

INTRODUCING THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE VETERANS' COVENANT

A DFVA INSPIRED INITIATIVE



The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant was announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Darren Chester MP, on 27 October 2018.

This legislation, providing better recognition of the unique nature of military service and further acknowledging the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families, has now passed Parliament.

The Covenant encourages Australians to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service, and support veterans and their families. The Covenant includes an Oath, which the Australian people will be encouraged to take at community commemorative events, such as Remembrance Day. The Veteran Card, a new Australian Veteran Lapel Pin and a Reservist Lapel Pin underpin the Covenant.

WHAT IS THE VETERAN CARD

The Veteran Card is a re-design of the DVA Health Cards (Gold, White and Orange). There is no change to DVA services and entitlements. Veterans who still hold DVA Health Cards can continue to use them as they do now. The primary purpose of the Veteran Card continues to be providing health services to veterans. The use of the Veteran Card to access business offers via APOD will be an extra benefit for card holders.

WHAT IS THE LAPEL PIN?

The Lapel Pin is a circular copper pin (20mm in diameter x 1.5mm thick) plated in 24ct gold and nickel-silver, and red and blue in colour incorporating the ADF tri-service emblem. There will be two versions of the Lapel Pin – one for Veterans, and one for Reservists. The Reservist Pin will be provided to reservists who only have reserve service.



Why is there a different Lapel Pin for Veterans and Reservists? The initial proposal was to only provide a Lapel Pin to those with permanent service with the Australian Defence Force. Following consultation, the Minister requested that a pin also be provided for reservists.

WHAT IS THE OATH?

The Oath is a declaration on behalf of the Australian people recognising the valuable contribution that current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families make and have made for our country. • The Oath can be read aloud at commemorative events as a sign of respect and support.

ELIGIBILITY NOTES

ALL current DVA Health Card holders (Gold, White, or Orange) will be issued with a Veteran Card when their current card expires or as part of the card replacement program whichever occurs first.

ELIGIBILITY NOTES:

Permanent ADF. Includes serving / ex-serving / national service member of the Permanent Forces of the ADF with one day's permanent service. This group will also include those entitled to:

- treatment for an accepted service related injury or condition; and/or
o Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC) for mental health conditions, cancer (malignant neoplasm) or pulmonary tuberculosis.

Reservist with CFTS. A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces who has rendered a period of Continuous Full Time Service (CFTS). These members are treated the same as 'Permanent ADF'.

Reservist with NLHC-MH eligibility. A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces without CFTS, but entitled to access Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC) for mental health conditions due to their service with Border Protection, Disaster relief, and/or Involvement in a serious servicereLATED training accident.

Reservist with accepted condition. A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces not recognised in the "Reservist with CFTS" but has an accepted service related condition.

Reservist. A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces not recognised in the "Reservist with CFTS", "Reservist with accepted

condition" or "Reservists with NLHC eligibility" categories.

DVA Health Card Holders not above. A client who currently holds or becomes eligible for a DVA Health Card for an accepted service related injury/condition, NLHC eligibility, or other treatment entitlements such as: War Widowers; Orphans and Eligible Young People; British and Commonwealth Allied (BCAL) veterans eligible under the VEA and MRCA; Australian Federal Police (AFP) eligible under the VEA; Allied veterans with a Health card to facilitate treatment in Australia on behalf of an Allied country; BCAL WW2 veterans with an Orange card who have access to subsidised RPBS pharmaceuticals; British Nuclear Testing (BNT) civilians; Civilians eligible for veteran-like entitlements

Dependant. Clients who may receive payments or services due to their dependant relationship with a Veteran and who do not have an entitlement to treatment (DVA Health Card), e.g. Partner Service Pension, education payments, etc.

Other Clients not included in the above categories.

ARE NATIONAL SERVICE PERSONNEL ELIGIBLE?

National Service men and women who have served one day of continuous full-time service in the ADF will be eligible for the Veteran Card, Veteran Lapel Pin and Oath. People who served under both the 1951-1959 and the 1964-1972 schemes who were required to render periods of CFTS are also eligible.

ARE ALLIED VETERANS ELIGIBLE?

Eligible British and Commonwealth Allied (BCAL) WW2 veterans have access to subsidised RPBS pharmaceuticals, receive a DVA Orange Veteran Card (Pharmaceutical). Allied veterans eligible for treatment in Australia on behalf of their Allied country, receive a DVA White Veteran Card to facilitate delivery and funding of treatment on behalf of their country. Allied veterans not eligible for treatment in Australia on behalf of their Allied country, are not eligible for a DVA White Veteran Card.

WHY ARE NON-VETERANS GETTING A VETERAN CARD (E.G. WAR WIDOWS, DEPENDANTS OF VETERANS)?

