



Submission No 30

Inquiry into RAAF F-111 Deseal/Reseal Workers and their Families

Name: **Name withheld**

About

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] applied to join the Air Force in October 1990. He was picked one out of 300 and enlisted 13th Feb 1991. He was a house painter for many years and joined the Air Force to secure his future for his wife [REDACTED] (myself) and their 5 children. We had so many great plans he was going to stay in for a minimum of 20 years so when he retired he would get a reasonable pension. We were going to buy a house and provide a really good environment for the children.

[REDACTED] joined as a General Hand as there were no vacancies in Surface Finishing, which is what he wanted to do. He was told once he 'was in' he could remuster to his trade. His first posting was to Amberley 3AD 410 Deseal/Reseal. He was so proud of himself.

He worked in that hangar for 3 years and then moved to toolstore at 501 wing.

He appeared to enjoy his work at Deseal although at times was very smelly and even after washing the clothes the smell would be still in the clothes when ironing them. He visited the sick bay quite frequently with what seemed to be colds, indigestion, chest complaints, strange lumps etc. During this time he also started to become very restless and tried many times to remuster, he became confused about things and he signed on for another 6 years and then tried to leave numerous times until eventually leaving in December 05, all the while getting more and more difficult at home, happy one minute confused the next.

We moved to Hervey Bay where he worked for nearly 11 months as a house painter and things were spiraling. We had a terrible time as depression had set in and the confusion and mood swings were just horrid. Hi attempts at working and running our own business failed miserably and by now he was drinking heavily and smoking pot. The doctor prescribed him with anti depressants and the children all started leaving home unable to cope with the abuse and mood swings.

At this point we started seeing specialists and they all said the same thing he was suffering from chemical poisoning. He went to see many doctors and specialists that Veterans Affairs sent him as well to and his condition was finally accepted under MCRS as 'aggravation of a disease, namely; disruption to an already dysfunctional cerebral system, resulting in a neuropsychological deficit' - [REDACTED] had an MVA in 1984 in which he suffered a head injury, returned to work and 7 years later was accepted into the Air Force, undergoing all the medical and psychological tests required upon entry, and passing them all. In other words because he had a previous head injury when he came into contact with the chemicals it caused irreparable brain damage and memory loss. Then Veterans Affairs finally accepted Memory Loss as a condition

We have been to many, many specialists for veterans affairs who apportion the blame to the car accident - if that was the case then how did he get into the Air Force....not possible.

[REDACTED] is now in review with a Neuro psychologists report, Psychiatrists report and our local GP's report all stating that he suffers from depression, which has been rejected 3 times previously by Veterans Affairs Doctors who interviewed him for 20 minutes and made an assessment.

His life is truly dismal as he is on medication all the time. In 2002 my mother had a series of heart attacks and we moved back down to Brisbane to be closer. On top of the stress of my mother being very ill [REDACTED] was being moved from his comfort zone and was absolutely stressed out. I had to resort to sending him to his mum and dad for a few days so that I could complete the move on my own. This happens all the time and he is unable to make any decisions at all, he has withdrawn completely from family and friends, feels like he is absolutely useless on this earth because he cannot work and has let his family down. If he does not take all his medications which keep him in a 'zombie like' state then he becomes very

suicidal, homicidal, angry, nasty, abusive and very difficult to cope with. He is totally dependent on me in every way and I am very very worried about his future as every specialist has said that his prognosis 'Is not good'.

It is so sad to see the healthy, proud wonderful man that I married in this dreadful state, unable to take control of even simple day to day living, life is very difficult, but what is more difficult to cope with that adds insult to injury, is the so called doctors who work for Veterans Affairs that do not know [REDACTED], talk to him for no more than 20 minutes and make their assessment adding to the Anger, humiliation and feeling of hopelessness. [REDACTED] always says 'Life isn't worth living' what has he got to look forward to except illness and I know I pray every day that there would be some light in the tunnel for him, to give him back some of his self worth and help him feel that at least he can provide for his family instead of being in receipt of centrelink payments because they deem us destitute.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]