Australian Government
Repatriation Medical Authority

Statement of Principles concerning SCRUB TYPHUS (Reasonable Hypothesis) (No. 68 of 2026)

The Repatriation Medical Authority determines the following Statement of Principles under section 370CB of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

Dated 19 October 2026

Dr Anthony Lynham AO
Chairperson
by and on behalf of
The Repatriation Medical Authority

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1 Name

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *scrub typhus (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 68 of 2026).

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on 16 November 2026.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 370CB of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

4 Repeal

The Statement of Principles concerning scrub typhus (Reasonable Hypothesis) (No. 77 of 2018) (Federal Register of Legislation No. F2018L01162) made under subsection 196B(2) of the VEA is repealed.

5 Application

This instrument applies to a claim to which 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 scrub typhus and death from scrub typhus.

*Meaning of **scrub typhus***

(2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, scrub typhus:

> means a clinical illness caused by infection with *Orientia tsutsugamushi, Orientia chuto*, or *Orientia chiloensis*;

Note 1: The *Orientia* genus of bacteria contains three species, of which *Orientia tsutsugamushi* is the most common cause of scrub typhus.

Note 2: Humans usually acquire the infection from the bite of an infected trombiculid mite (chigger).

Note 3: Symptoms of scrub typhus include, but are not limited to, eschar at the bite site, high fever, headache, myalgia, cough, a rash, and lymphadenopathy.

(3) While scrub typhus attracts ICD 10 AM code A75.3, in applying this Statement of Principles the meaning of scrub typhus 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), Tenth Edition, effective date of 1 July 2017, copyrighted by the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority, ISBN 978-1-76007-296-4.

Death from ***scrub typhus***

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

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 scrub typhus and death from scrub typhus can be related to relevant service under the MRCA.

Note: ***MRCA*** and ***relevant service*** 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 scrub typhus or death from scrub typhus with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

(1) being exposed to *Orientia tsutsugamushi, Orientia chuto*, or *Orientia chiloensis* as a result of:

(a) being bitten by a trombiculid mite (chigger) infected with *Orientia* species; or
(b) being in an area that is endemic for scrub typhus; or
(c) having percutaneous exposure to blood contaminated with *Orientia* species; or
(d) receiving a blood transfusion, blood products or a stem cell transplant contaminated with *Orientia* species;

within the 28 days before clinical onset;

Note: Areas endemic for scrub typhus include Africa, the Middle East, South America, Islands of the Pacific, and the part of the world known as the "tsutsugamushi triangle" which extends from northern Japan and far-eastern Russia in the north, to northern Australia in the south, and Pakistan in the west.

(2) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for scrub typhus 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 clinical worsening aspect of factors set out in section 9 apply only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, scrub typhus where the person's scrub typhus 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 section 370CB of the MRCA;

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*.

relevant service means:

(a) warlike service;
(b) non-warlike service;
(c) British nuclear test defence service;
(d) hazardous service.

scrub typhus—see subsection 7(2).

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.