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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release - Wednesday, 19 May 2010

RSL Queensland helps secure federal budget funding for veterans

RSL Queensland is pleased to confirm that the Australian Government has delivered on several veterans' affairs issues campaigned for by the League in the recent Federal Budget.

As a result of a 2008 report submitted by the Returned & Services League of Australia in response to the Clarke Review and several individual advocacy efforts by RSL Queensland members on behalf of the League, two key veterans' affairs issues have been addressed.

These are the reintroduction of SHOAMP (Study of Health Outcomes for Aircraft Maintenance Personnel) for former F-111 workers and (in agreement with the Clarke Review) the extension of compensation allowances under the Veterans' Entitlement Act (VEA) for those involved in the British nuclear testing in Maralinga, Emu and Montebello in the 1950s.

RSL Queensland President Doug Formby said Veterans' Affairs Advisor Viv Quinn and former vice president Ray Townsend attended the senate enquiry into SHOAMP to advocate for former F-111 workers in need of healthcare.

"RSL Queensland's support of several key veterans' issues, alongside DVA and other ex-service organisations, has seen the Australian Government take notice in this budget proposal and we are proud to have played a part in securing assistance for our country's veterans," Mr Formby said.

"RSL Queensland seeks to support its members not only through its pensions and welfare work but also through its core function of advocacy for the rights of veterans."

As a result of these efforts, in conjunction with other ex-service organisations and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, SHOAMP has been reopened to extend compensation and healthcare availability to those veterans affected, including Pick and Patch workers.

The Government has also announced a \$36 million response to the Clarke Review which will see key benefits delivered to thousands of Australians previously not included under the VEA, as campaigned by RSL.

The Federal Budget declared service by Australian Defence Force personnel in the British atomic tests as non-warlike hazardous and allocated \$24.2 million to such claims.

Mr Formby said the move to cover British nuclear testing personnel under the VEA was not only a welcome change, but also an historic decision.

"This advancement has seen the Veterans' Entitlement Act be used for the first time to cover those serving in Australia outside of WWII."

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