MEDIA STATEMENT

Vietnam Veterans Still Have to Fight for Fair Compensation

While commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in 1966 as well as the Vietnam War (1962 – 1972), the Australian Government is still leaving those same Vietnam Veterans to continue to fight for fair compensation.

The Disability Compensation payment is still only 65% of the minimum wage after tax. This has been the case since the early 1950s.

These Veterans have been promised time and again that the Government will look after them. Is Australia so much in debt that they cannot look after their Veterans now?

This policy is contrary to the politicians of the WW1 and WW2 era. Prime Minister Billy Hughes CH KC said in 1917

“We say to them – ‘You go and fight, and when you come back we will look after your welfare’ …. we have entered into a bargain with the soldier, and we must keep it!”

Unfortunately, Prime Minister Hughes’ ‘bargain’ and that of the Parliament’s original intent of providing our most disabled veterans with a “living wage” has not been upheld for some considerable period of time.

The then Treasurer, Joe Hockey MP, stated on the 3rd February 2014,

“I say to you emphatically, everyone in Australia must do the heavy lifting. The age of entitlement is over, the age of personal responsibility has begun,”

All Veterans say to today’s Government we have done the ‘heavy lifting’ with our Service to the Nation and now we ask that we don’t want to now have to beg for fair compensation. The TPI Federation along with the members of the Alliance of Defence Services Organisations is asking for a fair and equitable compensation equal to at least the minimum wage after tax.

Prime Minister, our Vietnam Veterans are now too old and too sick to do any further “heavy lifting”. Will you help them?

18th August 2016

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