



Submission No 36

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

Name: **Name withheld**

25 June 2008

Defence Sub-Committee Secretariat
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2602

To Whom It May Concern:

SUBJECT: F-111 RESEAL/DESEAL INQUIRY

Through my spouse I am a member of the F-111 Support Group in Queensland.

I am the spouse of [REDACTED], former RAAF, Non-Destructive Inspections Technician and Airframe Fitter. My spouse is now on Military Compensation Rehabilitation Group (MCRG) fortnightly payments from Department of Veterans Affairs. I wish to put to the Committee the following issues that have arisen from my spouse health issues and his ongoing treatment through MCRG.

FINANCIAL

My husband as stated receives a fortnightly Compensation payment from MCRG and this has a significant impact on my financial situation. My spouse and I have a 23-year-old son with Down Syndrome, unstable Epilepsy and Depression. I am full-time carer to both my spouse and son. As a consequence I have had to cease work in December 2006. I am unable to access a carer payment for caring for my son due to my spouse's payments.

If my spouse was in receipt of wages from employment I would be eligible to receive a Carer Payment of approximately \$180.00 per fortnight and all other benefits. Because of the word Compensation in the payment I am not eligible for any Carer Payment although I am not employed in any area for financial gain. I have no Superannuation or other income. This situation must affect other spouses who are Carers of more than one person in the family.

HEALTH ISSUES OF MINE

I have fully diagnosed chronic and ongoing treatment for Sinusitis which I believe has arisen from my constant exposure to Trichloroethylene when I had to wash my spouses work clothes by hand in the 1980's. In 1996 I experienced a life-threatening episode of Encephalitis as result of sinusitis. I have had continual episodes for the past six months and have been advised to always have antibiotic on hand to start treatment. If the Committee researches the Material Safety Data Sheet for Trichloroethylene it is noted that the chemical, which was, used daily by my spouse can create nasal tissue sensitivity.

A Psychiatrist, [REDACTED], is currently treating me for Depression. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

June 25, 2008

██████ has stated to me that my Depression is related to my spouse's episodes of Suicide Ideation and his Major Depressive Disorder, which is a consequence of his exposure to the chemicals. My spouse worked on the F-111 Reseal/Deseal Wings Program as an NDI Technician and has had his status recognised as Group One.

CONCLUSION

I am an individual with a Masters Degree, which entitles me to work as a counsellor, unfortunately because of the health issues of my spouse and son I am unable to pursue any meaningful occupation in order to support myself. I am not formally recognised by Centrelink for a Carer Payment nor am I eligible to receive a spouse payment from Department of Veterans Affairs because of the MCRG Legislation and do not receive anything other than approximately \$40.00 per fortnight from Department of Veterans Affairs.

I consequently am both financially embarrassed and continually unwell due to the way that the former Liberal federal Government handled the issues surrounding the F-111 Reseal/Deseal health and financial issues.

I put this letter to the Committee on behalf of myself but to also bring the issues that may impact on other spouses to the attention of the Committee.

Sincerely,

████████████████████
MAHealth Studies (Loss and Grief), Associate Diploma Social Sciences,
Certificate of Child Care.