

Statement of Principles  
concerning

**POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA**

**No. 23 of 2008**

for the purposes of the

*Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*

and

*Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*

**Title**

1. This Instrument may be cited as Statement of Principles concerning polymyalgia rheumatica No. 23 of 2008.

**Determination**

2. The Repatriation Medical Authority under subsection **196B(2)** and **(8)** of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the VEA):
  - (a) revokes Instrument No. 89 of 1996 concerning polymyalgia rheumatica; and
  - (b) determines in its place this Statement of Principles.

**Kind of injury, disease or death**

3.
  - (a) This Statement of Principles is about **polymyalgia rheumatica** and **death from polymyalgia rheumatica**.
  - (b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, "**polymyalgia rheumatica**" means a clinical syndrome consisting of bilateral aching and stiffness persisting for at least one month involving the neck or torso, shoulder or proximal regions of the arms, or the pelvic girdle; a rapid relief of symptoms in response to corticosteroids; and with an erythrocyte sedimentation rate greater than 40 mm/hour or systemic symptoms such as malaise, fatigue and a low-grade fever, occurring in the absence of other

diseases capable of causing the musculoskeletal system symptoms.

This definition excludes polymyalgia rheumatica coexistent with giant cell arteritis.

- (c) Polymyalgia rheumatica attracts ICD-10-AM code M35.3.
- (d) In the application of this Statement of Principles, the definition of "**polymyalgia rheumatica**" is that given at paragraph 3(b) above.

#### **Basis for determining the factors**

- 4. After examining the available sound medical-scientific evidence the Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that the only factor that may be related to the cause of or material contribution to or aggravation of **polymyalgia rheumatica** or **death from polymyalgia rheumatica** and which can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans, members of Peacekeeping Forces, or members of the Forces under the VEA, or members under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (the MRCA) is that set out in clause 5.

#### **Factors that must be related to service**

- 5. The factor that must as a minimum exist in relation to the circumstances of a person's relevant service causing or materially contributing to or aggravating **polymyalgia rheumatica** or **death from polymyalgia rheumatica** is inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for polymyalgia rheumatica.

#### **Other definitions**

- 6. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

"**death from polymyalgia rheumatica**" in relation to a person includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's polymyalgia rheumatica;

"**ICD-10-AM code**" means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM), Fifth Edition, effective date of 1 July 2006, copyrighted by the National Centre for Classification in Health, Sydney, NSW, and having ISBN 1 86487 772 3;

"**relevant service**" means:

- (a) operational service under the VEA; or
- (b) peacekeeping service under the VEA; or
- (c) hazardous service under the VEA; or
- (d) warlike service under the MRCA; or
- (e) non-warlike service under the MRCA;

**"terminal event"** means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes:

- (a) pneumonia;
- (b) respiratory failure;
- (c) cardiac arrest;
- (d) circulatory failure; or
- (e) cessation of brain function.

**Application**

- 7. This Instrument applies to all matters to which section 120A of the VEA or section 338 of the MRCA applies.

**Date of effect**

- 8. This Instrument takes effect from 5 March 2008.

Dated this *twentieth* day of *February* 2008

The Common Seal of the )  
 Repatriation Medical Authority )  
 was affixed to this instrument )  
 in the presence of: )

KEN DONALD  
 CHAIRPERSON