

APRIL 2016

2 FREE PRESCRIPTIONS

Changes to the way in which Veterans' Affairs pays for prescription medications.



2 MORE SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Offering more cleaning and maintenance services to more veterans than ever before.



MESSAGE FROM JACKI

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

It was with sadness that we farewelled Leah MacDonald, Manager Veterans' Services, in early February. Leah passed away after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Leah's public service career spanned 42 years. She started her career as a cadet in the Department of Social Welfare at the age of 16, and held multiple roles, including senior leadership roles, in that agency before she took on the role of National Manager, War Pension Services in MSD in 2006. Leah transferred to Veterans' Affairs when it was formed in 2008. Leah told me that she enjoyed all of her public service roles – especially the knowledge that she could make a

difference for those she served. Her favourite roles were those working with veterans. Leah was well-respected by veterans and by their representative organisations, as evidenced by the messages of condolence we have received from the RNZRSA and other veterans' groups.

Leah really enjoyed the role she was playing in work to modernise Veterans' Affairs – including implementing the new Veterans' Support Act, and our enhanced focus on rehabilitation. She played a critical role in this work. It is part of her legacy.

Leah's career as a public servant spanned four decades, multiple senior roles and many changes.

A commitment to delivering for New Zealanders was at the heart of her service and New Zealand is the better for it. Leah left a lasting impression on many and she is greatly missed by all.



Leah MacDonald on her wedding day

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Hon Craig Foss, Minister of Veterans' Affairs

I recently had the privilege of attending a special ceremony at the Bluff RSA in honour of local veterans. I presented seven badges and certificates of appreciation to



veterans of various conflicts, including World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan. The ceremony was an important opportunity to acknowledge the bravery and commitment of those who served our country, enabling us to continue enjoying the freedoms we do today.

I would like to thank the team at Bluff RSA for their hospitality and for making me feel so welcome on this special occasion.

A number of commemorative events and activities are right around the corner. April 24th, the day before Anzac Day, is the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Gapyeong, in Korea. In 1951, New Zealand's 16th Field Regiment of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery played

a significant role in defeating the Chinese People's Volunteer Army, earning the Regiment the Republic of Korea's Presidential Citation.

My Korean counterpart, the Minister of Patriots and Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Sungchoon Park, has kindly invited me to attend the Battle of Gapyeong service and several other commemorative events, including battlefield visits, functions hosted by the New Zealand Embassy and Korean Government, as well as an Anzac Day service. I will also take the opportunity to visit New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to the United Nations controlled Demilitarised Zone.

I look forward to honouring our Kiwi veterans who served in Korea

... continued on page 4

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.

PICKING UP YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FREE FROM 1 FEBRUARY

Some changes have been made to the way in which Veterans' Affairs pays for these prescription medications: from 1 February 2016, prescription services have been coordinated through Green Cross Health. This new contract arrangement means that you are able to pick up your prescriptions for service-related conditions free of charge. You should no longer need to pay up front for these medications and seek reimbursement, or save up your receipts in order to receive free prescriptions after the first

20 annually. You can continue to visit the pharmacy of your choice – but in future, your pharmacy will invoice us through Green Cross Health instead of charging you up front.

These changes mean that the cost of prescriptions will no longer be a potential barrier to any veterans receiving proper treatment for their service-related conditions.

Many of you are already using this service and our provider, Green Cross Health has been working with your local pharmacy to make sure that they understand the new invoicing approach.

Veterans' Affairs fully funds medications for any accepted service related conditions that are prescribed for you by your GP or specialist.



If you find that you are asked to pay for your medications for your service-related conditions, you can remind your pharmacy that they should charge Green Cross Health directly. If you have any concerns about the new arrangements, or are finding that your pharmacy is still charging you up front, please contact your case manager – or call us on Freephone 0800 483 8372.

FASTER REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL OR TREATMENT

Veterans' Affairs is committed to making sure that you are reimbursed in a timely way for your expenditure.

We have recently had a delay in reimbursing some claims for travel – we apologise to anyone who has been affected by this delay. The delay

was caused by a number of things, including the Christmas shut-down period and an unusually high number of claims being made during this period. We have now caught up with this backlog – if you were waiting, you should by now have received your reimbursement. If you have not received a reimbursement which you

expected to have received by now, please contact your case manager urgently.

