



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 16 March 2020

HEALTH AND STIMULUS PACKAGES SUPPORT VETERAN COMMUNITY

THE Government is doing everything it can to protect our nation from the health and economic impacts of this global health issue, including veterans and their families.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said veterans and their families will benefit from the Government's commitment of \$2.4 billion to bolster the nation's health system in response to COVID-19 as this situation evolves.

"The health package allows older and at-risk veterans to access some health consultations and assessments remotely, via video or phone where video is not available," Mr Chester said.

"In the event veterans are in home isolation or from a vulnerable patient group, they will also be able to have their Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) prescriptions filled online or remotely and have their medication delivered directly to their home.

"This ensures vulnerable veterans can access the health care they need while limiting the risk of exposure.

"Veterans in residential or home care will be supported by the Government's commitment of over \$100 million to upskill and increase the numbers of aged care staff and nurses."

In addition, more than 225,000 veterans and their dependants will benefit from the \$17.6 billion stimulus package announced by the Government yesterday.

"Many of our veterans receive benefits through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the stimulus package announced by the Prime Minister and Treasurer will support our veteran community through this challenging time," Mr Chester said.

"Those veterans or dependants who receive income support or compensation benefits through DVA as listed below and who are currently residing in Australia, will receive the one-off payment of \$750.

"The payment will be automatically paid into bank accounts and will come from DVA or Services Australia, however, recipients are encouraged to confirm their bank details are current and up-to-date by calling DVA on 1800 555 254.

"The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first, particularly with regards to the health and economic impacts of this global health issue."

Payments will be made to the following groups from 31 March 2020, with the majority of payments to be made by 17 April 2020. Recipients of:

- Service Pension
- Income Support Supplement
- Age Pension and Wife Pension paid by DVA
- DVA Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders
- Disability Pension
- War Widow(er)'s Pension
- Wholly Dependent Partner payment
- Special Rate Disability Pension
- Permanent Impairment compensation under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*
- Permanent Impairment compensation under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*
- Veteran Payment
- Gold Card holders

There will be one payment per eligible recipient, which will be tax free and will not count as income for Social Security, Farm Household Allowance and Veteran payments.

In addition to the stimulus and health packages, more than 30,000 veterans and their families will benefit from cuts to deeming rates as announced by the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, which will start flowing through to bank accounts from 1 May 2020.

Further information on the Government's COVID-19 health commitment can be found at www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert

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