
Rongoā Māori

Version 1.0

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Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance on administering **veterans'** eligibility under the Veterans' Support Act 2014 (the Act) to funding for rongoā Māori services.
- 1.2 Veterans' Affairs acknowledges rongoā Māori as taonga in terms of Article Two of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and further acknowledges its obligation to ensure the rights of Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga over it.
- 1.3 Veterans' Affairs considers that rongoā Māori is a part of Mātauranga Māori, a holistic and dynamic knowledge system, encompassing spiritual, cultural, and physical aspects of life and the environment. Rongoā Māori is provided with the intent of holistically maximising the health and wellbeing of the recipient.
- 1.4 While rongoā Māori was founded in Te Ao Māori (the Māori world), it is increasingly a treatment of choice of non-Māori New Zealanders, and, as such, rongoā Māori services are available to both Māori and non-Māori veterans.
- 1.5 Veterans' Affairs provides rongoā Māori as an aspect of **social rehabilitation**.

2. Legislative Reference

- 2.1 The relevant legislation:
 - sections 7, 8, 11, 117 and 122(1)(a) of the Act.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this Policy, words in bold and in green are defined in a glossary at the rear of this document.

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 Veterans may receive funding for rongoā Māori services if they are eligible for social rehabilitation, i.e. if it is required as a direct consequence of the injury or illness for which they are receiving entitlements.

Veterans' Support Act, section 122(1)(a).

5. Services covered

- 5.1 Veterans' Affairs may fund or contribute to the costs of the following rongoā Māori services to eligible veterans:
- mirimiri — including whakawhiti kōrero (support and advice/counselling); karakia / takutaku (prayer to recite karakia); waiata (song); taonga pūro (instrumental music); breathwork; mahi wairua/whakapapa (connection to wairua and tūpuna/ancestors); energetic and vibrational stimulation and shifts. May include some mirimiri bodywork to stimulate and energise blood, bone and tissues.
 - romiromi — deep tissue stimulation of acupressure and acupuncture points to re-align, re-adjust, the physical body.
 - wai rākau/rongoā rākau — use of native plants and herbal preparations.
- 5.2 Veterans' Affairs does not cover the costs of herbal preparations except their use as part of the session with the practitioner. The costs associated with the provision of herbal preparations for use by the veteran after the rongoā Māori session is the responsibility of the veteran and is not funded by Veterans' Affairs.
- 5.3 Healing approaches from non Māori cultural traditions, such as Reiki or hyperbaric oxygen treatment, are not considered part of rongoā Māori, even if they are provided by tohunga rongoā (rongoā Māori practitioners). The costs of these treatments should be considered in terms of the relevant parts of the Act, and Veterans' Affairs policy.

6. Application and approvals

- 6.1 Veterans must obtain pre-approval from their Case Manager or Rehabilitation Advisor in order to be eligible for the costs associated with rongoā Māori services.
- 6.2 If the veteran meets the eligibility criteria, the Case Manager or Rehabilitation Advisor will tell the veteran to instruct their rongoā Māori provider (tohunga rongoā) to complete the relevant VA form in order to apply for funding and to set up appointments with the veteran.
- 6.3 Veterans' Affairs must within 7 **working days** after receiving the application, acknowledge receipt of the application, and must keep the veteran (and provider) up-to-date on the progress of the application.
- 6.4 Veterans' Affairs will make a decision on a claim as soon as practicable after receipt of the application.

Veterans' Support Act 2014, section 11.

7. Needs Assessment and Outcomes

- 7.1 Veterans' Affairs will fund an initial assessment where required.
- 7.2 The rongoā Māori practitioner must provide to Veterans' Affairs recommendations regarding the nature of the care being provided, including the intended duration of care, if appropriate.
- 7.3 Veterans' Affairs rehabilitation advisors will work with the rongoā Māori practitioner and the veteran to define the specific social rehabilitation outcomes from these recommendations as part of the veteran's rehabilitation plan.

