



RSL National Headquarters  
GPO Box 303  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**From:** Major General Bill Crews AO (Retd)  
National President

R1-2-21/BC:jo  
27 October 2006

NP:607/06

The Secretary  
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

The RSL welcomes the opportunity to forward a submission in relation to the Senate's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the Provisions of the Australian Participants in the British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Bill 2006; and the Australian Participants in Nuclear Tests (Treatment) (consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2006.

It has been long standing RSL policy that the participants in the British Nuclear Tests be afforded coverage under the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA) and this service be deemed as 'Hazardous'. This Bill is a start in this direction.

However, in order to avoid any delays in the passage of this Bill, the RSL will continue to lobby Government and Opposition for the necessary changes to the VEA to fully compensate the participants in these Tests.

There is however, one aspect of the Bill with which the RSL has major concerns. This is the failure to recognise as 'nuclear test participants' the following personnel who were not at the specified locations during the specific dates:

1. The maintenance personnel at RAAF Amberley who decontaminated returning aircraft from the test sites. These personnel worked in what were called the "Igloo Hangers" on base and because of their duties were definitely exposed to radiation. As some aircraft were redirected to other bases, maintenance personnel at those bases should also be included.
2. The personnel, both Naval and civilian, who worked on the returning ships in Naval Dockyards and Fleet Bases. The anti-wetting system used by Naval ships of this vintage would not have completely decontaminated these vessels.
3. The personnel, both Army and civilian, who maintained any equipment that the Australian Army utilised during the tests. Again, this equipment would not have been completely decontaminated prior to removal from the sites.

The RSL urges the Committee to bring this matter to the Senate for an amendment to the Bill.

Bill Crews