



Australian Government
Repatriation Medical Authority

Statement of Principles
concerning

SOMATIC SYMPTOM DISORDER

No. 25 of 2014

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 somatic symptom disorder No. 25 of 2014.

Determination

2. This Statement of Principles is determined by the Repatriation Medical Authority under subsection **196B(3)** of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the VEA).

Kind of injury, disease or death

3. (a) This Statement of Principles is about **somatic symptom disorder** and **death from somatic symptom disorder**.
(b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, "**somatic symptom disorder**" means a mental disorder characterised by one or more somatic symptoms which has been diagnosed by a psychiatrist and which meets the following criteria (derived from DSM-5):
 - A. The symptom or symptoms are distressing and result in significant disruption of daily life; and
 - B. Excessive thoughts, feelings, or behaviours related to the somatic symptoms or associated health concerns as manifested by at least two of the following:

- (i) Disproportionate and persistent thoughts about the seriousness of one's symptoms;
 - (ii) Persistently high level of anxiety about health or symptoms; or
 - (iii) Excessive time and energy devoted to these symptoms or health concerns; and
- C. Although any one somatic symptom may not be continuously present, the state of being symptomatic has persisted for at least six months.
- (c) Somatic symptom disorder attracts ICD-10-AM code F45.1.
- (d) In the application of this Statement of Principles, the definition of "**somatic symptom disorder**" is that given at paragraph 3(b) above.

Basis for determining the factors

- 4. On the sound medical-scientific evidence available, the Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that it is more probable than not that **somatic symptom disorder** and **death from somatic symptom disorder** can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans or members of the Forces under the VEA, or members under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (the MRCA).

Factors that must be related to service

- 5. Subject to clause 7, at least one of the factors set out in clause 6 must be related to the relevant service rendered by the person.

Factors

- 6. The factor that must exist before it can be said that, on the balance of probabilities, **somatic symptom disorder** or **death from somatic symptom disorder** is connected with the circumstances of a person's relevant service is:
 - (a) being the victim of severe childhood abuse before the clinical onset of somatic symptom disorder; or
 - (b) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for somatic symptom disorder.

Factors that apply only to material contribution or aggravation

- 7. Paragraph 6(b) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, somatic symptom disorder where the person's somatic symptom disorder was suffered or contracted before or during (but not arising out of) the person's relevant service.

Inclusion of Statements of Principles

- 8. In this Statement of Principles if a relevant factor applies and that factor includes an injury or disease in respect of which there is a Statement of Principles then the factors in that last mentioned Statement of Principles apply

was affixed to this instrument)
in the presence of:)

PROFESSOR NICHOLAS SAUNDERS AO
CHAIRPERSON