



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

The veteran's guide to living independently

Accessing DVA services



CONTACT DETAILS

Enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this document are welcome at:

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You can find this product at dva.gov.au and myagedcare.gov.au

Information current as at December 2024.

How to use this book

This book has been developed to help you, your family and carers better understand the types of services that the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) provides to help you stay independent and active in your own home.

We suggest you start by looking at the tables on page 4. If you see any services you might need, turn to the relevant section of the book for more information. You can find out about whether there are any costs involved on page 18.

This book also contains useful information on such things as:

- how to get DVA funded travel to medical appointments
- staying connected with the community
- mental health support
- getting your affairs in order.

See the Contents page overleaf, there is also a Glossary at the end of this book.

DVA services compared with Department of Health and Aged Care services

DVA and the Department of Health and Aged Care (Health) both offer services to help you stay at home and remain as independent as possible. DVA services are only available to eligible DVA clients but Health's services are available to all eligible senior Australians, including veterans.

While DVA offers a range of community health and home support services, Health offers aged-care services from entry-level through to more complex support in your home.

Depending on your needs, you are generally better off using DVA's services as:

- your needs can be assessed relatively quickly over the phone or with an in-home assessment
- there are no age restrictions to services
- your services are organised for you
- there may be a shorter waiting time for services
- any co-payments that may apply cost less
- there is no means testing.

You can supplement DVA's services with Health's aged-care services, as long as you don't use the same kind of services (such as household cleaning) from both departments.

Most DVA services can be arranged within two weeks of an initial over-the-phone or in-home assessment. This assessment is done by a DVA-contracted assessment agency or provider, who will then arrange a service provider for you. Note that if you live in a rural or remote area it may take longer to find an appropriate service provider in your area.

My Aged Care

You may find that either you are not eligible for DVA services or they do not meet your needs. If so, check the My Aged Care website (myagedcare.gov.au) for information on Health's aged-care services. You can access these services through My Aged Care, which is the Australian Government's main entry point to accessing aged-care services for all Australians.

The following information booklets are available on the My Aged Care (myagedcare.gov.au/resources) website:

- *Your guide to Commonwealth Home Support Programme services*
- *Your guide to home care package services*
- *Your guide to short-term restorative care*

Residential aged care

If you need information on how to access residential care, please see DVA's book ***The veteran's guide to moving into an aged-care home – Accessing DVA services*** or find information on DVA's website dva.gov.au/ac or call DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372*) and we will mail you a printed copy. Or, again, visit My Aged Care (myagedcare.gov.au).

For more information.

If you need further information or assistance, please call DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372*) or My Aged Care (1800 200 422*).

* Calls from mobile phones may incur additional charges.



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Overview of DVA and Health's programs

DVA provides a range of support services. These are aimed at helping you to stay living independently at home by supporting your health, wellbeing and community connection.

It is important for you to consider all services offered by both DVA and Health. This will allow you to select individual services or a combination of services that best suit your overall support needs.

In Home Care	Short term care and Episodic care	Residential aged care (aged care homes)
DVA Veterans' Home Care Community Nursing Respite Care Rehabilitation Appliances Program	DVA Respite Care Convalescent Care after a hospital stay	DVA DVA does not provide residential aged care or own any aged care homes.
HEALTH Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Home Care Packages Levels 1-4 (depending on aged care assessment and need)	HEALTH Transition care for after hospital stays Short Term Restorative Care (STRC)	HEALTH Residential aged care (aged care homes) for older people who can no longer live alone and need help with everyday tasks or health care. The Australian Government subsidises aged care homes to provide care that is available 24 hours a day

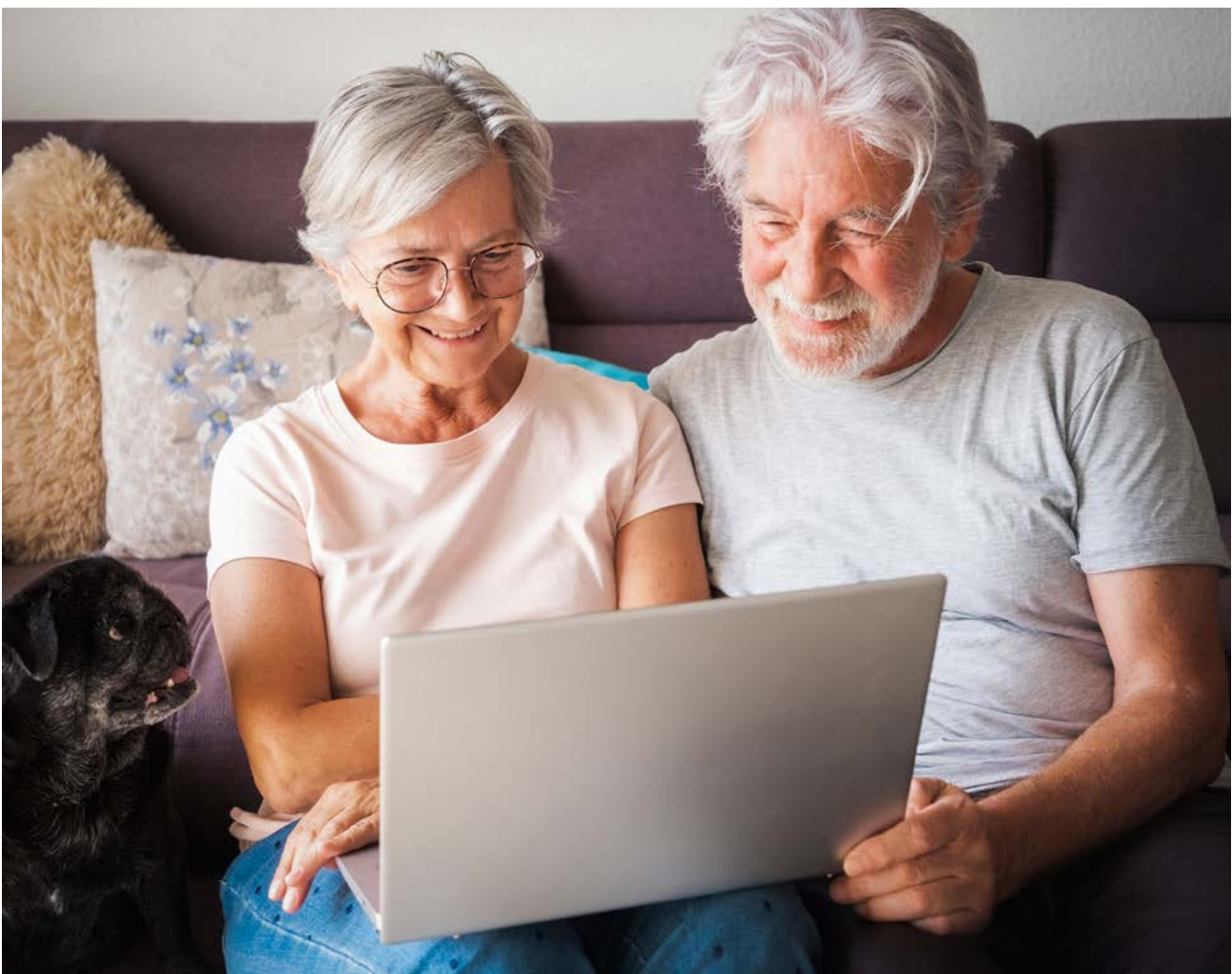
For information on the Department of Health and Aged Care's services go to My Aged Care (myagedcare.gov.au or 1800 200 422*).