We have recently implemented a new, and faster, system for processing reimbursements. This system will speed up the reimbursement period, and also help to ensure that similar delays don't happen again. Under the faster processing system, payments and reimbursements are processed within 14 days, rather than 4 weeks as was previously the case.

This means that, in future when you make a claim, you can expect to see the reimbursement amount paid directly into your bank account within two weeks of your claim being made. As part of the new system of processing, we will no longer be sending individual letters to confirm each payment. However, you can confirm your payment has been made by checking your bank account during the expected payment period.

If at any time you have concerns or queries about a travel or treatment claim you have made, you are welcome to contact your case manager or call us on Freephone 0800 483 8372.

More services and support for more veterans – cleaning of windows, gutters, and house-washing

Changes are being made which mean that we will be able to offer window cleaning, gutter cleaning, and house-washing services to more veterans than ever before. At present, a number of veterans receive one or two of these services. In future, we are hoping to be able to offer a package which will include an annual house wash, 2 annual window washes, and 2 annual gutter cleans to any veteran who currently receives any one of these services.

In addition, we will be able to offer the same package to a wider range

of veterans, under our Veterans' Independence Programme. The Veterans' Independence Programme allows us to provide support to veterans who are in need, and who wish to maintain their independence within their own home.

If you do not currently receive window cleaning, gutter cleaning, or house-washing, but believe you might qualify to receive these services under the Veterans' Independence Programme, please contact your case manager or call us on Freephone 0800 483 8372.

Veterans' Affairs provides a range of support and services to a wide variety of veterans.

The oldest veteran we support served in the Second World War, and the youngest is just over 19 years old. We also support many, many veterans who fall in between these two.

The needs of every veteran can be different – so the service and support that we provide to each can also be different. What might be the most appropriate support can vary according to the veterans' age, needs, and the types of conditions that they are experiencing. The case studies below show the range of services and different kinds of support that we can – and do – provide to some of our veterans.

ROBERT, 92 YEARS

Robert is a veteran of the Second World War who is aged 92. He is in reasonably good health and still living in his own home. However, he has slowed down and is less able to do some of the everyday things about the home that he might once have done. Robert has hearing loss (which is partially age-related, and partially related to his time in service). He has a Veterans' Affairs case manager who rings him at least once a month, and who he can ring at any time if he has concerns about his health or living situation or just wants to talk. His case manager will also help refer him to other government agencies for support and work with the RSA if necessary to provide support.

To assist Robert in living independently, Veterans' Affairs is providing Robert with:

- House and Section maintenance
- Medical alarm
- Home help
- Podiatry services

- Assistance with hearing aids (assessment, fitting, aids, maintenance, replacement)
- Aids or appliances to assist with independence in his home (hand rail in the shower, access ramp)

Robert is able to receive fully funded medical treatment for his service related conditions from his GP. If his GP is not able to treat his condition, he will be referred for specialist medical care (including private specialist care in some circumstances, with prior approval). All medical prescriptions related to Robert's service-related conditions are fully funded.

Robert also receives a War Disablement Pension of \$327.10 per fortnight – a tax-free pension which is paid based on the level of Robert's service-related impairments. This payment continues for life.

Robert has chosen to receive a Veteran's Pension, rather than New Zealand Superannuation, meaning that he automatically gets a Veterans' SuperGold Card and Community Services' Card.

GEORGE, IN HIS 70S

George is a veteran of the Viet Nam war, who is in his 70s. He has a number of service-related health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, osteo-arthritis, hearing loss and cancer.

George has been assessed as 82 percent impaired, and so receives a Disablement Pension of \$632.36 per fortnight. He is able to receive fully funded medical treatment, including counselling, physio, and acupuncture where he needs them for his service related conditions. The conditions are listed on a treatment card, and George is able to visit his GP as often as he wishes to be assessed or treated for these conditions: Veterans' Affairs will pay for his GP visits. If George's GP is not able to treat his condition, he will be referred for specialist care (including private specialist care in some circumstances, with preapproval). All medical prescriptions related to George's service-related conditions are fully funded. Where George needs to travel to receive treatment,

travel costs will be reimbursed (at 62 cents per km for the first 200km, where travel is by private passenger vehicle). He recently travelled three times to see a specialist (with pre-approval), and was reimbursed \$212.04 for 342km of travel in his private vehicle. His parking costs, and accommodation costs, were reimbursed in full.

