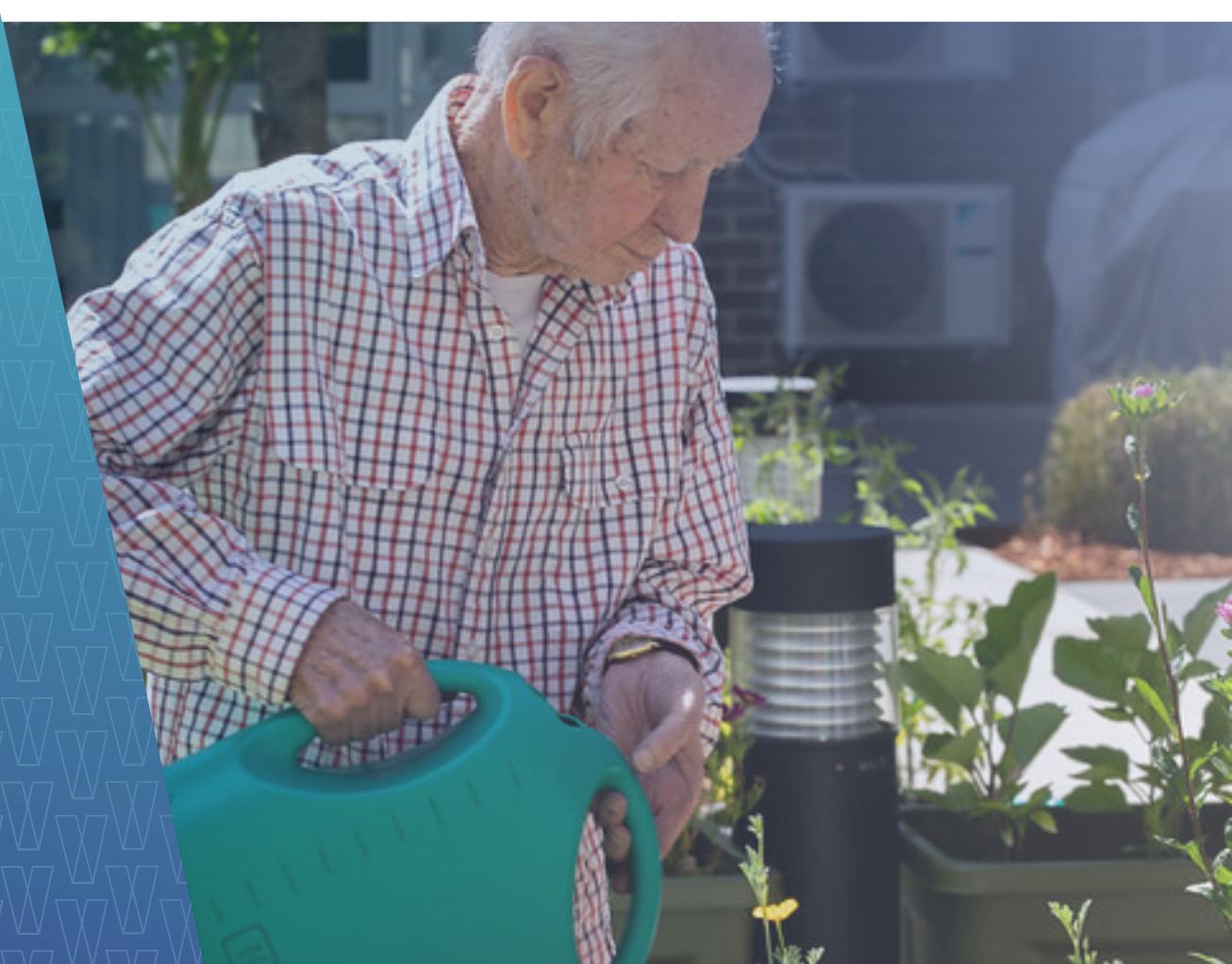




The veteran's guide to living independently

Accessing DVA services



Contact Details

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

**Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO Box 9998
Brisbane QLD 4001**

You can find this product at dva.gov.au

Information current as at November 2025.

P03918

The veteran's guide to living independently

Accessing DVA services

This guide

This book has been developed to help you, your family and carers better understand the types of services that the Australian Government can provide to help you stay independent and active in your own home.

We suggest you start by looking at the checklist on [page 9](#), as well as '**Things to think about**' on [page 11](#), and the '**Your guide to DVA health and home care services**' table on [page 12](#). If you see any services you might need, turn to the relevant section of the book for more information. You can find out about potential costs involved on [page 18](#).

This book also contains useful information on:

- help at home
- short-term care
- staying connected with the veteran community
- mental health support
- carer support
- preparing for your future needs.

The contents on [page 6](#) and glossary on [page 54](#) may also be helpful.

Other resources

The veteran's guide to moving into an aged care home provides details on the process and supports that are provided by DVA when moving into long term residential aged care.

The veteran's guide to living in an aged care home provides information on the supports that DVA provides while you are living in an aged care home.

DVA services compared with Department of Health, Disability and Ageing services

DVA and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health) both offer services to help you stay at home and remain independent for as long as possible. DVA's 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 in the first instance as:

- your needs can be assessed relatively quickly over the phone or with an in-home assessment
- there are no age restrictions to receiving services
- your services are organised for you
- there may be a shorter waiting time for services to commence
- 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 do not use the same service (such as household cleaning) from both departments.

Many DVA in-home services can be arranged within two weeks of an initial over-the-phone assessment. This assessment is done by a DVA-contracted assessment agency, who will then create a service plan and arrange a service provider for you. If you live in a rural or remote area it may take longer to find an appropriate service provider. Some DVA programs have different processes, for example home modifications. **More information** is available on [page 12](#).

Accessing in-home care through 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 the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing services. My Aged Care is the main entry point to access Australian Government funded aged care services for all Australians. This service is administered by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. As a member of the veteran community, you can visit myagedcare.gov.au or call **1800 200 422** if you need aged care information, advice and services or if you are thinking about entering residential aged care.

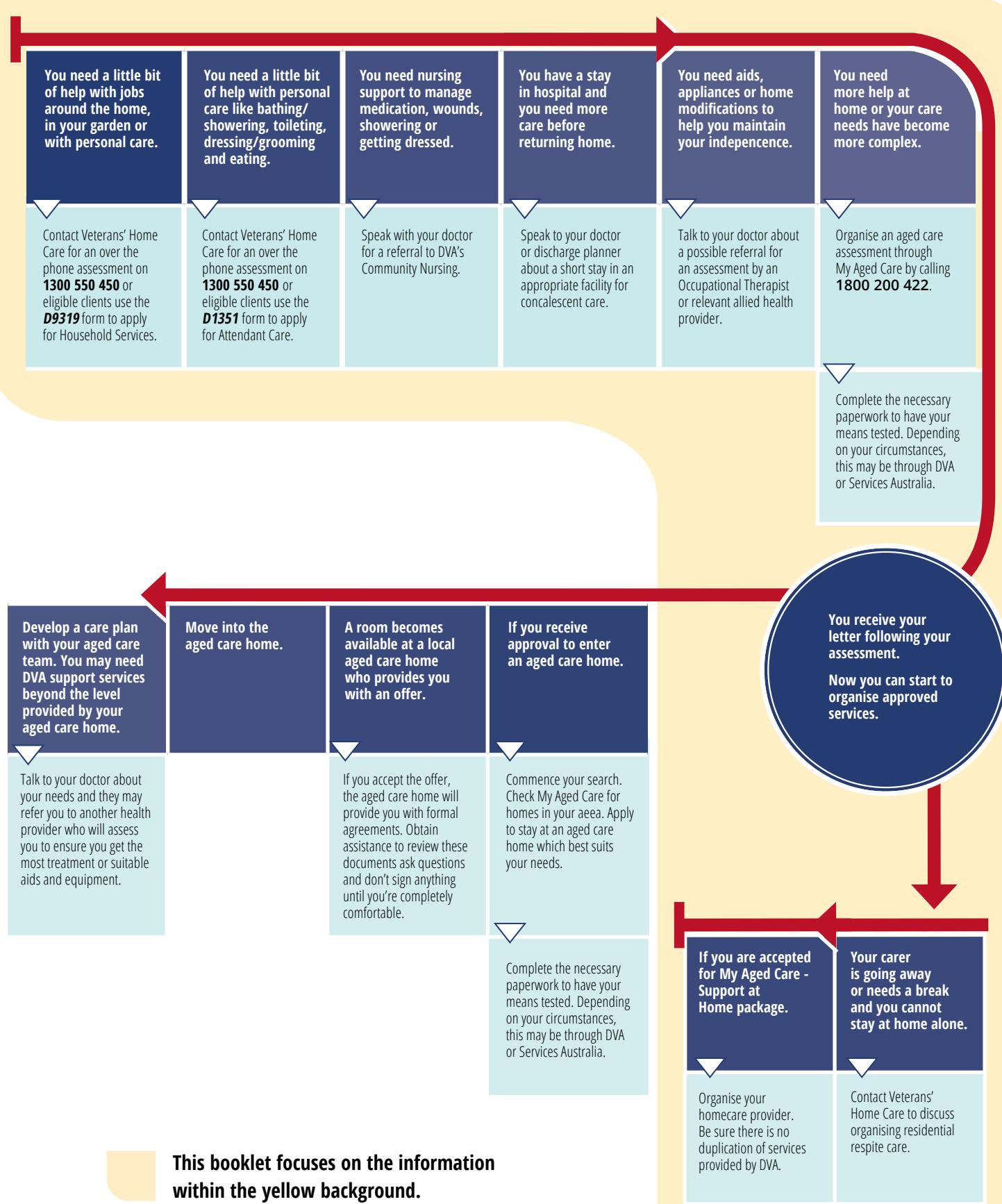
To access any of these services, you will first need to arrange an aged care assessment through My Aged Care. You can do this:

- online by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/how-get-assessed
- over the phone by calling My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**
(weekdays 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm, closed on Sundays and public holidays)
- in-person by booking an appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer on **1800 227 475** in selected Services Australia office locations
(Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)
- by visiting any Services Australia service centre for general My Aged Care support.

If you have questions after reading the information in any of these books or after accessing online information, please call DVA on **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)** or My Aged Care (**1800 200 422**). There is also a veteran specific page on the My Aged Care website (myagedcare.gov.au) and type '**veteran**' in the search field).



Client aged care journey



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Overview of aged care programs provided by DVA and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

DVA and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health) provide a range of support services through contracted providers. These services are aimed at helping you to remain living independently at home by supporting your health, wellbeing and community connection.

When you start researching aged care services, it is essential to establish what's important to you and your family. You should 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	
DVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendant Care• Community Nursing• Household Services• In-home respite care• Rehabilitation Appliances Program• Veterans' Home Care
Health (My Aged Care portal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistive Technology and Home Modification scheme• Respite care at home• Support at Home program
Short-term care	
DVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Short-Term Home Relief• Convalescent care after a hospital stay• Residential respite care
Health (My Aged Care portal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre-based (day centre) respite• Cottage respite• End-of-Life Pathway• Emergency respite• Residential respite• Restorative Care Pathway• Support at Home program• Transition care after a hospital stay

There is a brief overview of Health's services on [page 40](#), however you can find more details on their services by visiting the My Aged Care website (myagedcare.gov.au) or by calling **1800 200 422**.

As an eligible veteran or war widow(er) you can choose services provided by both DVA and Health as long as there is no duplication of services. For example, if you receive assistance with shopping through DVA's Veterans' Home Care program, you cannot access the same service through one of Health's aged care programs.



Checklist – Help Accessing Services

This checklist is as a guide which provides suggestions of contact information for services specific to your needs. You only need to contact the services you require.

✓ Tick when complete



WORK OUT WHAT YOU NEED

Consider questions on [page 11](#)



WORK OUT WHO CAN HELP

Check table on [page 12](#) and read relevant information

ACCESSING HELP AT HOME

Assistive Technology and Home Modification scheme – call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit myagedcare.gov.au

Attendant Care – complete a **D1351** form with your GP

Community Nursing – speak to your GP for a referral to a DVA Community Nursing provider

Coordinated Veterans' Care Program (CVC) – speak to your GP to establish eligibility and enrol you in the program

Household Services – complete a **D9319** form with your GP

Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) – speak to your GP for a referral to an appropriate allied health professional (eg physiotherapist, occupational therapist)

Support at Home program – call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit myagedcare.gov.au

Veterans' Home Care (VHC) – call **1300 550 450** to arrange an assessment

ACCESSING SHORT-TERM CARE

Convalescent care – speak with your hospital discharge planner to organise this for you

Emergency Short-Term Home Relief – call **1300 550 450** to arrange an assessment

In-home respite care – call **1300 550 450** to arrange an assessment

Residential respite care – call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit myagedcare.gov.au

Note: DVA may fund this – call **1300 550 450** once you have your respite bed booked

Respite care at home – call **1300 550 450** to arrange an assessment

Restorative care pathway – call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit myagedcare.gov.au

Transition care – call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit myagedcare.gov.au

TRAVEL FOR TREATMENT

Booked car with driver (BCWD) – call the BCWD team on **1800 550 455**

Reimbursement or long-distance transport – call DVA on **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)**

Checklist continued

STAYING CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY

Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme (ACVVS) – call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit health.gov.au/acvvs

Ex-service organisations (ESO) – contact your local ESO or visit dva.gov.au/eso to find an ESO in your area

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC) – call DVA on **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)** or email nlhc@dva.gov.au

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (OA) – call OA on **1800 011 046**





Things to think about

Is getting older affecting your life?

As you get older it is likely you may need help with some of the tasks you once found easy. This might include doing the washing, gardening or even getting dressed and showering.

As a DVA client you can access services from either or both DVA and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health), as long as there is no duplication of service. These services aim to help you maintain a good quality of life as you age, whether living independently at home or in an aged care home.

You could need a little help after a hospital stay or ongoing support as you age. Most services can be increased or decreased depending on your needs. Finding the right services depends on firstly understanding your needs.

Remember, your quality-of-life matters.

Consider the following questions and if you answer yes to any of them, check the table on [page 12](#) to find out how you can get help.

Questions

Do you have trouble moving around you home?	YES	NO
Is it difficult carrying items, such as your washing basket or shopping bags?	YES	NO
Do you struggle doing housework like sweeping, vacuuming and mopping?	YES	NO
Do you find the garden is getting too much to manage?	YES	NO
Are you worried about getting on a ladder to do jobs around the house like changing a light bulb, or cleaning the gutters?	YES	NO
Do you find it difficult to do your grocery shopping?	YES	NO
Do you miss fresh cooked meals but find it easier to reheat a prepared meal?	YES	NO
Are you concerned about falling?	YES	NO
Do you no longer feel safe living alone?	YES	NO
Do you feel lonely and miss catching up with friends?	YES	NO
Are you worried about forgetting to take your medication as prescribed?	YES	NO
Is your health declining and are you struggling to keep on top of things at home?	YES	NO
Are you caring for someone but feel you are putting your needs aside?	YES	NO
Do you need some time to recharge to regain your sense of self?	YES	NO

Your guide to DVA home care services and support

Get assistance	Program		
Help with cleaning and housekeeping			
Service examples	Veterans' Home Care (VHC)	Household Services (HHS)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with meal preparation • Bed making and linen changing • Bill paying • Clothes washing and/or ironing • Dishwashing • House cleaning • Shopping (unaccompanied only) • Vacuuming and mopping 	Overview – page 14 Access information – page 19	Overview – page 22 Access information – page 23	
Help with personal care			
Service examples	VHC	Attendant Care	Community Nursing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with bathing/showering • Help with dressing/grooming • Help with eating • Help with toileting 	Overview – page 15 Access information – page 19	Overview – page 24 Access information – page 25	Overview – page 26 Access information – page 26
Help with home and garden upkeep			
Service examples	VHC	HHS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air conditioning filter cleaning • Ceiling fan cleaning • Gutter cleaning • Lawn mowing • Minor home maintenance • Replacing light bulbs • Window cleaning 	Overview – page 15 Access information – page 19	Overview – page 22 Access information – page 23	
Nursing help at home – (Services must be clinically necessary)			
Service examples	Community Nursing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help administering medication • Help with dressing • Help with personal hygiene • Help with showering • Help with wound care 	Overview – page 26 Access information – page 26		



Get assistance	Program
Getting aids, equipment and home modifications	
Service examples	Rehabilitation Appliance Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cognitive, dementia and memory assistive technologies ● Continence products ● Diabetes products ● Fall prevention ● Hearing appliances ● Home modifications and household adaptive appliances ● Low vision aids ● Mobility and functional support ● Oxygen and continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) machines 	Overview – page 31 Access information – page 32
Short Term Care	
Service examples	VHC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emergency Short-Term Home Relief ● In-home respite care ● Residential respite care ● Respite care: 	Overview – page 16 Access information – page 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convalescent care 	Overview – page 30 Access information – page 30
Coordinated Veterans' Care Program	
Service examples	CVC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management of chronic health conditions and complex care needs ● Social assistance 	Overview – page 27 Access information – page 28
My Aged Care in-home support and DVA	
Service examples	Health (My Aged Care portal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commonwealth Home Support program ● Support at Home program 	Overview – page 40 Access information – page 42
Service examples	DVA or Services Australia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support at Home Means Test Assessment 	Overview – page 37
Travelling for treatment	
Service examples	Transport program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Booked Car with Driver (BCWD) ● Emergency and non-emergency ambulance travel reimbursement 	Overview – page 33

Veterans' Home Care Program

Veterans' Home Care (VHC) provides basic services to help you continue living independently in your home. These services are tailored for you and can be provided as either short-term or ongoing support. If required, services can be increased for a short time after surgery or a stay in hospital to assist with your recovery. 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.