* Calls from mobile phones may incur additional charges.

As an eligible veteran or widow(er) you can choose services from both DVA and Health as long as there is no duplication of services. For example, perhaps you receive assistance from the DVA Veterans' Home Care for shopping. If so, you cannot access the same services through Health's Home Care Package as well.

Health's **Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)** offers entry-level support at home on an ongoing or short-term basis, depending on need. CHSP provides services such as delivered meals, help with housework, personal care, community transport, shopping, allied health, social support and planned respite (giving your carer a break). This program aims to help you stay as independent as possible. It focuses on working with you, rather than doing work for you. It is about building on your strengths and abilities to help you remain living independently and safely at home.

Health's **Transition Care** is provided directly following a stay in hospital. **Short Term Restorative Care** is an early intervention program that aims to reverse or slow 'functional decline' in older people. Both of these programs require an in-home assessment by your state's Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) (or Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) in Victoria).



Your guide to DVA health and home care services

Get assistance	Access this service	Find out more
Domestic Assistance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal house cleaning (dishwashing, vacuuming and mopping) Bed making and linen changing Clothes washing and/or ironing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance with meal preparation (not total preparation of meals) Bill paying Shopping (unaccompanied only) 	<p>Access: Call the Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450</p> <p>Cost: Co-payment \$5 per hour Capped amount – maximum \$5 per week</p> <p>Page 6 Veterans' Home Care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/vhc</p>
Personal Care		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showering, bathing and toileting Dressing, grooming Application of non-medical skin creams and lotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating Putting on compression stockings, preventative bandaging, splints and calipers Moving about the house Getting in and out of bed 	<p>Access: Call the Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450</p> <p>Cost: Co-payment \$5 per hour Capped amount – maximum \$10 per week</p> <p>Page 7 Veterans' Home Care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/vhc</p>
Home and Garden Maintenance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cupboard adjustment Replacing light bulbs Changing batteries in smoke/security alarms Cleaning of gutters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal and external window cleaning Cleaning ceiling and exhaust fans, air conditioning and split system units Lawn mowing 	<p>Access: Call the Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450</p> <p>Cost: Co-payment \$5 per hour Maximum 15 hours per year Capped amount – maximum \$75 in 12 month period Additional costs for supplies may be required.</p> <p>Page 7 Veterans' Home Care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/vhc</p>
Community Nursing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medication Wound care Personal hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance with showering or dressing Other personal care support if health or medical recovery is negatively impacted 	<p>Access: DVA Community Nursing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Referral from your GP, treating doctor in hospital, hospital discharge planner, or nurse practitioner specialising in a community nursing field to an approved Community Nursing provider. A list of approved providers is on our website, or contact DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) to find a local provider CN provider to assess your needs and develop a care plan with you <p>Cost: No cost</p> <p>Page 13 Community Nursing on the DVA website dva.gov.au/cn</p>
Coordinated Veterans' Care Program		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of your chronic health conditions and complex care needs 	<p>Cost: No cost</p>	<p>Page 14 CVC Program on the DVA website dva.gov.au/cvc Or call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Assistance 	<p>Access: Obtain a referral from your GP and call the VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450.</p> <p>Cost: Co-payment \$5 per hour Capped amount – maximum \$5 per week</p>	<p>Page 14 CVC Social Assistance on the DVA website dva.gov.au/cvcsa</p>

Get assistance	Access this service	Find out more
Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility and functional support • Oxygen and continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) • Cognitive, dementia and memory assistive technology • Personal response systems (PRS) • Fall prevention • Low vision • Prostheses or orthoses • Hearing appliances • Speech pathology • Diabetes products • Home modifications and household adaptive appliances 	<p>Access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk with your treating doctor about your needs. Your treating doctor may provide a referral to a suitable health professional 2. Health professional to assess your needs and writes a prescription and a referral for DVA. 3. DVA arranges the issue of the item 4. Delivery of the item to your home address <p>Cost: No cost</p> <p>Prior approval required from DVA for items not on the RAP National Schedule of Equipment.</p> <p>Items required on an ongoing basis such as continence products and oxygen your health provider will need to provide regular prescriptions to ensure the product/s continue to meet your clinical needs.</p>	<p>Page 16</p> <p>RAP on the DVA website dva.gov.au/rap Or call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)</p>
Continence products	<p>Access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk to your treating doctor or continence adviser and get a prescription for continence products 2. Contact DVA to arrange supplier through a DVA contracted supplier <p>Cost: No cost</p>	<p>Page 17</p> <p>RAP on the DVA website dva.gov.au/rap Or call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)</p>
Respite Care		
• In-home Respite Care – allows a carer to have a break	<p>Access: Call the Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450</p> <p>Cost: No cost</p>	<p>Page 8</p> <p>Veterans' Home Care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/vhc</p>
• Residential Respite Care – short-term care usually in an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility	<p>Access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 for an ACAT or ACAS(Vic) assessment 2. Locate an available respite bed in a residential respite facility 3. Once booked, call VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450 for DVA to fund <p>Cost: No cost</p>	<p>Page 8</p> <p>Respite care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/carers</p>
• Emergency Short Term Home Relief (ESTHR) – when your carer and general community services unexpectedly is unable to provide the necessary care	<p>Access: Call the Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450</p> <p>Cost: No cost</p>	<p>Page 9</p> <p>Veterans' Home Care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/vhc</p>
Convalescent Care		
• Convalescent Care – medically prescribed convalescence to help recovery from an illness or operation immediately following a stay in hospital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speak to your treating doctor, discharge planner or hospital staff while still in hospital 2. They will locate suitable accommodation 3. They will seek prior approval from DVA if accommodation is not in a hospital setting 4. You are transferred to accommodation <p>Cost: No cost</p>	<p>Page 15</p> <p>Convalescent Care on the DVA website dva.gov.au/cc</p>

