

Statement of Principles
concerning

POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA

No. 24 of 2008

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 polymyalgia rheumatica No. 24 of 2008.

Determination

2. The Repatriation Medical Authority under subsection **196B(3)** and **(8)** of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the VEA):
 - (a) revokes Instrument No. 90 of 1996 concerning polymyalgia rheumatica; and
 - (b) determines in its place this Statement of Principles.

Kind of injury, disease or death

3.
 - (a) This Statement of Principles is about **polymyalgia rheumatica** and **death from polymyalgia rheumatica**.
 - (b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, "**polymyalgia rheumatica**" means a clinical syndrome consisting of bilateral aching and stiffness persisting for at least one month involving the neck or torso, shoulder or proximal regions of the arms, or the pelvic girdle; a rapid relief of symptoms in response to corticosteroids; and with an erythrocyte sedimentation rate greater than 40 mm/hour or systemic symptoms such as malaise, fatigue and a low-grade fever, occurring in the absence of other

diseases capable of causing the musculoskeletal system symptoms.

This definition excludes polymyalgia rheumatica coexistent with giant cell arteritis.

- (c) Polymyalgia rheumatica attracts ICD-10-AM code M35.3.
- (d) In the application of this Statement of Principles, the definition of "**polymyalgia rheumatica**" is that given at paragraph 3(b) above.

Basis for determining the factors

- 4. After examining the available sound medical-scientific evidence the Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that it is more probable than not on the sound medical-scientific evidence available, that the only factor that can be related to the cause of or material contribution to or aggravation of **polymyalgia rheumatica** or **death from polymyalgia rheumatica** and which 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) is that set out in clause 5.

Factors that must be related to service

- 5. The factor that must exist before it can be said that, on the balance of probabilities, in relation to the circumstances of a person's relevant service causing or materially contributing to or aggravating **polymyalgia rheumatica** or **death from polymyalgia rheumatica** is inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for polymyalgia rheumatica.

Other definitions

- 6. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

"death from polymyalgia rheumatica" in relation to a person includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's polymyalgia rheumatica;

"ICD-10-AM code" means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM), Fifth Edition, effective date of 1 July 2006, copyrighted by the National Centre for Classification in Health, Sydney, NSW, and having ISBN 1 86487 772 3;

"relevant service" means:

- (a) eligible war service (other than operational service) under the VEA; or
- (b) defence service (other than hazardous service) under the VEA; or
- (c) peacetime service under the MRCA;

"terminal event" means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes:

- (a) pneumonia;
- (b) respiratory failure;
- (c) cardiac arrest;
- (d) circulatory failure; or
- (e) cessation of brain function.

Application

- 7. This Instrument applies to all matters to which section 120B of the VEA or section 339 of the MRCA applies.

Date of effect

- 8. This Instrument takes effect from 5 March 2008.

Dated this *twentieth* day of *February*
2008

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

KEN DONALD
CHAIRPERSON