



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Suite 2, Level 1
307 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080

Toll Free: 1800 66 8855

Fax: (02) 6761 3380

e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor urges Veterans to make submissions to Review Committee

Following on from last weeks passing of the Veteran's Affairs Gold Card Extension Bill by the Parliament, Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is now urging ALL Veterans not now included in those eligible for the Veteran's Gold Card to make submissions to the Review of Veterans' Entitlements Committee.

Mr Windsor and his fellow Country Independents, Peter Andren (Calare NSW) and Bob Katter (Kennedy QLD) divided the Parliament last week over not including ALL Veterans over the age of 70 in the Bill that went through the Parliament.

The Veterans Gold Card is the popular name for the Repatriation Health Card issued by the Department of Veteran's Affairs and enables the Veteran to access the full range of repatriation health care benefits and transport to and from the nearest health care facilities where treatment is being provided.

"I was disappointed that both the Government and the Opposition chose not to recognise the efforts of ALL Veterans irrespective of whether those Veterans have been in danger from hostile forces of the enemy as the current legislation and the amendment Bill demanded particularly when many MPs from both sides spoke passionately about their concerns that some Veterans were missing out on the Gold Card benefit even though they had served their country.

I do not see returned servicemen, whether they were sent overseas or were involved in overseas combat, or were sent overseas and did not see any conflict, but possibly could have been involved in conflict, as being significantly different from someone who volunteered and trained in Australia, who did not actually face a hostile enemy.

The fact that we have servicemen who were prepared to volunteer, be trained and stay in Australia was a very significant deterrent to some other activity that may well have been planned, Mr Windsor said.

"What my Amendment did, was give members of the Parliament, the capacity to send a very clear message from their constituents through to the review committee headed up by Justice Clarke QC.

I asked the members to consider the amendment and the spirit of the people who volunteered, who are now in their later years and who are asking that the society that they helped create and mould and were quite prepared to fight for, should repay them in some form," Mr Windsor said.

I therefore urge those who still fall outside the category, to make their case known to the Review Committee so that it can be put on the record and looked at again to be brought before the Parliament when the criteria is raised again in hopefully the not too distant future," Mr Windsor said

Submissions can either be sent C/- Tony Windsor, PO Box 963 Tamworth NSW 2340 or to The Hon John Clarke QC, Committee Chair, Review of Veterans' Entitlements, PO Box 9563, Deakin ACT 2600.

Further information from Tony Windsor on 0427 66 8868 or 6761 3080