

Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans

To the Productivity Commission,

I am a veteran having served on active service in S/E Asia countries and wish to make the following comments regarding the Draft Report into Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans:

- I was made aware that the Productivity Commission had published the Draft report on Thursday 24th January 2019 via correspondence from my very pro-active RSL Sub- Branch. I'm sure that the people and agencies you invited to give you input were very helpful, however, as far as I'm aware they didn't consult with myself or anyone else in my service network here in S/E Queensland. There was no "grass roots" consultation here.
- I feel that the recommendations were decided before the veterans themselves were invited to make submissions after the draft had been prepared! Why were we put in a position to prepare rushed contributions? In addition, the public consultations / briefings are scheduled to be held after the closing date for written contributions? This smells of a "done deal!"
- Notwithstanding this, I wish to record that I have been extremely happy with the service I have received from DVA. Both my wife and I are grateful for the support we get.
- I am 79 years old, received a Gold Card at age 70 and receive the princely sum of \$63.19 per fortnight as a Vet Affairs Pension. This is hardly "ripping off the Government" as some of the wording in your Draft Report implies! If some applicants are guilty of fraudulently obtaining benefits then surely we have a legal system to address this!
- The report correctly states that we knew on joining that we could be deployed in sometimes extremely dangerous conflicts. We accepted this. At that time (1956 – 1976) we were confident that if we were killed or injured, we and/or our wives and families would be cared for by a compassionate Government. The Draft Report appears to recommend changing this perception.
- However, how do you think potential recruits will react to the news that if they were hurt or indeed badly injured they might be eligible for Workers Compensation? This, along with the prospect of negotiating the Medicare maze would be a hard sell for the Recruitment Teams.
- Where does special consideration for hazardous military conditions of service sit in these recommendations?
- If the functions of DVA were to be intergrated into the Department of Defence there would be a clear risk of conflict of interest where the Employer oversees the provision of support to its former employees!

In summary I recommend that the "squillions" that would be spent moving the Veteran Affairs functions to an entity under the umbrella of the Department of Defence be spent updating DVA procedures, and provide proper training in order to better support all veterans and their dependants.

Yours faithfully,

John Duncan