

Carers Booklet

ASSISTANCE FOR THE VETERAN COMMUNITY



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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Carers

A carer is someone who gives up their time to look after another person who is unable to care completely for themselves. A carer may be a wife, husband, partner, daughter or son, other relative or friend.

Caring is a physically, emotionally and financially demanding role for many carers. It is important for carers to also look after their own physical and emotional health by paying attention to good nutrition and making the time for daily exercise and recreation.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) recognises the important role carers play in providing valuable support and help to veterans and war widows and widowers who are unable to care for themselves. The care many veterans and war widows and widowers provide to others is also valued by DVA.

This booklet has been developed by DVA to assist carers. It provides information about specific services available through DVA as well as general information about services available in the community.





Assistance from DVA

VETERANS' HOME CARE

The Veterans' Home Care (VHC) program provides a range of home care services for eligible veterans and war widows and widowers. A VHC assessment agency will assess the need for home care services and, based on that assessment, services such as domestic assistance, personal care, limited home and garden maintenance and respite care may be provided. The VHC assessment agency may also provide referrals, with the person's consent, to other government programs and community agencies that are best placed to meet specific needs.

All veterans of the Australian defence forces who are holders of Gold and White Cards and their war widows and widowers are eligible to be assessed for VHC services. Commonwealth and Allied veterans who have White Cards may be assessed for respite care where it relates to their accepted disabilities.

To arrange a VHC assessment: **1300 550 450 (local call)**

For general enquiries: **133 254 (local call)**

Visit the website site at www.dva.gov.au/health/homecare/mainvhc.htm

RESPITE CARE

Respite care is when a substitute carer provides relief for a person's regular carer in an emergency or on a planned basis. It gives the regular carer a chance for some much needed rest and relaxation.

When possible, it is a good idea to plan respite care well in advance to help carers get the substitute care when and where they need it.

Respite care may be provided in different ways depending on the individual situation. Care may be provided:

- in a residential aged care facility
- in-home
- as emergency respite care in the home

Respite is also available in community-based day programs or facilities, such as day clubs. These programs are not funded directly by DVA.

Veterans' Home Care is the first point of contact for members of the veteran community requiring respite care.

RESPITE THROUGH VETERANS' HOME CARE (VHC)

DVA provides for residential and in-home respite including emergency short term home relief (ESTHR) through the VHC program. Approval, based on assessed need by VHC, should be obtained to access this respite care. VHC staff will then discuss respite options and assist in determining the best balance between in-home and residential respite. An assessment for VHC respite can be arranged by phoning **1300 550 450**.

Eligibility for DVA Respite Care

All veterans of the Australian defence forces who are holders of Gold and White Cards and their war widows or widowers may receive respite care, funded through DVA, where approved by a Veterans' Home Care assessment agency. Commonwealth and Allied veterans who have a White Card may be eligible for respite care, but only where it relates to their war caused disabilities.

Partners and carers may benefit from in-home respite care if they are caring for an eligible veteran or war widow or widower.

To arrange a VHC assessment:

1300 550 450 (local call)

For general enquiries:

133 254 (local call)

Financial Assistance for DVA Respite Care

In any one financial year, DVA may pay for up to 28 days (196 hours) of in-home or residential respite care, or a combination of both. Seven hours in-home respite is equivalent to one day in a residential respite facility. Any additional costs, such as pharmaceutical items, telephone calls or additional days of respite care will have to be met by the veteran or war widow or widower.

Respite in a Residential Aged Care Facility

Any person, not just a veteran or a war widow or widower, who has been assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team as requiring respite care in a residential facility, can access up to 63 days respite care per financial year. DVA will pay the basic daily care fee for up to 28 of the 63 days when the person entering residential respite care is a Gold or White Card holder. After 28 days, the veteran, war widow or war widower is responsible for paying the basic daily care fee.

