

War Widows' Guild Of Australia Inc.

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Mr. David Sullivan
Committee Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

RE: Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Digital Readiness and Other Measures) Bill 2016 (Digital Readiness Bill)

My apologies for not getting this to you prior to the closing date for submissions.

The War Widows' Guild of Australia Inc. are aware of the issues currently facing the Department of Veterans' Affairs in regard to the time taken to process claims for veterans and families and the impact this may have on a veteran and his/her family. Streamlining the process would appear to be a most reasonable outcome. Digitalisation of a system, which is easily able to recognise well-documented items, would enhance the clients well being and potentially lead to a less stressful environment for staff, veterans and families.

To do this the Department would require a most comprehensive upgrading of their current IT systems. This would enable information transfer from Department of Defence and other relevant departments and would ultimately be of benefit to the veteran. The veteran and his/her family are the clients of the department and they therefore should be afforded the most up to date systems to manage the affairs of the department.

The War Widows' Guild of Australia Inc. are also supportive of the "Public Interest Disclosures" section of the bill and recognise that such disclosures would only be undertaken by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs after consultation and only when/if it is in the public interest to do so. An example would be 'to correct misleading information in the public domain about DVA policies and procedures' and which may ultimately impact on a veterans' health.

Thank you for accepting this letter for your committee's consideration.

Yours sincerely

Meg Green
27.01.2017