

## QUALIFICATION OF FIGURES USED IN DRAFT REPORT:

### INTRODUCTION:

It is important that figures used in this report are accurate and not ambiguous. We all know that when figures are quoted often enough, even when not accurate or without qualification, they are accepted as accurate over time. It is in this context that I urge the Commissioners to qualify two of their quoted figures in the final report.

### COST OF A GOLD CARD:

Page 557 of your draft report states, *'The Gold Card gives access to a broad range of services. It is highly valuable (to veterans), and costly (to taxpayers): the average cost is about \$23 000 per cardholder each year and it is uncapped.'*

It is a fact the Gold Card covers medical and allied health costs associated with:

- : Accepted service related medical conditions that are rightfully the responsibility of DVA.
- : Non accepted service conditions many of which would be fully funded under Medicare, and
- : Allied health services not refunded my Medicare.

I am a Gold Card holder. A review of my 2018 diary revealed that only 2 medical tests and 3 GP appointments were for non DVA related issues and all these costs would have been 100% covered by Medicare.

The only additional cost to the taxpayer was for some dental work that would have cost no more than \$600 and for which I am grateful for.

I consider I have an excellent head for figures so I would be staggered if the average **additional** cost to the taxpayer for a Gold Card is more than \$3,000.

I urge you, in the name of accuracy, to clarify this matter in your final report.

### COST PER CLIENT OF DVA:

Page 109 of your draft report states, *'The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) supports over 283 000 clients at an annual cost of about \$13.2 billion (just over \$47 000 per client).'*

The figure of *'just over \$47,000 per client'* requires clarification. It covers the following:

- : Medical and allied health services specifically for service related medical conditions and injuries and is rightfully the responsibility of DVA.
- : For Gold Card holders, non service related conditions that would normally be the responsibility of Medicare and/or the public hospital system.
- : Service Pensions that would normally be the responsibility of Centrelink, and
- : All costs of DVA associated with the running of the Department.

It is misleading to include costs that would normally be the responsibility of Medicare and Centrelink in the figure of *'just over \$47,000 per client.'*

I urge you, in the name of accuracy, to clarify this matter in your final report.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN ASHMORE