

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INTO REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION REPORT

RESULTS AND HOW IT WILL AFFECT P.V.A.

Recommendation 15.5

"The Australian Government should amend the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA) to remove the attendant allowance and provide the same household and attendant services that are available under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004(MRCA).

Current recipients of the VA allowance should be automatically put on the same rate under the new attendant services program. Any further changes or claims would follow the same needs-based assessment and review as under the MRCA"

Recommendation 14.10 Harmonise the Funeral Benefit.

The Australian Government should amend the Veterans Entitlements Act 1986(VEA) to align its funeral allowance with the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 200 (MRCA) funeral benefits for veterans who:

- Were receiving the special rate of disability pension
- Were receiving the extreme disablement adjustment pension.
- Were receiving an allowance for being a multiple amputee
- Were a former prisoner of war
- Died of service-related causes.

Other groups eligible for the VEA funeral allowance should remain on the existing benefit.

Recommendation 15.2 Simplify and Harmonise Education Payments.

To align education payments across the veteran support system, the Australian Government should:

- Amend the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986, the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 and the Social Security Act 1991 to extend the education payment available for those under 16 years of age to those between 16 and 19 years of age in secondary schools – including allowing people to receive Family Tax Benefit while receiving this payment.
- Amend the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 to remove education payments to those older than 19 years of age (or older than 16 and not in secondary school) Those who pass a means test will still be eligible for the same payment rates under the Youth Allowance.
- Amend the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 to adopt the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme.

Wins for us, perhaps.

And now for the most disturbing piece of proposed Legislation I have read in a long time.

Recommendation 16.4

Better targeted eligibility for the Gold Card.

The Australian Government should amend the Veterans Entitlements Act 1986 to remove eligibility for the Gold Card for anyone other than veterans with severe service-related impairment.

Unless they qualify through having severe service-related impairments, this would remove eligibility from:

- **All dependants**
- **Veterans over 70 years with qualifying service**
- **Veterans on the service pension who meet the means test**
- **Veterans on the service pension who are also receiving a disability pension above the general rate, or who have between 30 and 60 MRCA impairment points.**

The Australian Government should provide financial compensation to dependants who lose eligibility for the Gold Card.

All current Gold Card holders should retain their eligibility.

Recommendation 16.5

Eligibility for the Gold Card should not be extended to any new categories of veterans, dependants or other civilians who are not currently eligible for such a card. All current Gold Card holders should retain their eligibility.