



**Australian Government**  
**Repatriation Medical Authority**

**Statement of Principles**  
**concerning**  
**GIANT CELL ARTERITIS**  
**(Reasonable Hypothesis)**  
**(No. 11 of 2021)**

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

Dated 24 December 2020

The Common Seal of the  
Repatriation Medical Authority  
was affixed to this instrument  
at the direction of:

Professor Nicholas Saunders AO  
Chairperson

## Contents

1	Name .....	3
2	Commencement .....	3
3	Authority .....	3
4	Repeal .....	3
5	Application.....	3
6	Definitions.....	3
7	Kind of injury, disease or death to which this Statement of Principles relates .....	3
8	Basis for determining the factors .....	4
9	Factors that must exist.....	4
10	Relationship to service .....	4
11	Factors referring to an injury or disease covered by another Statement of Principles.....	5
<b>Schedule 1 - Dictionary .....</b>		<b>6</b>
1	Definitions.....	6

**1 Name**

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *giant cell arteritis (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 11 of 2021).

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on 25 January 2021.

**3 Authority**

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

**4 Repeal**

The Statement of Principles concerning giant cell arteritis No. 71 of 2012 (Federal Register of Legislation No. F2012L02082) made under subsection 196B(2) of the VEA is repealed.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 giant cell arteritis and death from giant cell arteritis.

*Meaning of giant cell arteritis*

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, giant cell arteritis means a systemic autoimmune vasculitis that involves large and medium-sized arteries and principally affects the cranial branches of the carotid arteries.

Note 1: Examples of affected arteries include the temporal, occipital, ophthalmic, vertebral, distal subclavian and axillary arteries, and the thoracic aorta. Typical clinical symptoms associated with the involvement of the cranial arteries include headache, visual loss and jaw claudication.

Note 2: This condition is also known as temporal arteritis and cranial arteritis.

- (3) While giant cell arteritis attracts ICD-10-AM code M31.5 or M31.6, in applying this Statement of Principles the meaning of giant cell arteritis 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 giant cell arteritis*

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

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 giant cell arteritis and death from giant cell arteritis 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 giant cell arteritis or death from giant cell arteritis with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

- (1) having smoked at least 10 pack-years of tobacco products before the clinical onset of giant cell arteritis, and where smoking has ceased, the clinical onset of giant cell arteritis has occurred within 20 years of cessation;

Note: *pack-year of tobacco products* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (2) having smoked at least 10 pack-years of tobacco products before the clinical worsening of giant cell arteritis, and where smoking has ceased, the clinical worsening of giant cell arteritis has occurred within 20 years of cessation;

Note: *pack-year of tobacco products* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (3) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for giant cell arteritis.

## **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 factors set out in subsections 9(2) to 9(3) apply only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, giant cell arteritis where the person's giant cell arteritis 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:

***giant cell arteritis***—see subsection 7(2).

***MRCA*** means the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

***pack-year of tobacco products*** means:

- (a) 20 cigarettes per day for a period of one calendar year; or
- (b) 7,300 cigarettes in a period of one calendar year; or
- (c) 7,300 grams of smoking tobacco by weight, either in cigarettes, pipe tobacco or cigars, or a combination of same, in a period of one calendar year.

***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 also 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*.