



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Group Captain Carl Schiller OAM CSM (Retd)
National President
RAAF Association
natpres@raafa.org.au

Dear Group Captain Schiller

I am writing to advise you of the 1 May 2018 commencement of two new measures designed to benefit veterans and their families. These measures were announced last year and have been mentioned during a recent meeting of the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table.

Veteran Payment

As part of DVA's commitment to improving access to services for veterans and their families, the new Veteran Payment is now available to eligible individuals and their partners. This payment provides interim financial support to veterans who cannot work or support themselves while they await liability decisions on claims for mental health conditions under either the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA).

Extended Family Support Package

The Family Support Package is designed to extend family support under the MRCA for veterans and their families. There are two distinct groups that will benefit from this initiative: eligible veterans and their families, and eligible spouse or partner of deceased veterans. This initiative will provide guidance and financial support to alleviate pressures when needed the most. The time-limited support available include expanded childcare funding, additional counselling services and eligible widow(er)s will be entitled to home help.

I have enclosed DVA Factsheets which provide more information on these measures, including eligibility and payment details. If you have further questions or would like additional information, please contact the Department.

I ask that you please convey this information to members of your organisation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Spiers'.

Carolyn Spiers
A/g First Assistant Secretary
Rehabilitation and Support Division
11 May 2018

ENCL



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Factsheet IS189 - Veteran Payment Overview

Purpose

This Factsheet explains the veteran payment, eligibility criteria, and information on associated benefits.

What is the veteran payment?

The veteran payment provides interim financial support to veterans who lodge a claim for a mental health condition under either the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA), or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA), and are incapable of working for more than eight hours per week.

The veteran payment is subject to an income and assets test.

When is the veteran payment paid?

The veteran payment is paid fortnightly based on:

- daily entitlements with the rate of payment dependent on the person's assets and income; and
- whether the partnered or single rate is payable.

The rate of the veteran payment is reviewed twice-yearly, in March and September in line with movements in the cost of living and/or average wages.

Who is eligible for veteran payment?

You and your partner may be eligible for the veteran payment if you are a veteran and have lodged a claim for a mental health condition under either the MRCA or the DRCA.

Further eligibility criteria include:

- you are incapable of working more than eight hours per week
- you are below Age Pension age on the day that the claim was made
- you meet the residency requirements — that is, a resident of Australia and are present in Australia at the time of lodging the claim for a mental health condition; and

- you (and your partner) are below the income and asset test thresholds.

Is my partner eligible?

Yes. If you are receiving the veteran payment, it will be paid to partners if they are either:

- legally married
- living with a veteran, or
- living in a de facto relationship with a veteran.

What are Partnered veterans?

This Factsheet refers to the ‘veteran’ and ‘the partner’.

If both you and your partner are both veterans, than the term ‘veteran’ in this factsheet refers to the individual who has made the claim for a mental health condition.

If you and your partner are both veterans and have claims for a mental health condition, you will both be accessed for eligibility for the veteran payment as a veteran.

How do I access the veteran payment?

There are several ways to indicate you want to receive the veteran payment. For further information please see [IS190 – How to access Veteran Payment](#).

When will the veteran payment be payable?

You will be eligible for the veteran payment for up to two weeks before the date of lodgment of your claim for a mental health condition. Your first payment will be made once eligibility has been established.

After the first initial payment, the veteran payment will be payable fortnightly on the DVA pension payday.

What are the rates of the veteran payment?

There are two different rates of the veteran payment:

- a singles rate – payable to a single person
- a couples rate – payable to each member of a couple who are living together, whether legally married or living in a de facto relationship.

In some instances, the partner of a person receiving veteran payment will not be eligible or will choose not to receive veteran payment themselves. Even if only one member of the couple is receiving Veteran Payment, that person will be paid at the couples rate. If a couple

separates because of ill-health or during a period of respite care, each member of the couple may be paid at the singles rate. The couples rate of ordinary free area income and assets value limit will still apply to these payments.

For more information on the current veteran payment rates, please see [Factsheet IS30 – Pension Rates, Limits and Allowances Summary](#).

Can I receive other Government payments?

You cannot receive the Veteran Payment and other Government payments including:

- Newstart Allowance
- payments under the ABSTUDY Scheme
- Incapacity Payments
- Disability Support Pension
- Service Pension
- War Widow / Widower's Pension.

If you chose to receive veteran payment instead of your existing income support payment you will not receive a Pensioner Concession Card.

