

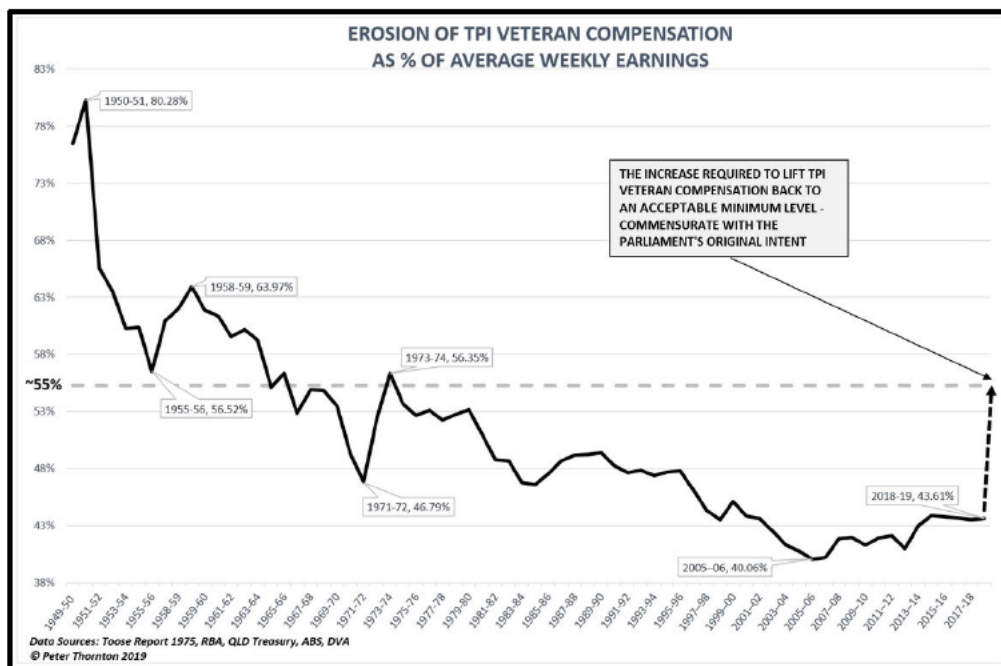
**SUBMISSION TO SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE REFERENCES COMMITTEE
INQUIRY INTO THE TPI PAYMENT (SPECIAL RATE OF DISABILITY PENSION)
BY BERT HOEBEE**

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Senators

1. The Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (Special Rate) [TPI-SR] disability payment is provided for under the *Veterans Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA). (With flow on to the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA)).

This is what is occurring with these TPI-SR payments for seriously incapacitated Veterans:



2. As at 2018-19 this payment represents only 43.61% of Average Weekly Earnings.

3. Senators, the Prime Minister himself explicitly recognised this as a 'compelling case'. To now not address this matter would bring shame to the Australian people for allowing our Veterans to be neglected any longer in such a manner.

4. In his submission, Mr. Peter Thornton presents a meticulous analysis in which he takes a deep view of relevant history and lays out the reasons for this downward trend in the value of the TPI-SR payment. He finds clear evidence of the 'Dark Arts' influencing much of public service administration of Veteran-related law and policies, as well as their advice on the subject to government. He addresses a number of formal Reviews on this subject, which he

suggests are predicated on seemingly pre-determined and biased outcomes: outcomes which do nothing to “*maintain and enhance* the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of eligible persons and their dependants [sic] through access to income support, compensation, and other support services”¹ [My emphasis.]

5. On occasion Thornton lapses into the vernacular. This no doubt reflects an eight-year frustration about the serious lack of any veteran centric, equitable and ethical approach to the plight of Australia’s most seriously incapacitated Veterans. The needless pain, anger and suffering caused by the failure to *maintain* this payment at its intended level is clearly evident among TPIs and their families, and highlighted in a number of the Submissions to this Inquiry. No one could mistake Thornton’s professional analysis as reflecting anything but a genuine desire for improvement in the lot of his TPI-SR comrades in arms and their loves ones.

6. Senators, this shocking situation can be easily and permanently remedied, as pointed out by Thornton and the TPI Federation. Amongst other recommendations, the solution he proposes to address this matter is to ‘*Structurally adjust the Total TPI Compensation Payment by a factor that benchmarks the notional ‘economic loss component’ to the tax-adjusted National Minimum Wage*’. ²

7. A simple and appropriate amendment to the VEA s.23 (4), as recommended by the TPI Federation in its Submission ³, would achieve that. In addition, it would restore integrity and be consistent with the Parliament’s intent for this payment.

6. I commend Thornton’s Submission to your careful attention and urge you to recommended the remedy he puts forward, in the Report of your deliberations.

Bert Hoebee

16 May 21

¹ DVA Portfolio Budget Statements, Outcome 1

² Thornton Submission to SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE TPI / SRDP COMPENSATION PAYMENT, Sub 16

³The Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen & Women Ltd, Sub09