Veterans' Home Care

Veterans' Home Care provides entry-level (low care) services to Veteran Gold Card and eligible Veteran White Card holders with an accepted service-related injury or condition. It can help you continue to live in your home by providing you with a small amount of practical help. These services are tailored for you and can be provided as short-term or as ongoing support. If required, they can be increased for a short time after surgery or a stay in hospital to assist with your recovery.

To receive VHC services, a VHC Assessment Agency (see glossary) needs to assess you.

VHC Assessment Agencies generally assess your needs over the phone in the first instance and approve services if appropriate. If it approves the services, the Agency, in consultation with you, will then arrange those services with a contracted VHC Service Provider (see glossary). It will also provide you with your VHC Care Plan.

VHC Service Providers deliver the approved services and collect a modest co-payment from you, if it is stated on your VHC Care Plan. VHC Service Providers cannot change your service, eligibility or co-payment. Nor can they make an assessment. They must refer you to the VHC Assessment Agency on these matters.

Services offered under VHC include:

- Domestic Assistance
- Personal Care (up to 1.5 hours/week)
- Home and Garden Maintenance
- Respite Care
- Social Assistance (through Coordinated Veterans' Care - see page 14 for more information).

Domestic Assistance

Domestic Assistance provides support with basic household tasks, such as:

- internal house cleaning like dishwashing, vacuuming and mopping
- bed making and linen changing
- clothes washing and/or ironing
- some assistance with meal preparation (but not total preparation of meals)
- bill paying
- unaccompanied shopping (the service provider goes shopping on your behalf).

Domestic Assistance is not intended to replace tasks you are capable of doing. Doing domestic activities has been shown to have a beneficial health effect, even for the frail and very elderly.

The threshold for Domestic Assistance is needs assessed, taking into account VHC which is not designed to meet complex or high-level care needs. This service can be provided on a weekly, fortnightly or less frequent basis.

Cost

This service attracts a co-payment. Refer to the table on page 18 'Costs of DVA programs and limits on services'.

Personal Care

Personal Care includes assistance with non-medical daily self-care tasks if you can't do them yourself. This is normally provided for up to one and a half hours per week.

Services may include assistance with:

- showering, bathing, toileting
- dressing, grooming
- eating
- application of non-medicated skin care creams and lotions
- putting on compression stockings, protective bandaging, splints and callipers
- getting in and out of bed
- moving about the house.

However, you may have long-term, high-level personal care needs beyond one and a half hours per week or perhaps you have clinical needs. If so, the DVA Community Nursing Program may provide the personal care you need.

Cost

This service attracts a co-payment. Refer to the table on page 18 'Costs of DVA programs and limits on services'. There is no cost if personal care is accessed under the DVA Community Nursing program.

Home and Garden Maintenance

Home and garden maintenance may include minor maintenance or repair work that can be carried out by a handyperson. This includes:

- replacing light bulbs
- cleaning gutters
- cleaning windows
- cleaning ceiling fans
- lawn mowing

We do not cover major home repairs or ornamental and routine garden maintenance such as weeding, pruning and maintaining of flower beds.

If you are getting home and garden maintenance services, you may need to pay for supplies like batteries, light globes or rubbish dumping fees.

Home and Garden Maintenance is limited to a maximum of 15 hours in a 12-month period and is based on your assessed need.

Cost

You will need to pay a co-payment and you may need to pay the cost of supplies. Refer to the table on page 18 'Costs of DVA programs and limits on services'.

Respite Care

Respite Care gives your carer a break. A carer can be a friend, partner or family member who provides your ongoing care because you are severely incapacitated or frail. A carer is not required to live with you. DVA defines a carer as someone who provides unpaid support and may receive the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance from Centrelink.

DVA offers respite care to:

- carers of a Veteran Gold or White Card holder
- Veteran Gold or White Card holders who are carers
- Veteran Gold or White Card holders who are self-carers (for Residential Respite only).

There are three types of respite care available through VHC:

- In-Home Respite
- Residential Respite
- Emergency Short-Term Home Relief (ESTHR).

In-Home Respite Care

In-Home Respite is available for eligible DVA clients who are:

- being cared for, and their carer needs a break from the caring role; or
- caring for someone, and they need a break from the caring role.

Self-carers are not eligible for In-Home Respite.

In-Home Respite allows a carer to have a break while a substitute carer comes into the home to take over the caring role. In-Home Respite can be for regular visits or one-off situations. It gives the carer the chance to attend to everyday activities, and supports carers who have other work/education commitments, or are reentering the workforce.

We can provide In-Home Respite whether or not the carer is at home. Either way, it must relieve the carer of caring tasks.

Residential Respite Care

Residential Respite Care provides short-term care, usually in an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility. However, in certain circumstances, Residential Respite may be provided in other types of accommodation.

You can use it if your carer needs a break, or if you are a self-carer. Only entitled persons (for example, veterans or war widows/ers) can be admitted for Residential Respite. It is available on a planned or emergency basis.

Residential Respite Care does not include convalescent care. Convalescent Care is provided in an appropriate care facility. You would use this when recovering from an acute illness or operation after being discharged from hospital. See page 15.

For information on how to access Residential Respite Care see page 10.

Emergency Short Term Home Relief (ESTHR)

DVA can provide care in your home when your carer is unexpectedly unable to provide care. We will provide ESTHR when general community services are not available and the only alternatives are that you are admitted to hospital or left without the necessary care. We will continue providing ESTHR until general community services are arranged, or the usual carer is able to resume caring for you.

