



Australian Government
Repatriation Medical Authority

**Statement of Principles
concerning
CUT, STAB, ABRASION AND LACERATION
(Reasonable Hypothesis)
(No. 37 of 2025)**

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

Dated 15 April 2025

Professor Terence Campbell AM
Chairperson
by and on behalf of
The Repatriation Medical Authority

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1 Name

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *cut, stab, abrasion and laceration (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 37 of 2025).

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on 19 May 2025.

3 Authority

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

4 Repeal

The Statement of Principles concerning cut, stab, abrasion and laceration No. 53 of 2016 (Federal Register of Legislation No. F2016L00567) made under subsections 196B(2) and (8) of the VEA is repealed.

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 cut, stab, abrasion and laceration and death from cut, stab, abrasion and laceration.

Meaning of cut, stab, abrasion and laceration

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, cut, stab, abrasion and laceration:
- (a) means an injury that interrupts the continuity of the epidermis or other external or exposed tissue and causes a wound. The wound may or may not penetrate to the subcutaneous tissues and underlying structures; and
 - (b) includes friction burns and needlestick injury; and
 - (c) excludes wounds that were caused by:
 - (i) burns other than friction burns;
 - (ii) dental abrasion;
 - (iii) explosive device or fragment thereof;

- (iv) gunshot;
- (v) missile; or
- (vi) traumatic contusion or haematoma;

Note: Examples of “other external or exposed tissue” include cornea, sclera, mouth, fingernails and toenails.

Death from cut, stab, abrasion and laceration

- (3) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, cut, stab, abrasion and laceration, in relation to a person, includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's cut, stab, abrasion and laceration.

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 cut, stab, abrasion and laceration and death from cut, stab, abrasion and laceration 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.

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 cut, stab, abrasion and laceration or death from cut, stab, abrasion and laceration with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

- (1) having direct physical trauma to the affected site at the time of the cut, stab, abrasion or laceration;

Note: Examples of friction burns (a type of abrasion) include those from sliding down ropes, motorcycle or bicycle accidents and a common type of stab wound is a needlestick injury.

- (2) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for cut, stab, abrasion or laceration before clinical worsening.

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(2) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, cut, stab, abrasion and laceration where the person's cut, stab, abrasion and laceration 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:

cut, stab, abrasion and laceration—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.

Note: ***MRCA*** and ***VEA*** are 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*.