ALL DVA Health Card holders (Gold, White, or Orange) will be issued with a Veteran Card. DVA clients include Veterans and non-Veterans. Non-Veterans with treatment entitlements who are eligible for a DVA Health Card include: War Widowers; Orphans and Eligible Young People; British and Commonwealth Allied (BCAL) veterans, eligible under the VEA and MRCA; Australian Federal Police (AFP) eligible under the VEA; Allied veterans with a Health card to facilitate treatment in Australia on behalf of an Allied country; BCAL WW2 veterans with an Orange card who have access to subsidised RPBS pharmaceuticals; British Nuclear Testing (BNT) civilians; Civilians eligible for veteran-like entitlements.

ARE AFP OFFICERS WITH OVERSEAS SERVICE ELIGIBLE FOR THE COVENANT?

Under the Covenant, Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers are not eligible. However, an AFP officer may be eligible for disability compensation and treatment for injuries related to specific peacekeeping service covered under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA). Where a claim is accepted, a Veteran Card will be issued for the treatment of the condition.

ARE ALL VETERAN CARD HOLDERS ELIGIBLE FOR NON LIABILITY HEALTH CARE (NLHC) FOR MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT?

Any member of ADF with at least one day of continuous full-time service (CFTS) is eligible for DVA funded mental health treatment under NLHC arrangements. Veteran Card eligibility has a set of criteria, and NLHC mental health eligibility has a different set of criteria so not all Veteran Card holders are eligible for NLHC mental health treatment. This is particularly relevant for reservists.

A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces who has rendered a period of Continuous Full Time Service (CFTS), is treated the same as 'Permanent ADF' and is eligible for a Veteran Card and access to mental health treatment under NLHC arrangements. A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces without CFTS, may be entitled to access NLHC for mental health treatment due to their service with Border Protection, Disaster Relief, and/or involvement in a serious-related training accident, and is eligible for a Veteran Card and access to mental health treatment under NLHC arrangements. A member / ex-member of the Reserve forces not eligible for NLHC for mental health treatment but has an accepted service related condition, is eligible for a Veteran Card.

ARE DECEASED VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR THE LAPEL PIN AND OATH?

Eligible veterans and reservists who were alive at the time of the Prime Minister the Hon Scott Morrison's announcement on 27 October 2018 are eligible to receive the Lapel Pin and Oath posthumously. A nominated representative or family member can apply on behalf of a deceased veteran or reservist. • For more information call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).



WHY DO I HAVE TO APPLY FOR THE COVENANT? THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS US ALL / WHY DOESN'T DVA JUST SEND THEM TO ALL VETERANS?

There are a couple of reasons DVA are asking veterans to apply. Based on demographic projections, we estimate that there are currently 631,800 living veterans. Of these, only 183,655 are DVA clients. For the remaining 450,000+ veterans any information that the Department of Defence may have will be in paper records and likely to be out of date and not usable. Secondly, DVA understand that not all veterans and reservists want a Lapel Pin or Oath for many reasons. DVA want to avoid causing any distress so we chose to send out only to veterans and reservists who tell us they want to receive them.

HOW DO VETERANS APPLY FOR THE COVENANT?

To apply for the Covenant go to DVA's online application MyService (dva.gov.au/myservice). MyService can be accessed on any device (personal computer, iPad, tablet, mobile phone) that you can access the internet on.

If veterans are having problems with applying using MyService, they can call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or visit your nearest Veterans' Access Network office.

DVA CLIENTS WITH A DVA HEALTH CARD

DVA veteran and reservist clients who currently hold a DVA Health Card

can request a Lapel Pin and a copy of the Oath using MyService (dva.gov.au/myService) and click on the 'Veteran Covenant' tile. If eligible, a Lapel Pin and a copy of the Oath will be sent to the client in the mail. Clients will automatically receive a new look Veteran Card as part of the card replacement program, which is scheduled to occur next year. Clients will notice that they can see a digital version of the redesigned Veteran Card in their MyService Account. • Existing DVA Health Card holders are able to use their existing card (both physical and the new look digital card) as they do now with no changes to their DVA services and entitlements. Wherever a client sees "Veteran Card" they can correctly assume that they can use their DVA Health Card for the same benefits and offers.

DVA CLIENTS WHO DON'T HAVE A DVA HEALTH CARD

To use MyService, existing DVA clients will need to have a myGov account and a linking code provided by DVA. To get a linking code, clients can phone 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). DVA veteran clients can request a Veteran Card, Lapel Pin and a copy of the Oath using MyService (dva.gov.au/myService) and click on the 'Veteran Covenant' tile.

VETERANS WHO ARE NOT YET CLIENTS OF DVA

Applicants who are not yet clients of DVA can apply using DVA's MyService portal (dva.gov.au/MyService). When registering for online DVA services on MyService, clients will be redirected to myGov.