Self-carers are not eligible for ESTHR. If you (the eligible DVA client) are the carer, and the person you are caring for is not a DVA client in their own right, we cannot provide that person with ESTHR.

To access ESTHR you will need to call a VHC Assessment Agency via 1300 550 450. The agency will discuss your circumstances with you to identify which services you need.

Cost

There is no cost for respite care provided through the VHC program if it is within the following limits within one financial year:

- 196 hours of in-home respite
- 28 days of residential respite (each day is equivalent to 7 hours)
- a combination of in-home and residential respite not exceeding 196 hours
- 216 hours of ESTHR.

Refer to the table on page 18 'Costs of DVA programs and limits on services'.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/carers.

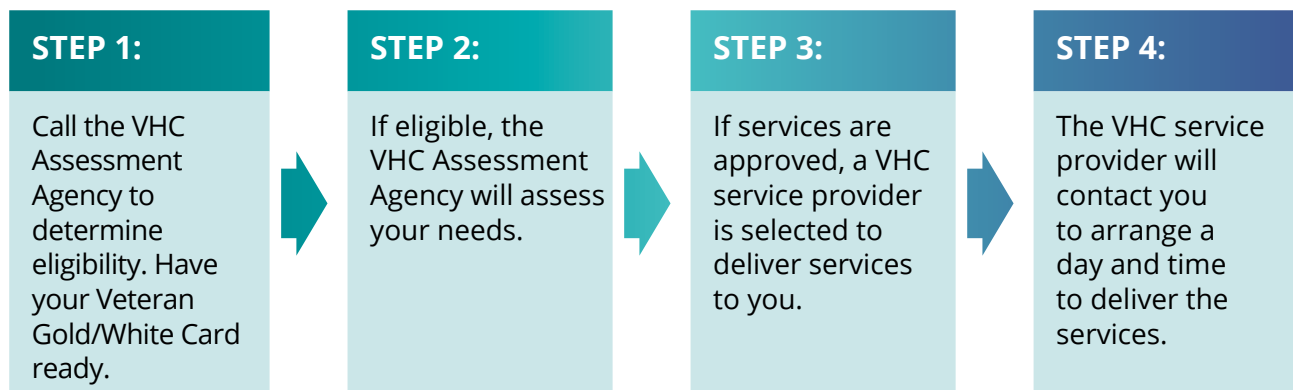
Accessing Veterans' Home Care

VHC is designed to provide flexible and timely services that are responsive to the needs of eligible DVA clients. Most services will start within two weeks of your assessment.

To access VHC services, with the exception of Residential Respite, you will need to contact a **Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency** via **1300 550 450** or call **DVA** on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372).

The process for getting the following VHC services is shown below:

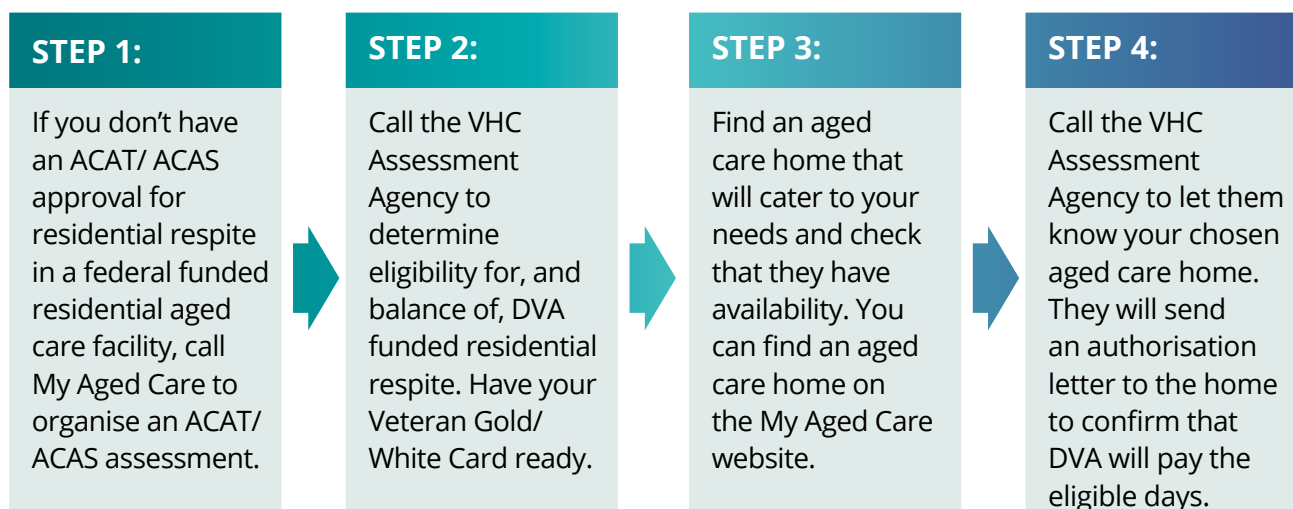
- Domestic Assistance
- Personal Care
- Safety-related Home and Garden Maintenance
- Respite care – In-Home and ESTHR.



Accessing Residential Respite Care

Eligible DVA clients needing Residential Respite in an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility must be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) or the Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS in Victoria) before booking their stay. To organise an ACAT or ACAS assessment, call **My Aged Care** on **1800 200 422** or visit the My Aged Care website at myagedcare.gov.au.

This is the process for getting Residential Respite Care:



After receiving an ACAT or ACAS approval, the eligible DVA client (or their carer or family) will need to locate a facility with an available respite bed. To find an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility, visit the **My Aged Care website** at myagedcare.gov.au.

Once you have booked a respite bed, call a **VHC Assessment Agency** via **1300 550 450**. The VHC assessor will arrange for DVA funding for the residential respite stay. The VHC Assessment Agency will send a letter to you and to the residential respite facility.

Occasionally, the residential aged-care facility may ask you to pay a fully refundable booking fee or deposit. DVA does not pay or reimburse this fee.

Ongoing assessment and changing circumstances

Generally you will be reassessed every six months by the VHC Assessment Agency once services have been approved. Short-term higher-level services approved following discharge from hospital are reviewed after six to eight weeks.

If you feel that your needs have changed since the initial VHC assessment or review assessment, you should contact the VHC Assessment Agency whose number will be on your VHC Care Plan. The VHC Assessment Agency will discuss the changes and ensure appropriate assistance is provided.

