



**The Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently  
Incapacitated Ex Servicemen and Women Ltd  
(Incorporated in the ACT)**

**DIFFERENT CONFLICT- SAME SACRIFICE**

**Patron-in-Chief**

**Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC**

**Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia**

1 June 2009

The Hon Kevin Rudd  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
Canberra  
ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express the disappointment of the TPI Federation concerning an outcome in the 2009 Budget. I am aware that a response to a matter of this kind would usually be the responsibility of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs however as the head of the government, a direct response from you is preferred on this occasion.

In 1998 the Old Age Pension, Centrelink Disability Pension, War Widows and Service Pension indexation arrangements were altered to allow them to be adjusted in a fairer way by the use of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE) or the Consumer Price Index (CPI) whichever is the greater and for those pensions not to fall below 25% of MTAWE.

For some 10 years the TPI Federation made representation to government to be treated in the same fair manner as other pension recipients and for the TPI payment be adjusted to maintain its relativity to other government pensions.

In a joint Press Release from yourself and Alan Griffin just prior to the last election you said:

*"Our veterans have paid a very high price for their service to our country. **This is about fixing an injustice.** We have listened to our nation's veterans and we are acting. It has been budgeted to cost \$61 million from September 20, 2008 – the day of indexation. They deserve a Federal Labor Government that will finally fix this issue rather than a tired cynical old Howard Government that has consistently ignored them. There has been no other issue that has been the subject of greater sustained and passionate concern in the veterans' policy area over the last ten years. We have heard from many individuals and representatives of the Veterans' community about the importance of this issue. In 1997 when the Howard Government indexed a range of other pensions, they left out the above general rate disability pensions. **Since that time there has been an erosion of these pension's values compared to the broader community.**" (Emphasis added)*

From March 2008 the indexation arrangements of the TPI and other DVA disability pensions were brought into line with all the other major government pensions. The bonus payments of December 2008

National President 38 Meridian Drive Mullaloo WA 6027  
PH 08-93071017 Fax 08-93071383 Mob 0422 817 510 Email [blueryan@iinet.net.au](mailto:blueryan@iinet.net.au)

were also passed on to most TPIs. We are at a loss to understand why the increase to pensions announced in the budget was not passed on to TPIs and other DVA Disability Pension recipients.

The reason for our disappointment was articulated by Paul Kelly in the Australian when he said:

“Australian households have never been so well-prepared for recession. They are cash-rich, showered with tax cuts, the biggest pension increase in history, tax breaks for business and home buyers, a parental leave scheme, school infrastructure, investment in clean energy, roads, rail, ports, a national broadband scheme, renewed commitments to defence in the new white paper, funds for innovation, universities, the car industry, with the Reserve Bank of Australia cutting interest rates by a whopping four percentage points since the crisis began. “  
But nothing for Australia’s disabled veterans.

In a Press Release in May 2007 Alan Griffin said that:

“A Rudd Labor Government is already committed to making sure that our most severely disabled war veterans have their pensions adjusted to take account ***not just of the cost of living but also the standard of living***”.

The new indexation arrangements to DVA disability pensions had gone some way to ensuring that the veterans’ benefits did not suffer further erosion. Your government’s failure to adjust the rate of the TPI pension in line with the adjustments made to other government pensions, as per the 2009 Budget, has meant that the relativity between veterans’ disability pensions and the other pensions has diminished. It follows that there has to be an erosion of the standard of living for veterans and their families.

The ex-service community was very supportive of Alan Griffin and your party leading up to the last election because it seemed that for the first time in more than a decade some one was listening to the issues and seemed genuinely moved to address the longstanding wrongs.

The view of the TPI Federation is that we have been badly let down by your government. In a time when extraordinary sums of money are being spent by the Government to dull the impact of the recession it seems that the group given the least consideration is that which has given the most in the service of their country. We request that military disability pensions be increased by the same percentage as the other government pensions - that is, 11.4%.

Your early attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. Should you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

John (Blue) Ryan OAM  
National President

National President 38 Meridian Drive Mullaloo WA 6027  
PH 08-93071017 Fax 08-93071383 Mob 0422 817 510 Email [blueryan@iinet.net.au](mailto:blueryan@iinet.net.au)