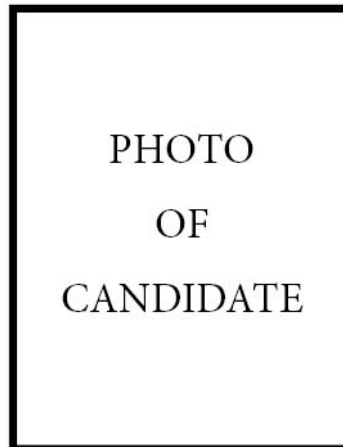


media release #15



GREG McMAHON

INDEPENDENT SENATE CANDIDATE for QUEENSLAND FEDERAL ELECTION - 2 JULY 2016

Veterans' cries for decent treatment must be heard

The treatment received by injured veterans making application to the Department of Veterans Affairs for assistance with their injuries remains a shame on our government, Independent Senate candidate for Queensland, Greg McMahon, said today.

"This deep shame has been exposed from the results of a survey carried out by the veterans themselves and it shows that matters have returned to the worst years post the Vietnam War," he said.

Mr McMahon said that published Department of Veterans Affairs figures about its service to veterans have been contradicted in important respects by the veterans' study and are disturbingly silent on issues highlighted by the study.

"Men and women in pain still appear to be the subject of tricks and callousness from the bureaucracy.

"It's as if to dissuade them from applying for the assistance they need, or to demoralise them to the point where they go away," Mr McMahon said.

"Sixty per cent of veterans who replied to the survey are claiming medium to high levels of intimidation by the bureaucracy while fifty to sixty percent are claiming to have been misled by the bureaucracy.

"Another sixty-five to eighty-five per cent have claimed high levels of hardship caused by conflicting information from the bureaucracy," Mr McMahon said.

He said that there appeared to be a correlation between the 60 to 70 per cent rejection rate for applications for reviews, and the 80 to 90 per cent level of dissatisfaction at the fairness of investigations where medical/legal advice was sought from the bureaucracy's advisers.

Outcomes generally are seen to be fairer when the veteran's specialist provided the advice.

"I can still recall the trick played by the repatriation bureaucracy in the 1970s with a family member," Mr McMahon said.

"The veteran applied for Totally and Permanently Incapacitated status based on the department's criteria A, but the bureaucracy advised the veteran to change the basis to criteria B.

"It took several years to obtain acceptance of the complaint.

"But the veteran was then tricked - the bureaucracy approved his status on the basis of criteria A, not B as the bureaucracy had advised, and then refused the veteran back-payment of entitlements because the application had been made on the basis of criteria B, when the approval had been made based on criteria A," Mr McMahon said.

Mr McMahon said a colleague was recently advised that his application had been approved, and celebrations were held...but less than a month later, the colleague was advised that the bureaucracy had changed its mind.

"This treatment all occurred around Christmas," Mr McMahon said.

He said that sixty to seventy per cent of respondents to the veterans' survey replied that their condition worsened during delays in dealing with their applications; 80 percent of respondents complained that they were not being treated with dignity and respect; and 70 per cent complained about their treatment by the department.

"That is how the cycle starts, with misleadings and reversals that can demoralise and anger damaged people and cause veterans to consider self-harm, bringing greater distrust and making meetings and exchanges extremely guarded and combative.

"Combat should be over for our veterans and defence members when they return from operations, not started up again with our own bureaucracy," Mr McMahon said.

"Veterans are entitled to respect.

"This is a litmus test of public leadership for our elected members of parliament towards our veterans, their families and their communities.

"Eighty to ninety per cent of respondents to the veterans' survey recommended that an inquiry be held into the unjust treatment and dealings meted out to them by the Department of Veterans Affairs bureaucracy.

"This worrying figure merits an appropriate response worthy of our nation and its international standing," Mr McMahon said.

“When elected, I will take these outcries to the floor of the Senate and persist with them until justice is done...and seen to be done,” he said.

27 June 2016

Home/Business: 22 Kersley Road, Kenmore, QLD, 4069

Mobile: 0411 757 231

Email: mcmahonqueensland@gmail.com

Webpage: <http://www.gregmcmahon.com.au/>