You may be eligible for an assessment to receive services through VHC if you are a:

- Veteran Gold Card holder assessed under the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA)
- Veteran Gold Card holder older than 70 with approved qualifying service
- Veteran Gold Card holder war widow(er)
- Veteran White Card holder:
 - with accepted conditions under the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA); and/or
 - receiving treatment under Non-liability Health Care (NLHC) where the services you need are related to the NLHC condition.

For information on how to access VHC services see [page 19](#).

Services offered under VHC include:

- help with cleaning and housekeeping
- help with personal care
- help with home and garden maintenance
- coverage for respite care:
 - in-home respite
 - Emergency Short-Term Home Relief (ESTHR)
 - residential respite
- social assistance (through Coordinated Veterans' Care – CVC).

Help with cleaning and housekeeping

VHC provides support with basic household tasks, such as:

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

These services are not intended to replace tasks that you can manage. Undertaking domestic activities has been shown to have a beneficial health effect, even for the frail and very elderly.

While Veterans' Home Care services are not designed to meet complex or high-level care needs, they can be provided on a weekly, fortnightly or less frequent basis, depending on your needs.

For information on costs and limits see [page 18](#).



Help with personal care

Personal care includes assistance with non-medical daily self-care tasks that you can't do by yourself.

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 calipers
- getting in and out of bed
- moving about the house.

Up to one and a half hours per week of personal care can be provided for under the Veterans' Home Care Program (as a guide). If you have a clinical need for personal care needs beyond this it may be more appropriate that you receive services through the DVA Community Nursing program. You can find information on DVA's Community Nursing program on [page 26](#).

For information on costs and limits see [page 18](#).

Help with home and garden upkeep

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

- replacing light globes
- cleaning gutters
- cleaning windows
- cleaning ceiling fans
- lawn mowing.

The Veterans' Homecare program does not fund major home repairs or ornamental and routine garden maintenance such as weeding, pruning and maintaining flower beds.

Home and garden maintenance is limited to 15 hours in a 12-month period and is based on your assessed need. This is a legislated limit and DVA is not able to approve additional hours above this limit.

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

For information on costs and limits see [page 18](#).

Respite care

Respite care provides temporary relief for carers, allowing them to take a break from their caring duties, while the person they care for receives care from someone else.

DVA defines a carer as someone who provides unpaid support and may receive the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance from Services Australia. 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 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 (eligible 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 do everyday activities and supports carers who have other work or education commitments, or are reentering the workforce.

DVA 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 who are DVA Gold or White Card holders) can be admitted for residential respite. It is available on a planned or emergency basis.

Residential respite care does not include the Convalescent Care program. 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. **More information** on the Convalescent Care program can be found on [page 30](#).

For information on how to access residential respite care see [page 19](#).



Emergency short-term home relief

DVA can provide care in your home when your carer is unexpectedly unavailable. DVA will provide Emergency Short-Term Home Relief (ESTHR) when there is no one else to look after you and the only alternative is that you are admitted to hospital or left without necessary care. DVA can provide up to 72 hours of assistance at a time or until other care is in place 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 care 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.

Respite limits

Respite Care	Eligibility	Limits per financial year
Emergency Short-Term Home Relief	Veteran Gold or White Card	216 hours, 72 hours each episode or until alternative care is arranged
In-home respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	196 hours
Residential respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	28 days
A combination of in-home and residential respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	196 hours, with 7 hours of in-home care equal to 1 day of residential care

Co-payments for services

Some services provided by DVA require you to pay a small contribution known as a co-payment. However, there is a cap on how much you might pay.

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

Costs per service

Service	Cost Per Hour	Capped Amount
Domestic assistance	Veteran Gold or White Card	Maximum \$5 per week
Personal care (up to 1.5 hours/week)	Veteran Gold or White Card	Maximum \$10 per week
Social assistance (CVC)	Veteran Gold or White Card	Maximum \$5 per week
Safety-related home and garden maintenance	Veteran Gold or White Card	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 visit dva.gov.au/vhc.

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. DVA 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.



Accessing Veterans' Home Care

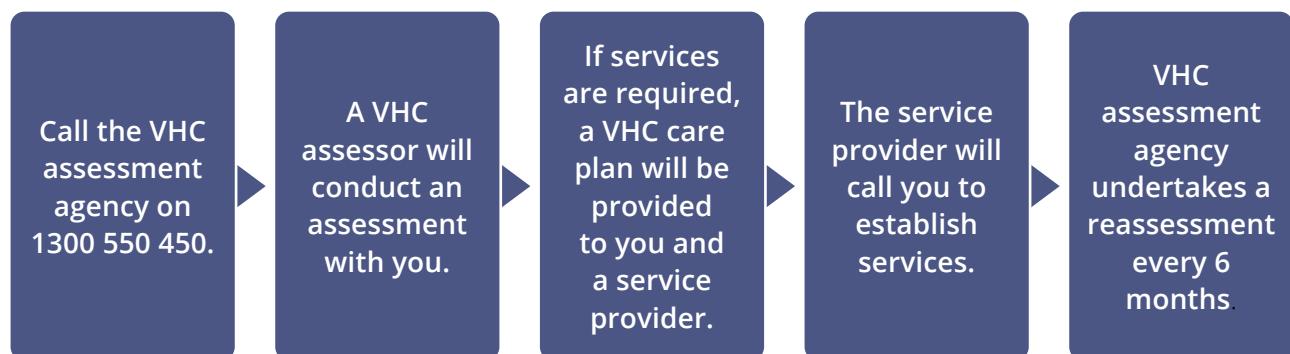
To access Veterans' Home Care (VHC) services, with the exception of residential respite, you will need an assessment by a VHC Assessment Agency. They will assess your needs over the phone in the first instance and approve services if appropriate. If the services are approved, the agency will consult with you and arrange those services with a contracted VHC service provider.

VHC service providers cannot change the service you receive, eligibility or co-payment amount. Nor can they make an assessment. You must contact the VHC Assessment Agency to discuss these matters.

To start your assessment, you need to contact a **Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency** via **1300 550 450**.

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

- help with cleaning and housekeeping
- help with personal care
- safety-related home and garden maintenance
- respite care – in-home and ESTHR.



Accessing residential respite care

The first step to access residential respite care is to arrange an aged care assessment with My Aged Care. You can do this:

- online by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/how-get-assessed
- over the phone by calling My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**
(weekdays 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm, closed on Sundays and public holidays)
- in-person by booking an appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer on **1800 227 475** in selected Services Australia office locations
(Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)
- by visiting any Services Australia service centre for general My Aged Care support.

Waiting times for a My Aged Care assessment can be long, so we recommend making this your highest priority, especially if you know when you will need respite care.