Australian former Prisoners of War and Victoria Cross Veterans

DVA pays the basic daily care fee for up to 63 days (or such further period as is permitted under the Residential Care Subsidy Principles) for former Prisoners of War and Victoria Cross veterans who receive respite care in an approved residential facility.

In-Home Respite Care

In-home respite care can be arranged for a few hours on a regular basis or for several days at a time. It can be used by veterans or war widows or widowers who are carers themselves (i.e. caring for another person), as well as by carers of eligible veterans and war widows and widowers.

Emergency Short Term Home Relief

Emergency short term home relief (ESTHR) is respite care provided to veterans and war widows and widowers. ESTHR offers episodes of up to three days (72 hours) of continuous emergency care, such as when the carer is suddenly or unexpectedly unable to continue providing care. Funding of ESTHR is separate from, and does not affect, the

28-day in-home or residential respite. A cap of nine days (216 hours) in any financial year applies to ESTHR.

If ESTHR is needed outside business hours, local Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres provide an after-hours emergency telephone service that links carers to local emergency respite services. Information about Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres can be found on page 12 of this booklet.

CONVALESCENT CARE

Convalescent care may be available to an eligible veteran in a residential aged care facility for up to 21 days during any financial year following a period of acute illness or surgery.

133 254 (local call)

1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

AIDS AND APPLIANCES

A range of equipment is available through the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) to help eligible members of the veteran community minimise the impact of disabilities and assist them in caring for themselves and undertaking everyday activities. The aids and appliances range from mobility aids such as walking frames and wheelchairs, to continence products and visual aids. Specialists, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and nurses, assess a person's clinical need for aids and appliances available through RAP. Home modifications can be undertaken where they are clearly justified on medical grounds. This can include modifying entrances and bathrooms. A local doctor or other relevant health professional can arrange a referral to RAP.

133 254 (local call)

1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

ATTENDANT ALLOWANCE

An attendant allowance may be paid to veterans who suffer from specific service-related disabilities and as a result, require continuous and permanent assistance for everyday activities such as dressing, feeding, bathing and toileting. This allowance is available where a veteran is living at home or in a community setting and is not being cared for at public expense.

133 254 (local call)

1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

COMMUNITY NURSING

Community nursing services are available to eligible veterans and war widows and widowers to meet assessed clinical and/or personal care needs on referral from a general practitioner, treating doctor or specialist in hospital, hospital discharge planner or Veterans' Home Care assessment agency. Services are provided by a contracted community nursing organisation in the person's home.

Community nursing helps restore or maintain the optimal level of health and independence of the individual.

Contracted community nursing organisations use a mix of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and nursing support staff, as clinically appropriate, in the delivery of services. The community nursing organisation bills DVA directly for its services.

133 254 (local call)

1800 555 254

(regional areas free call)



HOMEFRONT

HomeFront is a preventive program to reduce falls and accidents in the home. It provides eligible members of the veteran community with a comprehensive assessment of their home environment, financial assistance towards the cost of recommended aids and appliances and information about DVA and community support services.

Gold and White Card holders are eligible for HomeFront assistance once each calendar year.

1800 80 1945 (free call)

RECREATIONAL TRANSPORT ALLOWANCE

This allowance provides financial assistance to veterans for transport for recreational purposes. It may be payable to veterans who have specific severe disabilities accepted as service-related. The rate payable is determined by the individual veteran's accepted disabilities.

133 254 (local call)

1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

VIETNAM VETERANS COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS) is a specialised, free, confidential Australia-wide service for Australian veterans and their families. VVCS staff are professionally qualified, with skills in working with a range of problems faced by veterans and their families. They can also provide a wide range of programs and treatment for war and service-related mental health conditions.

1800 011 046 (free call)



DVA Resources

There is a range of other helpful resources available to veterans, war widows and widowers and their carers.

DVA PUBLICATIONS

These publications are free of charge to veterans, war widows and widowers and their carers and are available from DVA State Offices and VAN Offices.

