

Dear All,

Firstly, I wish to offer my apologies for not being able to attend today's meeting but it was a decision that was only made at 6.30pm last night. I don't offer excuses but the explanation that I have is 3, 7000 word assignments due on Friday and four major law exams in the next two weeks and as I am writing this letter to you at 11.39pm and am desperate for time. So I sincerely apologise for not being in attendance.

I have however outlined my activities since the last meeting and attach some copies of letters for your information.

As promised I commenced lobbying the government by sending them a letter a day commencing on the 1st of March. A copy of the letter I wrote (with the help of Kathleen Henry) follows and if you wish can be read out.

In response to this letter I received a response from the Prime Ministers office getting a complete palm off to the Minister of Defence.

To this response I sent back a letter telling him that it was a complete palm off and a waste of time as not only does the Minister of Defence know about our problem but so does other departments like DVA and so forth and no body is moving. I explained that we now have a contact in the US that has been settled and complained about our governments lack of response. I have not yet received a further response from the Prime Ministers Office.

However, I have received a letter from the Office of the Minister for Employment Services Minister assisting the Minister for Defence. This letter is also attached and can be read out if so desired. This response to my letters got me furious. So from here I sent back a letter stating that their responses have been nothing short of poor and that this response was more of a palm off then the first letter I received from parliament and was a waste of the Assistant Defence Advisors time in writing the letter. I told them that they weren't telling me anything new and that I would like some new information because their letter of the 7 May 2004 was boring and won't send me away but has made me more furious in the governments dealing of the whole affair. Not to mention the stationary quality made me more furious as it would have been worth more than the cost of paying the person who would have scribed the letter.

In the same ink as my last response to the letter of 7 May 2004 I sent copies of all correspondence to the opposition party – I will see if they jump on the band wagon – this could prove to be effective or a waste of time – only time will tell.

Since our last meeting, as promised I have obtained a list of all the members of parliament and their respective electorates along with their contact details. If anyone would like their members contact details please send me an email or phone me and I will get the details to you.

I have also sent a letter to 13 womens/family type magazines telling them about our plight, and what we are all about requesting some coverage – I am still waiting on a response and will follow this up shortly.

I have continued to send letters to the editors of newspapers around Australia and will keep you posted on responses.

Regarding the life insurance queries, I have made a couple of inquiries with various insurance companies and they all responded slightly different. The only thing that I can suggest to do is to ring your insurance companies anonymously and query about whether being exposed to chemicals etc affects your policy, also whether you need to specifically advise them of your exposure or failure to advise renders your policy null and void -- make sure you record the name of the person you spoke to, the time and date of the call and what the number was you called.

After the last meeting I also obtained a transcript of the 7.30 Report on the Kimberly Report and the Health Study for the Kimberly's Chemical Poisoning --if you wish to have a look at either one of these please let me know and I will forward a copy to you. I have also been trying to obtain the judgement from the WA Workcover case mentioned at the last meeting -- this is believed to be an unreported judgement which doesn't mean it is unreported as it still is, just not officially in the WA Reports. If anyone has any further information such as dates, who was the full name of the party that brought the action etc it would be useful in my searching.

With regards to a class action, I have made inquiries and it is possible to do one. In order to pursue this one further I need an accurate representation of those who want to pursue this avenue so that I can give you an accurate big picture scenario -- I really wanted to talk further about this at the meeting but unfortunately I wasn't able to be there.

I am currently in the process of putting together a letter and "stories" to go to the United Nations. I don't know whether they will be interested but we may as well give it a go. So please send me some stories.

I have also found some excellent web sites with information on multiple chemical exposure -- I have sent these to Ian and he was going to set up links to them on the Goop Troop website.

Well that is all I can think of at the moment.

Please send me an email or give me a call if you need any information or have any queries. My contact details are tj.price@student.qut.edu.au or 0405 210 941.

I apologise again for not being able to attend and I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.

