



The Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association

National Executive

Election Issues to the Federal Government and

The Opposition and Interested Political Parties,

FOR YOUNG VETERANS.

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Preface:

The Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA), is a vibrant and young Ex-Service Organisation (ESO), that represents the issues and interests of over 105,000 veterans and their families who have contributed toward World Peace and Security in the following Conflicts:

- i. Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) since 14th September 1947 to the present;
- ii. Operational or warlike service since March 1989 to the present;
- iii. ADF members and their families who have served post 1975 to the present;
- iv. Australian Federal Police (AFP) and seconded Officers from States and Territories to the International Deployment Group (IDG) and their families.

There have been 75 different ADF and AFP IDG Operations conducted in 60 different countries since 1947. This includes the current Operations in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO), Timor Leste and other PKO around the world.

Currently there are 3,300 ADF members deployed on 19 Operations across the world and within Border Protection of Australia, with an average turn-over of 3,300 personnel every 6 months. This means up to 6,600 ADF members would have served on operations in a given year. This generates the added figure for Veteran eligibility on a continuum, of which this has been a constant, particularly since 1999.

In contrast, the AFP IDG has deployed approximately 4,000 members to a range of operations since 1964 (UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) to the present deployment commitments in Darfur, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. AFP IDG has about 328 members at any given time as operational members. This again adds to the generation of a veteran population that is continuing to grow.

In addition to the above-mentioned deployments is the notation that almost 257,000 people have served in the ADF since 1945 to the present, or have been awarded the Australian Defence Medal (ADM) for their completion of Service commitment in the ADF.

The APPVA has been successful in lobbying for a range of issues over the past 10 years and continues to lobby the issues that are of importance to our membership and constituency (**over a ¼ of a million voters, not including family and friends**).

1. **Health and Wellbeing.**

1.1 Emergency accommodation for Young Veterans.

- 1.1.1 It has been discovered by the APPVA that Emergency Accommodation for Young Veterans is not readily accessible due to a number of reasons. There have been ongoing issues that Young Veterans have been requiring short to medium term accommodation as they are unable to afford such lodgings and are in the process of being assessed for pension or compensation entitlements under the three respective Acts (SRCA, MRCA and VEA).
- 1.1.2. VVCS will only allow a 1 to 3 day (maximum) accommodation in a Motel paid by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This is insufficient in terms that many Young Veterans are not housed properly, are homeless and unable to afford rent or lodgings during the process of their claims. They are therefore unable to access any money and have nowhere to live.
- 1.1.3. In many cases, the veteran has either separated from his/her partner and/or family, have no family support, have no money and are suffering from Acute to Chronic Mental Illness. Young Veterans have had treatment and extended stay in various Psychiatric Health Facilities in order to provide lodgings for the veteran.
- 1.1.4. The use of the Salvation Army emergency Accommodation, Brotherhood of St Lawrence and other similar Charities is declined by most veterans, due to shared accommodation, dignity and pride that the person is a veteran of Australia and that the Mental Illness is severely causing social isolation.
- 1.1.5. There must be affordable means for such Short to Medium outcomes for homeless Young Veterans who have in particular debilitating Mental Illness. In Victoria, there has been a reliance upon the RSL and the Victorian Veteran Council (VVC) to assist in this provision. The RSL has been helpful in the past but is reluctant to provide continuing assistance for the same veteran. The VVC, due to political reasons within the Council, have omitted the APPVA in Victoria in receiving much needed funding to facilitate such accommodation and other welfare needs.
- 1.1.6. In some cases APPVA Welfare officers have had Young Veterans stay at their own home, until the Young Veteran is able to fend for himself/herself. This is a totally unsatisfactory situation, that requires a specific pathway provided by the Department for our veterans.

1.2 **Younger Veterans in Residential Care.** A clear and definitive pathway is required for Young Veterans accessing Residential Care. This means that access of payment by the MRCA, SRCA and VEA is essential to pay for such Residential Care indefinitely. Both MRCA and SRCA state that the Acts will pay for any reasonable treatment including hospitalisation toward the veteran. The VEA is able to use the Defence Homes Act 1918, under the auspices that the veteran is TPI and is not able to find suitable lodgings.

- 1.2.1. A case in 2005 identified a lack of pathway for a severely incapacitated Gulf

War Veteran who had tumours removed from his brain and subsequently suffered from Epilepsy.

