



Submission 92

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

Name:

Name withheld

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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
JOINT COMMITTEE – FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE & TRADE
F-111 DESEAL/RESEAL INQUIRY

Dear Secretary,

(Link to terms of reference {TOR} in italics)

I refer to your offer calling for submissions from former RAAF personnel affected by F-111 Deseal/Reseal (DSRS). You should understand I am still an active member in the Air Force and have previously been advised formally by DVA I was ineligible for the ex-gratia lump sum payment. Although my health allows me to continue service I wish to state my case again and be considered for compensation should new decisions be made in my favour and/or if in the future my health deteriorates significantly affecting my standard of living.

Whether the overall handling and administration of the ex gratia and compensation claims was appropriate.

Prior to enlistment into the commissioned ranks in Aug 98, I was previously employed in the Air Force as an Aircraft Technician 90-94 and later as a Non Destructive Testing (NDT) technician 1994 – 98'. For eight years I worked diligently as an Airman at RAAF Base Amberley, directly supporting strategic Airpower capability for Australia, never questioning my superiors whilst carrying out depot level maintenance on the F-111 Aircraft.

My case for consideration of compensation is not as an “ex DSRS worker” but rather a worker who was at times in close proximity to DSRS practices. I was employed within DSRS hangers periodically over eight consecutive years, my most recent exposure to F-111 DSRS hazardous substances dates back over a decade and started 18 years ago. Based on information that has been made available to me it appears one of my NDT colleague's has received ex gratia payment. This colleague was paid compensation for performing like duties to me over a period of four years; I have had a further four years employed on the F-111 yet am denied compensation.

Whether there has been equitable treatment of service personnel, public servants, civilian employees and contractors involved in DSRS wrt the ex gratia payment.

I have without doubt been exposed to known carcinogenic causing substances used during F-111 DSRS. I believe my memory loss; irritable bowel syndrome and periods of anxiety are caused by my exposure to DSRS activities. I challenge the fact that I have been awarded tier 3 or exposure category 3 stating I did not work in such proximity to be at risk. NDTSL RAAF Base Amberley have documentation supporting NDT technicians working in close proximity to DSRS activities.

As a Senior Engineering Officer in the Air Force, continuing to contribute in the fields of both personnel and technical maintenance capability, I request the committee consider the following points in this new inquiry:

- 1) Provide individuals that seek claims for compensation, a customised approach that delivers a level of service that rewards hardship. I have attended funerals of workmates and DSRS meetings in the Ipswich district. The psychological effect is immeasurable;

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- 2) Deliver a communication strategy that targets all those that have been affiliated in the F-111 DSRS inquiry individually by letter, including DGPERS-AF sponsoring advice for current serving members;
- 3) Review the adequacy of the tier system based on known outcomes since the "tier approach" was adopted;
- 4) Where precedence has been set and persons paid compensation, that like applications be accepted and honoured with compensation; &
- 5) Finally, provide outcomes from the DSRS BOI aligning with recommendations. Reference in service policies and the Defence OH&S Strategic Plan, and progress updates in occupational medicine.

Respectfully,

15 July 08.