



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

VA040

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PARLIAMENT PASSES BUDGET BILLS TO BENEFIT VETERAN COMMUNITY

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Alan Griffin welcomed the passage of the Budget Measures Bill through Parliament, delivering benefits to veterans and ensuring more veterans are recognised for their service.

"The measures passed show this Government is delivering on key election commitments," Mr Griffin said.

"Long overdue recognition will be provided to military personnel who participated in nuclear tests at Maralinga, Emu Field and the Monte Bello Islands.

"From 1 July 2010, a new category of service will be created under the *Veterans Entitlements Act 1986* to be known as British nuclear test defence service, providing eligible former members or their dependants with access to pensions and other benefits and allowances.

"Up to 890 former submariners will benefit from a reclassification of certain submarine special operations between 1978 and 1992, which will provide eligible members and their dependants with access to pensions and associated benefits.

"British Commonwealth or allied defence force members, aged between 18 and 21 at the time of enlistment and therefore too young to have their domicile of choice as Australia, will gain access to pensions and benefits as Australian veterans, as a discrepancy in the *Veterans Entitlements Act* will now be removed.

"From 1 July 2010, service in Ubon in Thailand between 31 May 1962 and 27 July 1962 will be reclassified under the *Veterans Entitlements Act* as qualifying service, providing eligible members and their partners with access to service pensions. Eligible members will also qualify for a Gold Card at age 70.

"The final measure ensures equal treatment of widow/ers who enter de facto relationships, with those who remarry, in the right to claim a war widow/ers pension from 1 October 2010.

"These changes demonstrate the Government's ongoing support for Australia's current and former service personnel and their families."

These measures were part of a \$246.4 million package of new initiatives announced in the 2010-11 Budget.

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