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AWF.001.00732

## SUBMISSION TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION

### Questions about you

**Submitted By:** Ms Pat McCabe OAM

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**State:** ACT

**Do you live in a remote, rural or regional area?** : I do not live in a remote, rural or regional area

**Previous submission:**

**This submission is on behalf of :** Other

**Name of service provider or other person :** TPI Federation of Australia

### About your submission

**Which of the Royal Commission s terms of reference is your submission about?:** Challenges and how to best deliver aged care services to people over 65 with disability; Challenges and how to best deliver care for younger people (under 65) with disability; Challenges and how to ensure aged care services are person-centred (including by allowing people to exercise choice, control and independence of care and improving engagement with family and carers); Challenges about understanding what care is available, the assessment process, how to get care, and at the level of care needed; Challenges associated with providing high quality, safe and affordable aged care services generally; Interface between aged care services and primary health services, acute care and disability services and regulatory systems (including how people transition from other care environments or between aged care settings)

**What, if any, specific concern/s does your submission relate to?** Emotional abuse; Clinical care; Mental health; Restrictive practices; Governance arrangements and management support systems

**What type of aged care services does your submission address?** Care in an aged care home (nursing home); Services of any kind to a veteran (including care or help in their own home under the Veterans Home Care Program); Care to a person with a disability living in an aged care home (nursing home) under the age of 65

### Your Submission

**What would you like to tell the Royal Commission?**

The TPI Federation is most concerned that Veterans, & War Widows, are not entitled to utilise their Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Gold Card for medical and ancillary services while residing in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF).

Most RACFs have contracts with a variety of medical and allied health providers. For this reason the Veteran, & War Widow, is unable to continue their usual medical arrangements. The contracts that the RACFs have with GPs, Physiotherapists, Pharmacies (even including newsagents), and more, do not enable the Veteran or War Widow to have a choice in which medical provider they attend. When the Veteran or War Widow is in their own home, they do have this choice, but once they enter a RACF their individual life choices disappear.

This also includes the provision of DVA Rehabilitation Appliance Program (RAP) items such as incontinence provisions. When the Veteran is at home they have an unlimited supply of their required incontinence requirements, but when they enter a RACF this is restricted to the supply that the RACF deems necessary.

When a Veteran has need of a psychiatrist (who they have seen all their life since returning from Defence Operational areas), for the treatment of their PTSD, they are told that the facility does not have a psychiatrist for them and they cannot allow another to visit. A Veteran with mental health issues has a real need for a psychiatrist, and this does not need to be restricted by an illogical contract that they Veteran has signed. To restrict this to the Veteran could cause the Veteran to become extremely upset and result in an unwanted disturbance to the entire complex.

When a Veteran, or War Widow, has a need for a DVA RAP item (such as a lamb s wool under-blanket to alleviate bed sores, repositioning bed bar and more), DVA has a requirement for an Occupational Therapist to examine the Veteran's environment and make a recommendation to DVA on the needs of the Veteran or War Widow. This Occupational Therapist is not permitted to enter the RACF to make this assessment. Again, the Veteran is disadvantaged in not being able to have a choice of receiving the entitlements they are due from DVA.

The Veterans, and War Widows, who are entering the RACFs now are of the WW2 and Vietnam era. The Vietnam era Veterans had their country turn their backs on them when they returned from Vietnam. They were spat on and denied access to the R&SL. They fought all this and more. The DVA denied them a number benefits and compensation for many, many years. They were denied mental health treatment until they created their own service with the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS).

Now these same Veterans, and War Widows (their carers), are being denied their right to basic DVA services because an unknown owner of a complex has a contract with other providers. These Vietnam Veterans are now too old, and too sick, to fight the good fight any more for their rights.

The Veteran organisations, who try to help these Veterans and War Widows, are also restricted with their visitation attempts. These visitation rights seem to be limited to those who have a contract with MyAgedCare. Upon enquiring with them as to the possibility of visiting Veterans, the door is closed. Most of these Veterans have relied on Veteran Organisations to be their security blanket, and to ensure they have the correct entitlements and benefits they are due. The major reason for a visit from an Ex-Service Organisation is to provide the camaraderie they have had for years similar to what they had during the time they were enlisted.

**Who is going to look after the Veteran now? Certainly not the RACFs.**

The Government, as a result of the way the MyAgedCare system is designed, is denying these Veterans and War Widows their rights to all the above. This is, the TPI Federation believes, mental abuse and a denial of their human rights.

Someone has to fight for these Veterans and ensure that they remain as respected and entitled as they should be in their declining few years. They have already given their all for their country.

Supporting material provided:

Can this submission be made public I agree to my submission being made public under my name