

APPENDIX I:

LETTER TO THE REPATRIATION COMMISSIONER CONCERNING GENETIC TESTS ON FORMER MEMBERS OF THE SASR



Commonwealth
Department of
Veterans' Affairs

**Expert Committee to Review
SAS Health Issues**

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8 May 2003

Maj Gen Paul Stevens AO
Repatriation Commissioner
Repatriation Commission
PO Box 21
Woden ACT 2606

Dear Maj Gen Stevens,

At a meeting of the Expert Committee last week two matters were raised which the Committee members agreed should be raised with you now. You may also feel it appropriate to advise the Minister of the matters I am raising.

Firstly, the Committee is concerned about the validity of the chromosome tests previously reported as positive in six former SAS soldiers and also about the adequacy of counselling provided to those veterans. Professor Turner has discussed the matter with four of the veterans involved and has allayed some of their fears, however, as the Committee considers the original tests were questionable and the counselling alarming, both need to be repeated in more professional hands.

In view of this, the Committee recommends that the affected veterans be provided with the opportunity to receive genetic counselling and chromosome studies at an appropriate genetic laboratory. The Department of Veterans' Affairs may incur some cost in respect of this measure.

Secondly, the Committee was interested to gather data on physical injury rates in Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel. Specifically, are physical injury rates or service discharge rates due to physical injury higher in SAS personnel compared to other ADF occupation codes? The Committee requests that this data be provided, if available.

Yours Sincerely,

Carole Friedrichs
For Professor Ken Donald
Chairman, SAS Expert Committee