

I wish to bring to your attention the very, what I believe to be, **restrictive limitations of the “Statements of Principles” used by DVA** when assessing eligibility for compensation.

To give an example, in my own case, I developed asthma whilst serving as a radio technician instructor at the RAAF School of Radio. I worked as a High Reliability Hand Soldering instructor in the early 1980s and was exposed to the soldering fumes, fluxes and solvents used in the process; without the advantage of the extraction fans and OHS procedures which are common place these days.

When I made a claim to DVA for recognition of my condition they acknowledged that I did not have asthma when I joined the RAAF, I was diagnosed as suffering asthma during my service and I was exposed to occupational antigenic stimulus as a result of my employment; however my claim was rejected because of a Statement of Principle which states that you must be diagnosed as having asthma within 24 hours of being exposed to the agent.

Surely this stipulation is based on a culture of “*running to the doctor every time something happens*” and is contrary to the culture within the Services; at least in the Services of 40 years ago.

I was exposed to the stimulus continuously as part of my job so I fail to see how they can say that, when I eventually went to medical and was diagnosed as suffering with asthma, it was not within 24 hours of exposure (unless, I guess, I went to medical on a Monday morning – and isn’t that really splitting hairs). Whilst the students we were teaching were exposed for one or two 40-minute periods per week, the instructors were in the soldering laboratory continuously.

Please contact me if you would like further information.

Yours faithfully,

Peter J. Nelms