Family Tax Benefit is payable whilst you are receiving veteran payment.

Do I need to provide a medical certificate to DVA?

Yes. Evidence of your incapacity to work more than eight hours per week will need to be provided in the form of a medical certificate issued by your treating doctor or GP.

A medical certificate is not required immediately but can be provided to DVA up to four weeks after your payment commences.

Do I need to participate in a rehabilitation program?

Yes. A condition of receiving the veteran payment is that you participate in a rehabilitation program if are you are capable of doing so. This will be arranged by a DVA rehabilitation coordinator on determination of your veteran payment eligibility.

What happens when I am considered eligible for the veteran payment?

Once you and/or your partner are deemed eligible for the veteran payment, DVA will work out your rate of veteran payment, depending on your income and assets.

When a decision has been made you will be notified by letter, which will include the date of grant, the amount of veteran payment you will receive and your obligations whilst receiving veteran payment.

When will my veteran payment stop?

The veteran payment will stop 42 days or six weeks after a decision on your mental health claim has been determined.

The payment can continue for a longer period in special circumstances.

If you are granted incapacity payments by DVA your veteran payment will cease immediately.

Is the veteran payment based on the income and assets tests?

Yes. The amount of veteran payment you receive depends on the income and assets of you and your partner.

The veteran payment is calculated under two separate tests, the income test and assets test. The test paying the lower rate of veteran payment is the one that is applied. For more information see [Factsheets IS87 Income Test Overview](#) and [IS88 Asset Test Overview](#).

What is my income and assets limit to receive the veteran payment?

You can have a certain amount of income and assets, and still receive the maximum rate of veteran payment. These limits are known as the ordinary income free area and the assets value limit.

There are two ordinary income free areas:

- the singles income free area
- the couples income free area.

There are four assets value limits:

- singles who own their home
- singles who do not own their home
- couples who own their home
- couples who do not own their home.

Income or assets above the ordinary income free area or assets value limit, reduces the amount of the veteran payment payable. The veteran payment ceases to be paid when income or assets exceed certain cut-off limits.

If you are a member of a couple, you are both treated as if you each receive half your combined income and you each own half your combined assets, regardless of who actually receives the income or owns the assets. Therefore, you are both paid the same rate of veteran payment.

***Note:** Superannuation products are not counted as income producing or an asset until the person who owns the superannuation reaches Age Pension age, or makes a withdrawal from the investment. For more information about the assessment of superannuation, see [Factsheet IS91 Managed Investments](#).

If you are considered to be blind, the veteran payment is not subject to the income and assets tests and is paid at the maximum rate. For more information see [Factsheet IS147 Blind Pensioners](#).

Do I need to provide my tax file number?

Yes. To receive the veteran payment, you and your partner are required to provide your tax file number to DVA. If you do not have a tax file number and are not eligible for an exemption, you will need to apply for a tax file number through the Australian Tax Office.

Is the veteran payment taxable?

Yes. The veteran payment is considered income for taxation purposes and is therefore taxable. You will receive a Payment Summary from DVA at the end of each financial year.

Are there other allowances payable?

Yes. There are a number of allowances payable to eligible veteran payment recipients:

- pension supplement – payable to all veteran payment recipients, to help with the cost of prescriptions, rates, telephone and internet connections, energy, water and sewerage
- rent assistance – payable to veteran payment recipients who pay private rent for their accommodation, subject to minimum rent limits
- remote area allowance – payable to veteran payment recipients who live in designated remote areas of Australia.

For current rates, including pension supplement, rent assistance and remote area allowance, see [Factsheet IS30 - Pension rates, Limits and Allowances Summary](#).

***Note:** If you are receiving the veteran payment, you will not receive the Pensioner Concession Card or Energy Supplement payments.

Can I receive Family Tax Benefit?

Yes. If you have dependent children you can receive Family Tax Benefit Part A from the Department of Human Services without having to satisfy the means test.

***Note:** DVA will not pay the Family Tax Benefit even if you may be eligible. If you have dependent children you should contact the Family Assistance Office for any enquires about the payment of Family Tax Benefit.

What are my obligations?

As a recipient of the veteran payment, you have a responsibility to keep DVA informed of changes that may affect the amount of pension you receive.

