



INCREASING DVA FEES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

This initiative includes three elements:

- a one-off fee increase for psychiatrists, allied mental health professionals, social workers and community nurses;
- simplification of fee schedules for allied mental health, social workers and community nursing providers, and
- 10 specialised psychiatric training positions per year.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The wellbeing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are particularly important for vulnerable cohorts, including veterans with ongoing mental health concerns, veterans requiring community care support, and Australian Defence Force (ADF) members transitioning to civilian life. Targeted funding in these priority areas will strengthen the capacity of the healthcare workforce to provide timely and high quality services to veterans and their families.

On 1 February 2021, DVA will increase fees paid to mental health and community nursing providers to strengthen access to high quality mental health and community care services for veterans.

In addition to the fee increase, DVA will simplify fee schedules for allied mental health, social workers and community nursing providers to reduce red tape and make the claiming process more efficient and easier to navigate. DVA will consult with affected professional associations in the design of these changes.

This measure will also fund specialised psychiatric training positions to improve access to psychiatrists with training in military and veteran mental health. The training program aims to strengthen workforce capability to deliver psychiatric services specific to the unique needs of veterans and military personnel.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

Up to 123,000 Veteran Gold Card and 85,000 Veteran White Card holders.

Mental health and community care providers — including psychiatrists, allied mental health care professionals, social workers and community nurses.

DATE OF EFFECT

Simplified fee schedules and a one-off fee increase will be implemented on 1 February 2021.

The psychiatric training program will be implemented in 2021, with a start date to be determined.

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

\$94.3 million over the forward estimates.