Regards

Tracey Price

1st March 2004

The Hon John Winston Howard
Prime Minister
GPO Box 59
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Howard,

RE: RAAF F111 DESEAL RESEAL WORKERS

I am writing to you on behalf of some very sick individuals who have been made sick from exposure to extremely toxic chemicals during the performance of their duties whilst providing a defence capability to this great nation of ours. I also write to you as a daughter of one of these persons and a friend of many of the others.

It alarms me greatly that these individuals served this great nation of ours and can't get the slightest bit of help in return – is your government sitting down waiting for these individuals to die so that the problem will go away – well I am here to state that I am the next generation and I will be around for a long while yet.

These individuals are not asking for the world even though they are entitled to it – do you have any idea what they have lost – babies, children, houses, income, spouses, their own minds, their own independence, most are slowing loosing their lives, lots have already lost their lives.

In an election year, tens of thousands plus is individuals is a lot of votes and by the time you add their spouses, extended families, children, friends, current serving members of the Defence Forces as well as all other Veterans – this could potentially constitute a lot of votes. I am also sure people would be reluctant to join our Defence Forces if they new how they were really going to be treated and cared for.

All these individuals aren't asking for a lot - firstly they need the gold card, guaranteed unlimited medical cover for them and their immediate families. They also need to be guaranteed life insurance – they are dying and can't get insurance due to their exposure to toxic chemicals. Even those with Superannuation cannot receive the death/disability component to assist their families in the event of their death, because of the toxic chemical exposure received whilst serving in the Defence Force. We are seeking ongoing government assistance to cover these insurance shortcomings.

Don't even bother referring this to the Department of Veteran Affairs – we are in contact with them and are getting no where fast.

These individuals are dying everyday – we need answers.

There are hundreds of ongoing reports and studies – each proving proof and substantial evidence supporting our claims of illnesses and diseases attributable to multiple chemical exposure.

The Royal Australian Air Force has admitted that exposure happened to the servicemen working on the F111 Aircraft (the nation's pride and joy – our only fighter bomber), they have admitted failure of duty of care, and they have recognised the effects – why do we need to keep studying it – our people are dying.

Babies lost – do you know how many wives lost babies – nearly all of them lost at least one whilst their husbands were working with chemicals – we have research that shows the toxic chemicals do cross through the womb. A particular study and subsequent legal case in America proved that MethylEthylKetone crosses the placenta and causes deformities and retardation in the growing embryo.

There is a Professor of Toxicology at Kangaroo Island in South Australia who has undertaken studies and research on multiple chemical exposure to Australian workers both military and civilian over the last 20 years. Why has his input not been included in the expensive, time consuming, inconclusive “independent” health study undertaken by the government? Why was the health study commissioned to study the effects of only one of chemicals used at the time of contamination instead of all the chemicals as they were all used in conjunction with each other.

Studies already undertaken around the world agree that multiple chemical exposure (also known as multiple chemical sensitivity syndrome) causes damage to the endocrine, immune and neurological systems of the body. Once a system is saturated with toxic chemicals, any further exposure by any chemicals creates a “sensitivity” and therefore exacerbates the body's response to these toxins. The greater the response, the more symptoms a person suffers, and the less the tolerance to further exposures. These servicemen were exposed to toxic chemicals to saturation level time after time after time. There were ineffective, if any, safety equipments issued to protect the brain, lungs, skin, eyes, and all other internal parts of the body from this exposure. This has also been recognised and accepted as fact by the Air Force and also contributed to the negligence of the government to provide adequate protection of its servants.

The symptoms suffered by these servicemen include, but are not limited to, memory loss, personality disorders, depression (to the point of suicidal tendencies and actual suicides), cognitive dysfunction, premature ageing, impotence, rage, cancer, autoimmune diseases including lupus and rheumatoid arthritis, skin diseases and cancers, neuropathy, gastrointestinal disorders, gut disorders, bowel cancers and disorders, lung and oesophageal cancers and disorders and breathing difficulties, and loss of temperature control. These have caused loss of life, loss of marriages and family breakups, loss of businesses, loss of social interaction, loss of income, loss of homes, loss of the ability to communicate and make decisions, and loss of esteem.