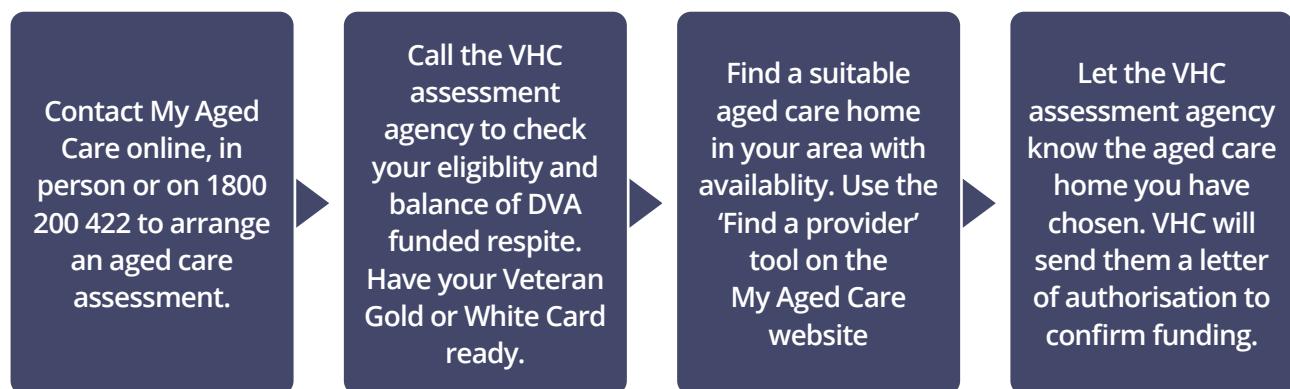
If you are assessed as eligible you will need to find an available respite bed at a government-funded aged care home. You can find an aged care home in your area by going to myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider. Contact the home you are interested in to find out if they have an available bed.

Once you have booked your respite bed, call the VHC Assessment Agency directly on **1300 550 450** so they can arrange for us to pay for your care.

If an Australian Government-funded aged care facility is not suitable or available, you may be able to get Residential Respite in another type of accommodation. Call the VHC Assessment Agency directly on **1300 550 450** to discuss your options.

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

The process for accessing residential respite care is shown below:



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 increases to services approved following discharge from hospital are reviewed after six to eight weeks.

If you feel that your needs have changed since your last VHC assessment or review, you should contact the VHC Assessment Agency whose number will be on your VHC care plan. They will discuss any changes and ensure appropriate assistance is provided.

You also need to 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, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (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:

- contact your VHC service provider using the number on your VHC care plan and discuss your dissatisfaction; or
- contact your 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 the Health Approvals and Home Care team.

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

Household Services

If you are a veteran, DVA's Household Services program (HHS) may provide compensation for the costs of tasks you are no longer able to do at home due to an accepted, service-related condition. Support can be either short-term to assist while you are recovering from surgery or on an ongoing basis if you have complex health issues.

Common services may include help with:

- cleaning
- shopping
- childcare in some short-term and crisis care circumstances
- laundry
- ironing
- lawn mowing
- gardening
- meal preparation.

You may be eligible for Household Services if:

1. you are unable to manage household tasks due to a service-related injury or condition accepted under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) or the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA); and
2. an Activities of Daily Living (ADL) assessment confirms your need for services is due to your accepted, service-related condition under the DRCA or MRCA.

Your assessed needs determine how much care you can receive. The provider who undertakes your ADL assessment determines your needs.

Some services covered by Household Services are similar to those offered by Veterans' Home Care but costs and limits can vary between programs.

For information on costs and limits see [page 18](#)





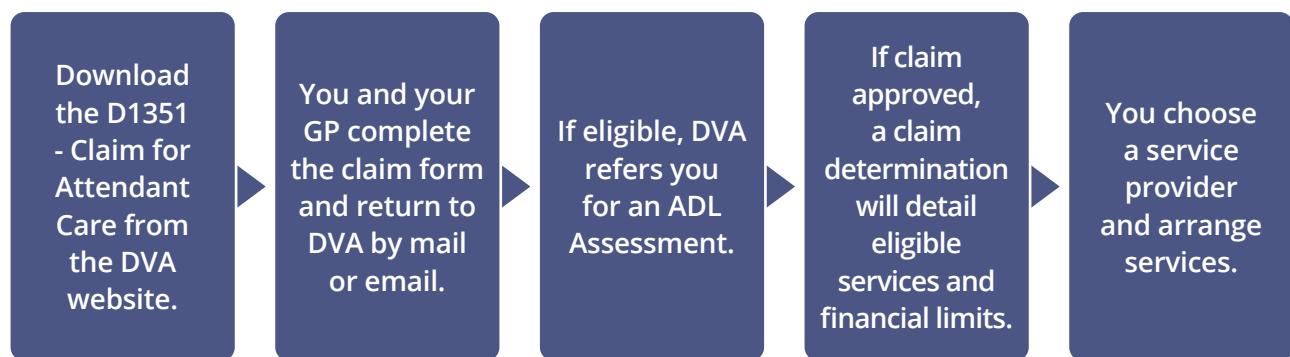
Accessing Household Services

If your health conditions have been assessed under the MRCA or DRCA legislation and you would like to access Household Services, you will first need to complete a **D9319 – Claim for Household Services from DVA** form. You will need to have your GP assist with this.

If you are found eligible, DVA will then organise an Activities of Daily Living (ADL) assessment. If approved, you will receive a determination letter about the services you can receive and the financial limits.

You can then choose a service provider and arrange services.

To access Household Services, follow the steps below:



Upon completion of the **D9319** form, you can scan and return via email to hhs@dva.gov.au or by post to:

The Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO Box 9998
Brisbane QLD 4001

If sending via post, please ensure that you make copies of all materials being sent in case documents are misplaced in the mail.

Attendant Care

If you are a veteran, DVA's Attendant Care program may provide compensation for the costs of regular personal care tasks you are no longer able to do due to an accepted, service-related condition.

The program is designed to meet essential and ongoing personal care needs at home. These may include:

- bathing
- toileting
- grooming
- dressing
- feeding.

Care may be short-term while you recover after surgery, or long-term for chronic health conditions.

You may be eligible for Attendant Care if:

1. you require assistance with personal care due to service-related injury or condition accepted under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) or the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA); and
2. an Activities of Daily Living (ADL) assessment confirms your need for services is due to your accepted service-related condition under the DRCA or the MRCA.

Your clinical needs determine how much care you can receive. The provider who undertakes your ADL assessment determines your needs.





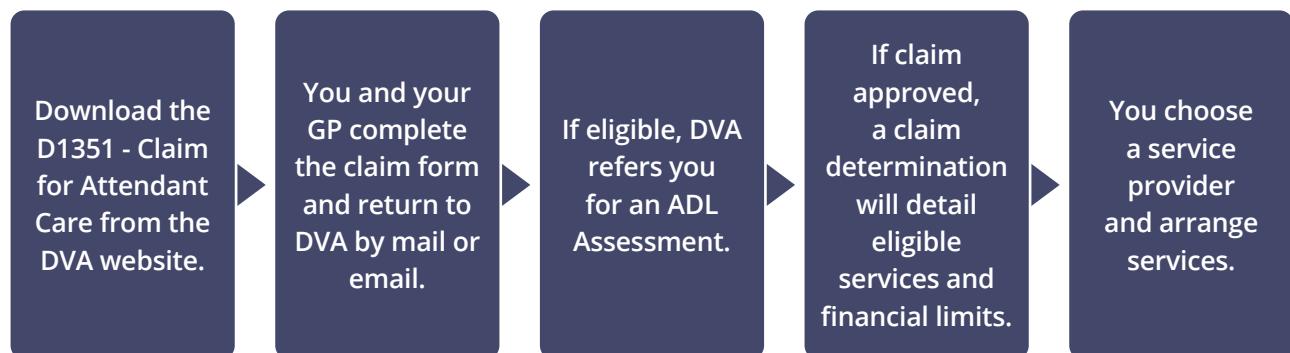
Accessing Attendant Care

If your conditions have been assessed under the MRCA or DRCA legislation and you would like to access Attendant Care services, you will first need to complete a **D1351 – Claim for Attendant Care Services** form. You will need to have your GP assist with this.

If you are found to be eligible, DVA will then organise an Activities of Daily Living (ADL) assessment. If approved, you will receive a determination letter about the services you can receive and the financial limits.

You can then choose a service provider and arrange services.

To access the attendant care program, follow the steps below:



Upon completion of the **D1351** form, you can scan and return via email to hhs@dva.gov.au or by post to:

The Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO Box 9998
Brisbane QLD 4001

If sending via post, please ensure that you make copies of all materials being sent in case documents are misplaced in the mail.

Community Nursing

DVA's Community Nursing program 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.

