion of Normandy – aimed at destroying the enemy forces and preventing them from interfering with the province’s security and the Australian withdrawal.

On 5th June the Australians deployed by helicopter and armoured personnel carriers north to the provincial border of Phuoc Tuy, near the Courtenay Rubber Plantation. 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) would take the lead in assaulting enemy positions, while 4RAR/NZ and American troops held blocking positions to trap enemy forces looking to escape. Australian armoured personnel carriers (APCs) from 3 Cavalry Regiment, tanks from 1 Armoured Regiment, artillery from 12 Field Regiment and sappers from 1 Field Squadron would also be in support.



Pictured at left: A Centurion tank of C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment moving through the jungle on Operation Overlord, June 1971.

After two days of patrolling, B Company, 3RAR had found what they thought was the main enemy position, just across the border in Long Khanh province. The next morning, 7 June, B Company’s 5 Platoon led by Lieutenant Graham Kells began a morning assault on the enemy 14 positions. They had not gone far when automatic fire spewed from at least four enemy positions and the understrength platoon was pinned down unable to move and with several men

wounded. Trapped on the edge of a cleverly concealed bunker system, they called for artillery and air support. The Battle of Long Khanh had begun.

Sergeant Eddie Desfontaines recalled: In the initial burst of fire, the platoon took a few casualties, the most serious being Private Mitchell who was shot through the throat. The platoon deployed; we realised that we were in deep poo. The platoon was receiving fire from the front as well as from the flanks.

By mid-morning, the stranded platoon was low on ammunition and in danger of being outflanked and overrun. RAAF helicopters were called in to deliver ammunition and evacuate the wounded, bravely hovering low over the battle raging below.

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Pictured above is a typical enemy bunker encountered by the Australians on Operation Overlord. Most were very stoutly constructed and well concealed

Private Don Hannaford remembered the scene as they mopped up the following morning: " We moved through the bunker system with the tanks. Once we left where the platoon’s position had been the day before, the jungle was just obliterated. I remember there were bits and pieces of human flesh and limbs all over the place, and blood trails everywhere.

The enemy was obviously a very large force and they had taken every dead body they could carry with them, leaving virtually none behind.

The enemy force encountered were elements of 3 Battalion, 33 North Vietnamese Army Regiment, comprised of some 40 members of its C10 Company, and some additional men from its C12 Heavy Weapons Company.

In this battle three Australians had been killed; one artillery forward observer hit during the initial firefight (Second Lieutenant Ian Mathers), and two RAAF men in the chopper crash, Flight Lieutenant Everitt Lance and Corporal David Dubber. Ten more men were wounded, including two of the chopper crew.

Operation Overlord continued and on 12th June the enemy ambushed APCs patrolling the area of operations. A rocket-propelled grenade hit a basket on one vehicle containing several Claymore mines, causing a massive explosion that killed seven on board and wounded others – the greatest number of Australian casualties in a single incident during the war. Overlord concluded two days later.

The operation was successful in driving the enemy from their bases in the area and thwarting plans for further incursions into Phuoc Tuy – at least temporarily. But the enemy force had not been destroyed; only six dead were found but likely more would have been carried away by their comrades. Ten Australians had been killed in action and 24 wounded.



This was a stark reminder that the enemy was still dangerous and would fight to the bitter end. For their bravery under fire, eight Australians were recognised with awards including Lieutenant Kells who was awarded the Military Cross.

Survivors of 5 Platoon, B Company, 3 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) a fortnight after the Battle of Long Khanh in June 1971.

Author: Craig Tibbitts

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide extended to 17 June 2024

The Attorney General has granted the Royal Commissioners an additional 12 months to prepare and deliver its final report, which is now due by 17 June 2024.

In comments made by the Commissioner Nick Kaldas on the final day of a two-week public hearing at the Rex Hotel in Canberra.

"We requested this extension to give us the opportunity to thoroughly review the complex matters before us – the breadth of which is now more apparent," Commissioner Kaldas said.

"It affords us adequate time to conduct more hearings and private sessions, to engage with stakeholders and to pursue and analyse data from Defence and DVA that has up to this point, been difficult to obtain."

Although some in the community may view this as a delay in final recommendations it appears to be prudent given the complex issue involved in this most urgent of mental health issues. Of note from the Attorney General is the requirement for the interim report deadline still being delivered by the 11th of August 2022.



Photo source: Facebook

Chair of the Royal Commission, Nick Kaldas APM advised the extension is an acknowledgment of the significant volume of work the Royal Commission has undertaken to date.

