

SUBMISSION FOR FOI INQUIRY

Committee Members

My name is _____ and _____,

I am a Vietnam Veteran and as a result of this I have spent in the vicinity of some 20yrs (once in the Federal Court) but many times in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal seeking my entitlements through FOI. The biggest stumbling block to any Service Person or Ex-Service Person is this:

1/ Having to rely on the very same authority/s (in our case the Defence Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs) for release of documents (personal or otherwise) and these are the very same authorities we have to fight, and I say fight to the detriment of our health and family life, against in a court of law for our entitlements without any assurance that they have given us all of the documentation asked for. They decide what is relevant to a request and what is not.

2/ Vital documentation in the care of the Nation Archives is systematically being disposed of and request for documents are being put in the "too hard to find ect" basket. Hence, our claims fail due to lack of evidence.

A case in question is that I am in a FOI matter before the AAT in Adelaide against the DVA. My concern is that after being assured in writing and by these authorities before the AAT that no other documentation from my Central Medical File exists that I have not been supplied with already two documents have surfaced through an FOI request to DVA that have medical findings written on them that are not on the same copies of what I have been assured from them over the last 20yrs are copies of the original documents. DVA is at the time of writing this submission attempting to stop me from having access to one of these documents.

I could go on for hours over my personal treatment of these authorities in relation to FOI requests but as an example of their attitude towards us are summed up in the words of _____ in a copy of a letter I have in my possession and has been submitted as evidence before the AAT and these words are (when he found out I had put it before the AAT):

"Now that it is before the AAT we must win at all costs!"

And we expect these people working for these authorities to be completely honest with us. I don't think so!

Yours Sincerely

16/12/09