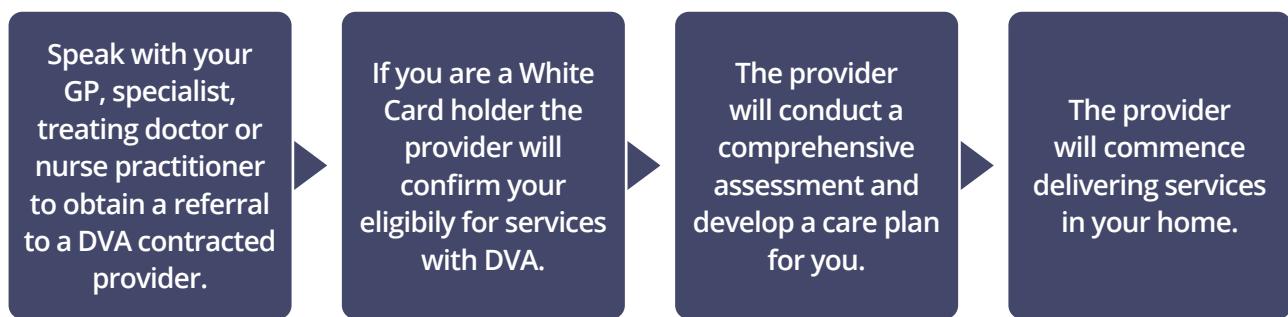
Community Nursing services can help you restore or maintain your health and independence at home. This can be following an illness, or to help you avoid early admission to hospital or residential aged care. Community Nursing can also provide you with palliative care services to support you to remain at home at the end of your life, where safe and appropriate.

Accessing Community Nursing

To access DVA Community Nursing services, your GP, treating doctor in hospital, hospital discharge planner, or nurse practitioner specialising in a community nursing field must provide a written referral to a DVA contracted Community Nursing provider. To receive community nursing services, you must hold a Veteran Gold Card or a Veteran White Card (and need this service for a DVA-accepted service-related condition).

The Community Nursing provider will undertake a comprehensive assessment to determine the nursing services required to meet your assessed clinical and/or personal care needs and a nursing plan will be developed with you.

To access community nursing services, follow the steps below:



Your Community Nursing 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 Community Nursing 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.

For information on costs and limits see [page 34](#).

Coordinated Veterans' Care Program



The Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program uses a proactive approach to enable you to manage your chronic conditions, improve your wellbeing and quality of life and reduce the risk of unplanned hospitalisations.

Participation in the program assists you to be actively involved in the ongoing management of your health and wellbeing. This is achieved by working closely with, and receiving the support of your care team, consisting of you, your GP, a care coordinator, your carer and any other health professionals in your care team.

Your GP will work with you in a face-to-face appointment to develop an individualised care plan that will:

- meet your health needs
- support you to achieve your health goals
- provide education and guide you to understand your health
- manage your chronic condition and ongoing care.

Your care coordinator will then lead the coordination of your care under the supervision of your GP. This involves regular face-to-face contact and may also involve some phone calls from your care coordinator, depending on your care needs.

The CVC Program is designed to be an ongoing program with enrolment continuing as long as you can benefit from participation.

To be eligible for the CVC Program, you will need to have either:

- a Veteran Gold Card and one or more chronic health condition/s; or
- a Veteran White Card and one or more chronic DVA-accepted mental health condition/s.

A DVA-accepted mental health condition is a condition for which DVA has accepted liability (as being related to military service).

You will also need to:

- meet the criteria for benefitting from the program which your GP will assess
- be an Australian resident and live in Australia
- consent to participate and agree to a comprehensive care plan developed with your GP.



You will not be eligible to participate in the CVC Program if you:

- are taking part in the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health) Transition Care Programme
- are living in residential care (other than for respite purposes); or
- have a condition that is likely to be terminal within 12 months after being admitted to the program.

If you are not eligible for the CVC Program, you may be able to access mental health treatment at no cost to you through DVA's Non-Liability Mental Health Care (NLHC) arrangements.

The CVC Program provides coordination of all your health conditions at no cost to you. GPs are fully funded through the CVC Program to deliver your treatment and health services, including coordinating your health care.

If you are a Veteran White Card holder you may need to pay for treatment or health services that are included in your care plan and are not related to an accepted condition on your White Card or funded under NLHC or the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment (PAMT) program.

Accessing the Coordinated Veterans' Care Program

To access the CVC Program, speak with your GP, 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.

The process for accessing the DVA CVC Program is shown below:





Accessing Social Assistance

The CVC Program recognises the benefits of social inclusion in supporting good health. There are times where managing a chronic condition makes it difficult for CVC participants to engage regularly in social and community activities, such as groups, local clubs and associations, resulting in becoming socially isolated.

If your GP considers that you would benefit from accessing the Social Assistance service to help you re-engage with community activities, they can make a referral for this service. Social assistance is generally provided over a period of 12 weeks.

You may be eligible for the Social Assistance service if you hold a Veteran Gold Card, or a Veteran White Card and have a DVA-accepted mental health condition, and you are enrolled in the CVC Program.

To access the service, your treating doctor will refer you to a VHC Assessment Agency for a Social Assistance assessment.

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 is short term care which is medically necessary for recovery following a stay in hospital.

Care is available in a range of settings such as:

- public or private hospitals
- multi-purpose services
- Australian Government-funded aged care facilities
- supported residential services in Victoria
- other suitable institutions.

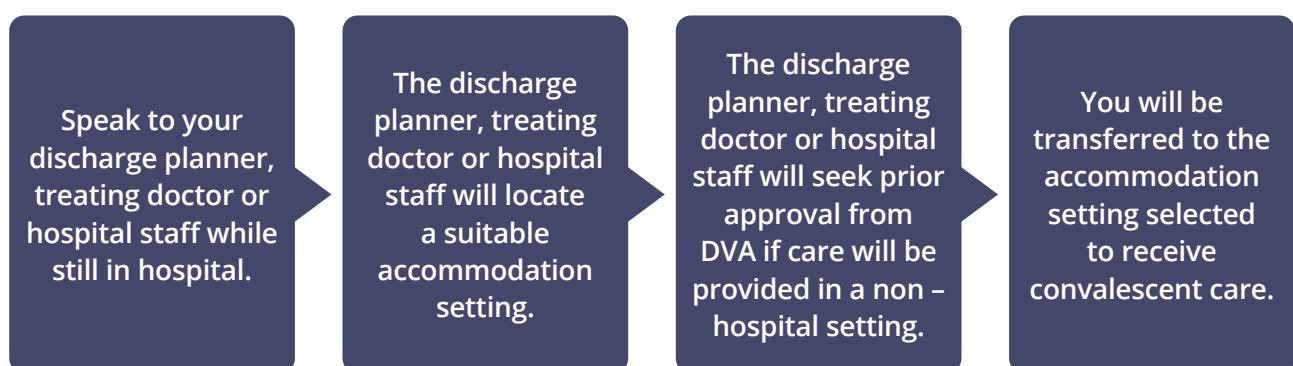
Convalescent Care cannot be provided in your home.

DVA will cover the cost of Convalescent Care for any condition if you have a Veteran Gold Card. If you have a Veteran White Card, DVA will cover the cost of convalescent care if we paid for the original hospital admission.

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. They will contact us before you are discharged from hospital and will seek prior approval for the cost of care if this is required. Prior approval is not required where convalescent care is taken in a hospital setting.

The process for accessing Convalescent Care is shown below:



Limits

Convalescent care is provided with no limits or costs in public or private hospitals. If the care is provided in an Australian Government-funded aged care facility or other institution, there is a limit of 21 days. You should not be charged for any additional fees (including extra service fees).

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

Rehabilitation Appliances Program



DVA's Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) provides you with aids and appliances to assist you to be as independent and self-reliant as possible in your own home.

RAP supplies items (such as aids, appliances, equipment and modifications) to:

- help you with an assessed clinical health care need
- minimise the impact of your disabilities or illness
- improve your quality of life
- enable you to live safely and with independence
- facilitate your participation in the community
- help with your health treatment or rehabilitation plan.

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 DVA-accepted service-related conditions).