In order to meet your obligations, you need to tell DVA within 14 days (28 days if you live overseas or receive remote area allowance) if:

- your residential situation changes
- your relationship status changes
- you receive the maximum rate veteran payment and your income exceeds the income free amount and/or your assets exceed the assets value limit
- you receive a reduced rate pension and your income and/or assets exceed the limits stated in our most recent letter to you about your veteran payment
- you move or travel overseas
- there is any other change that would affect the rate of your veteran payment.

Fulfilling your obligations within the specified time period assists DVA in maintaining your correct rate of the veteran payment.

Can I apply for an increase in the veteran payment?

Yes. If you receive a reduced rate of payment, you may apply for an increase in your rate of pension at any time there is a change in your circumstances. You can do this by contacting DVA by phone, in writing, or in person.

Please note that the earliest date your payment can be increased, is from the date you notify the Department of the change in your circumstances.

Will my partner receive my veteran payment after I die?

Yes. Following the death of a veteran who was receiving the veteran payment, the partner will receive the veteran payment at the single rate from the date of death for six weeks.

Following the death of the partner, the veteran will receive veteran payment at the single rate from the date of death until payments cease.

Can I access my personal information through DVA under Freedom of Information?

Yes. Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* you may seek to access information about yourself. This means that you can look at your personal files held by DVA and ask for copies of documents.

You need to apply in writing and there is an application fee of \$30.00. However, the fee does not apply if the documents you need relate to claims for, or increases in, your veteran payment.

Privacy

The *Privacy Act 1988* governs the collection and handling of personal information by Australian Government agencies, including DVA, and the process is overseen by the Privacy Commissioner to ensure the rights of individuals are protected.

More information

DVA General Enquiries

Phone: 1800 555 254 *

Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

DVA Website: www.dva.gov.au

Factsheet Website: www.dva.gov.au/factsheets

* Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur additional charges.

Related Factsheets

- [DVA06 Proof of Identity Requirements](#)
- [IS16 Pension Supplement](#)
- [IS87 Income Test Overview](#)
- [IS88 Asset test Overview](#)
- [IS30 Pension Rates, Limits and Allowances Summary](#)
- [IS91 Managed Investments](#)
- [IS117 Financial Hardship](#)
- [IS147 Blind Pensioners](#)
- [IS190 How to access the Veteran Payment](#)

Related Forms

- [D9333 - Veteran Payment Details](#)

Disclaimer

The information contained in this Factsheet is general in nature and does not take into account individual circumstances. You should not make important decisions, such as those that affect your financial or lifestyle position on the basis of information contained in this Factsheet. Where you are required to lodge a written claim for a benefit, you must take full responsibility for your decisions prior to the written claim being determined. You should seek confirmation in writing of any oral advice you receive from DVA.



Factsheet IS190 - How to access Veteran Payment

Purpose

This factsheet explains how to access the veteran payment.

What is veteran payment?

The veteran payment provides interim financial support to current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who lodge a claim for a mental health condition under either the *Military, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA).

To be eligible you must also be incapable of working more than eight hours per week and have income and assets below the cut-off. Veterans must also be below Age Pension age at the time of their claim.

Partners may also be eligible for veteran payment. The veteran payment is subject to an income and assets test.

For further information on veteran payment and who may be eligible please see [Factsheet IS189 - Veteran Payment Overview](#).

What is Age Pension age?

For a veteran to be eligible for veteran payment they must be below Age Pension age on the day that the claim was made.

Age Pension age will increase by six months every two years until it reaches 67 on 1 July 2023, as per the table below:

Age Pension Age	
If your date of birth is on or between:	Then your pension age is:
Before 1 July 1952	65 years

Age Pension Age	
If your date of birth is on or between:	Then your pension age is:
1 July 1952 to 31 December 1953	65 years and 6 months
1 January 1954 to 30 June 1955	66 years
1 July 1955 to 31 December 1956	66 years and 6 months
On or after 1 January 1957	67 years

What do I need to do to access veteran payment?

Veteran payment can be accessed by veterans who have lodged a claim for acceptance of a mental health condition under either the MRCA or the DRCA which has not yet been determined.

Further information on making a claim under the MRCA or DRCA can be found at [Factsheet MCS13 – How to claim benefits under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation \(Defence-related Claims\) Act 1988 \(DRCA\)*](#) or [Factsheet MRC25 – How to Make a Claim under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*](#).

The below table provides information on how to access veteran payment, depending on the status of your claim for acceptance of your mental health condition.