Because George has been assessed as over 75% impaired, he is entitled to claim to have a portion of any recreational travel he makes reimbursed - this is reimbursed at 28 cents per kilometre. Over Christmas he took a holiday, travelling by car from Auckland to stay at the Karikari Peninsula, near 90 mile beach. He was reimbursed \$185.36 for 684 kilometres of travel.

George lives with his partner in his own home. Because George is a veteran, Veterans' Affairs can also provide services to assist him to maintain independence in his own home. These services are not contingent upon George having a service-related condition: if he has qualifying service

and is assessed as being "in need", he can be provided with assistance. At the moment, George receives lawn and garden services, and also has his house washed and his gutters cleaned, as he has reached the point where he is unable to do this easily on his own.

Each year, George receives an Annual Medical Assessment. This allows registered Viet Nam veterans entitlement to a free annual medical check-up with their regular medical practitioner. On receipt of the AMA the case manager will contact George to discuss any newly identified conditions and to check that any services or support in place are meeting his current needs.

George has Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia. As this is a health condition that is identified in the Memorandum of Understanding between Viet Nam veterans and the Crown, he has also received an ex gratia payment of \$40,000.

George has three children of his own, and one step-child. As he is a veteran

... continued on page 4

Major Craig Wilson

As an experienced and capable soldier, Major Craig Wilson (41 years) hasn't often needed to seek or receive much support in his life. But he appreciates the proactive support that Veterans' Affairs has been able to offer him, since he was seriously wounded while serving in Afghanistan.

"Veterans' Affairs was very proactive in getting hold of me when I was wounded – they contacted me in hospital" he recalls. "I haven't had to do too much, they have always looked after me".

Major Wilson, who is still currently serving with the New Zealand Defence Force, has been a client of Veterans' Affairs since 2012. As Major Wilson is still serving, he receives support from AEP and – because of the nature and circumstances of his injury – also from ACC. However, being a client of Veterans' Affairs is also worthwhile: "Veterans' Affairs can look more broadly at what might help get you through – they can give broad consideration as to what your needs are, and supplement the support provided by ACC or AEP where needed".

Major Wilson also appreciates that Veterans' Affairs is in it for the long haul: "One of most important things is that Veterans' Affairs has made me feel like, in the long run, there will always be someone to care for my treatment – even when ACC might not be so heavily involved, there will still be someone to look after me, should there be long-term repercussions. I don't feel I have to worry about

claiming everything I have to now, because there is a long-term process in place – and people at Veterans' Affairs who will be around for me if I need it a long time into future. Even when I leave the New Zealand Defence Force, and the support NZDF currently provides to me is no longer available, Veterans' Affairs will be there for me – there will be someone there for me."

The service that Veterans' Affairs can offer is personal and prompt – and no one should be afraid to ask a question: "Whenever I've had a question, I've always been made to feel like it was worthwhile to ask" Major Wilson says. "I've always felt like I can go to Veterans' Affairs."

"Veterans' Affairs understands how soldiers are" says Major Wilson. "They are proactive and encouraging, and they understand veterans well". In fact, sometimes Veterans' Affairs understands longer term veteran-related issues better than a veteran themselves might: "sometimes things can get worse before they get better – Veterans' Affairs understands that, and it is good to have access to someone who has thought about the possible long-term impact of service or injury, and can provide support for



it. Veterans' Affairs thinks about the bigger picture, and the longer term, often more than we service-people ourselves are willing to think".

"If I have any advice for soldiers, it is that – if they have something wrong with them, or think that they might have medical needs of any kind that could be related to service – it doesn't hurt to ask Veterans' Affairs. Veteran-related support might be available".

"Also, if you know of others who need support – particularly ex-service persons – or those who might be in need of some sort of help, Veterans' Affairs is a good place to start. Even for things like possible mental health issues. Veterans' Affairs understands veterans very well, and if you start your inquiry with them, they will help you to find the correct place even if they can't help you themselves".

"People can trust Veterans' Affairs" says Major Wilson "you shouldn't hesitate to contact them".

And, in many cases, Veterans' Affairs will be able to help.

... continued from page 3

of Viet Nam, these children are able to access counselling that is related to his service in Viet Nam. This service is also available to the spouses/partners or ex-spouses/ex-partners of Viet Nam veterans, and to any of their grandchildren who have been raised as children, or whangai/adopted children.

