REPATRIATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 1983

Date Introduced: 5 October 1983
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. A.C. Holding, M.P., Minister for Veteran's Affairs

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To amend Repatriation legislation in accordance with Budget provisions and other recent Government decisions.

Background

The Repatriation Act 1920 provides for the payment of a pension, known as service pension, to veterans who have served in a theatre of war, and have reached 60 years of age or are permanently unable to work. The service pension is broadly equivalent to the age or invalid pension. It is subject to an income test in the same way as a social security pension. The Budget provides for a number of changes which are to apply to both social security pensions and service pensions which include:

Entitlement to fringe benefits,
Guardian's allowance,
Spouse carer's pension where a husband cares for his incapacitated service pensioner wife,
Income test for pensioners of age 70 and more,
Remote area allowance,
Orphan's pensions.

In addition the Bill proposes the appointment of a Deputy Chairman of the Repatriation Commission. It also provides for increased pensions for the limbless and blind, will ensure that income tests applicable to Social Security pensions apply also to service pensions, and clarifies some insurance aspects of the Defence Service Homes Scheme.

Main Provisions

Clause 4 provides for the appointment of a Deputy Chairman of the Repatriation Commission rather than his election by the Commissioners.
Clause 5 amends Section 35AAA of the Repatriation Act so that allowable income for fringe benefits entitlement is indexed twice annually in accordance with the CPI.

Clause 11 provides for a guardian's allowance where a married service pensioner has the care and control of a child due to the illness of his wife.

Clause 12 provides for the payment of service pension to a husband who provides constant care and attention to his severely handicapped service pensioner wife.

Clause 14 amends provisions for income tests for determining eligibility for service pension payable to people over age 70 to conform with tests for age pensions.

Clauses 30, 31 and 32 provide for increases to a number of allowances and pensions including:

- Attendant's allowance payable to seriously incapacitated veterans,
- Orphan's pension,
- Additional pension payable in cases of amputation and loss of sight.

Clause 35 regularises the practice by the Defence Service Homes Corporation of providing insurance cover for structural improvements and risks related to land.

Part IV ensures that amendments to the Repatriation Act 1920 concerning male carers of severely handicapped service pensioners extend to the Repatriation (Special Overseas Service) Act 1962.

Part V provides for increases in orphan's pension payable under the Seaman's War Pensions and Allowances Act 1940 in line with the amendment to the Repatriation Act.

For further information, if required, contact:

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Defence Group

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE