

Good Afternoon Senators,

With history as a conspicuous witness, no matter the misleading testimony or attempts by others to hoodwink those not well acquainted with the subject matter, over the last 8 years, the immutable facts underpinning the TPI Federation's rightful claim regarding TPI Compensation remain ever persistent.

In relative terms to Average Weekly Earnings, TPI Compensation for approximately 28,000 Veterans has eroded significantly from approximately 80% in 1950 to just 43% in 2021; where the notional economic loss component embedded within the total payment now measures at approximately 62% of the gross National Minimum Wage. By any measure, this is "just not cricket!"

As an Independent Commentator, I must proclaim that the TPI Federation's 8-year rightful claim is measured against clear evidence of a complicit Government that has allowed bureaucratic incompetence and misconduct to prevail, where DVA has failed its key performance indicator to '*maintain and enhance*' the legislative provisions for which it was, and remains, responsible for.

Without wishing to appear presumptuous of the Committee's ongoing or final deliberations, I would nevertheless draw the Committee's attention to the evidence presented within my submission and supporting documents and call upon Committee members to agree to and recommend to the Senate and the Parliament as a whole, the following recommendations please. They are:

1. To structurally adjust the Total TPI Compensation Payment by a factor that benchmarks the imbedded notional 'economic loss component' to the tax-adjusted National Minimum Wage.
2. To restore the Spouse's Compensation Payment to a level that should once again be commensurate with the Parliament's original intent.
3. To restore, by provision of Spouse and Dependent Gold Cards, the free health care that was once a featured entitlement for all TPI spouses and dependents.
4. To repeal the inequitable and egregious offsetting policies of the MRCA that are levelled against Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP) recipients, so that the SRDP provision can once again become a viable pathway in compensation for Australia's most disabled financially vulnerable Veterans. This recommendation includes allowing once eligible Veterans the opportunity to once again, without cost recovery detriment, to elect this pathway in compensation; And
5. To repeal and remove the divergence in MRCA Permanent Impairment compensation that exists between Veterans with Operational Service and that of Normal Military Service, so that all Veterans, no matter their status, are once again afforded equitable compensation for the same level of permanent impairment.

I thank you once again for the opportunity to appear today and I would now welcome any questions you may have of me.