If:	Then:
You have not yet made a claim for compensation, and will make this claim using a paper form:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 1 May 2018 new sections have been added to DVA Form D2020 (DRCA) and DVA Form D2051 (MRCA) allowing you to indicate you wish to receive veteran payment. An additional form D9333 will need to be completed.
You have not yet made a claim for compensation, and intend to make this claim online:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From June 2018 new sections will be added to online claims allowing you to indicate you wish to receive veteran payment. Prior to the new sections being added you may be contacted by DVA asking you to indicate if you are interested

If:	Then:
	in having your eligibility for veteran payment assessed.
You have made a claim for compensation prior to 1 May 2018:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be contacted by DVA asking if you are interested in having your eligibility for Veteran Payment assessed. • You may also choose to contact DVA and indicate you wish to have your eligibility for the veteran payment assessed.
You have made a claim for compensation after 1 May 2018 and your circumstances change and you previously did not indicate you wanted veteran payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will need to contact DVA to have your eligibility for the veteran payment assessed.

In each of these cases you will be required to provide additional details, including the income and asset details of you and your partner.

Can I receive other Government payments?

You cannot receive the Veteran Payment and other Government income support payments including:

- Newstart Allowance
- payments under the ABSTUDY Scheme
- Incapacity Payments
- Disability Support Pension
- Service Pension
- War Widow / Widower's Pension.

If you chose to receive veteran payment instead of your existing benefit you will not receive a Pensioner Concession Card.

Family Tax Benefit is payable whilst you are receiving Veteran Payment.

What if I need help accessing veteran payment?

If you need help accessing veteran payment, you should telephone DVA General Enquires or visit a local Veterans' Information Service (VIS) or Veterans' Access Network (VAN) for assistance. They will ensure that you receive assistance from Income Support staff.

Alternatively, ex-service organisations such as the RSL or Legacy, have pension and welfare officers who will be able to assist you to access veteran payment.

Proof of Identity

As part of the process of completing a claim for a mental health condition you will have provided DVA with proof of identity.

Partners will be required to provide us with documentation to prove your identity. For more information refer to [Factsheet DVA06 Proof of Identity Requirements](#).

What does DVA do when I have asked to access veteran payment?

DVA will determine if you (and if applicable) your partner are eligible for veteran payment. For eligibility requirements refer to [Factsheet IS189 Veteran Payment Overview](#). If eligible DVA will work out your rate of veteran payment, depending on your income or assets. When a decision has been made you will be notified by letter. This will include the date of grant and the amount of veteran payment you will receive. You will also be notified of your obligations whilst receiving veteran payment.

If I receive veteran payment, when will it stop?

Veteran payment will continue for up to 42 days following the determination of your claim for a mental health condition.

Please see the below table for further information on this process:

If:	Then:
Your claim for a mental health condition is accepted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You (and your partners) veteran payment will continue for up to 42 days following the determination date of your claim.• Your veteran payment can be extended in special circumstances, e.g. your claim for incapacity payments is still being determined, for further details please contact DVA.

If:	Then:
Your claim for a mental health condition is rejected:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You (and your partners) veteran payment will continue for 42 days following the determination date of your claim. • DVA officers will assist you to transfer to a Department of Human Services Income Support payment if eligible or to return to work if appropriate under your rehabilitation plan.

More Information

DVA General Enquiries

Phone: 1800 555 254 *

Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

DVA Website: www.dva.gov.au

Factsheet Website: www.dva.gov.au/factsheets

* Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur additional charges.

Related Factsheets

- IS189 - Veteran Payment Overview
- DVA06 Proof of Identity Requirements
- MCS13 - How to claim benefits under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA)
- MRC25 - How to make a claim under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004

Related Forms

- D9333 - Veteran Payment Details

Disclaimer

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Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Factsheet MRC52 – Family Support Package for Veterans and their Families

Purpose

This Factsheet explains the services that might be available to you if you are eligible for the Family Support Package under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)*.

What is the Family Support Package?

The Family Support Package for MRCA veterans and their families, has been developed to address recommendations from the Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-Service Personnel, *The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans*.

The package will provide:

- expanded child care in specific circumstances to the children of MRCA veterans; and
- counselling support for the immediate family members of MRCA veterans, to enable the family unit to manage within its budget and maintain its connections to community and employment.

Assistance is also available to widowed partners and spouses under this package. Please see Factsheet MRC53 Family Support Package for Widow(er)s for more information.

When will the package commence?

The Family Support Package will be available from 1 May 2018 for eligible persons.

