



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

MC21-004471

Mr Trevor Benneworth
Secretary/Treasurer
The Radschool Association Inc.
trev@radschool.org.au

Dear Mr Benneworth

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 November 2021 to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs concerning funeral benefits under veterans' legislation. Your correspondence has been forwarded to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for response.

You are correct in your understanding that the level of payment for funeral benefits under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* is lower than under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*. Under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, a payment of \$2,000 is available for a larger group of eligible veterans, and in some limited circumstances, their dependants. This amount is designed to help support families during a difficult time, but was never intended to reimburse the entire cost of a funeral.

This is different to the support available to veterans under other legislation administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Under the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*, and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*, a larger reimbursement amount of up to \$12,603.88 is available, but with strict eligibility criteria, and therefore a much more limited group of eligible veterans. This amount is intended to cover the cost of a funeral. Eligibility for the funeral payment under the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*, and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* is limited to clients who:

- died as a result of a condition accepted under those Acts; or
- were eligible for the Special Rate of Disability Pension under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*; or
- have been assessed at 80 or more impairment points under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

I understand that you are disappointed with the amount of funeral benefit available under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*. Any increase to the amount of funeral benefit payable under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* would be a decision for the Australian Government. As this would involve additional expenditure, it would need to be considered in the Australian Government Budget process. The Department of Veterans' Affairs will consider your views when developing advice to the Australian Government about potential future policy changes.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely



Veronica Hancock
First Assistant Secretary
Veteran and Family Policy Division

26 November 2021