If clients already have a myGov account, they can log in to myGov and link to DVA. • Once clients have registered for MyService, they can apply for the Covenant by clicking on the 'Veteran Covenant' tile. If applicants are unable to go online, or need help with their application, they can phone DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or visit our Veterans' Access Network.

WHAT IS A "PMKEYS NUMBER"?

A PMKeyS number is the personnel identifier used by Department of Defence from the late 1990's for serving members. If you served prior to 2000, it is unlikely that you were issued with a PMKeyS number and will need to provide your service number.

HOW DO VETERANS PROVIDE PROOF OF SERVICE WHEN APPLYING FOR THE COVENANT?

For online Covenant application to proceed we need veterans to provide proof of service to determine eligibility for either the Veteran Lapel Pin or Reservist Lapel Pin. Veterans can provide any one of the following:

- PMKeyS number (if they have the PMKeyS number there is no requirements for additional Proof of Service) OR
- Service Number (along with best estimate of Date of enlistment and Date of discharge) and Military Payslip or Discharge Signal or Service ID Card or any other document that identifies your previous service.

Note that DVA doesn't currently have access to this information from Department of Defence. If the applicant cannot find one of these documents they will need to request documentation from the Department of Defence.

WHY ARE CURRENT DVA CLIENTS BEING ASKED TO PROVIDE PROOF OF SERVICE WHEN APPLYING FOR THE COVENANT?

The Covenant has different Lapel Pins for veterans and reservists. In some

cases, DVA may not hold sufficient information electronically to determine whether clients are a veteran or reservist. Therefore some applicants will be required to upload proof of service documentation.

How can veterans without access to the internet apply for the Covenant? If applicants are unable to go online, or need further assistance with their application, they can phone the DVA general enquiries phone number on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or visit our Veterans' Access Network.

CAN A NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE APPLY FOR THE COVENANT ON BEHALF OF A CLIENT?

Applying for the Covenant / Request for Recognition is considered as a new type of claim so the existing conditions for Nominated Representatives and Powers of Attorney apply in the same way as they do with other claims:

- If the Nominated Representative has the authority to act on behalf of the client, they can apply on the client's behalf.
- If the Nominated Representative has the authority only to enquire on behalf of the client, they can't apply on the client's behalf (unless there is clear consent from the client allowing the rep to apply on this particular occasion – see the following question).

CAN AN ADVOCATE, ESO REPRESENTATIVE OR FAMILY MEMBER APPLY FOR THE COVENANT ON BEHALF OF A CLIENT?

Advocates, ESO reps or family members will be able to apply on behalf of a client where they have the clear authority or consent of the client to do so and the usual POI requirements are met for the client. For example, an Advocate/ESO rep/family member calls DVA on behalf of an elderly client and the client is with the Advocate. We can speak with the client to seek their oral consent for the Advocate to act on their behalf for this claim. The Advocate sits with the client to provide support in responding to questions. Normal POI requirements apply.

WHY ARE CLIENTS BEING TOLD ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT WHILE REGISTERING FOR A VETERAN CARD?

Access to free mental health treatment is a government initiative and available to all veterans and eligible reservists if they ever need it. This means that clients are able to access DVA-funded treatment for any mental health condition without having to link the condition to your service in the ADF.

A CLIENT APPLIED FOR THE VETERAN CARD AND RECEIVED INFORMATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH NONLIABILITY HEALTH CARE (NLHC). WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Eligibility for the Veteran Card under the Covenant also entitles clients to DVA funded mental health treatment under NLHC arrangements without the requirement to link the mental health condition to their service. Eligible clients can access DVA-funded mental health treatment should they ever need to.

WHY IS DVA ASKING CLIENTS TO PROVIDE BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS WHILE APPLYING FOR A VETERAN CARD?

When applying for a Veteran Card, DVA will check to see if the client is eligible to receive the veteran supplement. The veteran supplement is a fortnightly amount paid to some veterans, war widow/ers and orphans to reduce their out of pocket expenses when paying the maximum

concessional pharmaceutical co-payment. If the client is eligible, they will receive the fortnightly supplement amount to their nominated bank account. If clients are not comfortable providing their bank details as part of this process, they can skip this step.

WHEN WILL CLIENTS RECEIVE THEIR VETERAN CARD?

EXISTING CLIENT WITH A DVA HEALTH CARD. Clients will automatically receive the new-look Veteran Card as part of the card replacement program. Upon registration in MyService, clients will gain access to a digital version of their Veteran Card.

EXISTING CLIENT DOESN'T HAVE A DVA HEALTH CARD. Clients will receive their Veteran Card in the mail usually in about two to three weeks from the date of request.

