

# AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM VIETNAM ASSOCIATION (WA BRANCH) INC.



**"KHONG HET ROI"**  
(Never Finished)



President: Rick Ryan Maj (Rtd)

Secretary: Mr John Riley

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Committee Secretary  
Senate Inquiry – TPI Payment (Special Rate of Disability Pension)  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

Dear Senators and members,

RE: Senate Inquiry – TPI Payment (Special Rate of Disability Pension)

I am writing on behalf of all members to AATTV Association WA Branch seeking your support for an outcome for all TPIs in relation to the ongoing claims for an increase in the TPI Special Rate pension and/or related payments.

Before going any further, we wish to make it clear to the Senate Inquiry that our Association believes that there is and always has been a distinction between Peacetime and Warlike Service. War service is unique, your life is in danger, yet you are serving your nation and you expect to be looked after if you are wounded, maimed or injured during your time in the field and that your family are cared for if you are killed on active service.

The falsehood as told to Senators and others at the 2017 Senate Inquiry into Veteran Suicide, of which you would be fully aware, and in relation to the TPI Federation's President statement that there is no distinction between Peacetime and Warlike service and that TPIs had agreed to such a policy was a total fabrication by the TPI Federation President, Ms Pat McCabe OAM to which she has since admitted that she lied to the Senate Inquiry.

Our Association wants to take a simplistic approach to the payment of the Special Rate pension. For years now there have been submissions made to various Commissions, Inquiries, hearings etc with plenty of graphs, charts, figures from nearly a century ago and claims and counter claims from all parties concerned. The TPI Federation, as an example, trots out the same submission time and time again and although rejected repeatedly, they expect that their submission must be the one accepted.

Bear in mind that the TPI Federation, although claiming to represent 28,000 TPIs, they only have a membership of around 25% of all TPIs. The AATTVA Association WA Branch, are in the majority, TPIs but many are not members of the TPI Federation as we wish to fight our own battles.

### **Special Rate Pension**

We want to see a Benchmark figure set against MTAWP including the current indexation measures, at a level that is agreeable and acceptable to all parties concerned. The set benchmark figure to be legislated as a figure that cannot decrease below the current rate but may increase with agreement between those may be affected by such changes i.e. TPIs.

Our Association is not prepared to offer a satisfactory benchmark figure above the current level and leaves it to the Senate Inquiry to satisfy themselves that such an increase is warranted.

The Senate Inquiry would also realise that in today's world that two incomes are necessary to allow the family unit to live in some comfort, yet even then it can be difficult to survive. This is also applicable to TPIs who have already lost one breadwinner and in a number of cases also lose the second breadwinner at they have to tend and care for the TPI member of the family unit.

### **Service Pension**

The following is an extract the KPMG Report into Review of TPI Payments.

**Page 4, "The Service Pension is also considered a service replacement benefit for TPI veterans (i.e. compensation for veterans). This is consistent with insurance principles, and the observation that early access to a Service Pension on disability (i.e. before the Service Pension age of 60) represents compensation for lost income and is not considered welfare."**

This is contrary to what the view of the TPI Federation President who has stated, "it is welfare". Once again, a personal view and not that of TPIs across the country who accept the KPMG findings, that it is Compensation.

There are a number of TPI veterans that only receive part payment of the Service Pension. Our Association is of the opinion that the Senate Inquiry accept that the Service Pension is Compensation and that all TPIs under VEA Act 1986 should have the full payment as part of their entitlements, that it should not be means tested and that it is non-taxable.

We believe that the acceptance of this payment alone as Compensation will go a long way to rectifying the complaints of many TPIs in relation to their payments.

The Senators should be aware that a number of TPIs in excess of 2,600 only receive part payment of the Service Pension as they have to have their partner out in the work force to try and make ends meet. The partner in reality should be at home caring for their TPI partner. A non-means tested, tax free Compensation such as the Service Pension would go a long way to assisting not only these TPIs but all TPIs.

In closing, we believe our Association has taken a simplistic approach to resolving problems with the Special Rate of Disability Pension and that of the Service Pension as compensation not welfare.

I remain yours faithfully,

Rick Ryan Maj (Retd) President  
AATTV Association WA Br Inc.