

Statement of Principles

concerning

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)  
(Reasonable Hypothesis)

(No. 46 of 2020)

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

Dated 12 June 2020

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| The Common Seal of the Repatriation Medical Authority was affixed to this instrument at the direction of: |
| RMA Chairperson signature  Professor Nicholas Saunders AO  Chairperson |

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1 Definitions 5

1. Name

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)* *(Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 46 of 2020).

1. Commencement

This instrument commences on 22 June 2020.

1. Authority

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

1. 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.

1. Definitions

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

1. Kind of injury, disease or death to which this Statement of Principles relates
   1. This Statement of Principles is about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Meaning of **coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

* 1. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) means an illness caused by infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Note: Typical clinical features of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle pain, fatigue, shortness of breath, pneumonia and new loss of taste and smell.

Death from **coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

* 1. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19),in relation to a person, includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

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

1. Basis for determining the factors

The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical‑scientific evidence that indicates that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) 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: ***MRCA***, ***relevant service*** and ***VEA*** are defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

1. 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 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

* 1. being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as specified within the 14 days before the clinical onset of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19);

Note: ***being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as specified*** is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

* 1. inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

1. Relationship to service
   1. The existence in a person of any factor referred to in section 8, must be related to the relevant service rendered by the person.
   2. The factor set out in subsection 8(2) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) where the person's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was suffered or contracted before or during (but did not arise out of) the person's relevant service.
2. 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 8 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 5

1. Definitions
   1. In this instrument:
      1. ***being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 as specified*** means:
         1. being in a country or an area of a country that is experiencing current SARS-CoV-2 transmission; or
         2. being in the same household, or immediate work or travel environment, as a person with SARS-CoV-2 infection; or
         3. having direct contact with an object or substance contaminated with SARS-CoV-2; or
         4. having direct contact with, or being within two metres of, a person with SARS-CoV-2 infection; or
         5. inhaling droplet nuclei or aerosols contaminated with SARS-CoV-2.
      2. ***coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)***—see subsection 6(2).
      3. ***MRCA*** means the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.
      4. ***relevant service*** means:
         1. operational service under the VEA;
         2. peacekeeping service under the VEA;
         3. hazardous service under the VEA;
         4. British nuclear test defence service under the VEA;
         5. warlike service under the MRCA; or
         6. non-warlike service under the MRCA.

Note: ***MRCA*** and ***VEA*** are also defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

* + 1. ***terminal event*** means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes the following:
       1. pneumonia;
       2. respiratory failure;
       3. cardiac arrest;
       4. circulatory failure; or
       5. cessation of brain function.
    2. ***VEA*** means the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.