

Inquiry: the Suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel

Submission by Mr Peter Larter, Advocate, Australian Special Air Service Association

Attached is a submission by myself to the Repatriation Medical Authority regarding altering the Factors in an Statement of Principles regarding Suicide and Attempted Suicide.

Submission:

Review Factors 3 and 4 of the SOP Suicide and Attempted Suicide, instruments 65 and 66 of 2016.

Factors 3 and 4 of the SOP stipulate that a person must experience a 1A or 1B stressor within 2 and 5 years before the suicide in order to establish that death from suicide is connected to a person's relevant service.

EndFragment

Additional information

A situation presents itself where a spouse or dependent may not be able to connect the person's suicide to relevant service where the suicide occurred after 2 and 5 years from date of experiencing the category 1A or 1B stressor and they cannot establish enough evidence to satisfy any other factor in the SOP.

It is possible that a person with relevant service has a delayed onset (more than 5 years) of a significant disorder of mental health and has not received or being treated for any impairment regarding symptomology of a mental health condition.

In this instance the surviving spouse or dependent claim for compensation will fail and they will be ineligible for any entitlements as the suicide occurred after the 2 and 5 year time period as stipulated in the SOP's.

It is entirely possible that a serving member may be motivated to attempt suicide in order to ensure support was provided to their families on their death. This timeframe may provide the motivation to attempt suicide.

This SOP and the relevance of this submission was discussed at the recent Younger Veterans Forum on the 21 July 2016. All representative ESO members agreed that the timeframe associated with this Factor of the SOP should be omitted.

It is requested that the RMA remove the 2 and 5-year clause in factors 3 and 4 of the SOP's as there is evidence that psychiatric conditions can manifest and there can be a delayed onset of any impairment.


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Mr Peter Larter
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Dear Mr Larter

Thank you for your request to carry out a review of the contents of the Statements of Principles concerning suicide and attempted suicide, Nos. 65 and 66 of 2016.

Your request will be referred to the next meeting of the Repatriation Medical Authority (the Authority) for examination and consideration. This meeting will take place on Wednesday, 12 October 2016. You will be notified of the decision of the Authority following this meeting.

Under section 196K of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the VEA), certain decisions made by the Authority are reviewable by the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC). If a valid application for review by the SMRC is made, the VEA requires the Authority to disclose to the SMRC all information relevant to its determination or decision. This includes applications for investigation or review, and submissions received relevant to the matter being reviewed by the SMRC.

If you have any queries, I can be contacted on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Lochel
Administration Officer