CLIENTS WHO ARE NEW TO DVA. Clients will receive your Veteran Card in the mail usually in about two to three weeks from the date of request.

WHEN WILL VETERANS BE ABLE TO USE THE CARD?

Successful new Veteran Card applicants can commence using the digital card displayed in the MyService portal as their Veteran Card until the physical card arrives via mail. Existing DVA Health Card holders can commence using either their digital Veteran Card, OR continue using their existing DVA Health Card. Health providers and participating businesses will recognise both the current DVA Health Cards and the new Veteran Cards.

WHEN WILL CLIENTS RECEIVE THEIR LAPEL PIN AND OATH?

The Veteran Recognition Bill has now passed Parliament and Lapel Pins and the Oath can now be posted. DVA are working with our distributor to get these to you as quickly as we can.

Additional benefits now available to veterans

WHEN WILL BUSINESSES START OFFERING DISCOUNTS OR CONCESSIONS TO VETERAN CARD HOLDERS?

Veteran Card holders can access concessions and business offers now. Discounts and concessions will be at the discretion of the participating businesses or organisations. There is no obligation for a business or organisation to offer discounts or concessions.

HOW DO VETERANS ACCESS THESE OFFERS? WHERE DO THEY FIND THEM?

DVA is working with Australian Partners of Defence (APOD) – an Australian-owned organisation which was founded by Veteran families, for Veteran families – to make it easy for businesses and organisations to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the contribution of veterans and their families. APOD provides a closed membership site where Veteran Card holders can search by location, category or keyword, to redeem business offers online (using a web link or discount code) or in-store.

WHAT BENEFITS ARE BUSINESSES OFFERING?

Businesses include retailers, travel and tourism operators, accommodation and car hire, entertainment, hospitality, restaurants, and service and trade industries ranging from gym memberships to automotive mechanics and legal. Offers are generally discounts on goods, gift cards and services. Some offers are seasonal or for a set period.

Percentage discounts, for example, range from 2.5 per cent through to 30 per cent on selected items – each business has different offers available. Some of these discounts are comparable to or less than what the broader Australian public can receive – should businesses be offering more if they're truly supportive of veterans?

The Minister has encouraged each and every business to show their support for the Covenant and get behind this initiative – ultimately, supporting the Covenant and the unique nature of military service is the most important step in recognition. The benefit offered is a matter for each individual business and understandably can be based on any number of factors.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER REWARD AND LOYALTY PROGRAMS ALREADY AVAILABLE TO THE WIDER PUBLIC?

Veterans don't need to spend money to qualify for rewards or acquire loyalty points. APOD is an Australian-owned organisation which was founded by Veteran families, for Veteran families and is already in close alignment with the principles of the Covenant.

APOD has over 400 businesses committed to supporting veterans. APOD already has a digital platform in place, making it easier for businesses and organisations to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the contribution of veterans and their families. APOD will continue to onboard businesses as they commit to supporting the Covenant.

WILL FAMILY MEMBERS BE ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THESE BENEFITS?

Arrangements are in place for all Veteran Card holders to have free access to the full suite of offers. When a DVA Health Card or Veteran Card holder logs in to the APOD platform, either from a PC or through a mobile device, they are able to search and select particular offers for validation. APOD also provides an option for Defence families to use the platform, however, as this is outside the Veteran Card program, there are membership fees.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE CARD HOLDERS WHO DON'T OR CAN'T USE THE INTERNET OR A SMARTPHONE – HOW CAN THEY GET DISCOUNTS IF SEEING THE VETERAN CARD ISN'T ENOUGH?

Veteran Card holders seeking to redeem a particular offer can phone DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or visit the Veterans' Access Network and DVA staff will help with the process and provide a particular offer redemption code or voucher.

THE COVENANT WAS ANNOUNCED IN OCTOBER 2018 – WHY HAS IT TAKEN SO LONG TO MAKE THESE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VETERANS?

Legislation providing better recognition of the unique nature of military service and further acknowledging the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families has now passed Parliament. During that period, DVA has been working closely with a range of businesses on how to make more benefits available to veterans. The majority of Australian businesses have moved to online offerings and our focus has been on working out how veterans can access those businesses. This is one of the key reasons DVA are working with APOD: it is a tried and tested online platform that can validate the entire range of offers available to Veteran Card holders.



Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant

The Oath is a declaration on behalf of the Australian people recognising the valuable contribution that current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families make and have made for our country. It can be read aloud at commemorative events as a sign of respect and support.



The Veteran Card helps Australians, including businesses, organisations, community groups and service providers to identify veterans and offer respect to them and their family.

The Lapel Pin provides the opportunity for veterans to be easily identified when not wearing their medals or uniforms.



Visit recognition.dva.gov.au for more information on how to apply for and support the Covenant.