

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR E. G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.,
TO THE R.S.L. NATIONAL CONGRESS, MELBOURNE,
TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 1974.

IN OUR 22 MONTHS OF OFFICE AUSTRALIA'S
REPATRIATION SYSTEM HAS BEEN UNDER CONTINUING REVIEW AND
HAS UNDERGONE CONTINUING REMODELLING. I VENTURE TO
SAY THAT NEVER BEFORE HAS A GOVERNMENT ADOPTED SO
PROMPTLY SO MANY PROPOSALS ORIGINATING IN THE FORM OF
RESOLUTIONS FROM THE R.S.L. NATIONAL CONGRESS. WE HAVE
BEEN CONCERNED, OF COURSE, TO SEE THAT THOSE ELIGIBLE
FOR CASH BENEFITS ARE NOT DISADVANTAGED BY INFLATION.
THESE PAYMENTS HAVE MORE THAN KEPT PACE WITH RISES IN
THE COST OF LIVING. MOREOVER, WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED
TO WIDEN ELIGIBILITY FOR THE WHOLE RANGE OF EXISTING
BENEFITS TO CREATE NEW BENEFITS AND TO EASE THE
QUALIFICATIONS FOR THEM.

(7)
SPECIAL RATE (T. & P.I.) PENSION

September 1972	\$48.00
November 1974	64.10
Increase	33.5%

INTERMEDIATE RATE PENSION

September 1972	\$34.00
November 1974	44.55
Increase	31.0%

GENERAL RATE PENSION

September 1972	\$14.00
November 1974	25.00
Increase	78.5%

WAR WIDOW'S PENSION

September 1972	\$20.00
August 1974	31.00
Increase	55%

DOMESTIC ALLOWANCE

September 1972	\$ 8.50
November 1974	\$12.00
Increase	41.2%

	DEC. 1972		SEPT. 1974*		JUNE 1974	
	Pension	Pension % (Dec) AWE (Dec)	Pension	Pension % (Sept) AWE (June)	Pension	Pension % (June) A.W.E. (June)
	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
<u>WAR PENSIONS:</u>						
Special rate T & PI	48.00	47.95	64.10 ^Ø	50.75	60.10	47.59
Intermediate rate	34.00	33.97	44.55 ^Ø	35.27	41.05	32.50
General rate (100 percent)	14.00	13.99	25.00 ^Ø	19.79	22.00	17.42
War Widows Pension	20.00	19.98	31.00	24.54	26.00	20.59
Domestic Allowance	8.50	8.49	12.00 ^Ø	9.50	9.50	7.52
<u>SERVICE PENSIONS:</u>						
Single Rate	20.00	19.98	31.00	24.54	26.00	20.59
Married Rate	34.50	34.47	51.50	40.78	45.50	36.03

* A.W.E. Seasonally Adjusted figure for June 1974 used - latest available

Ø Budget Item 1974

NEW BENEFITS INCLUDE:-

(A) ABOLITION OF THE MEANS TEST FOR ALL VETERANS OVER 70.

(B) ALL SERVICE PENSIONERS HAVE 25% OF THEIR WAR SERVICE PENSIONS DISREGARDED WHERE THE MEANS TEST STILL APPLIES.

(C) REPATRIATION PENSIONS PAYABLE IN ANY OVERSEAS COUNTRY.

(D) ALL COMMONWEALTH EX-SERVICEMEN ELIGIBLE FOR REPATRIATION BENEFITS. (GOVERNMENT NOW ACTIVELY CONSIDERING EXTENSION TO ALL ALLIED PERSONNEL.)

(E) FREE MEDICAL AND HOSPITAL TREATMENT FOR ANY CONDITION FOR ALL P.O.W.'s, AND FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN VETERANS IRRESPECTIVE OF AREA OF SERVICE.

(F) REPATRIATION TREATMENT BENEFITS EXTENDED TO ALL VETERANS OF BOER AND WORLD WAR I, INCLUDING NURSING HOME CARE.

(G) DEFENCE SERVICE HOMES - MAXIMUM LOAN INCREASED TO \$15,000.

THE SAME PROCESS OF CONTINUING REVIEW APPLIES TO SERVING PERSONNEL. IN OUR EFFORTS TO BUILD TRULY PROFESSIONAL FORCES AND TO ENSURE THAT ARMED SERVICE IS MADE AS ACCEPTABLE AS ANY OTHER PROFESSION IN THE COMMUNITY THERE HAS BEEN A CONTINUING REVIEW OF SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS. THESE INCLUDE:

(A) THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KERR/WOODWARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED RATES OF PAY AND GENERAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.

(B) SINCE THE TIME RATES OF PAY WERE REVISED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE KERR/WOODWARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS, I.E. 8/9 FEBRUARY, 1973, SALARIES HAVE BEEN INCREASED AS SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES: .

PRIVATE PAY LEVEL 1	-	\$1,628	OR	48.96%
WARRANT OFFICER 1	-	\$2,390	OR	30.08%
LIEUTENANT (MAXIMUM OF SALARY RANGE)	-	\$1,860	OR	32.92%
COLONEL (MAXIMUM OF SALARY RANGE)	-	\$3,042	OR	22.12%

(C) THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW MACHINERY TO SPEED UP THE DETERMINATION OF SALARIES AND RELATED CONDITIONS.

(D) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE FOR DEFENCE FORCES PAY, TO PROVIDE EXPERT GUIDANCE ON PAY MATTERS.

(E) THE EXTENSION OF THE BENEFITS UNDER THE DEFENCE SERVICE HOMES ACT TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE PERMANENT FORCES WHO HAVE AT LEAST THREE YEARS' SERVICE.

(F) IMPROVEMENT OF THE RANGE OF SETTLEMENT BENEFITS.

(G) THE EXTENSION OF REPATRIATION BENEFITS TO PROVIDE ENTITLEMENT WITHOUT WAR SERVICE.

(H) THE INTRODUCTION OF A TAX-FREE RE-ENGAGEMENT BONUS OF \$1,000 PAYABLE TO OTHER RANKS WHO RE-ENGAGE FOR A FURTHER THREE YEARS' SERVICE ON COMPLETION OF AN INITIAL SIX YEARS' SERVICE.

(I) THE APPOINTMENT OF A DEFENCE FORCE OMBUDSMAN WHEN THE APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION IS APPROVED.

(J) THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ANNUAL LEAVE BONUS SCHEME TO OPERATE ON THE SAME LINES AS THE COMPARABLE SCHEME FOR AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES.

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