

**DECLARATION UNDER SUBSECTION 196B(9)
OF THE VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS ACT 1986**

The Repatriation Medical Authority (the Authority), under subsection 196B(9) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the Act), makes the following declaration in respect of an investigation to review the contents of a Statement of Principles in force under the Act concerning **chronic bronchitis and emphysema**. The investigation related to "asbestos as a factor in chronic bronchitis and emphysema" and the Notice of investigation was published in the Government Notices Gazette of 27 February 2008.

The Authority declares that it does not propose to amend the Statements of Principles, Instrument Nos. 30 & 31 of 2004, concerning **chronic bronchitis and emphysema** for the reason that the new sound medical-scientific evidence (SMSE) available is not sufficient to justify an amendment to the Statements of Principles already determined in respect of **chronic bronchitis and emphysema**.

The investigation identified 14 studies concerning the association of asbestos exposure with chronic bronchitis or emphysema (eight studies) or respiratory function (six studies). In the studies concerning chronic bronchitis and emphysema, the measurement of exposures and the definitions of end points were inadequate. The findings of these studies were also inconsistent. Selection bias, inadequate assessment of exposure based on self-report, inadequate assessment of outcome based on symptoms or self-report, and lack of control for confounding were all limitations of these studies. Overall, studies of respiratory function in asbestos-exposed workers suggested small declines in lung function, but the significance of these findings in relation to chronic bronchitis and emphysema is unclear as lung function was not correlated with these outcomes. For these reasons, the Authority considered that the SMSE available does not raise a reasonable hypothesis concerning a causal link between asbestos exposure and chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

The Common Seal of the)
Repatriation Medical Authority)
was affixed in the presence of)

KEN DONALD
CHAIRPERSON 22/10/2008