133 254 (local call)

1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

Back To Basics: Handy hints for carers to help prevent back injury

This publication aims to make caring safer for both the carer and the person receiving care, by explaining injury prevention techniques, practical hints and instructions and an overview of products and aids available.

Choose Health: Be Active

This new book shows you simple ways to fit exercise and activity into your daily routine. It includes an activity planner to help you choose the type of activity that best suits you and descriptions of different types of exercise and advice on coping with health problems and overcoming setbacks.

Keeping fit and remaining active are the keys to getting the most out of life, whatever age you are. You will need to choose strategies to fit

in with your individual lifestyle and the person you care for, but even a slight increase in activity can make a difference to your health and well-being. As little as 30 minutes a day has been shown to provide what is needed to help keep your heart, lungs, muscles and bones in working order. You can choose to do your exercise in sessions as short as ten minutes if this is what suits you best.

Physical activity can help prevent injury and reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes (type two), osteoporosis, colon cancer and obesity. Gentle exercise can also help reduce stress, alleviate depression and anxiety, enhance mental health and provide a great opportunity to enjoy activity with family and friends.

Living with Dementia – A guide for veterans and their families

This publication provides information about the different types of dementia and strategies for coping, both for the carer and the early dementia sufferer. It includes personal stories of caring and information about support services available.

You and Your Prostate

This publication provides information about the prostate gland, urinary and prostatic symptoms, investigations for prostate disease, treatment options, living with prostate disease and available support and assistance.

OTHER DVA RESOURCES

Cooking for one or two

This series of classes is designed to assist men and women over the age of 50. The aim is to increase the confidence of those who have never cooked before and to assist people who have previously cooked for a large family and now find it hard to adjust to cooking for one or two. The classes aim to give people practice in cooking easy, quick and nutritious meals.

For information on classes in your area contact your local community centre. If courses are not run in your area, please call your local VAN Office on 1300 55 1918 or your State Office on 133 254 for assistance.

Keeping YOU safe in the rider's seat

This resource addresses many of the safety issues surrounding the purchase and use of motorised scooters and electric wheelchairs as pedestrian movers. It provides information that will assist in the decision making process before purchase as well as the use, storage and maintenance of scooters.

This resource is available online at

www.dva.gov.au/media/publicat/2003/scooter/index.htm.

Planning Ahead

This resource will encourage and assist you in putting family affairs in order and keeping your personal papers up to date. Topics covered include making a will, power of attorney, death and bereavement and benefits and assistance available through DVA.

The Right Mix: Your Health and Alcohol

The Right Mix has something for anyone interested in a healthy lifestyle. There's simple information about standard drinks, facts about alcohol and medication, as well as sleep and health conditions. If you want to find out how to start making changes to your drinking or where to go for help, please call your local VAN Office on 1300 55 1918 or your State Office on 133 254 for information on *The Right Mix* or visit the website, **www.therightmix.gov.au**.

***For resources and more information about DVA publications
and other available resources, visit the DVA website at
www.dva.gov.au/media/publicat/publicat.htm***



Assistance from other Agencies

Veterans and war widows and widowers can also access assistance from a range of other government and community organisations.

COMMONWEALTH CARER RESOURCE CENTRES

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres are operated by carers' associations in each State and Territory. Services include:

- providing carers with referral to community and government services
- practical written information to support them in their caring role, for example support services, home help, financial entitlements and legal matters
- emotional support
- educational and training opportunities for carers and service providers
- access to counselling

A carer support kit is available free of charge in 13 languages. In addition to general information, it addresses issues such as self care, managing health care and medications, loss and grief and includes an emergency care kit.

An Australian indigenous carer's kit is also available.

1800 242 636 (free call)

COMMONWEALTH CARER RESPITE CENTRES

The Australian Government has funded the establishment of Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres to help carers to find the most appropriate respite services to meet their emergency short-term needs and to plan for their future respite needs. The Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres provide an after hours emergency telephone access service that links carers to emergency respite services.

