



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

**Statement of Principles**  
**concerning**  
**OPISTHORCHIASIS**  
**(Reasonable Hypothesis)**  
**(No. 45 of 2016)**

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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 22 April 2016

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 'N. Saunders'.

Professor Nicholas Saunders AO  
Chairperson

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**1 Name**

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *opisthorchiasis (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 45 of 2016).

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on 23 May 2016.

**3 Authority**

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

**4 Revocation**

The Statement of Principles concerning opisthorchiasis No. 111 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 opisthorchiasis and death from opisthorchiasis.

*Meaning of opisthorchiasis*

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, opisthorchiasis means a symptomatic clinical infection of the biliary system by the trematodes *Opisthorchis felinus* or *Opisthorchis viverrini*. This infection is characterised by loss of appetite, diarrhoea, or a sense of abdominal pressure.
- (3) While opisthorchiasis attracts ICD-10-AM code B66.0, in applying this Statement of Principles the meaning of opisthorchiasis 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)*,

*Death from opisthorchiasis*

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

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 opisthorchiasis and death from opisthorchiasis 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 opisthorchiasis or death from opisthorchiasis with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

- (1) for infection with *Opisthorchis viverrini* only:
- (a) ingesting the skin or flesh of raw, undercooked, iced, pickled or smoked freshwater fish containing encysted larvae of *Opisthorchis viverrini*, at least three weeks before the clinical onset of opisthorchiasis; or
  - (b) ingesting the skin or flesh of raw, undercooked, iced, pickled or smoked freshwater fish from a country from Specified List 1 of countries, at least three weeks before the clinical onset of opisthorchiasis;

Note: *Specified List 1 of countries* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (2) for infection with *Opisthorchis felineus* only:
- (a) ingesting the skin or flesh of raw, undercooked, iced, pickled or smoked freshwater fish containing encysted larvae of *Opisthorchis felineus*, at least three weeks before the clinical onset of opisthorchiasis; or

- (b) ingesting the skin or flesh of raw, undercooked, iced, pickled or smoked freshwater fish from a country from Specified List 2 of countries, at least three weeks before the clinical onset of opisthorchiasis;

Note: *Specified List 2 of countries* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (3) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for opisthorchiasis.

## **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(3) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, opisthorchiasis where the person's opisthorchiasis 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:

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

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

**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.

**Specified List 1 of countries** means:

- (a) Cambodia;
- (b) Laos;
- (c) Myanmar (Burma);
- (d) Thailand; or
- (e) Vietnam.

**Specified List 2 of countries** means:

- (a) Albania;
- (b) Armenia;
- (c) Azerbaijan;
- (d) Belarus (Belorussia);
- (e) Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- (f) Bulgaria;
- (g) Cambodia;
- (h) Croatia;
- (i) Czech Republic;
- (j) Estonia;
- (k) Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- (l) Georgia;
- (m) Germany;
- (n) Hungary;
- (o) Kazakhstan;
- (p) Kyrgyzstan (Kirgiziya);
- (q) Kosovo;
- (r) Laos;
- (s) Latvia;
- (t) Lithuania;
- (u) Moldova (Moldavia);

- (v) Montenegro;
- (w) Myanmar (Burma);
- (x) Poland;
- (y) Romania;
- (z) Russia;
- (aa) Serbia;
- (bb) Slovakia;
- (cc) Slovenia;
- (dd) Tajikistan;
- (ee) Thailand;
- (ff) Turkmenistan;
- (gg) Ukraine;
- (hh) Uzbekistan; or
- (ii) Vietnam.

***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*.