Robert and George each have a case manager assigned to them as their one point of contact within VA. They are able to call their case manager at any time, and will also receive regular calls from their case manager who will check that their support and service needs have not changed: or will assist them, if they have.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

... continued from page 1

and discussing pertinent issues with my equivalents from the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. I'm pleased to say a small number of New Zealand veterans will also be attending the commemorations with support from the Korean Government.

It is timely to remind veterans that grants of up to \$2000 are available through Veterans' Affairs to assist those wishing to revisit battlefields or attend overseas commemorations. Veterans are able to apply for assistance more than once, however, overall assistance may not exceed \$2000. Individual veterans are

welcome to contact Veterans' Affairs to determine their eligibility for support.



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

The Editor
PO Box 5146
Wellington 6140

or emailed to:
veterans@nzdf.mil.nz

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.

RATES FOR 2016

GRAND-PARENTED ENTITLEMENTS

WAR DISABLEMENT PENSIONS: WEEKLY RATES FROM 1 APRIL 2016

Disablement(%)	Weekly Rate(\$)
(a) Ordinary Rates	
5%	10.90
10%	21.81
15%	32.71
20%	43.61
25%	54.52
30%	65.42
35%	76.32
40%	87.22
45%	98.13
50%	109.03
55%	119.93
60%	130.84
65%	141.74
70%	152.64
75%	163.55
80%	174.45
85%	185.35
90%	196.25
95%	207.16
100%	218.06

Disablement(%)	Weekly Rate(\$)
(b) Rates for those with Severe Disablement	
105%	228.96
110%	239.86
115%	250.76
120%	261.67
125%	272.57
130%	283.47
135%	294.38
140%	305.28
145%	316.18
150%	327.08
155%	337.99
160%	348.89

Disablement(%)	Weekly Rate(\$)
(c) Rates for those with Severe Disablement: Aged 60 Years and over	
105%	251.86
110%	263.85
115%	275.84
120%	287.84
125%	299.83
130%	311.82
135%	323.82

Disablement(%)	Weekly Rate(\$)
140%	335.81
145%	347.80
150%	359.79
155%	371.79
160%	383.78

Note: War Disablement Pensions are not subject to income tax. Those with severe disablement aged 60 years and over receive an additional 10% of their pension.

OTHER GRAND-PARENTED WAR PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES FROM 1 APRIL 2016

(a) Weekly Rates (\$)	
Allowance for Decorations	31.30

(b) Annual Rates (\$)	
Annuity to Victoria Cross Holders	2189.38

These payments are available for recipients of United Kingdom Gallantry Awards only.

SCHEME ONE ENTITLEMENTS

DISABLEMENT PENSION FROM 1 APRIL 2016

Impairment Rating(%)	Weekly Rate(\$)
5-7	10.91
8-12	21.81
13-17	32.71
18-22	43.61
23-25	54.52
26-30	65.42
31-32	76.32
33-37	87.22
38-41	98.13
42-47	109.03
48-49	119.93
50	130.83
51	141.74
52-54	152.64
55-57	163.54
58-61	174.45
62-66	185.35
67	196.26
68-74	207.15
75	218.06
76	228.96
77	239.87
78	250.76
79	261.67
80	272.57

Impairment Rating(%)	Weekly Rate(\$)
81	294.37
82	316.18
83	337.98
84	359.80
85-100	383.78

OTHER SCHEME ONE ENTITLEMENTS

(a) Weekly Rates (\$)	
Surviving Spouse or Partner Pension	160.86
Dependant's Pension	160.86
Children's Pension	172.25
Weekly Income Compensation	889.12

(b) Annual Rates (\$)	
Children's Bursary (Orphans and Children of Veteran's Pension)	
Full Time Year 9-13	910.37
Full-time Tertiary	1,080.26
Part-time Tertiary	455.13
Children's Bursary (Other Children)	
Full Time Year 9-13	455.15
Full-time Tertiary	540.10
Part-time Tertiary	227.56

VETERAN'S PENSION AND LUMP SUMS

(a) Weekly Rates	
	Weekly Rate (\$)
Veteran's Pension	
Single living alone rate	443.43
Single sharing accommodation rate	407.53
Relationship rate	335.74
Relationship (partner not receiving superannuation or pension)	636.20

