REPATRIATION MEDICAL AUTHORITY

INSTRUMENT NO. 56 of 2014

VETERANS’ ENTITLEMENTS ACT 1986
MILITARY REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION ACT 2004

EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR TABLING

1. The Repatriation Medical Authority (the Authority) has determined, under subsection 196B(3) of the Veterans’ Entitlements Act 1986 (the VEA), Statement of Principles Instrument No. 56 of 2014 concerning chronic multisymptom illness and death from chronic multisymptom illness.

2. The Authority is of the view that on the sound medical-scientific evidence available it is more probable than not that chronic multisymptom illness and death from chronic multisymptom illness can be related to particular kinds of service. The Authority has therefore determined this Statement of Principles concerning chronic multisymptom illness pursuant to subsection 196B(3) of the VEA.

3. Pursuant to the provisions of the VEA and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (the MRCA), claims for pension under the VEA or compensation under the MRCA are determined by the Repatriation Commission or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission by reference to Statements of Principles issued by the Authority pursuant to the VEA.

4. The Statement of Principles sets out the factors that must exist, and which of those factors must be related to the following kinds of service rendered by a person:

   - eligible war service (other than operational service) under the VEA;
   - defence service (other than hazardous service and British nuclear test defence service) under the VEA;
   - peacetime service under the MRCA,

before it can be said that, on the balance of probabilities, chronic multisymptom illness or death from chronic multisymptom illness is connected with the circumstances of that service.
5. The Repatriation Commission, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, Veterans’ Review Board or Administrative Appeals Tribunal cannot accept any claim for pension; or a claim for liability or compensation relating to chronic multisymptom illness or death from chronic multisymptom illness that was lodged on or after 1 June 1994 in the case of the VEA, or 1 July 2004 in the case of the MRCA respectively, unless this Statement of Principles upholds that claim (subsection 120B(3) of the VEA or subsection 339(3) of the MRCA).

6. This new Instrument results from a review of prior decisions made by the Authority. In 2003, following an investigation the Authority declared that it would not make a Statement of Principles concerning Gulf War syndrome for the purposes of subsection 196B(2) or (3) of the VEA, as the available sound medical-scientific evidence led the Authority to conclude that there was no unique Gulf War syndrome that could be a "disease" or "injury" as defined in section 5D of the VEA. In 2010, following a review of the 2003 decision, the Authority concluded that available sound medical-scientific evidence continued to support the 2003 decision and re-affirmed that Gulf War syndrome is not a "disease" or "injury" as defined in section 5D of the VEA. A further review was notified by the Authority in the Government Notices Gazette of 31 October 2012 in accordance with section 196G of the VEA and involved an examination of all of the sound medical-scientific evidence now available to the Authority.

7. Prior to determining this Instrument, the Authority advertised its intention to undertake an investigation in relation to Gulf War syndrome in the Government Notices Gazette of 31 October 2012, and circulated a copy of the notice of intention to investigate to a wide range of organisations representing veterans, service personnel and their dependants. The Authority invited submissions from the Repatriation Commission, organisations and persons referred to in section 196E of the VEA, and any person having expertise in the field. Six submissions were received for consideration by the Authority during the investigation.

8. This instrument is compatible with the Human Rights and Freedoms recognised or declared in the International Instruments listed in Section 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011. A Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights follows.


10. A list of references relating to the above condition is available to any person or organisation referred to in subsection 196E(1)(a) to (c) of the VEA. Any such request must be made in writing to the Repatriation Medical Authority at the following address:

The Registrar
Repatriation Medical Authority
GPO Box 1014
BRISBANE    QLD    4001
Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights

(Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011)

Instrument No.: Statement of Principles No. 56 of 2014

Kind of Injury, Disease or Death: Chronic multisymptom illness

This Legislative Instrument is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011.

Overview of the Legislative Instrument

1. This Legislative Instrument is determined pursuant to subsection 196B(8) of the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (the VEA) for the purposes of the VEA and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (the MRCA).

2. This Legislative Instrument:-
   - facilitates claimants in making, and the Repatriation Commission in assessing, claims under the VEA and the MRCA respectively, by specifying the circumstances in which medical treatment and compensation can be extended to eligible persons who have chronic multisymptom illness;
   - facilitates the review of such decisions by the Veterans' Review Board and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal; and
   - outlines the factors which the current sound medical-scientific evidence indicates must exist before it can be said that, on the balance of probabilities, chronic multisymptom illness is connected with the circumstances of eligible service rendered by a person, as set out in clause 4 of the Explanatory Notes.

3. The Instrument is assessed as being a technical instrument which improves the medico-scientific quality of outcomes under the VEA and the MRCA.

Human Rights Implications

4. This Legislative Instrument does not derogate from any human rights. It promotes the human rights of veterans, current and former Defence Force members as well as other persons such as their dependents, including:

Page 3 of 4

Explanatory Statement to F2014L00525
the right to social security (Art 9, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*; Art 26, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and Art 28, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*) by helping to ensure that the qualifying conditions for the benefit are 'reasonable, proportionate and transparent';

- the right to an adequate standard of living (Art 11, ICSECR; Art 27, CRC and Art 28, CRPD) by facilitating the assessment and determination of social security benefits;

- the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Art 12, ICSECR and Art 25, CRPD), by facilitating the assessment and determination of compensation and benefits in relation to the treatment and rehabilitation of veterans and Defence Force members; and

- the rights of persons with disabilities by facilitating the determination of claims relating to treatment and rehabilitation (Art 26, CRPD).

**Conclusion**

This Legislative Instrument is compatible with human rights as it does not derogate from and promotes a number of human rights.

Repatriation Medical Authority

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1 In General Comment No. 19 (The right to social security), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights said (at paragraph 24) this to be one of the elements of ensuring accessibility to social security.