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Miriam Beswick MP
Member for Braddon
Jacqui Lambie Network
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Dear Ms Beswick

Thank you for the Constituency Question you asked in Parliament on 13 June 2024 requesting information regarding the expected time frames for the Superannuation Commission to assess claims, as follows:

"I have personally observed and heard of several other incidents about delays from RBF super funds in assessing claims and reasonable requirements they place on claimants to put proof of claims, particularly where spouses have passed away and the claim is going to the left behind spouse. This organisation has been well known as the slowest and worst of assessments by lawyers, Centrelink workers and the like who come into contact with these claims. This is a significant issue, particularly for vulnerable people who are in these circumstances and are grieving. Can you confirm the expected time frames for these claims and assessments and how often RBF Tasmania and its representatives actually meet those expectations?"

As you are aware, the Superannuation Commission administers and manages the Retirement Benefits Fund and provides benefits on retirement to members of the contributory scheme, and their beneficiaries or representatives and strives to provide a consistent, timely and responsive service for RBF members.

I can advise that for the period 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024, the Superannuation Commission assessed a total of 470 claims for ill health and death, of which 116 were surviving partner pension claims.

The majority of pensioner deaths are identified and actioned by the Superannuation Commission within 14 days of the death and, when the death of an RBF pensioner is identified, it is usually actioned on the same day. The Commission endeavours to be proactive in identifying deaths and, if a potential surviving partner of a pensioner is identified, RBF initiates contact by telephone and then by letter to commence the surviving partner application process. The time taken to assess surviving partner pension claims are also dependent on the completeness of information submitted by the potential surviving partner.

I can advise that for the same 12-month period, it took an average of 13.2 weeks from the date of death of a pensioner to the commencement of the surviving partner pension. Once a surviving partner pension application was approved by the Commission, on average their pension commenced within 11 days.

A provisional surviving partner pension can be paid following the death of an RBF life pensioner, where a surviving partner declaration has been completed by the pensioner prior to their death. A provisional surviving partner pension can commence immediately following the death of the pensioner and be paid for up to six months.

I can further advise that the Commission has an ongoing campaign to increase the number of pensioners with a surviving partner declaration to ensure that a members' death benefit is paid promptly. The form, and further information, can be found on the RBF website.

Telephone and in-person support is also available to surviving partners who are going through the determination process and require assistance with paperwork or certification of documents.

Yours sincerely



Michael Ferguson MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Infrastructure

19/6/2024