Expanded Child Care

Who is eligible?

To be considered for child care funding, you must:

- have an accepted MRCA condition; and
- have undertaken 'Warlike Service' on or after 1 July 2004; and

- be eligible for, or in receipt of incapacity payments; and
- currently participating in a Rehabilitation Program provided by DVA; and
- have an identified and justified requirement for child care services to help you achieve your rehabilitation goals.

You will also need to ensure you have been assessed for eligibility of Commonwealth child care requirements and that your child/ren meet the immunisation requirements for Commonwealth child care entitlements.

What about Commonwealth child care entitlements?

Child care funding under the Family Support Package is provided to complement, not replace or duplicate existing Commonwealth child care entitlements. Any child care funding provided by DVA is to cover the gap in fees after Commonwealth child care entitlements have been applied. In the event that the family income makes them ineligible for Commonwealth child care support, DVA will fund the fees owing. Coverage of this gap (partial or full fees) will be available up until the DVA child care funding has been exhausted.

Who can provide the child care?

Only Commonwealth approved child care providers can be used. Commonwealth approved providers can be found on Australia's online child care portal: www.mychild.gov.au.

Care cannot be provided through informal arrangements, such as care provided by grandparents, relatives or friends.

How do I seek assistance with child care funding?

In order to access the child care funding you must be participating in a DVA approved Rehabilitation Program and have an identified and justified requirement for child care services to help you achieve your rehabilitation goals. This means it is the DVA Registered Rehabilitation Program Provider's role to identify whether you might require child care services and provide rationale as to why these services are needed.

Counselling

Who is eligible?

For your family to access the counselling support, you must:

- have an accepted MRCA condition; and
- have undertaken 'Warlike Service' on or after 1 July 2004; and
- be currently participating in a Rehabilitation Program provided by DVA; and

- your family has an identified need for counselling, to help you achieve your rehabilitation goals.

Counselling is intended to provide your immediate family members with assistance to manage challenging life circumstances that military service may have contributed to.

Family members who can access counselling include your children, partner, parents, siblings and grandparents.

What counselling services are available?

The types of counselling could include:

- resilience training
- grief and loss counselling
- drug and alcohol counselling
- personal and relationship counselling
- parenting skills and support counselling
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- financial counselling
- counselling for gambling

Who can provide the counselling?

The counselling services need to be provided by a professional with the appropriate qualifications, and where applicable, membership with a professional or industry body.

How do I access counselling services?

In order for your family to access child care services, you must be participating in a DVA approved Rehabilitation Program and your family must have an identified need for counselling services, to help you achieve your rehabilitation goals. This means it is the DVA Registered Rehabilitation Program Provider's role to identify whether your family might require counselling.

How many counselling services can your family have?

Your family can be provided with four counselling sessions each year, the year will commence on the date of the first counselling session. Access to counselling will cease at the end of a consecutive five-year period provided you are still participating in rehabilitation. This means that over the course of a five year rehabilitation program, your family can access up to 20 counselling sessions.

Immediate assistance

Immediate counselling assistance can also be provided by the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), which provides a free and confidential 24 hour counselling service for eligible veterans and their families on 1800 011 046.

More Information

DVA General Enquiries

Phone: 1800 555 254 *

Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

DVA Website: www.dva.gov.au

Factsheet Website: www.dva.gov.au/factsheets

* Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur additional charges.

For specific questions about the Family Support Package

Email: family.support.package@dva.gov.au

Related Factsheets

- [MRC05 Rehabilitation](#)
- [MRC53 Family Support Package for Widow\(er\)s](#)
- [VCS01 Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service \(VVCS\)](#)

Disclaimer

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Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Factsheet MRC53 – Family Support Package for Widow(er)s

Purpose

This Factsheet explains the services that might be available to you if you are eligible for the Family Support Package under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)*.

What is the Family Support Package?

The Family Support Package for widowed partners and spouses, has been developed to address recommendations from the Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-Service Personnel, *The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans*.

The package will provide:

- child care for the children of MRCA veterans;
- counselling support following the death of their partner; and
- home help assistance to provide additional support in and around their home.

Assistance is also available to MRCA veterans and their families under this package. Please see [Factsheet MRC52 Family Support Package for Veterans and their families](#) for more information.

How can I access the Family Support Package?

The Coordinated Client Support (CCS) team within DVA assist widowed partners and spouses to navigate what assistance can be accessed through DVA. Where a widow is not already being assisted by CCS, they can contact DVA general enquiries to seek a referral to the CCS program.

