

# Statement of Principles

concerning

## **OTITIS EXTERNA**

**ICD CODES: 053.71, 054.73, 112.82, 380.10, 380.12 - 380.16, 380.22,  
380.23, 680.0**

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986  
subsection 196B(2)

1. Being of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that **otitis externa** and **death from otitis externa** can be related to operational service rendered by veterans, peacekeeping service rendered by members of Peacekeeping Forces and hazardous service rendered by members of the Forces, the Repatriation Medical Authority determines, under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the Act), that the factors that must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting **otitis externa** or **death from otitis externa** with the circumstances of that service, are:
  - (a) being occupationally required to swim or dive in water immediately before the clinical onset of otitis externa; or
  - (b) undergoing a course of therapeutic radiation to the head or neck region within the 18 months immediately before the clinical onset of otitis externa; or
  - (c) having a foreign object inserted into, or removed from, the affected ear canal immediately before the clinical onset of otitis externa; or

- (d) suffering inflammation of the ear canal of the affected ear as a complication of a specified systemic inflammatory skin condition immediately before the clinical onset of otitis externa; or
  - (e) suffering inflammation of the ear canal of the affected ear as a complication of an infection involving the external ear canal immediately before the clinical onset of otitis externa; or
  - (f) suffering from chronic suppurative otitis media of the affected ear within the 30 days immediately before the clinical onset of otitis externa; or
  - (g) for malignant otitis externa only, suffering from *type 1* diabetes mellitus immediately before the clinical onset of that otitis externa; or
  - (h) for malignant otitis externa only, being in an immunocompromised state immediately before the clinical onset of that otitis externa; or
  - (j) being occupationally required to swim or dive in water immediately before the clinical worsening of otitis externa; or
  - (k) having a foreign object or implement inserted into, or removed from, the affected ear canal immediately before the clinical worsening of otitis externa; or
  - (m) suffering inflammation of the ear canal of the affected ear as a complication of a specified systemic inflammatory skin condition immediately before the clinical worsening of otitis externa; or
  - (n) suffering inflammation of the ear canal of the affected ear as a complication of an infection involving the external ear canal immediately before the clinical worsening of otitis externa; or
  - (o) suffering from chronic suppurative otitis media of the affected ear within the 30 days immediately before the clinical worsening of otitis externa; or
  - (p) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for otitis externa.
2. Subject to clause 3 (below) at least one of the factors set out in paragraphs **1(a) to 1(p)** must be related to any service rendered by a person.
  3. The factors set out in paragraphs **1(j) to 1(p)** apply only where:

- (a) the person's **otitis externa** was contracted before a period, or part of a period, of service to which the factor is related; and
- (b) the relationship suggested between the **otitis externa** and the particular service of a person is a relationship set out in paragraph 8(1)(e), 9(1)(e), 70(5)(d) or 70(5A)(d) of the Act.

4. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

**“chronic suppurative otitis media”** means a group of recurrent or continuous infective disorders of the middle ear characterised by perforation of the tympanic membrane, long standing painless aural discharge and varying deafness, attracting ICD code of 382.1, 382.2, 382.3, 382.4 or 382.9;

**“contact dermatitis”** means an acute or chronic dermatitis (skin inflammation) caused by materials or substances coming in contact with the skin, which may involve either allergic or non-allergic (irritant) mechanisms, attracting an ICD code in the range 692.0 to 692.6, or ICD code 692.8 or 692.9;

**“course”** means five or more episodes of treatment within a 125 day period;

**“eczema”** means a pruritic, papulovesicular dermatitis, attracting ICD code 692.9;

**“herpes simplex”** means a group of acute infections, attracting ICD code 054, caused by herpes simplex virus type 1 or type 2, characterised by the development of one or more small fluid-filled vesicles with a raised erythematous base on the skin or mucous membrane and occurring as a primary infection or recurring because of reactivation of a latent infection;

**“herpes zoster”** means a unilateral vesicular eruption within a dermatome, often associated with severe pain, caused by reactivation of latent *varicella-zoster virus* (VZV) from a dorsal root ganglion, attracting ICD code 053;

**“ICD code”** means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in the Australian Version of The International Classification of Diseases, 9th revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM), effective date of 1 July 1995, copyrighted by the National Coding Centre, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, NSW, and having ISBN 0 642 22235 5;

**“immuno-compromised state”** means a state where the immune response has been attenuated by administration of immunosuppressive drugs, or by irradiation, certain types of infection, malnutrition, or a malignant disease process;

**“infection involving the external ear canal”** means herpes simplex or herpes zoster;

**“malignant otitis externa”** means a severe progressive necrotising infection of the external auditory canal usually caused by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, attracting ICD code 380.14;

**“neurodermatitis”** means an eczematous dermatosis, attracting ICD code 691.8 or 698.3;

**“otitis externa”** means a generalised or localised inflammatory condition of the external auditory meatal skin which may arise primarily in the meatus or be a manifestation of a generalised skin condition, attracting ICD code 053.71, 054.73, 112.82, 380.10, 380.12, 380.13, 380.14, 380.15, 380.16, 380.22, 380.23 or 680.0;

**“psoriasis”** means a chronic squamous dermatitis, attracting ICD code 696.1;

**“seborrhoeic dermatitis”** means a chronic inflammatory disease of the skin characterised by exfoliation and pruritus, attracting ICD code 690;

**“specified systemic inflammatory skin condition”** means contact dermatitis, seborrhoeic dermatitis, neurodermatitis, psoriasis or eczema;

**“therapeutic radiation”** means medical treatment by irradiation to the person with gamma rays, x-rays, alpha particles or beta particles;

**“type 1 diabetes mellitus”** means insulin dependent diabetes mellitus.

Dated this *Eighteenth* day of *July* 1995

The Common Seal of the )  
Repatriation Medical Authority )  
was affixed to this instrument )  
in the presence of: )

KEN DONALD  
CHAIRMAN