

DVA Issues

ESO end of year get together – Brisbane.

For many years BC (before Covid) DVA in Brisbane hosted members of numerous Ex Service Organisations (ESO) to an end of year get together – commonly referred to as the DVA Christmas Party.



These popular events, which were held in the conference rooms at DVA offices in Brisbane, usually ran from about 2.00pm to about 5.00pm and were an event to which ESOs looked forward. They gave ESOs the opportunity of meeting the various section heads in DVA in a social atmosphere, of being able to put a face to a voice/name with whom they had communicated over the year and it consequently allowed DVA Section Heads the opportunity of meeting management committee people of the various ESOs. It was also an opportunity for ESOs to inform DVA of the more urgent problems their members were facing.

It personalised the process, it allowed ESOs to unofficially discuss any problems they had with DVA processes with a section head and it allowed DVA people to explain how and why a process/claim/benefit was conducted in the manner it was. It also allowed section heads to offer advice to ESOs on how to apply for DVA's many benefits.

DVA deals with a huge number of very troubled people and sometimes the written response to a claim/benefit can be interpreted incorrectly, a written response can be interpreted as indicating DVA doesn't care, can indicate that DVA is just another huge un-approachable public service department, just another face-less organisation.

Men and women with troubles usually, in the first instance, approach their association or a friend with similar experiences, to discuss their problems. Very rarely is their first approach made to DVA as DVA is, incorrectly, considered uncaring, unapproachable, too big. When approached, a friend will usually encourage that person to talk with their association and that association will eventually direct that person to DVA. Having attended a recent "Christmas Party" the ESO person has experienced the personal aspect of DVA – he/she knows DVA is run by approachable and caring people and will encourage and help the troubled person obtain the relevant assistance they need and to which they are entitled.



This is the way it has always worked. Most ESOs contain someone who has met someone in DVA, who knows someone to whom they can direct their first enquiry and if necessary be directed to the relevant section. This way of doing things was beneficial two ways, the ESO knew he/she was speaking to a “person” not to just a phone extension, similarly, the DVA person knew he/she was speaking with a person from an ESO – not to just an unknown caller.

It sped up the benefit process as there was a degree of care involved.



Unfortunately, it seems this will no longer be the way things are done. No longer will there be a social get together at the end of the year. Covid understandably put a stop to events in calendar years 2020 and 2021 but it seems DVA has decided that as they managed to carry on over the past 2 years without their annual get togethers – why should they bother resurrecting them. Why should they go to the trouble of organising these events.

This is indeed a shame. Many ESOs will interpret this as DVA becoming or being an aloof organisation, “it’s done our way or it’s not done,” the rules are the rules, fill in this form.

We think it is a retrograde step, self-harm amongst serving and ex-service men and women is on the rise, DVA, with its huge annual budget (\$11.5 billion), is supposed to be the “go to” organisation yet it seems it is becoming an unapproachable non-personal organisation. We feel DVA should be out there whenever they can, consistently mixing with ESOs, personalising the Department, being approachable, making it easier for ESOs to get help, to get advice.

But that’s just our opinion.

This topic is Queensland specific, we’re not in a position to discuss the situation in other states, if you can let us know how DVA works outside of Queensland, please do.



A young Naval Officer was in a terrible car accident, but due to the heroics of the hospital staff the only permanent injury was the loss of one ear. Since he wasn't physically impaired he remained in the military and eventually became an Admiral, however, during his career he was always sensitive about his appearance. One day the Admiral was interviewing one Navy, one Army and one Air Force people, one of whom was to be his personal staff.

The first Navy person was a sum-mariner type and it was a great interview. At the end of the interview the Admiral asked him, "Do you notice anything different about me?" The Navy bloke answered, "Why yes. I couldn't help but notice you are missing your starboard ear, so I don't know whether this impacts your hearing on that side." The Admiral got very angry at this lack of tact and threw him out of his office.

