



Frequently Asked Questions

Improved Access to Treatment – Tinnitus Pilot

Background

Supporting the long-term wellbeing of veterans and the families of veterans was a key focus of recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. In December 2025, the Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, [confirmed the Australian Government's commitment](#) to making sure veterans have access to high-quality, modern treatments and rehabilitation to support recovery and reduce the risk of long-term disability.

As part of this, DVA is strengthening its focus on early intervention, treatment and prevention, recognising that wellbeing is an important protective factor against suicide. Improving access to treatment for service-related tinnitus is one of these important initiatives, helping veterans and serving members to lead healthy, productive lives.

Q: What is the Improved Access to Treatment for Tinnitus Pilot?

A: The Improved Access to Treatment for Tinnitus Pilot is a DVA initiative that provides eligible veterans with access to evidence-based tinnitus assessment and treatment in the context of their Permanent Impairment (PI) claim.

It aims to support veterans in managing the impact of tinnitus and improving their long-term health and wellbeing.

It also helps DVA understand whether the veteran has received reasonable rehabilitative treatment for tinnitus, before consideration of the final level of impairment takes place in keeping with the requirements of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

The Pilot commenced in April 2026 and operates only in the context of decision making on relevant claims in the compensation process between acceptance of initial liability by DVA, and determination of any permanent impairment.

Q: What is reasonable rehabilitative treatment?

A: Reasonable rehabilitative treatment is treatment that is intended to help improve your function, reduce the impact of your condition, or restore your health as much as possible. It may include medical treatment, surgery, therapy, exercise programs, psychological treatment or other clinically appropriate care recommended by your healthcare provider.

The aim is to support your recovery, health and wellbeing, and help you achieve the best possible long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

Q: Why has DVA introduced this Tinnitus treatment Pilot?

A: Hearing conditions, including tinnitus, are one of the most claimed service-related health conditions for veterans, including veterans who are still serving.

DVA recognises that, left untreated, tinnitus can affect sleep, concentration, communication, mental health and quality of life. Evidence shows treatment for tinnitus can help you to live well with the condition by reducing its impact on daily life.

As one of the most common but treatable service-related health conditions, the Pilot aims to ensure veterans have access to appropriate support through a free and easy pathway to tinnitus treatment, maximising the opportunity for treatment to make a real, measurable difference to longer term wellbeing.

Q: How can I take part in the Pilot?

A: The Pilot currently applies to veterans under the age of 60 with a *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* Permanent Impairment (PI) claim for tinnitus.

If you are part of the Pilot, you will receive a letter from DVA referring you to book an initial clinical assessment of your tinnitus with Hearing Australia.

DVA strongly encourages eligible veterans to take part in the Pilot, which may help reduce the impact of tinnitus on daily life. 80% of early participants have experienced a reduction of the impact of tinnitus on their life as a result of the treatment they have received.

Q: Will participating in the Pilot affect my Permanent Impairment (PI) claim?

A: Being referred to participate in the Pilot does not mean your PI claim has been rejected. Under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*, DVA must consider a range of factors when assessing your PI claim. Your participation in the Pilot will help DVA assess:

- whether reasonable rehabilitative treatment for your service-related tinnitus has occurred
- whether your tinnitus has stabilised
- what level of impairment remains after appropriate management.

Your participation will provide you with information about your tinnitus, appropriate assessment of your tinnitus, and enable you to access necessary rehabilitative treatment for your tinnitus.

Q: Will I have to wait longer for my Permanent Impairment decision?

A: Your participation in the Pilot helps ensure DVA has comprehensive clinical information about your level of permanent impairment, including whether all reasonable rehabilitative treatment requirements have been met.

The Pilot enables a streamlined and timely way for your tinnitus to be assessed, and for you to receive necessary treatment. Your claim will continue to be managed through DVA's usual claims process.

Q: Do I have to lodge a Permanent Impairment claim to access treatment for my tinnitus?

A: No. DVA encourages clients to seek treatment for tinnitus, and any other conditions, as early as possible to improve long-term health outcomes.

DVA funds access to safe and effective tinnitus treatment for veterans through Veteran Card arrangements. Current serving veterans can access treatment through Defence health arrangements.

Q: I am a veteran card holder and experience hearing loss and tinnitus. I have not submitted a Permanent Impairment (PI) claim or received Provisional Access to Medical Treatment (PAMT) for tinnitus only. Can/do I still access devices through the Hearing Services Program (HSP) and Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) through the Rehabilitation and Appliance Program (RAP)?

A: Yes. Unless you have a PI claim lodged for tinnitus only, you can access all hearing related and tinnitus treatment through your usual audiology provider.

If required, they will need to seek prior financial authorisation from us before hearing aids/ ALD's can be provided by completing:

- [DVA form D9398 – Audiology prior financial approval request](#) or
- [D9376 - Request for assistive listening devices and/or tinnitus devices](#)

Your audiology provider can then send their request and documents to health.approval@dva.gov.au for consideration or call **1800 550 457** for more information.

[Find out more](#) about this and other hearing services available through DVA.

Q: If my tinnitus has been accepted as service related and I've completed a Tinnitus Functional Index (TFI), why do I need to prove anything further?

A: Acceptance of liability for your tinnitus confirms that DVA recognises the condition as service related.

A permanent impairment assessment is a separate process that considers the level of lasting impairment from the condition. This requires DVA to consider whether reasonable treatment has occurred.

A TFI measures the impact tinnitus has on your life. It does not replace treatment. Your participation in the Pilot provides you the opportunity to obtain necessary treatment.

Q: What happens if my tinnitus improves after treatment?