Commissioner Kaldas said: *"The engagement with the Defence Force and veteran communities has been extensive and essential, and there is much more to do. The magnitude of the task has become clearer. Given the need to undertake a more detailed inquiry, harnessing the contact with the community and continuing our own research and analysis, we sought the extension to allow the following:*

- *To allow adequate time for continuing engagement with the Defence and veteran community and other relevant stakeholders.*
- *To allow us to pursue our ambitious data gathering program to analyse the results and test them against other evidence. This will inform our recommendations, including the need to have in place information systems designed to help reduce the number of deaths by suicide in our military and veteran population.*
- *To conduct further roundtables with experts on suicidality in the Defence and veteran community and more generally. These roundtable discussions have been very helpful to date in directing our thinking about the contents of our hearings and the importance of various areas for research. With the extension of time we will be able to conduct more roundtable discussions, consolidating*

the robustness of our evidence base, and we will also have time to socialise and test possible solutions prior to publications of the final report.

- *To allow us to properly examine how our allies in the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand in particular deal with this issue and learn from their experience as per our terms of reference.*
- *And, finally, to safeguard our own workforce and that of the Commonwealth staff who are responding to our demands and participating in our inquiries. "*

The Commissioner clarified that the interim report will be focused on urgent recommendations that will benefit from early attention and immediate implementation. He has also stated that should any subsequent urgent issues be discovered he will make further recommendations prior to the release of the final report.

Any current or former ADF members who wish to share their experiences are being encouraged to <https://submissions.defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/general/submissions/>. The Royal Commission has so far received 1,419 submissions. Every contribution is carefully reviewed and will inform both the interim and final reports.

The hearings continue in Townsville from Monday 20 June 2022, and in Hobart from 1 August 2022.

Author Brett Grosser

The Federal Budget addressing Veteran community.

In Budget 2022–23, an additional \$369 million in funding has been allocated on top of the more than \$11.5 billion provided to support around 340,000 veterans and families every year.

DVA's claims processing system is receiving additional funding to help reduce the claims backlog in the form of an extra 280 plus staff. No doubt this will help with the backlog of claims that is causing significant delays in processing for Veterans.

The Psychiatric Assistance Dog Program has received ongoing funding to help more eligible veterans. The funding will also provide financial support to veterans living with post-traumatic stress disorder who have privately sourced a suitably trained psychiatric assistance dog prior to or shortly after the start of the Program in September 2019.

In addition, the following has been provided:

- an increase to fees for domestic assistance and personal care services under the Veterans' Home Care program to provide more sustainable access to Veterans' Home Care services, including for veterans in rural and regional areas
- an extension of the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment Package for a further two years to 30 June 2024
- funding to maintain incapacity compensation payments for a further year at 100% of pre-injury earnings for veterans undertaking study as part of their DVA-funded Return to Work rehabilitation program
- a grant to Invictus Australia to support the Australian team participation at the 2023 Invictus Games and 2022 and 2024 Warrior Games, and promote and encourage veteran involvement in adaptive sports across the country
- expanded services in the Family Support Package to more families, allowing them greater choice in how they use the services.

The Budget also provides a grant to support Legacy Australia to commemorate its 100th anniversary in 2023, including a remembrance torch relay from Pozieres in France, to London, and onto Australia to raise awareness of the great work Legacy does supporting veteran families.

More information on DVA's Budget 2022–23 measures is available on the Budget 2022-23 page on the DVA website: <https://www.dva.gov.au/about-us/overview/reporting/budgets/budget-2022-23>.

Author Brett Grosser, information primarily sourced from VETAFFAIRS newspaper vol. 38 No.1 April 2022.

Australia to send M113 APCs, additional Bushmasters to Ukraine

By Charbel Kadib



More than 30 additional armoured vehicles will be delivered to Ukraine as part of the Commonwealth government's new military support package.

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton announced fourteen M113 armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and a further twenty Thales-built Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMVs)

would be gifted to Ukraine in support of its ongoing resistance to Russian aggression.

This batch of vehicles builds on the 20 Bushmasters, initially delivered to Ukraine following a request from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, taking the total number of PMVs gifted to the country to 40.

The first tranche of Bushmasters was painted olive green to suit Ukraine's battlefield environment better. A Ukrainian flag is painted on either side alongside "United with Ukraine" in English and Ukrainian. At the same time, the ambulance variants will represent the standard Red Cross. The vehicles were furnished with radio, GPS and "additional bolt-on armour". Training of the systems conducted via video.

