

Rehabilitation strategy launched

Minister for Veterans Hon Ron Mark hosted a function at Parliament on 23 May to launch New Zealand's first strategy that sets out how rehabilitation services will be offered to veterans.

Veterans' Affairs has been leading the work to develop the strategy over the past year. Along with the RNZRSA and No Duff, and Government agencies and non-Government organisations, they focused on identifying what was going to be needed to make rehabilitation work for veterans.

"The starting point was our belief every veteran who has been injured or made ill because of service has the right to live the best possible life," said Veterans' Affairs head Bernadine Mackenzie. "We then had to work out how to make this something that would be more than just words, and that would actually happen."

The new strategy accepts that service-related illnesses and injuries are not all the same. While some may be physical, up to one-sixth of those who go on deployments could develop some form of mental illness. The strategy can offer help in both areas.

It also recognises that rehabilitation can be many different things. For a person with a physical injury it could be help from a physiotherapist. Those dealing with psychological issues might find that counselling or medical treatment—or a combination of the two—might help them get their lives back on an even keel. For a person wanting to be as independent as possible—or to return to employment—the focus might be on social or vocational rehabilitation.

"We think it's important that our strategy provides something for older veterans, as well as younger people recovering from injuries," Bernadine told VA News. "Those who served in the Second World War, Korea, Malaya, or Vietnam might have illnesses or injuries that they've quietly coped with for many years. They might have now come to a stage in their lives where they need some support to deal with these problems—and our rehabilitation strategy is able to offer that to them".

Veterans' Affairs has trained rehabilitation advisors on staff. Advisors work with veterans individually to find out what they might need. Then—between them—they'll agree on a personal plan that spells out how each person can reach their specific goals.

If you feel the strategy might be able to help you, get in touch with Veterans' Affairs and see what could be available.

Access the strategy online (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/about-veterans-affairs/our-programmes/the-veteran-rehabilitation-strategy/>)

Date

28 May 2018

Tags

[Office of the Minister for Veterans \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/news-events/articles/?tag=2\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/news-events/articles/?tag=2)

[Our work \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/news-events/articles/?tag=22\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/news-events/articles/?tag=22)

