



30 April 2021

Ref: O 012/21

Ms Lyn Beverley  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee  
Email: [fadt.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fadt.sen@aph.gov.au)

**Submission to the Inquiry into TPI Payment (Special Rate of Disability Pension)**

Dear Ms Beverley

Thank you for the opportunity for the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) to contribute to the *Inquiry into TPI Payment (Special Rate of Disability Pension)*.

RSL members were provided with the opportunity to contribute to an overall RSL response individually, and via their Branches and Sub-Branches, noting our volunteer base has also been busy with Anzac Day preparations over the period available for contributions from our membership.

In addition to its own findings, the RSL has noted the observations and recommendations of three comprehensive external reports which are referred to below:

- *A Better Way to Support Veterans Report* (2019) – Productivity Commission
- *Independent Review into the TPI Payment* (2019) – David Tune
- *Review of TPI Benefits* (2019) – KPMG

When taking a holistic view of the overall support package provided to veterans in receipt of TPI payments the RSL agrees with the finding of the Productivity Commission's *A Better Way to Support Veterans Report* (2019) that "changes to eligibility for the service pension and other welfare payments mean that the package of compensation received by veterans on the special rate of disability pension is reasonable. Despite strong veterans' representation on this issue, there is no compelling case for increasing the rate of the pension".

The RSL also supports recommendations from the *Independent Review into the TPI Payment* (2019) conducted by Mr David Tune including:

- renaming the Disability Pension as the 'Disability Compensation Payment' to better reflect its status as a compensation payment
- making the Disability Pension exempt from the social security income test and the veterans' rent assistance income test; removing the need for the Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA)
- simplifying the way Disability Pension rate components are indexed.

The RSL recommends that the changes to DFISA and Rent Assistance be effective from July 2021 rather than September 2022.

The RSL also notes the points raised in KPMG's *Review of TPI Benefits* (2019) and makes the following recommendations:

- consider increasing the TPI benefit for veterans who were disabled at a young age
- prioritise the need for better communication, analysis of data and the provision of services to younger veterans
- reassess Service Pensions for the period prior to 11 November 1982 when Disability Pension payments were regarded as income.

The RSL would also recommend that some consideration be given to address the anomalies which arise where veterans being considered for TPI payments have liability entitlements under more than one Act ie Veterans Entitlements Act 1986, Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004.

Attachment A prepared by the RSL Queensland Branch reinforces the above points.

Yours sincerely

Greg Melick  
National President

**Enclosure**

Attachment A – RSL Queensland submission to FADTR Committee re Special Rate payments April 2021