



Australian Government  
Repatriation Medical Authority

**Statement of Principles  
concerning  
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)  
(Reasonable Hypothesis)  
(No. 46 of 2020)**

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The Repatriation Medical Authority determines the following Statement of Principles under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

Dated 12 June 2020

The Common Seal of the  
Repatriation Medical Authority  
was affixed to this instrument  
at the direction of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Saunders'.

Professor Nicholas Saunders AO  
Chairperson

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**1 Name**

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 46 of 2020).

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on 22 June 2020.

**3 Authority**

This instrument is made under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

**4 Application**

This instrument applies to a claim to which section 120A of the VEA or section 338 of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* applies.

**5 Definitions**

The terms defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary have the meaning given when used in this instrument.

**6 Kind of injury, disease or death to which this Statement of Principles relates**

- (1) This Statement of Principles is about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

*Meaning of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) means an illness caused by infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Note: Typical clinical features of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle pain, fatigue, shortness of breath, pneumonia and new loss of taste and smell.

*Death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*

- (3) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), in relation to a person, includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Note: **terminal event** is defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

## **7 Basis for determining the factors**

The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans, members of Peacekeeping Forces, or members of the Forces under the VEA, or members under the MRCA.

Note: *MRCA*, *relevant service* and *VEA* are defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

## **8 Factors that must exist**

At least one of the following factors must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

- (1) being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as specified within the 14 days before the clinical onset of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19);

Note: *being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as specified* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (2) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

## **9 Relationship to service**

- (1) The existence in a person of any factor referred to in section 8, must be related to the relevant service rendered by the person.
- (2) The factor set out in subsection 8(2) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) where the person's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was suffered or contracted before or during (but did not arise out of) the person's relevant service.

## **10 Factors referring to an injury or disease covered by another Statement of Principles**

In this Statement of Principles:

- (1) if a factor referred to in section 8 applies in relation to a person; and
- (2) that factor refers to an injury or disease in respect of which a Statement of Principles has been determined under subsection 196B(2) of the VEA;

then the factors in that Statement of Principles apply in accordance with the terms of that Statement of Principles as in force from time to time.

# Schedule 1 - Dictionary

Note: See Section 5

## 1 Definitions

In this instrument:

***being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as specified*** means:

- (a) being in a country or an area of a country that is experiencing current SARS-CoV-2 transmission; or
- (b) being in the same household, or immediate work or travel environment, as a person with SARS-CoV-2 infection; or
- (c) having direct contact with an object or substance contaminated with SARS-CoV-2; or
- (d) having direct contact with, or being within two metres of, a person with SARS-CoV-2 infection; or
- (e) inhaling droplet nuclei or aerosols contaminated with SARS-CoV-2.

***coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)***—see subsection 6(2).

***MRCA*** means the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

***relevant service*** means:

- (a) operational service under the VEA;
- (b) peacekeeping service under the VEA;
- (c) hazardous service under the VEA;
- (d) British nuclear test defence service under the VEA;
- (e) warlike service under the MRCA; or
- (f) non-warlike service under the MRCA.

Note: ***MRCA*** and ***VEA*** are also defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

***terminal event*** means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes the following:

- (a) pneumonia;
- (b) respiratory failure;
- (c) cardiac arrest;
- (d) circulatory failure; or
- (e) cessation of brain function.

***VEA*** means the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.