



Submission No 27

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

Name: Mr Robert Tarrant

21st June 2008

Submission to House of Representatives
Inquiry into RAAF F-111 Deseal-Reseal workers and their families.

I would like to re-iterate my Statutory Declaration as submitted to the Commonwealth on 17/7/2004:

I was posted to No3 AD in October 1978. I worked in the Deseal/Reseal section for a full 9 months. During this period I carried out removal of fuel tank components, puddling out fuel and preparation of the aircraft prior to the SR51 treatment at the "RAG" hangar. I entered post SR51 treatment and carried out manual sealant removal. Following this barrier and A& B type sealant was applied, the aircrafts fuel systems was refitted and the aircraft sent out to tis respective owning squadron.

Also during my time at 3AD I was employed in the Sealant section, a transportable hut in the car park along side the main hangar. Duties carried out were storage of an un-mixed sealant, the mixing of sealant using pneumatic mixing machines; the mixed sealant was frozen in a mixture of dry ice and Isopropyl alcohol. The mixing pots were hand cleared out the back; a cut down 44-gallon drum, full of MEK did the trick. Even if the washing up glove and scotch brite pads melted. Sealant was tested by us in the section, baked in the oven and hardness tested. During this time I was using daily A & B sealants, PR148 MEK etc, during in the fuel tanks could be for hours on end. I personally hand cleaned lower trap tanks on 3 consecutive aircraft.

Signed and witnessed by JP on 17/7/04

Adequacy and Equity of the Health Care Scheme:

I have received no regular correspondence from Veteran Affairs, the Deseal/Reseal Program or any other body advising me of any follow-ups, or Health Care Scheme that my family or myself may be eligible for.

I am aware that there is a Scheme but have no knowledge of the detail, what is available or how to find out about the scheme. I live in NSW and believe that the Scheme is more directed to Queenslanders. If this enquiry could document and make this information publicly available to all that would be a great benefit.

Adequacy and Equity of the final element of the Ex Gratia Scheme:

One of my major concern is that this has not be adequately investigated and managed.

- a. I have been personally approached me ex military members to write documents that they were involved in the Deseal-Reseal program. I personally refused to enter into such a deceit, but I could fully understand that others may have succumbed to peer pressures, and agreed to sign such a document. This is not a proven and legitimate way to be eligible for the funds that were made available.

The tier definitions

- b. Tier 2:
 - a. Definitions for the Purpose of the Lump-sum Payment scheme. Tier 2 people, who has met any one of the following criteria is eligible for a lump-sum of \$10,000 of which there is a list of 8 items of which Item 1 I find to be the most

inequitable. If a person spent between 10-29 cumulative days on the Fuselage Deseal/Reseal or Respray program etc. This equate for some of 10 days work = \$10,000 payout. Items 2-8 cover people that were even more removed from the 'coal face' got the same amount. If this amount was transferred to my own situation the following is the final equation:

9 months = 270 days @ \$1000 per day = \$270,000 payout. I have work colleagues that have legitimately spent 2.5 years in the Deseal/Reseal program this would equate to: $2.5 \times 12 = 30$ months $\times 30$ days = 900 days @ \$1000 + \$900,000 – but instead we both received a lump-sum payment of \$40,000.

- b. Considering our lengthy and proven exposure was did not receive an equivalent or near equitable lump sum.
- c. Tier 1:
 - a. Definitions are numbered 1-5 but basically it equates: - if a person did 30 cumulative work days on the Fuselage Deseal/Reseal or Respray program, or Wing Tank program or carrying out Sealant Rework are entitled to the \$40,000 payout.
This equates to \$40,000 divided by 30 days = \$1333 per days work compensation: 9 months = 270 days @ \$1333 per day = \$359,000 payout. I have work colleagues that have legitimately spent 2.5 years in the Deseal/Reseal program this would equate to: $2.5 \times 12 = 30$ months $\times 30$ days = 900 days @ \$1333 + \$1,199,700.00 payout.
 - b. This shows how inadequate the \$40,000 payout was for those people that had extended exposure to those that had little or even no exposure.
 - d. Last clause of both Tiers: 'would have met the above criteria except that they had an immediate physical reaction, required medical treatment or intervention, given work restriction or medical fitness advice.
 - a. This would be interpreted by me as, anyone that attended for the shortest period of time, claimed a headache or similar – can claim the \$40,000 if they were even just posted to this section. Some would never had done a full days work or even had exposure, much less months and months of heavy exposure as some did.

Staffing resources were adequate to produce a timely result, there were unreasonable delays in the process, the overall handling and administration of the ex gratia and compensation claims were appropriate and timely.

I was in the Deseal/Reseal Program in 1979, I attended Victoria Barracks , Brisbane about March/April 2001 giving a witness update statement and report, in 2005 the ex gratia payment was made. Now in 2008, this subject is continuing.

I do not feel that this has been dealt with in an appropriate or timely manner considering the process is still working away some 29 years later.

Submitted by email
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