- 1.2.2. During an unnecessary battle with DVA, it took 5 months to finally have this veteran placed into Residential Care. It was evident that the Department had not foreseen such a case and did not know how to handle the matter. It was constantly and unfairly pointed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs Bureaucracy that the State Government of Victoria should handle the case under arrangements from COAG.
- 1.2.3. The APPVA saw this as unacceptable and continued to lobby for the veteran to be appropriately taken into a care facility. In addition, many care facilities within the RSL and Aged Care had large waiting lists and the veteran was not within the age range of a priority case for admission.
- 1.2.4. Eventually, the President of the Repatriation Commission made the decision to have this veteran covered under the Defence Homes Act 1918, as a result of the veteran being a TPI recipient. This matter should not repeat itself and the lessons learned from the Taylor Case should have open pathways to admission to Residential Care facilities, without the undue and inordinate delay in such admission and treatment.

1.3 **VVCS access to Police Peacekeeping and Overseas Veterans and their families.**

It has been noted for some time by the APPVA that our Police members have been overlooked in terms of treatment and/or counselling within the auspices of the VVCS. As is accepted by VVCS, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers (warlike service), are eligible for VVCS services, however it is not specific toward returned Police Peacekeepers and their families.

- 1.3.1. Police Peacekeepers and their families are exposed to the many facets of mental illness and trauma as much as their counterparts in the ADF on such operations. Therefore, there should be no reason why Police Peacekeepers are not eligible for such treatment.
- 1.3.2. The eligibility for Police Peacekeepers and their families is contended to be committed by Veterans' Affairs, in particular for inclusivity within VVCS treatment and programs for them and their families.

1.4 **Additional VVCS access to former ADF members and their families with Peacetime service only.** Currently an MOU is in existence between the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and the ADF. Any Peacetime serving member of the ADF is able to access VVCS services during their period of service.

- 1.4.1. Our concerns are that once the ADF member is discharged, the entitlement of ongoing Counselling and Program Support is no longer available to the individuals who have been previously clients of VVCS.
- 1.4.2. If the ADF member is discharged without further follow-on treatment and rehabilitation, there is a risk that early intervention that may have been

successful while the former member was serving in the ADF, but will lapse upon Discharge. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the former ADF member may lapse back into their co-morbid state and the condition may worsen after this valuable treatment is no longer made available to them.

1.4.3. For the sake of providing ongoing rehabilitation and treatment to a member of

the ADF, they should not be segregated because of service qualification (Warlike Service, Non-warlike Service and Peacekeeping Service etc). ADF life does have its stressors and no-one in the service is immune to trauma.

1.4.4. It is therefore contended that the Opposition and the Government commit to extending eligibility for VVCS treatment to former ADF members and their families.

1.5 **Billing of Medical and Pharmaceutical services under SRCA and MRCA** (Raised in the APPVA submission to the Military Compensation Review in 2009). Outstanding issues with MRCA (Age, Sex and Service Bias; SRDP; etc), VEA and SRCA are articulated within our submission dated 20 July 2009.

Link: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/Final%20Cut%20-%20Military%20Compensation%20Arrangements%20Jul%202009.pdf>

2. National Younger Veteran Outreach Program.

2.1 Promote the 2010-2015 APPVA Business Plan for the expansion of paid Practitioners across Australia, particularly dealing with multi-eligibility and multiple deployment veterans and their families.

2.2. Ensure that funding will continue and potentially increase for BEST Programs, particularly toward identified APPVA needs. (Await the outcome of the DVA Funded Grants to ESOs for the delivery of Pensions and Welfare).

2.3 Ensure that the tools of the trade, for example, Running Costs; Administrative Costs; Information and Communications Technology upgrades, replacement and software upgrades (including Anti-Virus).

Copy of documentation to the Repatriation Commission on the review of DVA Funds to ESO and other matters are available on request.

3. Military Superannuation.

3.1 DFRDB & MSBS are indexed under the Public Beneficiary Cost of Living Indexation (PBCLI), in order to maintain the real value of the pensions.

3.2 The Military Superannuation Boards are administered by a separate board of ADF orientated people, who specialise in DFRDB and MSBS Legislation, along with the understanding of the unique and special nature of ADF service.

3.3 Remove the 10% tax rebate for the Military Superannuation at age 65 and provide equal opportunity for the remainder of the retired workforce in receipt of Superannuation, who will not pay tax after age 65 on their superannuation scheme.

Refer to the APPVA Website: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/> and go to “For Veterans”
Scroll Down.