Veterans and war widows and widowers who are carers themselves can phone the free call number below to access emergency respite.

1800 059 059 (free call)

COMMONWEALTH CARELINK CENTRES

Commonwealth Carelink Centres form a national network to provide free confidential information on community aged care, disability and other support services.

Centres also provide information about costs for services, assessment processes and eligibility criteria.

Commonwealth Carelink Centres offer information and assistance to those requiring help, especially the elderly, people with disabilities and their family members, friends, health professionals and service providers.

Information about the services is available in 16 different community languages and in appropriate formats for the vision and hearing impaired as well as for indigenous Australians.

1800 052 222 (free call)

CENTRELINK

Carer Allowance

This is a supplementary payment available to carers looking after a person at home who requires constant care or supervision. It is not

income or assets tested and is non-taxable. Carer Allowance can be paid in addition to a Centrelink or DVA income support payment.

Carer Payment

Carer Payment is an income support payment for carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through full-time work. The carer does not need to live with the person they are caring for to be eligible, but must be providing care on a daily basis. This payment is income and assets tested, both for the carer and the person in care. The carer cannot receive Carer Payment in addition to another pension from Centrelink or DVA.

For more information including current rates, call Centrelink or visit

www.centrelink.gov.au

132 717 (local call)

Information on financial assistance and other support for carers can also be found on the Department of Family and Community Services website at **www.facs.gov.au**

CARERS AUSTRALIA

In each State and Territory there is a carers' association working to bring the needs, views and concerns of carers to the attention of the community, including government, policy makers, health professionals and service providers. They also undertake carer support services, education and training and research and policy development. For more information visit the Carers Australia website at

www.carersaustralia.com.au

1800 242 636 (free call)

CARER SUPPORT NETWORKS

Local Carer Support Networks have been established in most regions across Australia to meet the needs of carers in the local community. These networks offer carers the opportunity to meet in groups (such

as male carer groups), attend courses on carer issues, participate in day outings and other activities which carers find can help them to cope.

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres can assist in locating your nearest Carer Support Network.

1800 242 636 (free call)

ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA

Alzheimer's Australia provides a comprehensive range of free counselling, education, support and information services for people with dementia, their families and carers. The Association works to raise community awareness of dementia and supports local and national research into Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

1800 639 331 (free call)

BEYONDBLUE

Depression in the elderly can be a very serious condition affecting physical health, mobility and relationships. The national depression initiative *beyondblue* has also launched *Maturity Blues*, a program relating to depression in the elderly.

For more information about this program, visit bluevoices/maturityblues on the *beyondblue* website at **www.beyondblue.org.au**

PALLIATIVE CARE AUSTRALIA

Palliative care provides relief to a terminally ill person through symptom and pain management and attention to mental health and spiritual needs. The goal is to provide comfort and maintain the highest possible quality of life. Palliative care also offers bereavement support services.

Contact your general practitioner, local hospital, community health centre or your local branch of Palliative Care Australia for more information or visit the Palliative Care website **www.pallcare.org.au**

1800 660 055 (free call)

Service Reference Guide

Eligibility Code

- Gold and White Repatriation Health Card holders who served in the Australian Defence Force and their war widows and widowers.
- Gold Repatriation Health Card holders. White Repatriation Health Card holder eligibility is dependent on accepted disabilities.
- General community eligibility (including veterans and war widows and widowers).

	Domestic Assistance	Home & Garden Maintenance	Residential Respite	In-home Respite (including emergency)	Personal Care	Falls Prevention	Home Nursing	Aids & Appliances	Carer Payment/Allowance	General Carer Support
Veterans' Home Care Page 2										
Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) Page 5										
Community Nursing Page 6										
HomeFront Page 7										
Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service Page 7										
Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres Page 12										
Centrelink Page 12										
Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre Page 11										

For information on any other home and community care services available to the general community (including veterans and war widows and widowers) call Commonwealth Carelink on 1800 052 222.

