

DECEMBER 2014

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The way we support you is changing. Find out why.



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How you can find out more information on the changes.



MESSAGE FROM JACKI

Jacki Couchman, Head of Veterans' Affairs and Secretary for War Pensions

Welcome to this special end of year edition of *Veterans' Affairs News*. In this issue we aim to help you understand the way we will be changing our support for you over the next year. These changes are happening because the legislation Veterans' Affairs is governed by has been updated to give us the ability to do more for you.

With a new way of working we have also decided to update the way we look. You may have noticed this newsletter looks different, and if you visit us at www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz you will find some changes there to make it easier for you to find the information you need and what we can do to support you.

In this issue we aim to help you understand the way we will be changing our support for you over the next year.



MESSAGE FROM CDF

Lieutenant General Tim Keating MNZM,
Chief of Defence Force



One of my key priorities for the New Zealand Defence Force is supporting our military families. Our veterans and their families are an important part of that wider military family and I fully endorse the opportunities the new Veterans' Support Act provides us to do more for them.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Hon Craig Foss, Minister of Veterans' Affairs

It is an honour and a privilege to have recently been appointed Minister of Veterans' Affairs.

The introduction of the Veterans' Support Act, the launch of WW100 commemorations and recent world events have all illustrated to me why now, perhaps more than ever, it is so

important to recognise and honour the contribution our service people have made and continue to make to protect our way of life.

The new Act will help us better support New Zealand veterans and their families now and into the future. I will continue to meet and talk with veterans around the country, including in camps and bases.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can. Thank you for your service to New Zealand.

Thank you for your service in the New Zealand Defence Force. Your contribution on behalf of our nation is greatly appreciated and will never be forgotten.



THE WAY WE SUPPORT YOU IS CHANGING

On 7 December the legislation governing Veterans' Affairs changes. A new Act called the Veterans' Support Act 2014 will come into effect on that day.

The Act gives Veterans' Affairs the ability to introduce new types of entitlements and support for our veterans and their families.

Why?

The War Pensions Act 1954 was passed 60 years ago and is outdated. To meet the needs of older and contemporary veterans it needed to be replaced.

What does this mean for you?

First and foremost service eligibility criteria remain unchanged and no veteran will have their current entitlements reduced.

What it does mean is that, in time, Veterans' Affairs will be able to take a broader approach to the assistance we provide you.

We want to support you in a more holistic manner. Not just focusing on service-related health care needs, but taking into account your social and, if required, work needs as well.

We will be looking at social and vocational rehabilitation for current and former servicemen and women, looking at better ways to support you to live independently and to help you remain in or return to employment if possible.

First and foremost service eligibility criteria remain unchanged and no veteran will have their current entitlements reduced.



WHEN IS THIS HAPPENING?

Changes under the Veterans' Support Act are being introduced in two parts:

- Scheme One (**on 7 December 2014**) covers veterans from Second World War to the Vietnam War.
- Scheme Two (**on 7 December 2015**) covers those with qualifying operational service since 1 April 1974.

In time we will provide more support to you and your families through:

- additional types of entitlements, care and support
- a clearer decision making process for applicants
- a better monitoring process, so veterans and their families can more easily track the progress of their application
- payments additional to the ACC programme to recognise military service
- new rehabilitation services that are tailored to the individual
- extended eligibility for the Veteran's Pension

SCHEME ONE

**7
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2014**

Scheme One entitlements will continue to be based on those currently available under the 1954 Act. This continues the practice of paying a periodic pension to veterans with a service-related impairment and also provides entitlements for spouses and partners, children, and dependants of veterans.

SCHEME TWO

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2015**

Scheme Two will cover veterans with qualifying operational service since 1 April 1974. These entitlements will be closely aligned with those available through ACC, but with additional support that recognises the special service provided to New Zealand by our veterans.





Will the service eligibility criteria change?

No, the 2014 Act contains the same service eligibility criteria as in the 1954 Act, which means that all deployments currently covered under the 1954 Act will retain coverage under the new legislation.

No veteran will have their current entitlements reduced by the new legislation, rather many veterans and their family members will benefit from increased entitlements, care, and support.

Will I continue to have the same Case Manager?

Yes you will.

Where can I find more information?

To help you to understand changes to specific entitlements, please visit the Veterans' Affairs website which will be regularly updated with any new information www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz. If you do not have internet access, you can of course contact us directly:

NZ Freephone: 0800 483 8372 (0800 4 VETERAN)

For International Callers: (64) 4 495 2070

Contributions for Veterans' Affairs News are to be posted to:

The Editor
PO Box 5146
Wellington 6145

or emailed to:
veteransaffairs@nzdf.mil.nz



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In particular I am pleased with the opportunity the Act provides us to focus more fully on rehabilitation and on support for veterans who are currently serving, as well as those who served with distinction in the past.

I have said recently that Defence needs to be seen as an integral part of the New Zealand story which fully engages the public and New Zealand's key organisations and institutions. Implementing this new legislation will provide the opportunity for Veterans' Affairs to work more closely with colleagues within the NZDF, particularly Defence Health and the Accredited Employer Programme, and with other partners including the RNZRSA, ACC and the Ministry of Social Development.

Once again I would like to thank you for your contribution and support and wish you the very best for the future.



Thank you for your service in the New Zealand Defence Force. Your contribution on behalf of our nation is greatly appreciated and will never be forgotten.