Also contact the VHC Assessment Agency to update your care plan if you are going away on holiday, into hospital, into a residential aged-care facility or your health has improved.

Your care plan

When you engage with DVA Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing services you will be provided with a care or service plan. This plan will be discussed with you, along with your eligibility and any co-payments before a service provider in your area is organised.

DVA services and programs are normally organised within two weeks or to meet your clinical need. Occasionally, it may take longer to link you with a service provider in your area with the skills to meet your determined need, particularly if you live in a rural and remote area.

If you are not eligible for DVA services or DVA cannot meet your needs, Health has a range of services and programs that may suit you. DVA encourages you to explore the options that Health provides.

Service satisfaction

If you are dissatisfied with your VHC service, you should call your:

- VHC Service Provider using the number on your VHC Care Plan and discuss your dissatisfaction.
- VHC Assessment Agency via **1300 550 450** and explain the situation if you believe your issue has not been resolved by the VHC Service Provider.

You can find out more about your rights and responsibilities by referring to the 'Veterans' Home Care Services Client Rights and Responsibilities' information sheet issued with your VHC Care Plan.

If you believe your issue has not been addressed by the VHC Service Provider or VHC Assessment Agency after a reasonable period of time, you can lodge a complaint with DVA by phoning **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) and asking to speak to someone in the Health Approvals and Home Care team.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/vhc.



DVA Community Nursing Program

DVA Community Nursing (CN) can provide you with clinically required nursing and/or personal care services in your own home.

Community Nursing services can assist you with:

- medication
- wound care
- personal hygiene, showering and dressing
- other personal care if clinically required.

CN services can help you restore or maintain your health and independence at home. This can be following an illness or to help you avoid early admittance to hospital or residential care. Community Nursing can also allow you to have a dignified death at home.

Accessing the program

To access the DVA CN program, you must be assessed as having a clinical need for nursing and/or personal care services and hold a Veteran Gold Card or a Veteran White Card (for conditions covered by the card). Your GP, treating doctor in hospital, hospital discharge planner, or nurse practitioner specialising in a community nursing field (authorised referrer) must provide a written referral to a community nursing provider.

The CN provider will undertake a comprehensive assessment to determine the nursing services required to meet your assessed clinical and/or personal care needs.

The process for accessing the DVA CN services is shown in the following:

STEP 1:

Speak with your GP, specialist, treating doctor, or nurse practitioner to obtain a written referral to a CN provider to obtain a written referral to the CN Provider.



STEP 2:

The CN Provider will conduct a comprehensive assessment and develop a care plan with you.

Your CN provider will continually assess your needs. However, please talk to them if your condition changes, you are in hospital or you will be away from home.

If you have any concerns about your care, in the first instance contact your CN provider. If you feel they have not resolved your concerns, you can contact DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) and ask to speak with someone in the Health Approvals and Home Care team.

Cost

You do not have to pay for DVA Community Nursing services.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/cn, call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or email nursing@dva.gov.au.

DVA Coordinated Veterans' Care Program

DVA Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program provides you, as a Veteran Gold Card holder or a Veteran White Card holder with an accepted mental health condition, with co-ordinated care to manage your chronic condition, to improve management of your condition/s and keep you out of hospital.

In the CVC Program your GP and a care coordinator work with you to develop a plan to meet your healthcare needs. The CVC Care Team is tailored to your needs and can include specialists and allied health professionals, as well as family and community supports.

Accessing the program

To access the CVC Program, speak with your GP or Practice Nurse or Community Nurse. If you are eligible, they will work with you to understand your goals and develop a plan together.

If you have any concerns about your care, in the first instance speak with your GP. If you feel they have not resolved your concerns, please contact DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) and ask to speak with someone from the CVC team.

Accessing Social Assistance

The CVC program recognises the benefits of social inclusion in supporting good health. It encourages you to participate in community activities, such as groups, local clubs and associations on an ongoing basis.

The CVC program includes a one-off short-term intensive Social Assistance service to help you engage with community activities. This generally lasts for up to 12 weeks.

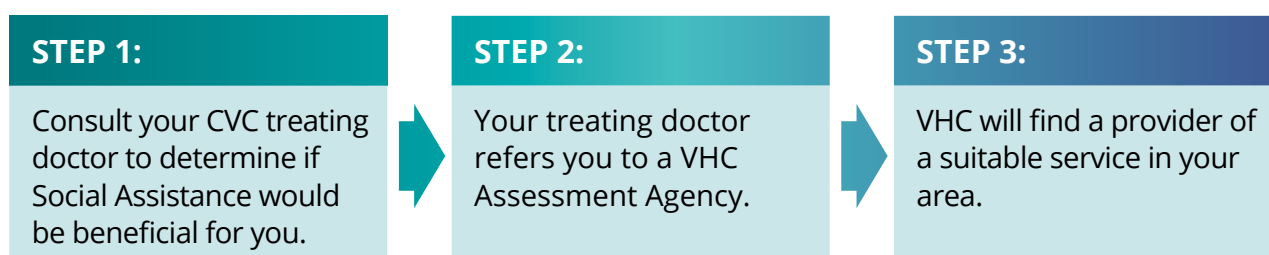
You may be eligible for the Social Assistance service if you are the holder of a Veteran Gold Card, or a Veteran White Card and have an accepted mental health condition, and you participate in the CVC program with your treating doctor.

If appropriate for you, your treating doctor will refer you to a VHC Assessment Agency for a Social Assistance assessment.

Cost

You do not have to pay for the CVC Program. You may have to pay a co-payment for Social Assistance services. Refer to the table on page 18 'Costs of DVA programs and limits on services'.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/CVC or dva.gov.au/CVCSA or call **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or email cvcprogram@dva.gov.au.



Convalescent Care

Convalescent Care provides you, as an eligible DVA client with a period of medically-prescribed convalescence while you are recovering from an illness or operation immediately following a stay in hospital. DVA can provide Convalescent Care in Australian Government funded aged-care facilities, Multi-Purpose Services, Supported Residential Services (SRS) in Victoria, or public and private hospitals. Convalescent Care should only be provided in hospitals when no suitable residential care is available. In certain circumstances, we may provide Convalescent Care in other suitable institutions. Convalescent Care is not available in the home.