A: Treatment for tinnitus can often have a positive impact. Through appropriate treatment, many people develop effective strategies to manage their symptoms and reduce the effect tinnitus has on their daily lives. A reduction in the impact of your tinnitus following treatment is a positive outcome for your long-term health and wellbeing. 80% of early participants in the Pilot have experienced a reduction of the impact of tinnitus on their life as a result of the treatment they have received.

For Permanent Impairment assessment purposes, DVA considers the level of impairment that remains after reasonable treatment has been undertaken. The aim is to understand the ongoing impact of the condition once appropriate treatment

options have been explored.

Q: What happens if my tinnitus does not improve?

A: Some veterans experience ongoing tinnitus despite appropriate treatment. The aim of tinnitus treatment is often focused on reducing distress, improving coping, improving sleep and concentration, and reducing the impact on daily life. A lack of complete resolution does not mean treatment has failed.

Some people will find that their tinnitus gets worse at certain times or can sometimes flare up. If you have completed the types of treatment recommended in your initial assessment, Hearing Australia will conduct a follow-up review to assess your progress and determine whether any additional treatment options or management strategies may be beneficial.

Your Veteran Card provides you with access to clinically necessary tinnitus treatment should your symptoms worsen or change in the future.

Q: Does treatment mean DVA believes my tinnitus is not permanent?

A: No. Tinnitus can be permanent even when treatment is recommended or has been undertaken. Many chronic conditions are improved by, or managed with treatment, without being cured.

Q: Where is Hearing Australia located and how do I book an appointment?

A: Hearing Australia has a network of more than 180 hearing centres across metropolitan, regional and remote Australia, enabling veterans participating in the Pilot to access consistent services from Hearing Australia's team of fully qualified audiologists, regardless of where they live. Telehealth is also available in some circumstances.

If you have been referred to Hearing Australia by DVA as part of the Pilot, you can make contact with Hearing Australia on the number provided in the referral, and their staff will help you understand where the closest centre is, and how to make your first appointment for an initial assessment of your tinnitus and treatment needs. Regardless of which Hearing Australia centre you visit, you will receive access to the same high-quality, evidence-based care.

To book your appointment, please call Hearing Australia on the number provided in your referral letter. Calling is the quickest way for Hearing Australia to identify you as a Pilot participant and arrange the most appropriate appointment for you.

If you are unable to call, you can also use the email address provided in your referral letter and Hearing Australia will send you additional booking instructions.

Q: What happens at the initial appointment with Hearing Australia?

A: At the initial appointment, your Hearing Australia audiologist will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of your tinnitus. This includes assessing your tinnitus, reviewing any treatment you have already had or are having, and recommending further treatment as needed.

Hearing Australia will test your hearing to see if that is contributing to your tinnitus and will assess your sensitivity to certain sounds. They will also ask you a series of questions to understand how tinnitus is impacting your life and what could best be done about it.

Under the Pilot arrangements, DVA fully funds the care you will receive from Hearing Australia.

Throughout the process, Hearing Australia will provide DVA with assessment reports outlining the details of your tinnitus as well as any recommended treatment. These reports will be shared with Defence (if you are still serving), and your nominated medical practitioner where you have provided consent.

The tinnitus assessment reports will be considered by DVA when assessing your PI claim, in keeping with the requirements of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*. The reports enable DVA to determine whether your level of impairment is permanent, whether there is any likelihood of improvement, and whether all reasonable rehabilitative treatment has been undertaken.

Undertaking recommended treatment assists with assessment of your PI claim and, more importantly, can support you to achieve a healthier and more productive life.

Q: What sort of tinnitus treatment might I receive?

A: Hearing Australia will consider which treatment options might be appropriate for your tinnitus. Treatment depends on individual needs, and may include:

- hearing assessments
- tinnitus education and counselling
- strategies to manage tinnitus
- sound therapy

- hearing devices
- sleep strategies
- psychological approaches such as tinnitus-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Neuromonics is a treatment option that might be recommended if you have tried some of the earlier treatments and further treatment is still needed.

Referral to a psychologist for CBT is another possible recommended treatment for tinnitus. CBT is a recognised effective treatment option for tinnitus. If Hearing Australia recommends CBT, you can choose to receive treatment from your current treating psychologist if you have one. If you do not have a regular psychologist, Hearing Australia may suggest a suitably qualified provider who can deliver tinnitus-focused CBT.

Q: If I have been referred to Hearing Australia, can I see another audiologist?

A: If you meet the eligibility requirements for the Pilot, DVA will refer you to Hearing Australia for tinnitus assessment and recommended treatment.

If you are receiving tinnitus treatment from another provider, you can complete your scheduled treatment with that provider. This includes treatment being provided through Defence for current serving veterans. You can discuss this with the Hearing Australia audiologist at your initial appointment.

Where you undergo treatment with Hearing Australia as part of the Pilot, you will remain under Hearing Australia's care until that course of treatment is complete. Once the course of treatment has been completed, any future tinnitus care can be accessed through existing treatment pathways, including through Defence for still serving members, or through Veteran Card arrangements, with your provider of choice.

Q: Do I need Prior Financial Authorisation (PFA) if Hearing Australia recommends treatment?

A: No. All treatment provided by Hearing Australia under the Pilot is paid for by DVA without the need to request approval in advance. Hearing Australia is aware of these arrangements.

Q: What other tinnitus treatment pathways are available to veterans?

A: DVA encourages all veterans to seek treatment for all service-related conditions as early as possible. However, not all veterans with service-related tinnitus will meet the Pilot's eligibility criteria.

Veterans who are not part of the Pilot can continue to access treatment for their service-related tinnitus through their provider of choice via existing treatment pathways. This includes treatment through Defence for current serving veterans, or through Veteran Card arrangements for other veterans.

The first step is to speak with your GP, who can exclude important things that may make your tinnitus worse, discuss options and provide initial treatment.