



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.