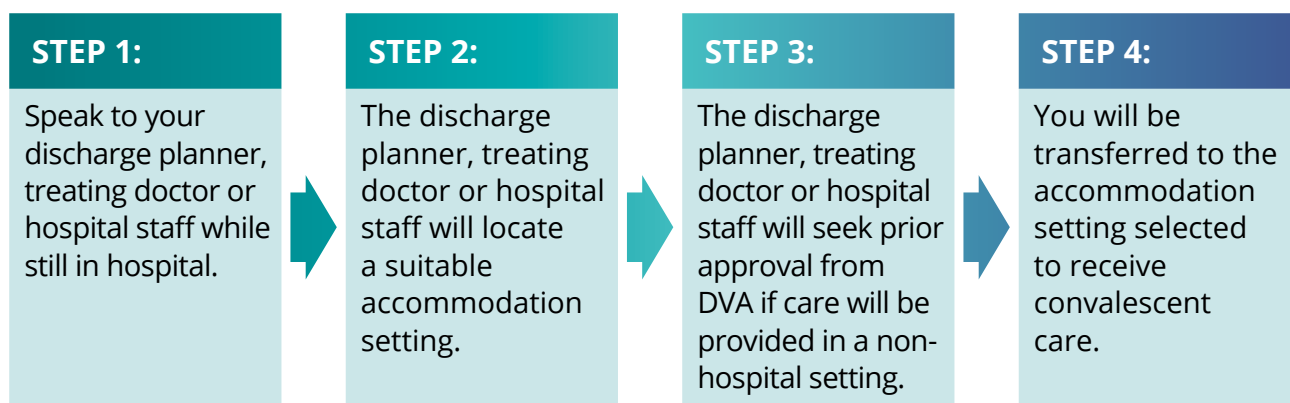
Accessing Convalescent Care

Your hospital discharge planner, treating doctor or other hospital staff (usually the social worker or charge nurse) can organise Convalescent Care if it is medically necessary.

When Convalescent Care is arranged in a public or private hospital (or a public hospital-based Multi-Purpose Service), prior financial authorisation from DVA is **not required** and there is **no limit** on the number of days you can stay there. Convalescent Care should only be provided in hospital when suitable Australian Government-funded aged care is not available.

Prior approval from DVA is required when Convalescent Care is arranged in an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility, SRS or other non-hospital institution approved by DVA. DVA will pay for up to 21 days in a financial year for you to stay there.

The process for accessing Convalescent Care is shown in the following:



If you believe you need more than 21 days, please contact your treating doctor to determine your ongoing care needs.

Cost

You will not have to pay for Convalescent Care. Convalescent Care is provided with no limits or costs in public or private hospitals. There is a limit of 21 days if the care is provided in an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility or other institution. You should not be charged for the cost of Convalescent Care or any additional fees (including extra service fees).

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/cc.

Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)

RAP provides you, as an eligible DVA client, with aids and appliances to be as independent and self-reliant as possible in your own home.

To be eligible, you need to have an **assessed clinical need** for an aid or appliance and be a DVA client holding a Veteran Gold Card or a Veteran White Card (only for conditions accepted by DVA as related to your service). Products available through RAP include (but are not limited to) the following categories:

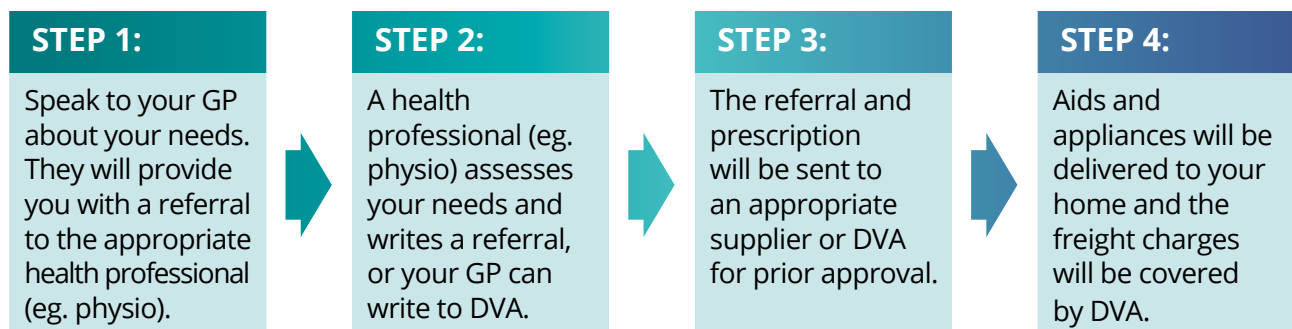
- mobility and functional support (MFS)
- continence
- oxygen and continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP)
- cognitive, dementia and memory assistive technology
- personal response systems (PRS)
- falls prevention
- low vision aids
- prostheses
- orthoses
- assistance dogs
- hearing appliances
- speech pathology
- diabetes supplies
- home modifications and household adaptive appliances.



Accessing the program

You will need to talk about your concerns with your treating doctor. Your treating doctor will assess your needs and make a referral to an appropriate health professional. The health professional will assess your circumstances and prescribe suitable aids and appliances through RAP.

The process for accessing RAP is shown in the following:



For more information on RAP go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/rap.

Continence products

If your treating doctor or Continence Adviser determines that you require continence products, they will provide you with a prescription for these. Prescriptions need to be renewed every two years to ensure the products still meet your needs.

You can arrange an ongoing supply of appropriate continence products through one of DVA's contracted suppliers.

For more information, about the DVA RAP and continence supply please call **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/rap.

Home modifications

DVA will pay for modifications based on an assessed clinical need as prescribed by an appropriate health professional (such as an occupational therapist). DVA will only pay for them if you are a Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holder (with an assessed need due to an accepted disability).

We provide these home modifications to enable you to continue living in your own home with:

- improved independence and safety
- reduced need for a carer
- lower likelihood of moving away from your family, friends and community
- reduced risk of falls.

We may try simpler options before making any modifications. This may include you considering alternative aids or equipment.

Completion of home modifications can take up to six months following initial review of the Occupational Therapy report by DVA.

