



MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

The Hon Graham Edwards MP
Member for Cowan
PO Box 219
KINGSWAY WA 6065

Dear Mr ~~Edwards~~ *Graham,*

Thank you for your representation of 17 September 2002 on behalf of the six veterans and a war widow that have reported problems with admission to Hollywood Private Hospital.

Officers from the Western Australian State Office have conducted an examination of departmental records concerning each of the cases you have referred to in your letter. I am advised that these records indicate that of the seven cases listed, in only two cases was admission to Hollywood Private Hospital (HPH) declined due to a shortage of available beds.

The other reasons for non-admission to HPH are detailed briefly for your information:

- One veteran required emergency treatment at a facility with an Accident & Emergency service. As you are aware, HPH does not operate an Accident & Emergency service.
- Another instance involved emergency treatment for a psychiatric patient in a crisis situation who was seen after hours at another facility. At that time, this veteran had not established his eligibility under the *Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986*. He had only submitted his claim for a disability pension to the Department 5 days before this admission. It is worth noting that once the veteran was admitted, his eligibility was established and approved the next day.
- A further case involved the veteran seeking treatment that was not provided by HPH and has never been available at HPH. No complaint was associated with this veteran's request.
- One case relates to a request for surgery while HPH operating theatres were closed from August 7 to August 23 2002. This was a planned closure of theatres due to the addition of two new theatre suites. Approval was given for this veteran to be admitted to another private hospital for treatment.

My Department will conduct further investigations into the circumstances surrounding one of the veterans you have listed. This veteran has medical conditions that require frequent periods of hospitalisation and has been admitted frequently to either the HPH or a public hospital. Since 1999, the veteran has been admitted to hospital on over forty occasions. However, no complaint has been received by the Department from this veteran concerning any admission to either hospital.

Three of these veterans have now written to the Department's State Office in Western Australia. The State Office will forward replies directly to these veterans to address the matters they have raised.

Unfortunately, despite the addition of 110 new beds to HPH since privatisation, there are instances when all beds are filled and further admissions must be accommodated elsewhere. It is of note that over the 12 months to July 2002, there were some 16,000 veteran and war widow admissions to the HPH and over the same period only 14 formal complaints were received in the Western Australian State Office regarding any aspect of treatment or admission to this hospital.

It was also mentioned in this correspondence that veterans' admissions are not possible if they occur after business hours. However, the Department does have well established procedures to manage emergency admissions, which occur outside business hours. Approval for such admissions is not required prior to the admission but can be sought on the next working day.

I would like to assure you that I remain committed to ensuring that veterans and war widow(er)s have access to high quality, timely hospital treatment. Thank you for bringing the concerns of veterans to my attention.

Yours sincerely



DANNA VALE MP

12 NOV 2002