



**Australian Government**  
**Repatriation Medical Authority**

**Statement of Principles**  
**concerning**  
**MESOTHELIOMA**  
**(Reasonable Hypothesis)**  
**(No. 104 of 2015)**

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The Repatriation Medical Authority determines the following Statement of Principles under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

Dated 21 August 2015

The Common Seal of the  
Repatriation Medical Authority  
was affixed to this instrument  
at the direction of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicholas Saunders', written in a cursive style.

Professor Nicholas Saunders AO  
Chairperson

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**1 Name**

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *mesothelioma (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 104 of 2015).

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on **21 September 2015**.

**3 Authority**

This instrument is made under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

**4 Revocation**

The Statement of Principles concerning mesothelioma No. 83 of 2007 made under subsection 196B(2) of the VEA is revoked.

**5 Application**

This instrument applies to a claim to which section 120A of the VEA or section 338 of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* applies.

**6 Definitions**

The terms defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary have the meaning given when used in this instrument.

**7 Kind of injury, disease or death to which this Statement of Principles relates**

- (1) This Statement of Principles is about mesothelioma and death from mesothelioma.

*Meaning of mesothelioma*

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, mesothelioma:
- (a) means a primary malignant neoplasm arising from the cells of the mesothelial lining of serous cavities of the body including the pleura, peritoneum, pericardium or tunica vaginalis testis; and
  - (b) excludes soft tissue sarcoma, carcinoid tumour, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- (3) While mesothelioma attracts ICD-10-AM code C45, in applying this Statement of Principles the meaning of mesothelioma is that given in subsection (2).

- (4) For subsection (3), a reference to an ICD-10-AM code is a reference to the code assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in *The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM)*, Ninth Edition, effective date of 1 July 2015, copyrighted by the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority, ISBN 978-1-76007-020-5.

*Death from mesothelioma*

- (5) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, mesothelioma, in relation to a person, includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's mesothelioma.

Note: *terminal event* is defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

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

The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that mesothelioma and death from mesothelioma 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 MRCA.

Note: *relevant service* is defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

## **9 Factors that must exist**

At least one of the following factors must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting mesothelioma or death from mesothelioma with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

- (1) inhaling asbestos fibres:
  - (a) at the time material containing asbestos fibres was being applied, removed, dislodged, cut or drilled; and
  - (b) the first inhalation of asbestos fibres occurred at least ten years, before the clinical onset of mesothelioma;
- (2) inhaling talc containing asbestiform fibres:
  - (a) at the time material containing talc was being applied, removed or dislodged; and
  - (b) the first inhalation of talc occurred at least ten years, before the clinical onset of mesothelioma;

Note: *talc containing asbestiform fibres* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (3) having asbestosis at the time of the clinical onset of mesothelioma;

- (4) having received a cumulative equivalent dose of at least 0.1 sievert of ionising radiation to the affected region at least five years before the clinical onset of mesothelioma;

Note: *cumulative equivalent dose* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (5) inhaling erionite fibres on more days than not for at least five years before the clinical onset of mesothelioma, where the first inhalation of erionite fibres occurred at least ten years before the clinical onset of mesothelioma;

Note: *erionite* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (6) firefighting for a cumulative period of at least 1 000 hours before the clinical onset of mesothelioma, where the first exposure occurred at least ten years before the clinical onset of mesothelioma;

Note: *firefighting* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (7) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for mesothelioma.

## **10 Relationship to service**

- (1) The existence in a person of any factor referred to in section 9 must be related to the relevant service rendered by the person.
- (2) The factor set out in subsection 9(7) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, mesothelioma where the person's mesothelioma was suffered or contracted before or during (but did not arise out of) the person's relevant service.

## **11 Factors referring to an injury or disease covered by another Statement of Principles**

In this Statement of Principles:

- (1) if a factor referred to in section 9 applies in relation to a person; and
- (2) that factor refers to an injury or disease in respect of which a Statement of Principles has been determined under subsection 196B(2) of the VEA;

then the factors in that Statement of Principles apply in accordance with the terms of that Statement of Principles as in force from time to time.

# Schedule 1 - Dictionary

Note: See Section 6

## 1 Definitions

In this instrument:

***asbestiform*** means a type of mineral structure that resembles asbestos. Asbestiform fibres occur in polyfilamentous bundles that are composed of flexible, long, thin fibres that are easily separated from each other.

***cumulative equivalent dose*** means the total dose of ionising radiation received by the particular organ or tissue. The formula used to calculate the cumulative equivalent dose allows doses from multiple types of ionising radiation to be combined, by accounting for their differing biological effect. The unit of equivalent dose is the sievert. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, the calculation of cumulative equivalent dose excludes doses received from normal background radiation, but includes therapeutic radiation, diagnostic radiation, cosmic radiation at high altitude, radiation from occupation-related sources and radiation from nuclear explosions or accidents.

***erionite*** means a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that belongs to a group of minerals called zeolites.

***firefighting*** means being involved in the direct combat of fires, including activities to control, extinguish, mop-up or prevent fires, or participating in training activities involving fires.

***mesothelioma***—see subsection 7(2).

***MRCA*** means the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

***relevant service*** means:

- (a) operational service under the VEA;
- (b) peacekeeping service under the VEA;
- (c) hazardous service under the VEA;
- (d) British nuclear test defence service under the VEA;
- (e) warlike service under the MRCA; or
- (f) non-warlike service under the MRCA.

***talc containing asbestiform fibres*** means talc containing fibres that are asbestiform in habit.

Note: ***asbestiform*** is also defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

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

- (a) pneumonia;
- (b) respiratory failure;
- (c) cardiac arrest;
- (d) circulatory failure; or

(e) cessation of brain function.

**VEA** means the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.