These were all men who were proud to join the Defence Force to serve and protect this nation, these were men who were highly trained technicians. They were selected above their peers, to become members of the Defence Force because they met the stringent criteria of health, fitness, intelligence and suitability to the military environment. To see the losses they

are suffering now, physically, mentally, emotionally and financially, because of their desire to serve this Country, is more than heartbreaking. To know it has taken them years to swallow their pride and seek assistance from the nation and then keep being rejected and pushed aside, is a disgrace. Also, to know that these conditions were not suffered as a result of conflict, but serving at home and using chemicals which the hierarchy knew were toxic, but continued to make them be exposed to and therefore in physical danger, is horrific.

What these servicemen, and their spouses, children and widows need is immediate recognition of their conditions through the Veteran's Entitlements Act and the Department of Veteran's Affairs and full entitlements as totally and permanently incapacitated Veterans. They deserve and require immediate and legitimate compensation through the Military Compensation and Rehabilitation Scheme. The general rule of \$25,000.00 compensation to military personnel is an insult. Esso workers were each granted \$6,000,000.00 compensation last August for "stress suffered as a result of the refinery explosion in Melbourne". Stress is the least of our men's concerns. Our men are damaged, diseased, injured, traumatised, and dying. The refinery explosion was an accident. The toxic contamination of our men was no accident. It was an ongoing policy of the defence department over 25 years. These men have also lost years of effective income. Their spouses have been forced to provide income for both partners and be care providers long before normal expectations. This has contributed to major health issues for the spouses as well.

We invite you to meet with these men and their spouses in an environment of understanding to hear and see the effects these men suffer. We seek your support of our situation and your commitment to the ex-service community in Australia. We note your support of current serving members of the Defence Force during the recent Gulf War, and several of our numbers are still serving. We also seek your support in inviting the Minister for Defence to join you in the meeting of these men as to date the Minister has been reluctant to support or even to listen to our concerns.

I trust that this letter actually reaches your desk and that it is not waylaid by one of your Secretaries. A personal response from yourself and not just your office would be greatly appreciated by myself and the men who have constantly been rejected.

Yours sincerely,

Tracey Price
on behalf of the F111 Deseal Reseal Support Group



OFFICE OF THE
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

7 MAY 2004

Ms Tracey Price
C/- 2 Frontignac Street
CARSELDINE QLD 4034

Dear Ms Price

Thank you for your letters of 2-8 March 2004 to the Prime Minister concerning F-111 Deseal/Reseal issues. This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, the Hon Mal Brough MP, who has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Minister shares your concerns for the well-being of ex-Air Force members and civilian staff who are suffering ill health because of their involvement in F-111 fuel tank maintenance at Amberley. There has been acceptance of responsibility for the circumstances that led to people being affected through working on F-111 fuel tanks and much is being done to assist those affected.

Early in 2000, concern for the health of serving members involved in F-111 fuel tank maintenance led to the suspension of the spray-sealing program and an internal investigation. That investigation resulted in a Board of Inquiry that, after a very thorough and very public inquiry, reported in 2001 on a number of failings in the maintenance of the F-111 aircraft. The Board of Inquiry made 55 recommendations that were acted on immediately.

An interim Health Care Scheme funded by the Air Force was established in September 2001, in response to a recommendation to provide immediate assistance to anyone who suffers from a medical condition that could be reasonably linked to their work in the maintenance of F-111 fuel tanks. Simultaneously, the Chief of Air Force responded to another recommendation by appointing an advocate or 'airman's friend', to provide anyone requiring assistance with compensation issues. Assistance and access to health care and compensation continues to be provided to many.