Costs of DVA programs and limits on services

LIMITS PER SERVICE		
Service	Eligibility	Limits per financial year
Coordinated Veteran Care (CVC) Program	A chronic health condition and Veteran Gold Card holder or a Veteran White Card holder with an accepted mental health condition.	No limit
Convalescent Care	Public or private hospital	No limit
	Australian Government-funded aged care facility	21 days
Community Nursing	Veteran Gold or White Card with an accepted condition. A clinically assessed nursing need.	Nil
Mental health and counselling support	Veteran Gold or White Card One day of permanent fulltime service.	Nil
Rehabilitation Appliances Program	Veteran Gold or White Card with accepted conditions Clinical need assessed by a suitable Health provider – White Card conditions must align.	Fully funded Limits may apply on some products.
Travelling to medical appointments	Veteran Gold or White Card Approved medical appointment	Nil
Respite Care		
In-Home respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	196 hours
Residential respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	28 days (each day is equivalent to 7 hours)
A combination of In-Home and Residential respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	Not exceeding 196 hours
Emergency Short Term home relief	Veteran Gold or White Card	216 hours

Co-payment services

Some services provided by DVA require you to pay a small contribution known as a co-payment. For co-payment services, there are some limits on the number of hours or days available for these services.

The co-payment is your contribution towards the cost of receiving these services.

Costs per service		
Service	Cost Per Hour	Capped Amount
Domestic Assistance	\$5 per hour	Maximum \$5 per week
Personal Care (up to 1.5 hours/week)	\$5 per hour	Maximum \$10 per week
Social Assistance (CVC)	\$5 per hour	Maximum \$5 per week
Safety-related Home and Garden Maintenance	\$5 per hour	Maximum \$75 in a 12 month period

If you are having difficulties paying the co-payment, please contact DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/VHCpaymenthelp.

Cost of supplies

If you are receiving Home and Garden Maintenance services, you may have to cover the cost of supplies like batteries (for smoke detectors) or light globes. We may also ask you to pay for other costs, such as rubbish dumping fees to remove garden rubbish. You must agree to these additional payments with the VHC Service Provider before they start work.

Further assistance

Travelling for treatment

All eligible clients can access transport assistance when travelling to and from treatment covered by their Veteran Card (Gold or White). How transport assistance is accessed will vary depending on the legislation that covers your entitlement to DVA benefits.

Travel assistance is available to both you and your travel attendant escort. A travel attendant (normally a partner, family member or friend) must be responsible, competent and physically able to assist you to travel for treatment. They do not need any medical qualifications or training. Note that DVA cannot pay the salary or cost for a qualified nurse or health care worker to assist you to travel for treatment.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/TFT.

Booked Car With Driver Scheme

DVA may arrange pre-booked transport under the Booked Car with Driver Scheme (BCWD) for travel to approved treatment locations. The BCWD provides additional transport assistance for more aged and frail clients to attend approved medical appointments. The BCWD uses contracted transport providers that offer a quality and reliable service by arranging a suitable vehicle to transport entitled persons to their appointment on time.

To request a Booked Car, or to discuss your eligibility for the scheme, call 1800 550 455.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/TFT.

Emergency and non-emergency ambulance

DVA will pay for ambulance transport in a medical emergency for Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holders in relation to an accepted condition. DVA will pay for non-emergency ambulance transport in certain circumstances.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/TFT.

Reimbursement

If you are not able to access BCWD, you can receive full reimbursement of taxi, community transport, public transport fares, or an allowance for private vehicle travel, meals and accommodation when travelling for treatment covered by your Veteran Card (Gold or White).

For assistance with claiming reimbursement, you or your nominated representative can call **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or visit your local Veterans' Access Network (VAN).



Staying connected to the community

Staying connected is very important as you age and become less mobile. Maintaining friendships or connections to family and community can be difficult.

Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs)

As a member of the veteran community, you can invite representatives from ex-service organisations to visit you.

For more information contact your local branch and discuss it with them or go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/ESO to find an ESO near you.

Day Club Program

Day Clubs provide opportunities for you to develop and maintain social contact outside the home through activities such as games, sports, fitness, information sessions and arts and crafts.

The Day Club program is run nationally and is run by DVA and ESOs. Each club tailors its activities to the interests and skills of the clubs' members.

For more information and to find a Day Club go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/dayclubs or call DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) and a printed copy of the web page can be sent to you.

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)

The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) is available for people who are receiving a Home Care Package through My Aged Care (or have been approved for one). If you are feeling lonely or isolated, a network member can match you with a suitable volunteer in your area to visit you regularly. **For more information** and to request a visit, go to health.gov.au/acvvs or call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**.

Recreational Transport Allowance

If you have a specific severe disability accepted as service-related under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA), you may be able to receive the Recreational Transport Allowance. This provides financial assistance for your transport to recreational activities. The rate payable is determined by the individual veteran's accepted disabilities.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/RT.

Mental health support

There may be times you feel anxious, sad or angry. You may be troubled by memories, drinking too much, not sleeping well or having difficulties relating to family or friends. It is usual to have these feelings, or to experience problems after stressful events or during stressful periods in life. There are benefits to taking action to manage your mental health if you notice an issue.

How to take action

- **Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling**
 - > Free and confidential 24/7, nation-wide counselling and support to eligible serving and ex-serving members, and their families, affected by war and service-related mental health and wellbeing conditions.
 - > **Go online** – Visit the website openarms.gov.au to access information, self-help tools, mobile apps, and advice about how to seek professional help or call **1800 011 046**.
- **Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC)** – If you have had permanent full-time service in the Australian Defence Force, even for as little as one day, you are eligible to receive treatment for any mental health condition. It doesn't matter when you served, how long you served, or the nature of your service. If you are a Reservist with any period of full-time service, you may also be eligible for NLHC. Phone **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or email nlhc@dva.gov.au.
- **Talk to your GP** – If you are not eligible for NLHC, your GP may provide treatment or refer you to a Medicare-subsidised psychologist, psychiatrist, mental health social worker or mental health occupational therapist.

Getting your affairs in order

As you age and your needs change it is important to get your affairs in order. Now is a good time to set up or review your:

- General Power of Attorney or Enduring Powers of Attorney arrangements
- Advance Care plan
- Will.

The laws regarding these documents differ in each state and territory. Therefore, the information in this booklet is just a guide. We encourage you to seek advice from your solicitor or from the public trustee (see glossary) in your state or territory.

