



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Dr Kathleen Dermody
Secretary
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Dr Dermody

I am writing to you in relation to the Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011/2012 (which was held on 19 October 2011) and the Department's response to a number of resulting Questions on Notice.

In this respect, I wish to advise you that a typographical error occurred in the response to Part 1 of Questions 49 and 50 from Senator Ronaldson which asks "*how many remaining BCOF veterans and ex-service people are alive and how many would be eligible for repatriation benefits to be paid as per Justice Clarke's 2003 recommendations to Government on this matter?*".

Paragraph 3 of the answer that was provided on 9 December 2011 states that there are approximately 650 former members of BCOF who **do** have a Gold Card, when it should correctly state that there are approximately 650 former members who **do not** have a Gold Card.

Accordingly, I have attached an amended copy of the Department's response to this specific question for your appropriate action.

Yours sincerely

Sean Fafrelly
First Assistant Secretary
Rehabilitation & Support

10 February 2012

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011–12; 19 October 2011
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 49 and 50

Outcome 1: Program 1.6

Topic: BCOF Services

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

1. How many remaining BCOF veterans and ex-service people are alive and how many would be eligible for repatriation benefits to be paid as per Justice Clarke's 2003 recommendations to Government on this matter?
2. What is the cost of accepting Justice Clarke's recommendations to extend Qualifying and Operational service coverage to BCOF veterans?

Answer

1. Based on estimated numbers who served with BCOF and using standard mortality assumptions, around 2,900 former BCOF members may be alive today.

Of this number, around 1,450 are estimated not to have rendered qualifying service under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, this being the type of service that provides Gold Card at age 70 and service pension at age 60. Qualifying service for the remaining members would have been rendered in other conflicts, such as the Second World War, the Korean War or the Malayan Emergency.

It is estimated that around 800 of these individuals who have not rendered qualifying service already have a Gold Card due to their level of disability, leaving approximately 650 former members of BCOF who do not have a Gold Card. These estimates are as at 1 July 2011.

2. Service with BCOF until 30 June 1951 is already classified as operational service under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA). Justice Clarke recommended that service with BCOF be declared warlike from 21 February 1946 to 30 June 1947.

Warlike service is a form of qualifying service under the VEA and provides Gold Card at age 70 and service pension at age 60.

The existing classification of BCOF as operational service already allows individuals to receive disability pension in relation to accepted conditions and, where their level of accepted disability is assessed at 100% or more, a Gold Card is provided.

The cost of classifying BCOF as warlike (qualifying) service is estimated at \$36.3m over four years from 1 July 2012.