

6 April 2018 – 2 May 18

Productivity Commission

I have made submissions to relevant Parliament Inquiries regarding DVA and was virtually ignored as no clarification was sought on any of the recommendations that I made.

I am going to include that submission again minus my details. It still includes other matters in regards DVA assistance, legislation, SOPs, compensation, and Disability Allowances. Current DVA modus operandi does not reflect any of my concerns to the Inquiry.

review the efficiency and effectiveness of the legislative framework for compensation

I have just submitted some claims and I originally submitted them to MCRS. This was changed to SRCA. SRCA was changed to DRCA. Consequently I have no idea what act my claims come under and DVA cannot explain it to me and it has all stalled.

Further two of the claims have been dismissed and I was told that medical evidence said the conditions did not now exist. I asked them for the reports, they refused, and cannot force them to give them to me.

I have had to go to the RSL DVA Senior Advocate to get help. He has been awaiting my medical files for at least 7 weeks. The frustration is not helping my Gold Card conditions.

As far as compensation goes I have never been compensated for my injuries monetry wise under MCRS. I cannot force them to do so either.

and rehabilitation of ex-service personnel and veterans, and assess opportunities for simplification.

I recently experienced a stay in Dandenong Valley Private hospital and DVA had a trial program where staff employed by DVA on contract actually were helpful. I have no useful details of them but DVA must know.

Simplification Try implementing a no fault system such as the Transport Accident Commission in Victoria. Eliminate the legal side and ensure the staff become really responsible for their own decisions. The papers attached to my Suicide Inquiry list many forums for determining the veracity of claims without the Courts becoming involved.

whether the arrangements reflect contemporary best practice, drawing on experiences of Australian workers' compensation arrangements and military compensation frameworks in other similar jurisdictions (local and international);

- the use of the Statements of Principles as a means to contribute to consistent decision-making based on sound medical-scientific evidence;

In the Suicide Inquiry submission I made referrence to the uselessness of SOPs to the person submitting a claim. They are so pedantic and continuously being modified to generally exclude realistic injuries or disease.

Further if your illness cannot be identified say Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or chemical poisoning from multiple exposures to many chemicals there is NO SOP relevant and NO-ONE is going to give you a specific diagnosis as to when, where, and what caused it. Bad luck to the sufferer!

I mentioned the lifting one as it specifically affected me. As an ex Safety Engineer the SOP was just unrealistic as to what could happen in one off incidents. I lifted heavy aircraft batteries and one incident is sufficient to cripple you for life. SOPs require several incidents over a set period to qualify etc.

I tried to get change implemented in the SOP and as I was not a specialist medical doctor they would not enter into discussion with me.

- **whether the legislative framework and supporting architecture delivers compensation and rehabilitation to veterans in a well targeted, efficient and veteran-centric manner.**

I am on a Gold Card now after 27 odd years of submissions. This required 3 or 4 AAT and same number VRB hearings. The AAT Hearings come under MCRS and do not count towards the Gold card. The VRB Hearings were an agony due to their acceptance of proof being so high. I eventually got the card on issues unrelated to my original submissions – thanks to the RSL Advocate.

The sum of money from my disability pension is crucial. I lost out on promotion in the RAAF hence pay and got minimum DFRDB pension. In industry I could get no higher than the bottom grades and intermittent short term employment due to my injuries. I have to buy off the shelf medications, small distance travel costs, and they all take their toll on your pocket. The amount of money from the Gold Card does not compensate me for all the money I have lost, let alone loss of pride and embarrassment that I have suffered over the years.

With my current claims I have had about 30 or so unhelpful emails and only ONE PHONE CALL to discuss my claims even though I have specifically asked for them. DVA just barge ahead in an effort to get the claims out off their hair ASAP.

I also have footwear issues. It has taken 12 months to get a pair of shoes that are unsatisfactory. 8 months so far and no approval yet for custom made footwear. The \$ reimbursement to manufacturers is less than most of what they can produce them for and the attendant administrative hassles and DVA wonders why no-one wants to deal with their clients.

Good aspects

I found the telephone reception people to be very helpful.

The Transport booking people ditto.

The Appliance aids people excellent.

The pharmacy people are also extremely helpful.

The other day I wanted to provide Feedback as I could NOT find on DVA website the name and Postal Address of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). The Feedback email site also was difficult and I ended up trying the General email site and they passed my details to the CMO who phoned me and we had a useful informative discussion. Somethings do work eventually!

Conclusion

Aspects of DVA related in particular to compensation really needs a good shake up and the whole legislative intent revamped to a no-fault system with avenues for interpersonal assessment of claims. Get rid of SRCA/DRCA/MCRS and SOPs!

There needs to be a totally independent forum for appeal in case the spirit of the legislation is not followed.

The amounts of money that could be saved would be amazing and should be expedited. This could be used to increase the Disability pensions.

In the meantime there ought to be encouraged a better culture to really help the compensation claimants rather than discourage them,

Yours sincerely

(BRIAN FULLER)

PS You will note the time of drafting for this correspondence. The letter was complete on 6 APR and it is now 1MAY and NOTHING has changed to help my claims.

I am willing to meet and discuss my grievances.