The *Carers Booklet* aims to assist carers by listing resources relevant to their busy role. This book provides information about contacts and help available from DVA and other agencies.

If you would like to help us assess the usefulness and effectiveness of the *Carers Booklet*, you can provide your feedback by completing the attached evaluation form.

The information you provide to us will be used to improve further editions of this book. It will also be considered in the production of other resources to further assist carers in their important caring role and help the wider veteran community.

After completing the evaluation form here and over the page, simply cut out the page, place the completed form in an envelope and post it to the DVA address over the page.

Your help will be greatly appreciated. *Thank you.*

Evaluating the Carers Booklet

Your feedback is valuable to us!

Are you a carer? **Yes** **No**

What is your relationship to the person you are caring for?

.....
.....

Age at last Birthday (*please circle*):

Under 18	18 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 39
40 – 49	50 – 59	60 – 69	70 – 79
80 – 89	90 and over		

Please rate the Carers Booklet using a line or circle to indicate your rating .

1. INFORMATION

How useful is the information you found?

Poor **Fair** **Good** **Excellent**

Comments/Suggestions: (Please attach a page if not enough space.)

.....
.....

Do you feel any improvements could be made? **Yes** **No**

Comments/Suggestions: (Please attach a page if not enough space.)

.....
.....
.....

2. USEFULNESS – Please tell us:

how useful you found the details of the resources outlined in the book

Poor **Fair** **Good** **Excellent**

Comments/Suggestions: (Please attach a page if not enough space.)

...□

...□

and

whether you feel any additions could be included?

Comments/Suggestions: (Please attach a page if not enough space.)

...□

...□

...□

3. USER FRIENDLY – Please tell us:

whether you found the book easy to use. **Yes** **Relatively** **No**

Comments/Suggestions: (Please attach a page if not enough space.)

...□

...□

...□

and

whether you feel any improvements could be made. **Yes** **No**

Comments/Suggestions: (Please attach a page if not enough space.)

...□

...□

...□

Your comments will be used to help us improve this and similar resources.

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this form.

please post to: **The Department of Veterans' Affairs
Veterans' Home Care Policy
PO Box 21
WODEN ACT 2606**



Quick Reference Guide

DVA SUPPORT

Aids and Appliances (RAP)

1300 550 456 (local call)
1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

Attendant Allowance

133 254 (local call)
1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

Community Nursing

133 254 (local call)
1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

Community Day Clubs

1300 55 1918 (local call)

Convalescent Care

133 254 (local call)
1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

HomeFront

1800 80 1945 (free call)

Recreational Transport Allowance

133 254 (local call)
1800 555 254 (regional areas free call)

Veterans' Home Care Assessment

1300 550 450 (local call)
General enquiries 133 254 (local call)

Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service

1800 011 046 (free call)

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER AGENCIES

Aged and Community Care Information

1800 500 853 (free call)

Alzheimer's Australia

1800 639 331 (free call)

Carer Support Networks

1800 242 636 (free call)

Carers Australia

1800 242 636 (free call)

Centrelink

13 2717 (local call)

Commonwealth Carelink Centres

1800 052 222 (free call)

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres

1800 242 636 (free call)

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres

1800 059 059 (free call)

Dementia 24 Hour Hotline

1800 639 331 (free call)

National Continence Helpline

1800 330 066 (free call)

Palliative Care Australia

1800 660 055 (free call)

Vision Information Line

(for dual sensory loss)

1800 331 000 (free call)

Aged Care Assessment Team See the *Age Page* of your local telephone directory

Better Hearing Australia See the *Age Page* of your local telephone directory

Other useful telephone numbers can be found on the *Age Page*
of your local telephone directory.

The *Carers Booklet* is an initiative of the Department of Veterans' Affairs '**choose health!**' strategic plan.

