

Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade
Inquiry into the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Bill 2006
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To whom it may concern,

I am writing from Cairo where I am in the preparatory stages of getting ready for a talk I am to give to 56th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs on the subject of 50 Years After Maralinga - British Nuclear Tests in Australia. The Pugwash Annual Conferences are attended by many prominent people and Pugwash were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995.

It is shameful to me that, now 50 years after the tests, the Australian government is not living up to its responsibilities toward the loyal servicemen who took part in the tests and subsequent, inadequate, clean ups of Maralinga and other sites.

A recent study showed an 18% increase in incidence of cancers among the Nuclear Veterans.

It is lamentable, and shameful that, as Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffins writes, regarding the Australian Participants in the British Nuclear Test Bills:

'The Bills give effect to the Government's decision to provide no-liability treatment of cancers to Australian participants in the tests.

The Bills do not implement the Clarke Recommendation to declare the Nuclear Veterans' service as non-warlike hazardous service.

This means that the Nuclear Veterans are not given the chance to apply for a disability pension for war related injuries. It also means their widows cannot apply for a pension when the Veteran has died of his war injuries.'

Further, I am wholeheartedly in support of ANVA President Ric Johnstone, and the ANVA, when they state:

'...full coverage under the Veterans Entitlement Act should be extended to all of those military personnel who are bona fide British Nuclear Weapons Tests participants and whose names appear in the Government's nominal roll, and to those civilians who were fully employed by the Federal Government and were present during the actual tests or may have been involved in the cleanup period after the actual tests.'

Anything less than this is a shame on the Government, and an act of betrayal. I hope the Government will choose to be responsible in these matters.

This is the message I will be carrying with me to Pugwash in Cairo.

Yours sincerely,
Adam Breasley

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