Products available through RAP include (but are not limited to) the following categories:

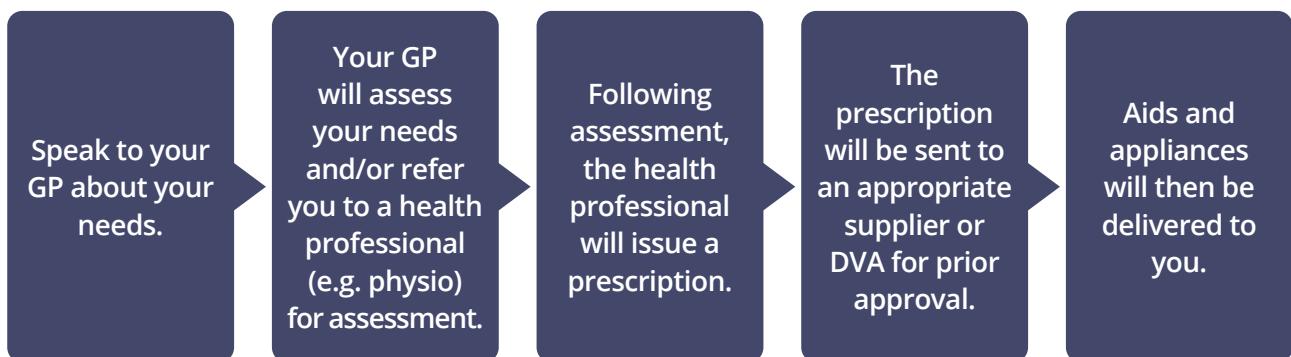
- bathing, toileting, continence and personal hygiene products
- chairs and other supports
- mobility and functional support aids
- cognitive, dementia and memory assistive technology
- diabetes supplies
- falls prevention aids
- hearing and communication appliances
- home modifications
- lifting devices
- low vision aids
- oxygen and continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP)
- personal response systems (PRS)
- prostheses and orthoses
- speech appliances
- assistance dogs

Equipment I may need:

Accessing the Rehabilitation Appliances Program

Speak with your treating doctor who 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 below:



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

Continence products

If your treating doctor or Continence Adviser confirms that you require continence products, they will give you a prescription for them. 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 continence product suppliers.

For more information about the DVA RAP and continence products 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 DVA-accepted service-related condition).

DVA provides 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.

DVA may try simpler options before making major modifications. This may include recommending you consider alternative aids or equipment.

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

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. 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/travel.

Booked Car with Driver (BCWD) service

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

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

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

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/ambulance.

Reimbursement

If you are not able to access BCWD, we may reimburse the full cost of taxi, community transport, public transport fares, some costs for private vehicle travel, and pay an allowance for meals and accommodation when travelling long distances 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).

Service limits

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 or non-hospital setting	21 days
Community Nursing	Veteran Gold or White Card with an accepted condition and a clinically assessed nursing need	Nil
Mental health and counselling support	Veteran Gold or White Card ADF members with one day of continuous full-time 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 with the need for the appliance	Fully funded Limits may apply on some products
Travelling to medical appointments	Veteran Gold or White Card White card-holder must be travelling for treatment of a DVA-accepted service-related condition	Nil

Respite Care	Eligibility	Limits per financial year
In-home respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	196 hours
Residential respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	28 days
A combination of In-home and residential respite care	Veteran Gold or White Card	196 hours, with 7 hours of in-home care equal to 1 day of residential care
Emergency Short-Term Home Relief	Veteran Gold or White Card	216 hours, up to 72 hours each episode



Other in-home aged care programs and DVA

As a DVA client aged 65 years or over you can speak with both DVA and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health) for assistance with accessing aged care services. DVA provides access to a range of aged care services. As your care needs become more complex, you may choose to use a combination of DVA and mainstream services organised through both DVA and Health, provided there is no duplication of services.

This means you can receive DVA services alongside other support, as long as you are not receiving the same service from both departments. For example, if you receive DVA funded cleaning services, you cannot access additional cleaning services through Health. However, you could be eligible for community transport and meals through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

It is important you consider all government-funded aged care services. This will allow you to select individual services or a combination of services that best suit your overall support needs. The aged care assessor can help you understand what services are available to you. However, as many DVA supports and services are fully funded or only require you to make a small co-payment or contribution, you may wish to consider your eligibility through DVA first.

If you are seeking aged care services, we encourage you to register with My Aged Care register with My Aged Care by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/apply-online or call on **1800 200 422** and arrange an aged care assessment early, as it can take time to set up services at first.

What to say when you call: "I need an aged care needs assessment as I need help with [insert the tasks] at home. Can you please organise this for me?"

There are support services to help you understand and navigate aged care. Explore these options by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/getting-support.

The following table provides a guide to the types of help you can get through DVA mapped against services available through the Support at Home program or the CHSP (except care management and restorative care management).

Please note limits and co-payments apply to some services. Furthermore, DVA programs are based on your needs as assessed by a suitable health provider or assessment organisation, and your eligibility under your Veteran Card.

Support at Home	Service list categories	Comparable DVA programs and services
Clinical supports	Allied health and other therapeutic services	Allied health services
	Assistive technology and home modifications, prescriptions and wrap-around services	Rehabilitation Appliance Program (RAP) – page 31
	Care management	Care plans (GP) Community Nursing Program – page 26 Coordinated Veterans' Care Program (CVC) – page 27
	Nursing care	Community Nursing Program – page 26
	Nutrition	Nutritional products available through Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS)
	Restorative care management	GP, Convalescent Care – page 30 , allied health
Independence services	Assistive technology products, equipment and home modifications	Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) – page 31
	Personal care Help with self-care and activities of daily living Self-administered medication Continence management	Veterans' Home Care (VHC) – page 14 Community Nursing Program – page 26 Attendant Care – page 24 Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) – page 31 Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) medication webster packs
	Respite	Respite (care at home, residential) – page 16 Emergency Short-Term Home Relief – page 17
	Social support and community engagement	Coordinated Veterans' Care Program (CVC) – page 27
	Therapeutic services for independent living (Acupuncturist, Chiropractor, Diversional therapist, Remedial masseuse, Art therapist, Osteopath)	Allied health services (physiotherapist, osteopath and chiropractor services only)
	Transport	Travel for treatment only – page 33
Everyday living services	Domestic assistance	Veterans' Home Care (VHC) – page 14 Household Services – page 22
	Home maintenance and repairs	Veterans' Home Care (VHC) – page 14 Household Services – page 22
	Meals	Veterans' Home Care (VHC) (shopping and meal preparation only) – page 14 Household Services (shopping and/or meal preparation) – page 22



DVA's role in assessing your contribution for Support at Home

Under the Support at Home program, participants contribute towards the cost of some assessed services, while other services will be free of charge. Participants only pay for the services that they receive under Support at Home. You can find **more detailed information** on Support at Home contributions by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/support-at-home-costs-and-contributions.

How much you pay will be determined by assessing your income and assets through a means assessment.

Who does my means assessment?

DVA is responsible for completing the aged care means assessment for:

- Veterans, their partners and war widow(er)s in receipt of one of the following DVA income support pensions:
 - service pension
 - income support supplement, or
 - age pension administered by DVA
- Veterans in receipt of DVA Disability Compensation Payment and who have qualifying service, and
- War widow(er)s in receipt of DVA war widow(er)'s pension and income support supplement.

Services Australia is responsible for completing the aged care means assessments for all other DVA clients. For example, veterans who do not have qualifying service or war widow(er)s and are not paid an income support pension by DVA will have their means assessment completed by Services Australia.

To check if the payment you receive is included, or to confirm who needs to complete your means assessment, you can contact DVA on **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)**.

If you do not receive any of the income support payments listed above and you do not have approved qualifying service, you will need to submit an income and assets assessment to Services Australia. You can find **more information** on how to do this by visiting the myagedcare.gov.au/income-and-assets-assessments-support-home or calling My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**.

You can also get an estimate of your potential fees using the **My Aged Care Fee Estimator** which you can find by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/support-at-home-fee-estimator.

How do I start the process?

If you are in receipt of a means tested payment through DVA (listed on previous page under 'Who does my assessment') or if you have approved qualifying service, you will need to submit your income and asset information to DVA so that we can complete the means assessment. This information will then be passed on to Services Australia who will determine and advise you of your contribution to the cost of your care.

To start the process, complete the Services Australia ***SA456 – Home Care Package – Calculation of your cost of home care*** form and send it via email to income.support.aged.care@dva.gov.au or by post to:

The Department of Veterans' Affairs, Aged Care Assets Assessments
GPO Box 9998
Brisbane, QLD, 4001

If sending via post, please ensure that you make copies of all materials being sent in case documents are misplaced in the mail.

If your income and assets are not assessed, you will be asked to contribute the maximum percentage contribution.

Do I have to wait for the means assessment before accessing services?

If you have been assessed as eligible for the Support at Home program but are waiting for your means assessment to be completed, you can start receiving services. You may initially be charged for these services at the maximum rate but you should be reimbursed or credited once your means assessment is complete.

If you have been assessed as eligible for Support at Home but are waiting for your means assessment to be completed, you can agree on a temporary contribution rate with your service provider. In this process, your pension status should be taken into consideration so that the contribution rate is as close as possible to your final assessed rate.

