



BUDGET 2021-22 - ADF FIREFIGHTER SCHEME SUPPORT PACKAGE

ABOUT THE SCHEME

On 11th May 2021 the Morrison Government announced in its Federal Budget 2021-22 a financial and health support package for ADF Firefighters who served at the RAAF Base Point Cook Fire Training School between January 1st, 1957 and December 31st, 1986.

The ADF Firefighter Scheme, as it is to be known, is in recognition of the potential for health effects from being exposed to a wide range of hazardous substances during historical fire training, when Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was not of the same standard available today.

The Air Force Association argued on the basis of the hazardous chemicals detected at Point Cook Fire Training School and potential for exposure due to a lack of adequate PPE, that there was a likelihood for a risk of serious health issues. The Government recognises the risks faced by these firefighters and the limitations in evidence available to support claims.

The Air Force Association is grateful to the Government and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) for providing a remedy for these veterans.

The Scheme is expected to commence from September 20th, 2021, with eligibility being retrospective to Budget night – May 11th, 2021. This will allow time for the scheme to be established. An Application Form for the Scheme is currently being developed.

In the meantime, those who undertook fire training at the Point Cook facility between 1957 and 1986 are being invited to “pre-register” for the Scheme. By pre-registering, DVA may be able to determine your eligibility more efficiently if the Department has your relevant service information prior to the commencement of the scheme. Please email ADF.FIREFIGHTER.SHEME@DVA.GOV.AU with your service and any existing claims details (if you have them) to register your interest in the Scheme.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE SICK TO APPLY

The Scheme recognises the need for a preventative health strategy. You do not need to be sick to apply. Eligibility under the Scheme provides access to the free Healthy Lifestyle program and colorectal and melanoma screening. You can submit a compensation claim for any of the prescribed (and diagnosed) conditions any time after you are eligible. There is no time limit.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

Approximately 300 living ADF Firefighters are expected to benefit. The Scheme will also consider other ADF personnel, where it can be established that they undertook fire suppression training at the Fire Training School as per the eligibility criteria.

WHAT WILL THE ADF FIREFIGHTER SCHEME PROVIDE?

Eligibility under the firefighter Scheme:

- provides access to a preventative health strategy, including free colorectal and melanoma screening as well as free participation in a Healthy Lifestyle (Heart Health) Program.



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- provides an easier pathway for DVA to accept a claim under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) for one or more of a list of 31 prescribed conditions, including all cancers (refer to the Table 1 below). However, a separate claim will still need to be submitted for those condition/s. The acceptance of claims will subsequently enable the provision of medical treatment, rehabilitation and compensation (subject to the current legislative rules).
- is limited to those with eligibility under the DRCA. However, it does not prevent claims also being lodged under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) or the *Military, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) if eligibility also exists under those Acts. However, any entitlements received under more than one Act for the same condition may be subject to compensation offsetting.

WHAT IF I HAVE PREVIOUSLY CLAIMED?

Scheme eligible personnel who have had claims previously rejected under the DRCA for any of the prescribed health conditions should make a new DRCA claim and highlight their eligibility under the scheme.

TABLE 1: LIST OF 31 DIAGNOSED HEALTH CONDITIONS COVERED BY THE ADF FIREFIGHTER SCHEME

Dysplastic Naevus	Anxiety
Eczema / Dermatitis	Panic Disorders
Multiple Sclerosis	Impaired Cognition
Parkinson's Disease	Agoraphobia with Panic Disorder
Peripheral Neuropathy	Malignant Neoplasms
Spinal Muscular Atrophy	Myeloproliferative Disorders
Erectile Dysfunction	Liver Disease
Cauda Equina Syndrome	Pancreatic Disease
Neurogenic Bladder	Irritable Bowel Disorder
Non-alcoholic Toxic Encephalopathy	Ulcerative Colitis/ Crohns Disease
Acquired Colour Vision Deficiency	Diverticulitis
Depression	Bowel Polyps
Sleep Disorders with Neurogenic Basis	Mixed Connective Tissue Disease
Bi-polar Affective Disorder	Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
Vertigo	Sarcoidosis
Memory Loss	

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

As per above, please email ADF.FIREFIGHTER.SCHEME@DVA.GOV.AU with your service and any existing claims details (if you have them) to register your interest in the Scheme.