4. Military Compensation.

4.1 Improvements by the Department are badly required to appropriately handle multiple-eligibility claims and MRCA Claims. The Time Taken To Process has been inordinately delayed, particularly toward MRCA claims for Primary level conditions; Incapacity Payments; no disclosure of the Defence Allowance; slow processing of Permanent Impairment claims; inappropriate Rehabilitation consultation (up to 2 years post Medical Discharge); Loss of documents (one case that I have handled has required has been re-submitted 3 times).

4.2 That prior to discharge from the ADF that all Primary Claims are accepted or decided before separation from the ADF. This will enable Incapacity Payment and Defence Allowance payments.

4.3 Await outcomes of the Military Compensation Review, which may alleviate some of these concerns, however it is quite clear that the Average Staffing Levels in DVA cannot cope with the current workload.

Refer to the APPVA Military Compensation Review Submission on our website:
<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/Final%20Cut%20-%20Military%20Compensation%20Arrangements%20Jul%2009.pdf>

5. Commemoration.

5.1 Funding is required for the successful construction of the National Peacekeeper Memorial on ANZAC Parade, Canberra. A pledge of \$1.5M will encourage sponsorship from large commercial businesses and other potential donors.

6. Defence Housing Loans.

6.1 Defence Service Home Loan Scheme for Younger Veterans. Currently younger veterans with low income or tax-free pensions are not eligible for home loans through home loan institutions. This is denying the veteran to provide for themselves and their respective Families. There needs to be consistency with the approaches of the Defence Homes Act 1918 to the Younger Veterans of today.

6.2 The Defence Service Homes Act 1918 was originally intended to provide returning WWI veterans with affordable and cheap interest home loans. This Act developed over the years from 1918 and post WWII and is under Section 38 of the Veteran Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA). In 1972, the amount was increased to \$25,000, which would have provided a reasonable loan to furnish the median home prices for that time.

6.3 Since 1972, the DSHL has not been indexed nor increased. The amount of \$25,000

still stands today and is reflective of a severe erosion of Veterans' Entitlements. Today Median Home Prices range between \$280,000 - \$420,000 and upward. The \$25,000 DSHL is simply inadequate for providing a returned veteran with an affordable loan for a house.

6.4 Successive Governments have refused to increase the value of the DSHL and have referred current and former serving ADF members to the ADF Home Loan Scheme (ADFHLS). The ADFHLS is Condition of Service, which is a retention benefit only, not a Veteran Entitlement, for current serving ADF members and the offer, is nullified to an ex-serving member after two (2) years post Discharge from the ADF.

6.5 The Government must review this veteran entitlement to be attractive to returned veterans and to make homes affordable to veterans, particularly those with young families. It is important that all parties in Government, including the Opposition support this area of need, particularly for those ADF and Young Veterans who may never have the opportunity to wealth create, nor live in their own home.

6.6 It is therefore contended that a veteran entitlement of Subsidised Defence Service Home Loans are indexed with CPI and that the value of the loan is made in comparison to that of the Australian Median Home Price Index, as has been the intention since 1918. This is not inclusive of the current serving ADF Member entitlement of the Defence Force Home Owner Assistance Scheme Act (DFHOAS), which was instituted on 1 July, 2008.

6.7 Eligibility is sought by Young Veterans who have for some time discharged from the ADF and that a previous Home Loan entitlement is non-existent for them, as opposed to what has happened to our past veterans had under the DSHL. The access to DFHOAS outside of the ADF is needed to provide for Young Veterans who desire to have a home.

Further information available on request.

7. Retrospective Reclassification of Service.

7.1. Reclassifications of the following:

7.1.1 Reclassify OP ASTUTE JTF 631 (Timor Leste) from May 2006 to Feb 2008 from non-warlike service to warlike service.

Refer to APPVA Website: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/APPVA%20Relcass%20OP%20ASTUTE%2011%20Mar%2009.pdf>

6.1.2 Reclassify OP PALLADIN (UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO)), to the Middle East for Australian UN Military Observers involved in the five Arab- Israeli Wars. Submitted to the Rudd Government in March 2009. The Lebanese War of July-August 2006 has recently been accepted by the Rudd Government in May 2010 and further reclassification of service needs to be applied for other hostile actions and war in the region, where Australian Army Military Observers have been directly involved.

Copy available on request.

Refer to APPVA website:

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/APPVA%20Clarke%20UNTSO%20Reclass.pdf>

- 7.1.3 Reclassify OP HABITAT (NATO Operation in Northern Iraq and Kurdistan) during the period May-June 1991 from non-warlike service to Warlike service.