What contribution will I be expected to make?

Full pensioners will pay the smallest contributions, whereas self-funded retirees will pay the highest contribution rate. The type of service you receive will also affect what you pay. [Page 40](#) of this guide has an overview of Support at Home services. **More information** is available from the My Aged Care website (myagedcare.gov.au/how-do-aged-care-costs-work) or by calling **1800 200 422**.

As a guide, if you are receiving:

- Clinical care – there are no client contributions
- Independence services – full pensioners will pay 5% of costs, and self-funded retirees will pay 50%, part pensioners will pay between 5-50%
- Everyday living services – full pensioners will pay 17.5% and self-funded retirees will pay 80%, part pensioners will pay 17.5-80%

You can also get an estimate of your potential fees using the ***My Aged Care Fee Estimator*** which you can find by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/support-at-home-fee-estimator.



Income included in the assessment

To assess your income, we will include your income support payment (excluding the minimum pension supplement amount) and any of these that apply:

- War Widow(er)'s Pension (except if you have qualifying service in your own right)
- deemed income on financial assets and on large gifting amounts
- overseas pensions
- payments from superannuation
- income from annuities, allocated pensions and transition-to-retirement pensions, market-linked pensions or term-allocated pensions
- net income from businesses including farms
- rental income from investment properties
- family trust distributions or dividends from private company shares
- Disability Compensation Payments (including Special Rate or totally and permanently incapacitated pension)

DVA will not include:

- Disability Compensation Payments (including special rate or totally and permanently incapacitated pension)
- the Energy Supplement
- the Flexible Pension Supplement
- the 4% GST component of the War Widow(er)'s Pension.

Assets included in the assessment

When we assess your assets, we will include:

- money in bank accounts
- investments
- real estate
- motor vehicles
- household contents
- personal effects
- any assets you sold or gave away for less than their value.

Each member of a couple is considered to have half of the combined assets of both partners.

Your home

Please note your principal place of residence is exempt from your assets assessment for Support at Home.

Your principal home is the home you live in, on an ongoing and permanent basis.

Other government funded in-home programs

In addition to the DVA services available, you may also be able to receive help through programs offered by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health). While DVA's services are only available to eligible DVA clients, Health's services are available to all eligible senior Australians, including veterans. Most people want to continue living in their home for as long as they can and Health's programs offer support ranging from basic (entry-level) through to more complex and comprehensive services.

Commonwealth Home support program

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) provides older people with access to basic support services to help maintain their independence.

The CHSP provides entry-level support, such as personal care, social support, respite care and help with home maintenance to make sure older people can live independently and safely at home.

If you are accessing CHSP services, you may be asked to pay a contribution or fee towards the cost of services. Fees must be agreed between you and the service provider before services start.

NOTE: *The CHSP program will transition to the new Support at Home program no earlier than 1 July 2027.*

To find out more about CHSP and how to access services see the Accessing in-home supports with My Aged Care section below, visit myagedcare.gov.au/commonwealth-home-support-program or call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**.

Support at Home program

The Support at Home program replaced the Home Care Packages program and the Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) Programme on 1 November 2025. The Support at Home program provides improved access to services, products, equipment and home modifications to help you live independently for longer.

If you were receiving a Home Care Package, Health will have written to you about this. Your provider will help you to transition to the Support at Home program, update your care plan, service agreements and discuss what contributions you may need to pay. **More information** about how this will affect you is available on the My Aged Care (myagedcare.gov.au) website.

Support at Home provides **ongoing** services in 3 categories:

- **clinical** supports such as nursing care, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and care management
- **independence services** such as personal care, community engagement, and transport
- **everyday living services** such as domestic assistance, basic home maintenance, and meals.



The Support at Home program also includes 3 short-term pathways:

- **Assistive Technology and Home Modifications scheme** provides funding to access a defined list of assistive technology and home modifications, so that clients can live at home with increased independence, safety, accessibility and wellbeing.
- **Restorative Care Pathway** provides access to intensive allied health and nursing care for up to 16 weeks to improve function and regain abilities or delay the need to access higher levels of aged care.
- **End-of-Life Pathway** gives people with less than 3 months to live, access to more funding for in-home aged care services, alongside local palliative care programs. This aims to help older people remain at home as they near the end of their life.

For more information, see the *Support at Home program – Booklet for older people families and carers, Booklet for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and carers*, visit the My Aged Care website or call 1800 200 422.



Accessing the Support at Home program

To access services under the Support at Home program, you will need to have an aged care needs assessment. If you have not previously accessed services through My Aged Care, you will first need to register with My Aged Care.

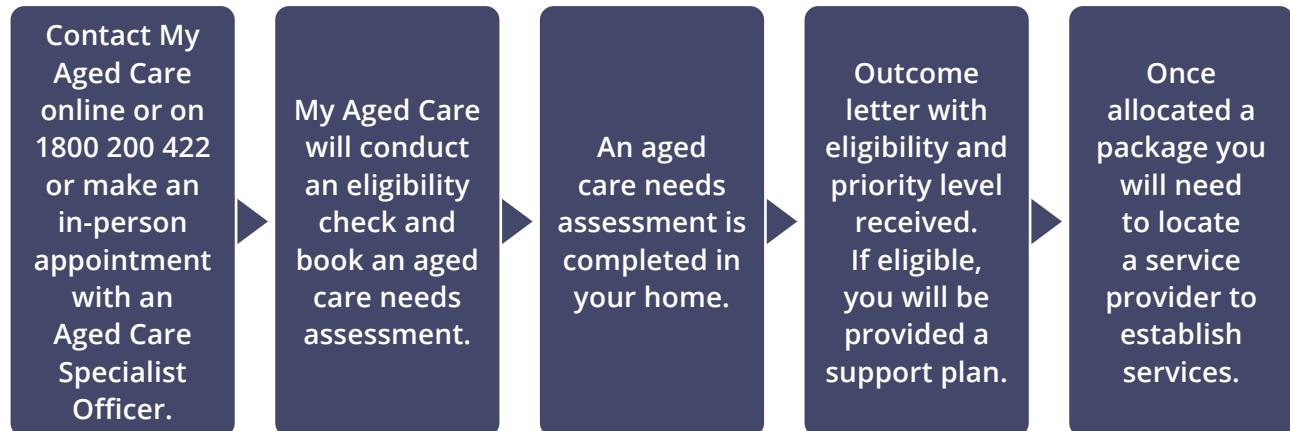
You can register:

- online by visiting myagedcare.gov.au/apply-online
- over the phone by calling My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**
- in-person by booking an appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer on **1800 227 475** in selected Services Australia office locations (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)
- by visiting any Services Australia service centre for general My Aged Care support.

DVA encourages you to register and arrange an assessment as early as you can as it can take time to get assessed and establish services.

What to say when you call: "I need an aged care needs assessment as I need help with [insert the tasks] at home. Can you please organise this for me?"

The process to arrange an assessment and receive your outcome is:



For more information on applying for an aged care needs assessment, finding a provider and to use the **My Aged Care 'Find a provider'** online tool. Visit myagedcare.gov.au/how-get-assessed.

What gets you out of bed and gives you joy?



As we move through life, our purpose and meaning changes.

When we are young our sense of purpose may be clear and well defined, such as preparing for working life by learning and studying, seeking a fulfilling job or career or building relationships and families. For those who served in the Australian Defence Force, and the families that have supported them, this sense of purpose has been particularly strong.

However, as we get older our life focus shifts. Relationships change and the work and other activities that used to occupy us are no longer central to our lives. With each of these changes we might need to redefine our purpose and reassess what brings us happiness and joy.

Having a purpose keeps us feeling alive, useful and fulfilled. Re-exploring our passions, connecting with others and learning something new are all ways we can keep a purpose in mind, and helps us get out of bed and gives us joy.

Think about what you want your current purpose to be and go for it! The following exercise can help you in your thinking:

Activities I enjoy doing and am passionate about continuing:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

People who are important to me that I want to remain connected with:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Trying new things

It is easy to stay within our comfort zone as we age, only doing things that are familiar, however, trying new things can be very rewarding, such as:

- joining a community group
- trying a new hobby
- learning a new skill
- being open to meeting new people
- engaging in new activities.

Trying new activities can ignite a zest for life, it could stimulate your brain, you could make new friends and have more confidence in your abilities.

New activities or things I would like to try:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Volunteering

As we age, it is important to stay connected with our community. One way to do this is by volunteering. Volunteering is a good way to meet new people and to contribute positively to the lives of others in the community. Many volunteers reflect on how much they get out of volunteering. So why not try it?