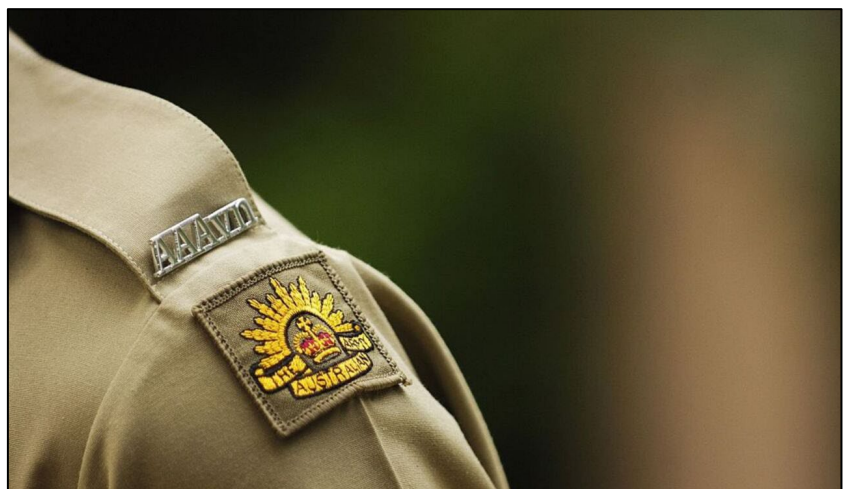
The next candidate, the Army bloke, when asked this same question, answered, "Well yes, you seem to be short one ear." The Admiral threw him out also.

The third interview was with the Air Force bloke. He was articulate, extremely sharp, and seemed to know more than the other two put together. The Admiral wanted this guy, but went ahead with the same question. "Do you notice anything different about me?" To his surprise the Air Force bloke said, "Yes. You wear contact lenses." The Admiral was impressed and thought to himself, what an incredibly tactful person. "And how do you know that?" the Admiral asked.

The Air Force bloke replied, "Well sir, it's pretty hard to wear glasses with only one ear."

Latest official suicide-figures.

A report released recently into the rate of suicide among current and former serving Australian Defence Force personnel reaffirms that suicide prevention must be a matter of national priority. The report, ***Serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members who have served since 1985 suicide monitoring: 1997 to 2020***, prepared by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, is the fifth annual suicide monitoring report commissioned by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.



Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Matt Keogh says the death of any current or former serving ADF member is a tragedy felt deeply by all in the Defence and veteran communities. "Sadly, this latest report found that 1,600 ADF members and veterans with service after 1985 died by suicide between 1997 and 2020," he said.



“This reveals an additional 327 deaths by suicide since last year’s report, largely due to an expanded study period, which now includes an additional five years of data and does not reflect an increased rate of suicide overall.”

The 2022 report found the most common risk factors for permanent, reserve and ex-serving ADF members who died by suicide were experiencing a mood affective disorder, such as depression, and problems in spousal relationships.

For males, suicide ideation was also found to be a risk factor while a personal history of self-harm was found to be more common for women. “A single suicide by a veteran or serving ADF member is one too many, and we are committed to making every possible effort to prevent any further tragedies of this nature”, Minister Keogh said. “After fighting for a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide for many years, our Government welcomed the Commissioner’s Interim Report in August 2022, responding to each of the 13 recommendations swiftly.

“The research in this report, coupled with the work of the Royal Commission, is critical to deepening our understanding of the sad reality of suicidal ideation in our veteran community, enabling us to undertake the necessary reform to save lives.”

Anyone who has completed a single day of service in the ADF can access a comprehensive range of services to support their mental health and wellbeing. This support is needs-based and uncapped. Immediate financial assistance is also available to veterans submitting mental health claims, and, additionally, veterans can access health treatment for 20 commonly claimed physical conditions while their mental health claim is being considered.

Free and confidential mental health support for veterans and families is available through Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling service, and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling 1800 011 046. Defence personnel can contact their local health centre, the All Hours Support Line on 1800 628 036 or the Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

Service-related claims information.

DVA is committed to giving the veteran community information on claims processing to provide greater transparency on its progress. So, each month the department will publish information on processing times on the [Claims Processing page of the DVA website](#).





There are a range of services and supports available to you while you are waiting for a claim to be processed. These include:

- [Provisional Access to Medical Treatment](#)
- [Non-liability Health Care](#)
- [Veteran Payment](#) (while your claim for a mental health condition is assessed)
- [Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling](#), 24/7 access – 1800 011 046.

Essential Medical Equipment Rebate.

Air Liquide Healthcare is pleased to continue its partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the provision of CPAP, Respiratory and Home Oxygen Therapy Services throughout Australia.



Air Liquid dedicates itself to provide Vets with compassionate care, extraordinary service and quality products. With the rising cost of energy, they would like to remind you that the Essential Medical Equipment Rebates are available for veterans living at home and using any of the appliances below. Remember, the rebate applies to EACH of your medical devices supplied through Air Liquide Healthcare, eg:



- Oxygen
- CPAP
- BiLevel
- Aerosol
- Suction Devices.

You'll find further information on the DVA web-site [HERE](#)

Colleen dropped a 50 cent coin, intending it to fall into the blind man's hat on the foot-path, but missed. As quick as a flash, he scooped it up and put it in the hat. "You're not blind" she said. "No I'm not" said Paddy, "It's Murphy who's blind. I'm just filling in for him while he's gone to the pictures".