Refer to Clarke Review Paper on APPVA Website:

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/APPVA%20Clarke%20Review%202009%20Main%2011%20Mar%2009.pdf>

- 7.1.4 Reclassify Humanitarian Overseas Operations from Peacetime Service to non-warlike service.

Refer to submission on APPVA website, including Clarke Review:

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/Reclass%20Humanitarian%20Ops%20Submission%20at%2017%20Dec%2008.pdf>

- 7.1.5 Reclassify Service in Kashmir (UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIIP), during the Indo-Pakistani wars.

Refer APPVA Website: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/KASHMIR%20AASM%20Submission.pdf>

- 7.1.6 Reclassify OPERATION BALI ASSIST 2002, the ADF response to the Bali bombings.

Refer APPVA Website: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/OPERATION%20BALI%20ASSIST%201.pdf>

- 7.1.7 Reclassify Police Peacekeeping Operations from non-warlike or peacekeeping service to service that meets the “Incurred Danger Test” for warlike service such as:
Cyprus during the 1974 Turkish Invasion;
Cambodia 1992-7 Oct 1993;
Somalia 1993-1995;
East Timor Aug 1999-17 Aug 2003;
Timor Leste May 2006 – Feb 2008; and
Afghanistan 2008- Present.

Further information available on request.

8. Medals.

8.1 That the Medal Policy of the APPVA is accepted and the action is taken to appropriately recognise Young Veterans, particularly with the following:

- 8.1.1 Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) since 14 September 1947 to current – the striking of the Proposed Australian Peacekeeping Service Medal to complement the Australian Service Medal (ASM 45-75 & 75-) for non-warlike PKO, and Australian General Service Medals for warlike service PKO

to complement the Australian Active Service Medal for Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda The Gulf War (1991) and East Timor;

Refer to APPVA Website: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/Final%20APPVA%20PK%20Medal%20Submission%207%20Jan%2010.pdf>

- 8.1.2 Warlike Service Operations with Operational Service Medals or General Service Medals; Somalia with the Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) for Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Ships, AUSCDT1 and Somalia Campaign Medal;
- 8.1.3 UN Operation to Somalia (UNOSOM 1&2) to be reviewed for Operational Service Awards, particularly Medals of Gallantry for 2 individuals and the Meritorious Unit Citation (MUC) for the Australian Defence Force Contingent (ASC) to UNOSOM to be back-dated to 10 December 1992, UNOSOM should also be inclusive for the proposed Somalia Campaign Medal;

Refer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 to APPVA Website:

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/APPVA%20Somalia%2031%20Aug%2009.pdf>

- 8.1.4 AASM and Australian Service Medal (ASM) “Exclusivity Policy” is abolished and an equal and fair policy is made available to those who have served in both Warlike and Non-warlike Service operations.

Refer to APPVA Website:

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/Final%20APPVA%20PK%20Medal%20Submission%207%20Jan%2010.pdf>

- 8.1.5 OP HABITAT be retrospectively awarded the AASM Clasp IRAQ and the IRAQ Campaign Medal, for the ADF Contingent to Kurdistan and Northern Iraq 1991.
- 8.1.6 Retrospectively award the ADF assets to the Gulf War 18 Jan – 28 Feb 1991, for the award of the IRAQ Campaign Medal.

Refer to APPVA Website: <http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/OP%20HABITAT%20AASM%203%20Jan%2010.pdf>

8.2 Humanitarian Operations served by ADF members to be recognised. Refer to APPVA Submission for Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal (DHAT) Inquiry into PKO.

8.3 PNG Service Post Independence 16 September 1975 is recognised with the ASM Clasp PNG.

Refer to APPVA Website:

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/veterans/submissions/Final%20APPVA%20PK%20Medal%20Submission%207%20Jan%2010.pdf>

8.4 Service in S.E. Asia is recognised for both periods of service under the Imperial and Australian Awards Systems. Refer to APPVA DHAT Submission for PKO.

8.5 Special Operations is recognised for covert Intelligence and Communications Intelligence (COMINT); Signals Intelligence (SIGINT); and Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) Operations by ADF assets. This includes Homeland Security Operations that has involved (High Risk Search (HRS), security and Counter Terrorism (CT) Operations. **Copy available upon request.**

8.6 That a fair and equal Defence Honours and Awards Policy is drafted, due to the inconsistencies, precedents and confusing nature of awards. This must be inclusive of Key Stakeholders for example the APPVA, most of which these policies affect our constituents.

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