

[SUBMISSION]

For the: **Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019**

To: **FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE LEGISLATION SENATE COMMITTEE**

Dear Sirs'/Ma'ams',

I have served 42 years in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), fulltime and Reserve, with a couple of overseas deployments, and promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer (WO1 level). In my current capacity as a volunteer co-administrator of the online DVA Gold Card Benefits & Concession group, I devote countless unpaid hours assisting and advising members of the veteran community with respect to entitlements, benefits and concessions that may be available to them from DVA, DHS and other agencies. Through our own veterans' forum and my membership of other veterans' forums, I am acutely aware of the dissatisfaction among many serving and former members of the ADF with the Government's stated intention to award "Veteran" status and entitlements to those with very minimal service.

I suggest the following:

Veteran Card

1. The word "Veteran" not be used on the DVA Health Cards for War Widows/ers, Orphaned Children, Cadets and other persons who are not actually a veteran.
2. Perhaps use the wording "Member of the Veteran Community" for the above persons, or "Dependent of a Veteran", or something similar.

Definition Of A Veteran

3. I suggest the definition of a veteran not be a minimum of one (1) day of fulltime service in the ADF, but rather the eligibility for "Veteran" could be linked to the same eligibility requirements for any of the following two military medals:

- **AUSTRALIA SERVICE MEDAL 1939-45** –

Eligibility: 30 days full-time or 90 days part-time honorable service in Australia or overseas between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945; or

- **AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MEDAL (ADM)** –

Eligibility: 4 years, or completion of an initial engagement, or discharge due to medical or Defence workplace policy, (whichever is the sooner) efficient service in Australia or overseas from 3 September 1945 to the current date.

4. Aligning the definition of "Veteran" with the eligibility of one of the above military medals simplifies the process for determining eligibility for the Veteran Card and the Veteran Lapel Pin, and it removes the absurdity of referring to someone with one (1) day of service as a veteran.
5. For former members of the ADF older than fits into the above criteria, their applications could be treated similar to the eligibility for the ADM.
6. Reservists without any fulltime service who qualify for the Australian Defence Medal (ADM), could be referred to as "Reservist Veteran", or "Veteran Reservist".
7. Finally, I believe the wider community will consider the "Veteran" entitlements scheme laughable and a joke if they also apply to persons who only have one (1) day or so of fulltime service and, who may have discharged at own request because they couldn't hack life in the service.

Yours sincerely,

Member of the Veteran Community
6 March 2019

[END OF SUBMISSION]