



# INJURED SERVICE PERSONS ASSOCIATION NATIONAL (Peacetime Injuries)

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The Secretary  
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

## **Inquiry into the Provisions of the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Bill; and the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) the (consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2006**

The Injured Service Persons Association (ISPA) has not been involved in any of the studies or forums and consultative groups into the British Nuclear Tests and Australian participants however we still have interests in the treatment of men and women who do serve and have served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

We do not profess to have the knowledge into radiation, the factors to the various levels and the short and long term effects other than the information provided through documentaries and contact with organisations such as the Australian Nuclear Veterans Association (ANVA).

Having said that, we have made various observations and therefore make the following comments for your consideration.

### **Government Inquiries.**

Governments of all persuasions have throughout time held inquiries and studies into a wide range of issues.

These are often seen as a waste of time and nothing more than a delaying tactic to appease the complainants.

Health studies generally take around five years and involve a comparison of certain cohorts.

If after this time the studies aren't favourable for the government, the statistics are worded to reflect there is no substantive support for the complainant group.

Inquiries and studies are generally conducted when many of the participants have died and therefore this provides for inconclusive findings, especially when compared to civilian population.

This is certainly the case in regards to the ADF participants in the various nuclear tests.

### **Non Liability Treatment**

This is a concept full of hypocrisy as a way of saying that we don't believe that your conditions were service caused but treatment will be provided because of the goodwill of the government.

## **Criteria**

The participants coverage is restrictive in who will be covered and in particular the aftermath of the tests.

While those who were directly involved at those areas are granted the treatment those whose handled the various pieces of equipment will be denied.

It is our understanding that the equipment involved was left at the test sites but returned to their units where a cleaning regime was undertaken.

Radioactive material is contaminated for life.

Anybody who was involved either directly at the tests or subsequently with contaminated equipment that hasn't already died should be covered.

## **Clarke Report and Support**

This was the recommendation in the 'Clarke Report':

*45. Participation by Australian defence force personnel in the British atomic tests be declared non-warlike hazardous and the legislation be amended to ensure that this declaration can have effect in extending VEA coverage.*

The government response was:

*Accepted in principle - the Government will respond positively to the needs of those affected by the British Atomic Test programme when the outcomes of the Australian Participants in the British Nuclear Test Programme - Cancer Incidence and Mortality Study are available.*

It has also been revealed that the current Minister for Veterans Affairs, Mr Bruce Billson wrote to Mrs Danna Vale who was the Minister for Veterans Affairs during the Clarke Review advocating that those military persons involved in the nuclear tests have their service recognised and declared non-warlike hazardous.

## **Recommendations**

The ISPA believes that the government should:

1. implement the Clarke Report recommendation that ADF personnel involved in the British atomic tests be classified non-warlike hazardous without delay,
2. that treatment and coverage be extended to those ADF personnel who were involved in the handling and cleaning of equipment after the tests, and
3. that the studies and any subsequent investigations do not cause delays in any compensation or benefits.

Any man or woman who serves the nation in the ADF is owed fair and just compensation and treatment. It is time the government took responsibility for the hazards it placed these people at.

Ray Brown  
National President.