Child care

Who can access child care funding?

Eligible widowed partners and spouses can access childcare assistance under the Family Support Package. To be an eligible widowed partner or spouse, the following criteria must apply:

- the person was the partner of a veteran at the time of their death; and
- the veteran rendered warlike service on or after 1 July 2004; and
- the veteran's death was a suicide; or
- the veteran's death occurred on deployment in a conflict.

You will also need to ensure you have been assessed for eligibility of Commonwealth child care requirements and that your child/ren meet the immunisation requirements for Commonwealth child care entitlements.

An eligible child for the purpose of receiving child care, is a child of the veteran within the meaning of the *Family Law Act 1975*. That is, the child must either be a biological child of the veteran, a step child of the veteran or an adopted child of the veteran.

What about Commonwealth child care entitlements?

Child care funding under the Family Support Package is provided to complement, not replace or duplicate existing Commonwealth child care entitlements. Any child care funding provided by DVA is to cover the gap in fees after Commonwealth child care entitlements have been applied. In the event that the income of the widow(er) makes them ineligible for Commonwealth child care support, DVA will fund the fees owing. Coverage of this gap (partial or full fees) will be available up until the DVA child care funding has been exhausted.

Who can provide the child care?

Only Commonwealth approved child care providers can be used. Commonwealth approved providers can be found on Australia's online child care portal: www.mychild.gov.au.

Child care provided through informal arrangements, such as care provided by grandparents, relatives or friends cannot be funded through this initiative.

Counselling

Who can access counselling?

Eligible widowed partners and spouses can access counselling support under the Family Support Package.

To be an eligible widowed partner or spouse, the following criteria must apply:

- the person was the partner of a veteran at the time of their death; and
- the veteran rendered warlike service on or after 1 July 2004; and
- the veteran's death was a suicide; or
- the veteran's death occurred on deployment in a conflict.

What counselling services are available?

Counselling is available to widow(er)s that need assistance managing challenging life circumstances following the death of their partner.

The types of counselling could include:

- resilience training
- grief and loss counselling
- drug and alcohol counselling
- personal and relationship counselling
- parenting skills and support counselling
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- financial counselling
- counselling for gambling.

Who can provide the counselling?

The counselling services need to be provided by a professional with the appropriate qualifications, and where applicable, membership with a professional or industry body.

How many counselling services can the widow(er) have?

You can be provided with up to four counselling sessions each year for two years from the date of the veteran's death. Access to counselling will cease at the end of a two year period.

Immediate assistance

Immediate counselling assistance can also be provided by the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), which provides a free and confidential 24 hour counselling service for eligible veterans and their families on 1800 011 046.

Home Help

Who can access home help?

Eligible widowed partners and spouses can access Home Help assistance under the Family Support Package.

To be an eligible widowed partner or spouse, the following criteria must apply:

- the person was the partner of a veteran at the time of their death; and
- the veteran rendered warlike service on or after 1 July 2004; and
- the veteran's death was a suicide; or
- the veteran's death occurred on deployment in a conflict.

What home help services are available?

The types of home help assistance can include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Activities conducted within the home – for example meal preparation, cooking, cleaning, making beds and general tidying, laundry, and ironing.
- Activities conducted around the home – for example, lawn mowing, gardening, cleaning gutters, cleaning solar panels, cleaning other external surfaces of the home, wood chopping and stacking, pool cleaning, and removing waste from the home.
- Home maintenance activities – for example minor repairs around the home that require the use of a handy person.

However, the home help must be conducted within or around the widow(er)'s principal place of residence.

Who can provide the home help services?

Home help services must be provided by a professional with an Australian Business Number and public liability insurance. Family members cannot be paid to provide home help.

How many home help services are available?

Home help is capped at a maximum of \$482.50 per week. This weekly amount is not retrospective or cumulative, and therefore cannot roll over to subsequent weeks.

More Information

DVA General Enquiries

Phone: 1800 555 254 *

Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

DVA Website: www.dva.gov.au

Factsheet Website: www.dva.gov.au/factsheets

* Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur additional charges.

For specific questions about the Family Support Package

Email: family.support.package@dva.gov.au

Related Factsheets

- [MRC05 Rehabilitation](#)
- [MRC52 Family Support Package for Veterans and their families](#)
- [VCS01 Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service \(VVCS\)](#)