This latest government support package also includes the supply of three pallets of radiation monitoring equipment and personal protective equipment, arranged by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) and Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO).

Additionally, Australia has committed to delivering 60 pallets of medical supplies donated by Australian citizens.

The total value of this latest support package is approximately \$60.9 million, with the 14 APCs costing an estimated \$12 million and the 20 PMVs \$48.9 million.

This delivery takes the total value of Australia's contribution to Ukraine's resistance to \$285 million.

"The Australian government will continue to identify opportunities for further military assistance where it can provide a required capability to the Ukraine Armed Forces expeditiously,"

Minister Dutton noted in a statement.

"Australia stands with the people of Ukraine and again calls on Russia to cease its unprovoked, unjust and illegal invasion of Ukraine."

The Defence and Veterans Legal Service (DAVLS) is a free, independent legal service that supports Australian Defence Force personnel and veterans, their families, carers and supporters, to share their experiences with the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

DAVLS is a legal service initiative of National Legal Aid, that covers every state and territory across Australia. We can assist people no matter where they are.

Services

DAVLS solicitors can advise on topics including:

- How to take part in the Royal Commission
- Privacy and access to information
- Legal rights when sharing information with the Royal Commission
- Legal obligations when sharing information with the Royal Commission
- Available legal protections

DAVLS solicitors can help people to:

- Understand their rights and obligations
- Make a submission
- Prepare for and attend a private session
- Request and respond to a Notice to Produce
- Connect with other available services, such as counselling, advocacy, and other legal support

If a person is asked to participate in a Public Hearing, DAVLS can provide legal advice and connect them to free legal representation.

Independence and confidentiality

DAVLS is independent of the Royal Commission. It is also independent of the Australian Defence Force, the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

All information shared with DAVLS is confidential and callers can do so anonymously.

Booking an appointment

An appointment with a DAVLS solicitor can be made by calling **1800 33 1800** anywhere in Australia, or by making a booking enquiry through the DAVLS website. An advice booking will always nominate a specific time that our lawyers will make contact.

Appointments or advice can be via phone call, video call, in writing or in person. Our staff have undergone specialised training to support victims of trauma and will work with anyone in whatever way they feel most comfortable.

Community Engagement

DAVLS staff are providing community education sessions to increase awareness about the Royal Commission and to support access and participation.

DAVLS staff are available across Australia to address interested communities.

How we can work together

The Royal Commission needs to hear directly from ADF members and veterans with lived experience of poor mental health outcomes or suicide ideation or action, as well as their families and supporters, to be a success.

The more our organisations can support this engagement, the more likely well-informed recommendations for reform will be the result. Many Defence and ex-service organisations will be the first point of contact for people wanting to engage with the Royal Commission and have an important role to play in supporting their community.

What can you do?

- Visit our website at defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au to download our free factsheets for your own use and distribution to your interested members.
- Display our posters and brochures in your offices and meeting places – contact our Office Manager on DAVLS@legalaidnsw.gov.au or phone **02 4428 6518** for supplies.
- Invite a DAVLS solicitor to address your members or attend your events – we can explain the rights and obligations, what the Terms of Reference of the Royal Commission mean and how to most easily have your members' experience communicated to the Royal Commission.
- Encourage your members to call **1800 33 1800** and speak to a DAVLS solicitor. If you have their consent, you can book them in for an appointment on their behalf.
- Our callers have the right to have anyone they want as a support person, during our contacts. If you are already working with someone to make a submission, we are happy to work with you and support you both!

Why refer to DAVLS

- Engaging with a Royal Commission can be a daunting experience, particularly if doing it alone. We can help people to decide if they want to engage and make doing so as easy and effective as possible.
- There are rules and legislation that prohibits the sharing of certain information. There are also legal protections for people sharing information with the Royal Commission. We can advise about their rights and obligations to ensure people share information safely.
- The terms of reference for the Royal Commission are very broad. We can help people by explaining the requirements of a submission and what fits within the terms of reference.
- We can help by reviewing draft submissions or help people get their thoughts down in a proper submission format.

Together, we can help this Royal Commission lead to better outcomes for the Defence community.

Call us on **1800 33 1800** (free call) or contact us at our website: www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 January each year. A member who is un-financial as of 28 February shall automatically forfeit their membership and shall no longer be entitled to any Association benefit, including Honorary RAA membership.

