

south east asian treaty organisation (seato)

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nurse update: 3

Review of Veterans' Entitlements

As reported in the March SEATO nurse update, the Government has established another independent review of veterans' entitlements chaired by the Hon. Justice John Clarke QC. The Committee is examining as part of its terms of reference, 'the current policy relating to eligibility for access to Veterans Entitlements Act benefits and Qualifying Service under the VEA.'

The Review is now well under way with the Committee moving into the consultation phase with a series of public and private meetings programmed around Australia to be held between May and July 2002.

As you are aware the ANF and the Civilian Nurses, Australian Surgical Teams, Vietnam, have made a joint submission to the Committee arguing that SEATO team members have the right to claim benefits under the Veterans' Entitlements Act and that a mechanism must be established to enable team members to access that entitlement.

We will also have an opportunity to meet with the Committee in a private meeting to be held during their visit to Melbourne on the 2nd and 3rd of July.

Some SEATO nurses have made individual submissions to the Review including a personal statement concerning their circumstances and the impact of their service in Vietnam on their health, career and life in general.

Public hearings have already taken place in Perth and Sydney during May. Representations on behalf of SEATO nurses were made in Sydney and were well received by the Committee.

If you would like to attend one of the public hearings scheduled over the months of June and July, contact Debbie Richards at the Federal Office on 03 9639 5211 for details of times and locations or check the ANF website, www.anf.org.au for further details. This is an important opportunity to put forward our case and demonstrate yet again the injustice of the Government's position.

The Review Committee is due to report back to the Government no later than mid-November 2002.

Information about the Review is available on the Internet at www.veteransreview.gov.au or from the Secretariat on 1300 780 122 (for the cost of a local call).

COMCARE CLAIMS

Another reminder that SEATO nurses with illnesses and injury arising from their service in Vietnam currently have the right to claim under COMCARE, the Commonwealth employees workers compensation scheme. So far successful claims have resulted in lump sum payments for permanent incapacity, payment for medical expenses and regular incapacity payments depending on the age and circumstances of the person concerned.

If you have any queries or concerns about the COMCARE process please contact Debbie Richards at the ANF Federal Office for further information and assistance.