8. Rongoā Māori services providers

- 8.1 Veterans should access their care through one of the providers listed on the ACC list of accredited and registered tohunga rongoā (rongoā Māori providers). This list is available on the ACC website at <https://www.acc.co.nz/im-injured/what-we-cover/using-rongoaa-maori-services/registered-rongoa-maori-practitioners/>

9. Costs covered

- 9.1 Upon receiving the initial assessment, Veterans' Affairs will approve up to 12 sessions at a time according to the veteran's needs.
- 9.2 Veterans' Affairs will pay up to NZ\$125 plus GST per hour per session. This amount includes room hire, sundries and herbal preparations used as part of a session. This rate does not cover herbal preparations or equipment that the veteran needs to take away after the session.
- 9.3 Veterans' Affairs will pay for the veteran's travel to rongoā Māori sessions on the same basis as travel for assessment, treatment and rehabilitation.
- 9.4 Before further sessions will be approved, the practitioner will need to complete a report setting out the veteran's progress with their recovery and set out the need for further sessions.

10. Working with other providers

- 10.1 Rongoā Māori should not replace any medical advice or pharmaceuticals prescribed by treatment providers unless otherwise agreed with the veteran's health provider.

11. Living Overseas

- 11.1 This policy is applicable to veterans living overseas who are able to locate and access a rongoā Māori practitioner.

12. Second Opinion

- 12.1 Veterans' Affairs may reserve the right to seek a second opinion on any assessment of the veteran's needs.
- 12.2 If the veteran seeks a second opinion they do so at their own cost and Veterans' Affairs may take that opinion into consideration.

13. Reviews, Appeals and Complaints

- 13.1 If a veteran or surviving spouse or partner disagrees about a decision concerning eligibility for an entitlement or service see separate policies on **Reviews and Appeals**. If a veteran is concerned about Veterans' Affairs' administration of an entitlement or service see separate policy on **Complaints**.

Glossary

Sections referred to in this Glossary are from the Veterans' Support Act 2014 unless otherwise stated

member of the armed forces [section 7]

Means a person who is or has been a member of the New Zealand armed force raised by the Governor-General on behalf of the Sovereign,–

- (a) whether in New Zealand or elsewhere; and
- (b) whether before or after the passing of this Act.

qualifying service [section 8]

Means–

- (a) **qualifying operational service**; or
- (b) **qualifying routine service**.

qualifying operational service [section 8]

Means–

- (a) service on any deployment treated as a war or emergency for the purposes of the War Pensions Act 1954; or
- (b) service on any deployment declared to be operational service under section 9.

qualifying routine service [section 8]

Means service in the armed forces before 1 April 1974 that is not qualifying operational service.

social rehabilitation [section 120]

The purpose of social rehabilitation is to assist in restoring a veteran's independence to the maximum extent possible.

veteran [section 7]

Means–

- (a) a **member of the armed forces** who took part in **qualifying operational service** at the direction of the New Zealand Government; or
- (aa) a member of the armed forces who took part in **qualifying routine service** before 1 April 1974; or
- (b) a person–
 - (i) who has been–
 - (A) appointed as an employee of the Defence Force under section 61A of the Defence Act 1990; or
 - (B) seconded to the Defence Force with the permission of the Chief of Defence Force; and
 - (ii) who took part in qualifying operational service at the direction of the New Zealand Government; or
- (c) a person who, immediately before the commencement of Part 3 of this Act, is eligible for a pension under the following provisions of the War Pensions Act 1954:

- (i) section 19 (but only if the person was a member of the forces):
- (ii) section 55 or 56:
- (iii) Parts 4 and 5.

working day [section 7]

Means a day of the week other than—

- (a) a Saturday, a Sunday, Waitangi Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, the Sovereign's birthday, Te Rā Aro ki a Matariki/Matariki Observance Day, and Labour Day; and
- (b) if Waitangi Day, or Anzac Day falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, the following Monday; and
- (ba) the day observed in the appropriate area as the anniversary of the province of which the area forms a part; and
- (c) a day in the period commencing on 25 December in any year and ending with 15 January the following year.