

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you to seek your assistance in reviewing what I feel is an inconsistency concerning medical treatment for former National Servicemen (Nashos) under the DVA white card. I have sought the assistance from the office of my Federal member for Lilley however was informed that the office would not provide any assistance in bringing this to your attention.

I was conscripted on [REDACTED]. Like many 20 year olds at the time this caused great hardship on me with concern to personal relationships and loss of income as the pay rate in the army was less than in my civilian life however like all the others I served without complaining and was ready to deploy to defend Australia if required.

When the government changed in December 1972 the new government ended National Service and those of us who were still serving were informed that we were no longer required and discharge was offered to us. Accordingly, I accepted the Government's offer and was discharged on [REDACTED] 1973. As an ex-serviceman I now have a DVA white card which covers me for mental health treatment. The white card also provides treatment for cancer under certain circumstances.

I have been diagnosed with cancer however I have been informed by DVA that I am not covered for the treatment for my cancer because I accepted the discharge that the Government offered me and did not serve the entire period of National Service. I was informed that if I had been medically discharged e.g. for a "bung" knee I would be eligible. In my view this is unfair as my service was the same as all other Nashos. It appears some National Service is valued more than others.

It is not as if we decided we were no longer going to participate any longer and went AWOL, the discharge was offered by the government. Now however, the Government appears to be holding the acceptance of early discharge, that the Government offered, against us with concern to treatment for cancer. Accordingly I am requesting that you review the criteria for cancer treatment under the white card to correct what I feel is an anomaly and change the eligibility criteria to include all the old Nashos.

As I stated previously being conscripted caused great hardship however we went without complaining and after all it was the government of the day that offered the discharge. Why are we now being denied treatment for cancer because we accepted the government offer? I would not envisage this to be a great cost to the government as at 72 years of age I am one of the youngest of the remaining Nashos so any cost would be a rapidly diminishing cost due to our age and the nature of the disease. I would appreciate it if you would give this your urgent attention as my medical condition is unfortunately deteriorating. Please contact me on [REDACTED] if you require further information. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Russell [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]