For more information DVA has also created a booklet and checklist to help you navigate this. It's called *Planning Ahead – A Guide to Putting Your Affairs in Order – Preparing for and coping with bereavement* and can be found on the DVA website dva.gov.au/publications.

Providing DVA with copies of your documentation

DVA will need you to provide documents that prove your identity when you are submitting a claim for a pension, benefit or allowance. We will also need to know if you have nominated a representative such as your partner, a family member, friend or professional to act on your behalf. We respect your privacy but need to ensure that people acting on your behalf have been chosen by you or your relevant state or territory body.

For more information go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/ID or to nominate a representative – dva.gov.au/nominaterepresentative.

Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a legal document that authorises an appointed person (such as your spouse, sibling, child, other relative, or friend) to make decisions on your behalf. You can only do this when you have the capacity to make this decision.

There are different types of powers of attorney, and there are differences between each state and territory in Australia. Despite these differences, there are three main types of 'powers':

- General power of attorney
- Enduring power of attorney
- Enduring power of guardianship.

General Power of Attorney

A general power of attorney is a legal document that gives the appointed person the authority to make decisions about **financial** and **legal** matters on your behalf. This power lasts only for as long as the person who appoints them has capacity. The general power ceases to operate if you lose capacity to make decisions.

A general power of attorney is often used as a tool of convenience. For example, a person might appoint a general power of attorney to look after their financial and legal affairs in Australia while they travel overseas.

Enduring Power of Attorney

An enduring power of attorney is similar to a general power of attorney except that the powers continue to last (or 'endure') after you lose capacity. You need to appoint your enduring power of attorney when you have the capacity to make the decision, so they can act on your behalf when you lose capacity.

In some jurisdictions, such as Victoria, the ACT and Queensland, an enduring power of attorney may also be used to authorise medical and health decisions.

Enduring Power of Guardianship

An enduring guardian is appointed by you to make lifestyle decisions on your behalf when you lose capacity, for example about accommodation and daily activities.

In some jurisdictions, such as New South Wales and Tasmania, an enduring guardian may also be authorised to make medical and health decisions. An enduring power of guardianship continues after the donor loses capacity.

Guardianship and Administration

An application can be made to the relevant state or territory administrative tribunal for the appointment of a guardian or administrator. This applies where there is no valid or relevant power of attorney or enduring guardian (or equivalent) documents and there are concerns that a person has impaired decision-making capacity and may make detrimental decisions, be neglected or exploited. A guardian can be authorised to make decisions about lifestyle, health care and certain other decisions.

Advance Care Plan / Advance Health Directive

Advance care planning is now a routine part of managing your health care. Putting together your plan enables you to have a conversation where you can openly discuss your health care preferences, values and choices.

Having an advance care plan in place can empower and prepare you, your loved ones, carers and healthcare professionals for important healthcare decisions in the future. This approach reduces anxiety and improves outcomes for all involved.

An advance care plan is a personal statement that goes beyond filling in a form. It's a commitment that will be honoured and respected at a time when you cannot voice your decisions. Keeping your advance care plan up to date requires cooperation between you, your family, care workers, and health professionals as well as community and healthcare organisations.

Advance Care Planning Australia is a national program that provides information and resources to individuals, care workers and healthcare professionals to improve this cooperation. To find out more about Advance Care Planning Australia go to www.advancerecareplanning.org.au.

Your Will

A will is a legal document that details what you'd like to happen with your estate. It can help ensure your assets are protected and your final wishes are carried out.

It also names who is responsible for carrying out your wishes. This person is known as an executor.

Your will is your voice after you're gone. The clearer your instructions, the better it is for the people you leave behind. A well-written and current will helps ensure:

- the right people are provided for when you die
- you know who will be your children's guardian
- your assets will be distributed according to your wishes
- there are no disagreements among those who expect to benefit from your estate
- the people responsible for managing your estate understand how you would like your affairs managed
- your estate can be settled quickly.

To make a will you must be 18 years or over and have legal capacity. Legal capacity means that you are of sound mind and you understand what a will is and what it does, you know the property you own and who is important to you.

If you don't have a will, state and territory laws determine who will benefit from your estate. The state will also determine who will administer your estate. This can mean your assets might not be distributed as you want.



Glossary

Aged Care Assessment Team – ACAT helps you and your carers determine what kind of support will best meet your needs particularly when you need to reconsider your current living situation. The team, often comprises a doctor, nurse, social worker and occupational therapist. They will ask you a series of questions to determine the best care options available, either at home or in an aged-care home. This service is delivered by the Health department in each state or territory.

Aged Care Assessment Service – ACAS is Victoria's equivalent to ACAT.

Multi-Purpose Services – Multi-Purpose Services are integrated health and aged-care services typically in small regional and remote communities where it is not viable for stand-alone hospitals or aged care homes.

Public Trustee – Public/State Trustees are established by state/territory governments to provide professional, affordable and accessible trustee services to their respective communities. See website moneysmart.gov.au/wills-and-powers-of-attorney.

Supported Residential Service – SRS may offer a similar service to that of a Government-funded residential aged-care facility but without the funding support. SRSs are state-registered service providers. An ACAT/ACAS assessment is not required.

Treating doctor – within this document the term treating doctor refers to medical doctors, general practitioner (GP), local medical officers (LMO) and specialists.

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) – provides coverage for those who served in wartime and certain operational deployments, including certain peacetime service, between 7 December 1972 and 30 June 2004. It is one of three pieces of legislation for which DVA is responsible.

Veterans' Home Care – The VHC program provides you, as an eligible DVA client, wishing to stay at home with a small amount of practical help. It also assists carers in recognition of the vital role they play in the veteran and defence community.

VHC Assessment Agency – Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agencies conduct an assessment, either by phone or in the home, to determine and coordinate the services you require. They will also advise you of the co-payment amount for each service. DVA contracts VHC Assessment Agencies to provide assessment services to DVA clients that are high-quality, flexible and timely. Agencies must comply with all relevant standards.

VHC service provider – Veterans' Home Care Providers deliver the service (household, personal or home and garden services) as specified in your VHC care plan and collect the co-payment. DVA contracts VHC service providers to provide DVA clients high-quality, flexible and timely services that are responsive to the needs of DVA clients and comply with all relevant standards.