SUBSCRIPTION FEE \$50.00

Name (Print)..... Member No:
(PRINT)

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Address Town/Suburb:

State: Postcode: Email:

Please enclose the subscription fee and a stamped self-addressed envelope or pay by Direct Debit (See below)
Send to: **The Secretary, TPI Association, 171 Richmond Road, Richmond, SA 5033**

PAY SUBSCRIPTIONS BY DIRECT DEBIT

Annual TPI Subscriptions can be paid by EFTPOS or directly to TPI (SA) bank account by Direct Debit.

TPI Bank Account details are set out below;

Account Name – TPI ASSOCIATION (SA) INC

BANK – COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA, 283 Anzac Highway, PLYMPTON

BSB – 065 148; **ACCOUNT NUMBER** 1024 3192

Record your surname and TPI Badge Number as a reference for your transaction

Note: The onus is on you to **Contact TPI Office** if you do not receive your membership card within seven working days

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Surname: (Print)..... Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

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Send to: **The Secretary, TPI Association, 171 Richmond Rd., Richmond, SA 5033**

AMBULANCE COVER (ACE Insurance)

TPI Gold Card covers you for Emergency attendance and/or transport by SA Ambulance, for Non-emergency transport you are responsible to pay. PLEASE CONSIDER taking insurance cover (small fee) with ACE Insurance, for general enquiries contact AmbulanceCover@health.sa.gov.au or 1300 136 272

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Name: (Print)..... Badge No:
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New Address: Town/suburb: Postcode:
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State: Tel: Mob: Email:

Send to: **The Secretary, TPI Association. 171 Richmond Rd., Richmond. SA 5033**

HOSPITAL VISITS

As a service to members our Hospital visits team services most hospitals; if you or a mate are going into hospital please advise our Hospital Visit Manager Mick Curry OAM.

Mob: 0417 843 262 or via email: mcur3581@bigpond.net.au

WELFARE MATTERS

If you need advice on welfare, please contact our office at (08)8351 7784 or (08) 8351 8140

GENERAL MEETINGS

General meetings are held monthly (Feb to Dec) on the second Tuesday of the month at 11.30 a.m. It is a good way to be informed and participate.

Some member attending always wins a Prize!

Free legal help for TPI SA members

Do you have an experience you want to share with the Royal Commission into Defence & Veteran Suicide?

The Defence & Veterans Legal Service (DAVLS) can help you make a submission to that inquiry for free.

Talking about various mental health issues that arise during, or out of, your involvement in the defence forces will help the Royal Commission make recommendations that can improve outcomes for yourself and others. You can also talk about the lived experience of your friends in the defence forces or the families of defence force members, particularly if they are not able to talk about those experiences themselves.

Where do I start?

Knowing what to say and how to say it can be difficult. Lawyers at DAVLS provide confidential and free advice tailored to your specific needs. They can help you make a submission to the Royal Commission, and that submission can remain anonymous if you wish.

Contact the Defence & Veterans Legal Service on 1800 33 1800 for advice or to book an appointment.

Need help with other legal issues?

If you need help with a legal issue that does not relate to the Royal Commission into Defence & Veteran Suicide, contact the Legal Services Commission on 1300 366 424.

The Legal Services Commission is the largest provider of free legal help in SA and can provide preliminary assistance regarding a wide range of legal issues.



**Free, independent
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Call 1800 33 1800 (FREE CALL)
defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au

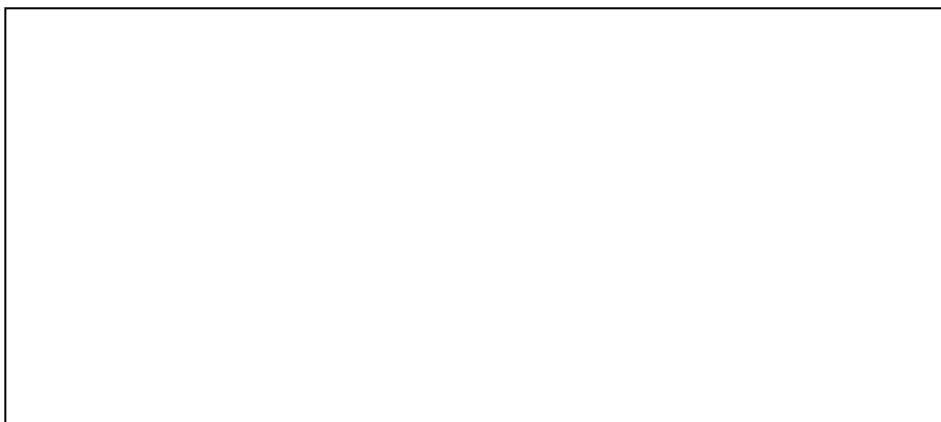


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