More support available for veterans in residential aged care.

From the 1st October 2022, DVA expanded access to allied health care services and the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) to all eligible veterans, widows and widowers living in residential aged care facilities, regardless of the level of care they are receiving.



Previously, only those DVA clients with low level care have been able to access DVA-funded allied health care services and aids and appliances. These DVA clients now have access to allied health and RAP services in their residential aged care home, so long as they don't duplicate those the aged care facility is funded to provide.

To find out more about residential aged care and to arrange a free assessment with an Aged Care Assessment Team, call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

You'll find more information on the Rehabilitation Appliances Program [HERE](#).

Access to the Defence, Veterans' and Families Acute Support Package

Legislation has recently passed in Parliament to enable the Defence, Veterans' and Families' Acute Support Package. This package expands the existing Family Support Package to provide more practical services and flexibility for families.



Requirements for veterans to have warlike service or be participating in rehabilitation have been removed. Eligibility has been expanded to working age families of veterans eligible for certain payments under all three Acts, who are at risk of or are in crisis. Working age widowed partners of veterans whose death was related to service, including suicide, under all three Acts are now also eligible. This eligibility expansion allows veteran families to access important support when they need it most.



Support for widowed partners will be improved by allowing them to access support for two years from the date of acceptance into the program, rather than the date of death of the veteran.

Financial limits for each service category of childcare, counselling and household services will be replaced with an overall yearly cap, providing families with greater flexibility. Additionally, a range of new practical supports will be available to help families build independence and resilience including but not limited to financial literacy, mental health first aid, academic and wellbeing support for children, resilience development and counselling.

Services that are available are:

- child care (including home based care, centre based care, family day care, occasional care and outside school hours care)
- counselling for adults and children (including clinical, financial and other life skills counselling where required)
- household assistance (including meal delivery and preparation, cleaning, and household and garden maintenance)
- services to build capacity (including financial literacy, relationship skills, cooking lessons and mental health first aid)
- wellbeing, academic and extra-curricular support for children (including tutoring, music lessons and sporting activities)
- transport for children to attend school and services provided through the program if required.

Access to the Defence, Veterans' and Families' Acute Support Package commences 14 October 2022.

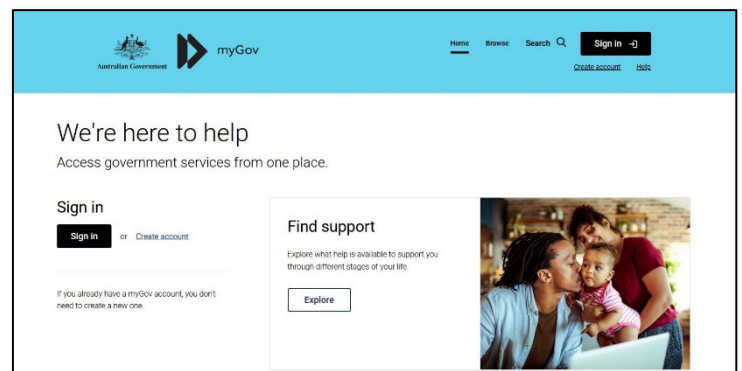
There is further information [HERE](#).

Nothing spoils a good story like the arrival of an eyewitness.

myGov has changed

myGov has been upgraded with a fresh look, modern functions and personalised information to help you find government services when you need them.

Your myGov account includes a new homepage to make it easier to see your correspondence all in one place.





You will still find myGov at my.gov.au and continue to sign in to your myGov account in the same way. Your information is still the same and remains safe and secure. All of your linked myGov services are the same, including your link to DVA.

There is no change to how you access or use MyService.

Free mental health care for eligible veterans.

The 10th October was World Mental Health Day, a day aimed at raising awareness of mental health issues faced every day for some people around the world and promoting the support available to those experiencing mental health challenges.



Did you know that free mental health treatment is available for all former full time members of the Australian Defence Force through DVA's Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC) program? Some reservists may also be eligible.

NLHC provides access to free mental health care, without the need to prove that your condition is related to military service and there is no need to submit a claim for compensation. Early intervention is important with mental health and can lead to better health outcomes. NLHC is designed to assist veterans to access treatment as early as possible. Speak to your GP who may refer you to a mental health practitioner, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.

To check if your White Card covers mental health treatment, or to apply for a White Card if you don't already have one, you can log into [MyService](#) or call DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).

There is more information [HERE](#).

There was a power failure in a Dublin Department Store last week, and three hundred people were stranded on the escalators for more than two hours.