

Over the past three years the National Government has made absolutely no measurable progress toward a new war pensions act. When asked by Hon Rick Barker last year, the Minister of Veterans' Affairs (Hon Judith Collins) said delays were due to a need for careful consideration of the implications of proposed changes in relation to other legislation. She said that many statutes and agencies would be affected and the impact of this had to be assessed. She avoided any direct or specific response.

There is no apparent target date, no evidence that the review is coordinated across agencies and no suggestion that anyone is accountable for producing results. In other words, it's just muddling along with no sense of urgency. Are people actually assigned to do the review or is it just 'spare time' work?

While this endless delay drags on, the people who might benefit most are dying off - this includes WW2 and later service men and women, up to 1975 when the accident compensation legislation took effect. If one were cynical, it might be said that the delay is deliberate to reduce the cost of implementing a revised war pensions regime. Well, I am cynical and so are many other veterans.

Veterans were in good heart in 2008 with the expectation that outdated legislation would be replaced within 2-3 years. Our hopes are fading and we would like to have the Government called to account for its lack of progress.

Could NZ First raise this matter to:

Be assured that the work is a serious priority, and

Establish a firm date when a bill will come before the House?