

INSTRUMENT No.5 of 1997

VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS ACT 1986

EXPLANATORY NOTE FOR TABLING

The Minister has approved, under subsection 115B(3) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act* 1986 (the Act), and effective from 1 December 1997, the attached instrument, No.5 of 1997, prepared by the Repatriation Commission under subsection 115B(1) of the Act, making a Scheme (the Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation Scheme) to assist specified classes of veterans to find employment and to continue in employment.

Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation Scheme

2. The objectives of the Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation Scheme are to assist veterans to find, or continue in, suitable paid employment, with particular emphasis on:

- (a) facilitating the transition from service in the Australian Defence Force to suitable paid employment;
- (b) assisting those veterans whose jobs are in jeopardy to retain suitable paid employment; and
- (c) in conjunction with Part VIA of the Act, providing an income safety net for certain veterans in receipt of pensions under sections 23 or 24 of the Act, or invalidity service pension, who wish to engage in suitable paid employment.

The principles of the Scheme include voluntary participation, no penalties for withdrawal from or failure to complete an approved program, services will be delivered on the basis of professionally assessed need, veterans will have significant input to the design of programs, and rehabilitation services will generally be the minimum necessary to achieve a suitable paid employment outcome.

Programs delivered under the Scheme may include, but will not be limited to:

- (a) general advice and assistance on job seeking;
- (b) referral for vocational assessment;
- (c) vocational guidance and counselling;
- (d) case management;
- (e) assistance with updating skills and retraining;
- (f) assistance with entry to other vocational rehabilitation programs;
- (g) advice or assistance if the veteran's job is in jeopardy;

- (h) assistance with job placement including selection interview skills training and involvement in job clubs;
 - (j) provision of an advocacy service for the veteran with the veteran's employer;
 - (k) transport and accommodation assistance under Chapter 4;
 - (m) grants for aids, appliances and workplace modifications under Chapter 4;
 - (n) education programs and related assistance under Chapter 4;
- but only if an element is not reasonably available to the veteran without significant cost from another source.

The arrangements in the instrument provide veterans with rights of review to the Repatriation Commission and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal concerning decisions made under the Scheme.

Consultation

The *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* requires that the Repatriation Commission consult organisations and associations that represent the interests of the veteran community before making, varying or revoking a Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation Scheme.

The following organisations and associations have been involved in the preparation of the instrument:

- Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women;
- Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council;
- Returned and Services League of Australia;
- Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia; and
- Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia.

Consultation has included briefings and discussions over the past year with national executive members of each of the organisations listed. Drafts of the Instrument were circulated progressively to the national executives for comment. Staff of the Department of Veterans' Affairs have visited all States and explained the Scheme which is contained in the Instrument to members of the State executives of the above-mentioned organisations. The comments received during the consultative process have been taken into account in preparing the final version of the Instrument.