Relationship (partner not receiving superannuation or pension) legacy rate	671.48
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(b) Lump Sums (\$)	
	Lump Sums (\$)
Lump Sum Payment on death of veteran	5,821.01
If veteran was, before 1 April 1990, receiving a war veteran's allowance under the War Pension's Act 1954	14,677.20
Lump Sum Payment on death of spouse or partner of veteran	4,438.68



(a) Weekly Rates

	Weekly Rate (\$)
Independence Allowance	
Weekly payments are paid based on the same rates scale as the Disablement Pension. Please refer to Disablement Pension under Scheme One Entitlements for rates	
Child Care Payments for Children of a Deceased Veteran	
One child	164.72
2 children, per child	98.82
3 children or more, divided by the number of children	230.62
Weekly Compensation	
This is calculated on the basis of a veteran's weekly earnings	

(b) Other Payments (\$)

	Lump Sums (\$)
Lump Sum for Independence Allowance	
Payment is based on a year's worth of Independence Allowance at the veteran's impairment rate.	
Survivor's Grant	
if more than one spouse or partner to be divided between them	25,000.00
Each child under 18	10,000.00
Each other dependant	10,000.00

Lump Sum Compensation for Permanent Impairment

Level of Whole Person Impairment(%)	Amount of Lump Sum Compensation (\$)
0	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	2,500.00
6	2,748.33
7	3,021.33

Level of Whole Person Impairment(%)	Amount of Lump Sum Compensation (\$)
8	3,321.45
9	3,651.37
10	4,014.07
11	4,555.16
12	5,117.11
13	5,696.76
14	6,297.25
15	6,920.23
16	7,562.51
17	8,228.84
18	8,917.67
19	9,632.14
20	10,370.76
21	11,135.02
22	11,924.99
23	12,743.86
24	13,591.63
25	14,468.32
26	15,377.09
27	16,316.40
28	17,287.80
29	18,294.50
30	19,336.57
31	20,413.93
32	21,529.87
33	22,684.32
34	23,880.49
35	25,116.80
36	26,398.13
37	27,722.77
38	29,093.95
39	30,514.93
40	31,984.09
41	33,504.64
42	35,078.12
43	36,707.83
44	38,393.77
45	40,139.05
46	41,945.39

Level of Whole Person Impairment(%)	Amount of Lump Sum Compensation (\$)
47	43,814.34
48	45,749.12
49	47,751.37
50	49,824.22
51	51,969.34
52	54,189.91
53	56,487.58
54	58,865.48
55	61,326.94
56	63,875.06
57	66,511.49
58	69,241.07
59	72,065.39
60	74,989.18
61	78,015.84
62	81,146.78
63	84,388.56
64	87,744.32
65	91,215.66
66	94,810.67
67	98,529.34
68	102,379.62
69	106,364.75
70	110,488.04
71	114,757.39
72	119,174.48
73	123,747.26
74	128,479.09
75	133,377.85
76	138,446.84
77	143,694.01
78	149,124.25
79	154,745.52
80	160,562.74
81	166,584.00
82	172,814.00
83	179,260.00
84	185,928.00
85+	192,826.00

ENTITLEMENTS COMMON TO SCHEME ONE AND SCHEME TWO**(a) Weekly Rates**

	Weekly Rate (\$)
Battery Allowance	
Monaural	1.06
Binaural	2.14

(b) Other Payments (\$)

	Lump Sums (\$)
Retirement Lump Sum	33,277.40
Asset Threshold for Couple (excl. house or vehicle)	302,521.82
Asset Threshold for Single or Couple (incl. house or vehicle)	504,203.04

Motor Vehicle Grant

Total Lower Body Impairment	18,675.49
Severe Lower Body Impairment	8,404.52
Motor Vehicle Fitting Controls Grant	3,015.30
Funeral Expenses	2,455.42
Transportation of body within same locality	653.32
Transportation of body to a different locality	1,306.63

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Call Veterans' Affairs on:
 Freephone **0800 483 8372** or (64) 4 495 2070
 (if calling from overseas).
 Or visit www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz for further information regarding the above entitlements.

THE VETERAN'S PENSION

For information about the Veteran's Pension contact the Veterans' Pension Centre by calling Freephone **0800 650656** or by going to the Centre's webpage:
<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/veterans-contacts.html>

