

5 July 2021

National Emergency Medal Committee Meeting (NEM 11) Minutes

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) raised the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic and sought advice from the Committee on whether it fitted the criteria for the NEM. The Committee agreed that COVID would be discussed later in the meeting, as general business.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

General Business

The Covid-19 pandemic

The Committee discussed the pandemic, agreeing there were challenges in recognising (thousands of) Australians – first responders, health professionals - for their service during arguably Australia’s most significant ongoing national emergency.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) led the conversation by acknowledging the complexities of the operation and how service may be considered. s 22(1)(a)(ii) reiterated the role of the Committee as responsible for discussing the issue and the way forward.

The Committee discussed challenges with recognising people for their service during non-traditional, non-natural disasters ie. the pandemic, cyber security attacks, and agreed the NEM was probably not appropriate and a much bigger conversation was needed in government to address the challenge.

The Committee agreed at present the Regulations are tied to ‘natural’ disaster/hazards, and not appropriate for other types of emergencies.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) agreed to review the current Regulations, focussing on the original intent and context to inform whether the pandemic would need to be considered outside of Committee jurisdiction.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

The Chair concluded with the notion that appropriate recognition might be best left to national leaders to discuss.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Recommendation: The Committee agreed the NEM may not be the most appropriate vehicle for recognising work to support the covid-19 pandemic response. Members agreed a bigger discussion might need to be had outside of the Committee's realm. s 22(1)(a)(ii) agreed to review the Regulations and work with the Secretariat on proposed wording for the website.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)