Organisations you may wish to consider volunteering with:

- Ex-service organisations – dva.gov.au/ESO
- Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme – health.gov.au/acvvs
- Your local club – clubsofaustralia.com.au
- Open Arms Community Peer Support – openarms.gov.au/get-support/community-and-peer-program
- Dementia Care Australia – dementia.org.au
- Carers Australia – carersaustralia.com.au
- Your local Circle of Friends Australia group – cofa.org.au
- Your local church group
- Online community group



Thinking about your life-purpose and the new things you want to try,
what are your goals for the next 6 – 12 months?

My goals

My goals for the next 6 months are to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

In the next 12 months I want to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Staying connected to your community

Staying connected is very important as you age and become less mobile. Maintaining friendships or connections to family and community can be difficult. The following organisations offer different ways of connecting with others in your community.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

OPAN offers free, independent and confidential advice and advocacy to:

- older people
- their families
- their representatives.

For more information contact OPAN by calling **1800 700 600**: the National Aged Care Advocacy Line or visiting their website (open.org.au).

Ex-service organisations (ESOs)

As a member of the veteran community, you can invite representatives from ex-service organisations to visit you or attend one of their events or locations.

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.

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)

The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) is available for people who are receiving Support at Home or Commonwealth Home Support Program services 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** offers 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. **For more information**, visit the website (openarms.gov.au) or call **1800 011 046**. The website contains self-help tools, mobile phone apps, and advice about how to seek professional help.
- **Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC)** is available if you have at least one day of continuous full-time service in the Australian Defence Force. NLHC provides 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** who may be able to provide treatment or refer you to a Medicare-subsidised psychologist, psychiatrist, mental health social worker or mental health occupational therapist.



Carer support

Many members of the veteran community need help with day-to-day activities. Others are helping family members and friends with their everyday care needs. DVA recognises the work being performed by carers in the veteran community. The following information contains details on the programs and services which support carers in this important work.

Aged care information and assistance

Payments for carers

As a carer, you may be entitled to financial assistance from the government. DVA is unable to provide this type of payment, however, you may be entitled to either a Carers Allowance or a Carers Payment through Services Australia.

More information can be found by visiting [servicesaustralia.gov.au/carer-allowance](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/carer-allowance) and [servicesaustralia.gov.au/carer-payment](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/carer-payment) or by calling **132 717**.

Veterans' Access Network

The Veterans' Access Network (VAN) is your first point of contact with DVA. They provide general information, can connect you with relevant areas of the department, and can make referrals to appropriate external entities where necessary. Contact VAN by phone on **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)**, face-to-face at staffed locations around Australia or by email to generalenquiries@dva.gov.au. You can find the locations of our VAN officers by visiting [dva.gov.au/location-finder](https://www.dva.gov.au/location-finder).

Aged Care Specialist Officers

Aged Care Specialist Officers (ACSOs) are part of the My Aged Care face-to-face service offering and can help with many aged care matters. **More information** can be found on the Aged Care Specialist Officer page of the Services Australia website ([servicesaustralia.gov.au/getting-aged-care-services](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/getting-aged-care-services)). You can book an appointment with an ACSO by visiting a Services Australia contact centre or calling Services Australia on **1800 227 475**.

My Aged Care

My Aged Care is responsible for helping older people navigate and access government-funded aged care services that are separate from DVA, such as the Commonwealth Home Support program, Support at Home program, Home Care Packages* program and residential aged care.

More information can be found by visiting the My Aged Care website [myagedcare.gov.au](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or by calling the My Aged Care contact centre on **1800 200 422**.

* The Support at Home program replaced the Home Care Packages program on 1 November 2025.



Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is the national regulator of aged care services. It protects the health, safety and wellbeing of older Australians accessing government-funded aged care services. You can find **more information** by visiting its website (agedcarequality.gov.au) or calling **1800 951 822**.

Services Australia – Financial Information Service

The Financial Information Service (FIS) provides free, independent and confidential information to help people make informed decisions about their finances. FIS officers can help you understand how financial products work and explain how a change to your circumstances may affect your financial situation, both now and into the future. They can also guide you to useful resources for managing your financial matters. Please note, they are not financial planners or counsellors and cannot give financial advice or recommend financial advisers.

You can speak with a FIS officer by calling **132 300** and when asked why you're calling, ask to be connected to the 'Financial Information Service'.

You can find out more by visiting servicesaustralia.gov.au/fis.

Wellbeing advocates

If you need assistance with accessing support, you might consider linking with an ESO wellbeing advocate.

Wellbeing advocates are often ex-service personnel who have undergone training to assist DVA clients with wellbeing services. This includes home and aged care visits, bereavement support, housing assistance, crisis management, community engagement, and more. You can find **more information** on advocates by visiting dva.gov.au and searching '**What is an advocate**'. You can search for accredited advocates in your area by visiting advocateregister.org.au.

Caring for someone with dementia

Dementia Australia

Dementia Australia is a national peak body that provides trusted information, education and support services for people living with dementia, their families and carers. You can find **more information** on the Dementia Australia website (dementia.org.au) or by calling **1800 100 500**.

Dementia Support Australia

Caring for a person with dementia can be difficult, particularly when behaviour changes impact the care of people you love. Dementia Support Australia has a 24-hour help line to help carers. Call Dementia Support Australia on **1800 699 799**.

Getting your affairs in order

As you age and your needs change, it is important to get your affairs in order. It is important to review your:

- Nominated representative arrangements
- 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. It is best to seek advice from your solicitor or from the public trustee in your state or territory.

If you need 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/planning-ahead.

Nominating a representative

You may choose to authorise someone to be your nominated representative when dealing with DVA. A nominated representative can be a partner, adult relative, trustee, agent, legal representative, or organisation.

You can set up a nominated representative using your MyService account or by completing the **D9325 – Appoint a third party to represent a DVA client** form. This form can be submitted via email to generalenquiries@dva.gov.au or via post to:

*The Department of Veterans Affairs
GPO BOX 9998
Brisbane, QLD, 4001*

For more information and to find the form go to the DVA website dva.gov.au/representative

NOTE: this form only authorises representation with DVA. Other government departments will have their own processes to establish representation arrangements

Providing DVA with copies of your proof of identity documentation

DVA will need you to provide documents that prove your identity when you are submitting a claim for a pension, benefit or allowance. DVA 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. DVA respects your privacy but needs 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; to the proof of identification page (dva.gov.au/ID) or to the nominate a representative page (dva.gov.au/representative).



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 and allows the appointed person to make decisions about **financial** and **legal** matters on your behalf. However, the enduring power of attorney continues 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, health professionals and 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 call **1300 208 582** or go to advancercareplanning.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 needs assessment

This is an assessment to determine what kind of help and support will best meet your needs particularly when you need to reconsider your current living situation. You will be asked a series of questions to determine the best care options available, either at home or in an aged care home.

Household Services

Household Services is a DVA program that provides compensation payments to veterans who are unable to complete domestic tasks they used to do around the home due to a service-related injury or condition which has been accepted under the MRCA or DRCA legislation.

Legislation

Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) covers current and former ADF members with service after 30 June 2004. It provides treatment, rehabilitation and compensation for service-related injuries and conditions. It also covers payments and support for dependants following a death related to ADF service where the service took place after 30 June 2004.

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) provides rehabilitation and compensation for injuries and diseases caused by:

- peacetime and peacekeeping service up to and including 30 June 2004
- operational service between 7 April 1994 and 30 June 2004.

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.

Multi-Purpose Services

These services are integrated health and aged care services. They are typically in small regional and remote communities where it is not viable for hospitals or aged care homes to stand-alone.

Public Trustee

Public/State Trustees are established by state/territory governments to provide professional, affordable and accessible trustee services to their respective communities. You can find out more by searching '**Wills and powers of attorney**' on moneysmart.gov.au.

Supported Residential Service (SRS)

This service may offer a similar service to that of a government-funded residential aged care facility but without aged care funding. SRSs are state-registered service providers. An aged care needs 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 involved in your care.

Veterans' Home Care (VHC)

This is a DVA program that provides eligible DVA clients with a small amount of practical help at home, to assist them to stay independent at home. 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 at home, to determine and coordinate the services you require. DVA has contracts with VHC Assessment Agencies to provide high-quality, flexible and timely assessment services to DVA clients. Agencies must comply with a set of quality standards.

VHC service provider

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

Notes

