

# Transition Process

## Introduction

At the recent public hearing I was asked to provide further information on the transition process for members of the Reserve Forces. I had expressed concern that the current discharge policy for Reserve members although in theory similar to that of full-time members is often not followed and that this makes any approach to DVA more difficult particularly due to the lack of discharge medical records but also due to minimal record keeping about service in the inactive reserve.

## The Inactive Reserve

Most members of the full time force on discharge and members of the Active reserve for whom there is no establishment vacancy are routinely transferred to the inactive reserve. This transfer does not normally involve any post service administration other than a change of status in the personnel management system. Most Active reserve members will spend the period prior to discharge in this category.

A member may be offered short term duty under section 26 of the Defence Act and while actually on duty is covered for compensation but otherwise has no major entitlements other than per diem salary at their current rank. Generally service is in an office environment and involves administrative or similar duty. A member may be asked to undertake a basic medical prior to duty however often this is not required due to having a current medical clearance.

Full time members are also entitled to a transition seminar and possible transition support as part of their transfer. Active reserve members have no automatic entitlement to transition services.

## Transition Process

The support needed in transition varies widely depending on the reason for discharge, the amount of preparation each individual undertakes and any existing disability or injury the member may have suffered.

The first need is to make an assessment of their physical and mental condition at the time of discharge. At the same time the member should be assisted to review their service and medical records to ensure they are complete and accurate. The member should be provided with a DVA white card listing conditions for which they are entitlement to treatment and any other DVA entitlements they may have such as an acknowledgement of

qualifying service, continuation of rehabilitation treatment to recover from temporary incapacity.

Then the member should be assessed for suitability for work after discharge (and rehabilitation) and for their relevant skills and competency. They should be given a discharge reference focussed on relevant skills and should then be able to either elect for access to a pre employment (transition) service or pre employment training. They should also be advised of income support services available during job search or training.

If the member is judged permanently unable to work or significantly impaired they should transfer to a compensation package prior to discharge. They should also be assessed for NDIS support.

It would be desirable to provide an equivalent termination payment to that for redundancy if the discharge is service initiated.

## Transition for Active Reserve

The process for members of the Active Reserve should be the same but be initiated on transfer to the Inactive Reserve. In many cases they will already have ongoing employment and therefore no requirement for support to prepare for employment. If they do not have ongoing employment treatment should be the same as for Full Time members.

It should be noted that Active Reserve members have no superannuation, leave, housing or healthcare entitlements during service and are paid at 1/365<sup>th</sup> of a discounted full time salary paid for each day of service. If they are not employed, they are at a disadvantage if accepted for compensation and so consideration should be given to treating them as having been on CFTS for compensation purposes.

## Transition for the Inactive Reserve

As members of the inactive reserve will have been already assessed for transition the only support suggested is to ensure that a final medical and a check of service and health records be conducted. All inactive reserve members would already hold a DVA white card and should be able to seek a statement of service for any service delivered while inactive.

For current and former inactive members they should be advised to seek the issue of a DVA white card or equivalent and their service and medical records be transferred to DVA.