

**Maori Party responses**  
**Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (Inc)**  
**September 2008**

**Law Commission Report:**

*“As New Zealanders veterans are entitled to all of the benefits, allowances and assistance to which every other New Zealander is entitled. This should be accepted as the first principle underpinning veterans’ entitlements.*

*“The second principle is that veterans who have suffered as a result of being put in harms way deserve to be recompensed over and above the entitlements of ordinary citizens who are not veterans”*

**Does your party accept the two principles stated by the Law Commission above? If not, why not?**

Yes.

**Notwithstanding changes to the general social security environment over the years, would your party agree, at least in principle, that the current War Disablement Pension Rates need once again to be adjusted to a “deemed to be fair” level relative to the average wage?**

Yes. There is an urgent need to increase rates, over and above inflationary adjustments.

**Would your Party keep previous Government’s promises of regular indexation?**

Yes.

**Does your party agree that all veterans with attributable conditions should be treated in the same way regarding compensatory payments for these conditions?**

Yes. The current system of compensation does not give justice to veterans. There are differences in the compensation available for Vietnam veterans as opposed to other injured soldiers; and further, differences in compensation under the War Pensions Act and under ACC also disadvantage veterans.

**Does your party agree that a good starting point would be entitlements equivalent to those under ACC?**

Yes.

**Does your party agree that veterans should receive those ACC-level entitlements plus a veteran increment?**

Yes.

**Does your party agree with the principle that veterans should be paid a lump sum commensurate with the ACC total impairment scale as well as their periodic War Disablement Pension payments?**

Yes. The Maori Party has consistently raised the need for equity in the pension payments and compensation available to injured veterans.

**Would your party include the two cancers, prostate and lung, as qualifying for ex-gratia lump sum payment conditions as per the MOU? (this applies specifically and only for Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange and the toxic environment encountered in Vietnam.)**

Yes. The Maori Party has worked consistently to uphold the calls from Vietnam veterans to advocate for their concerns.

**Would your party support a project to determine the historical facts in this matter, once and for all?**

Yes.

**If the result shows that the Vietnam cohort was not treated fairly in accord with precedent, would your party support making a generic payment of \$8,000 to each Vietnam veteran (including estates) in line with the JWG's recommendation?**

Yes, if there was sufficient support for this sum from Maori Vietnam veterans.

**Does your party agree that to require a veteran to have a War Disablement Pension of 70% or more before he or she qualifies for a Veterans' Pension is discriminatory; and that unlike NZ Super it implies a compensatory element in the Veterans Pension?**

Yes.

**Would your party agree with RNZRSA that all veterans on obtaining the age of 65 should automatically qualify for the Veterans' Pension in place of NZ Super?**

Yes. The Maori Party supports increased access to the Veterans' Pension.

**Does your party agree with the need for ongoing assistance to be given to the RNZRSA for its welfare support work to the 60,000 veterans of the nation, and their families, as a cost-effective NGO service provider?**

Yes.

**Would your party provide annual funding on an ongoing basis of an appropriate sum?**

Yes.

**Would your party support the award of a medal recognising non-operational service in the NZDF since World War 2, covering Regulars, Territorials and CMT/SMT personnel?**

Yes.

**Would your party support the strengthening of the criteria to prevent the sale or disposal overseas of Orders, Decorations and Medals awarded to New Zealanders?**

Yes.

**Would your party support the proposition that our defence force policy leans too heavily upon our friends and allies to provide combat capability?**

No. The Maori Party supports the need for a peacekeeping force.

**Would your party agree that the current qualified and restrictive loans to War Veterans Homes and Hospitals should be converted to grants? (among other things, this would erase the discriminatory cut off at World War II)**

Yes.

**Would your party support the reinstatement of regular veterans' residential support payments to the five Homes, and accredit their purpose as providing special services to veterans?**

Yes.