The Health Study of 873 people exposed to chemicals during their work on F-111 fuel tanks is nearing completion. The study involved those exposed to chemicals, as well as two comparison groups of 7,228 people at Amberley and 9,251 people at Richmond.

To be a scientifically valid study that will withstand scrutiny, an accepted methodology must be followed. Therefore, the research arm of Newcastle University has conducted the Health Study, completely independent of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The study is well advanced and the findings will be released later this year.

As with the Board of Inquiry, the results from the Health Study are being made public as they become available. Indeed, all F-111 maintenance staff who participated in the study will continue to receive personal copies of reports. The main report can be expected later this year.

The Minister commends to you the reports that have been released so far to ex-Deseal/Reseal staff, particularly the first report dealing with the literature review. Newcastle University described this review as *'A systematic and wide-ranging literature review to ensure that all appropriate outcomes and exposures, as well as important confounders and effect modifiers, were considered and assessed.'* In essence, this review provided the University with the basis for their study.

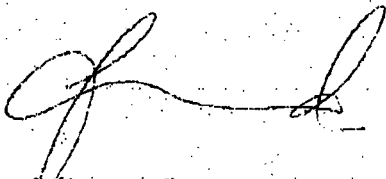
Since the release of the Board of Inquiry findings, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has provided health care, as well as Gold Cards and compensation, to those F-111 maintenance staff who have established eligibility within the legislative processes governing compensation payments. These processes, the care provided and the levels of compensation are reviewed from time to time and changed as necessary, and new schemes are introduced.

Notwithstanding this assistance, Defence, together with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, is examining options to address the longer term health needs of F-111 Deseal/Reseal staff, particularly permanent programs that might be developed to replace the interim Health Care Scheme. The views of the health study consultative forum are being considered in developing these options.

To provide anything other than the best possible information to assist in deciding the way forward would be unacceptable to the Government and to those affected.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Julieanne Comarmond
Assistant Defence Adviser



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

M/s Tracey Price
F111 Deseal Reseal Support Group
C/- 2 Frontignac Street
CARSELDINE QLD 4034

23 MAR 2004

Dear M/s Price

On behalf of the Prime Minister, I would like to thank you for your correspondence of 2 March 2004 regarding Royal Australian Air Force F111 deseal reseal workers.

Mr Howard appreciates the time you have taken to convey your views to him. However, he regrets that due to the large volume of correspondence he receives, he is unable to respond to each item personally.

Mr Howard has asked me to raise your views with the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Robert Hill who has portfolio responsibility for this matter. I have forwarded your letter to Senator Hill for his consideration and response.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to Mr Howard.

Yours sincerely

Paul O'Sullivan
Senior Adviser (International)

28th April 2004

COPY

Mr Paul O'Sullivan
Senior Advisor (International)
Office of the Prime Minister
GPO Box 59
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Paul O'Sullivan,

On behalf of the F111 Deseal Reseal Support Group, I would like to thank you for your response of 23 March 2004 on behalf of the Prime Minister.

I am writing in this instance to inform you and that the Minister for Defence, the Chief of the Airforce and the Department of Veteran Affairs are all fully aware of our situation and plight for compensation. We are getting no where fast, hence, our letter to Mr Howard.

I as well as the other members of our support group would appreciate this matter being addressed promptly as you can appreciate. In our previous letter, I outlined what the ex-servicemen women need, not want, but need and deserve.

The F111 Deseal Reseal Workers in the United States have had their claims dealt with, don't you think it would be appropriate for our government to do the same.

I have attached my previous correspondence for your reference.

I appreciate that Mr Howard receives a large volume of correspondence but as he can appreciate, I'm sure, these ex-servicemen and woman are running out of time and it would be appreciated if Mr Howard would address this issue promptly.

Yours sincerely,

Tracey Price
on behalf of the F111 Deseal Reseal Support Group

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