**NAA VICTORIAN SECTION WELFARE HANDYBILLY**

**Who is a veteran?**

The term ‘veteran’ traditionally described former ADF personnel who were deployed to serve in war or war-like environments. Veterans are now considered people who have any experience in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) including permanent, reserve, and former (ex-serving) personnel (Tehan 2017).

Australian Defence Force (ADF) members have unique experiences as a result of their service in the military, which can influence their health and wellbeing relative to the rest of the Australian population. In general, ADF members are trained to be physically and mentally fit, receive regular medical assessments, and have access to comprehensive medical and dental treatment. In contrast to the general Australian population, ADF members can be subject to workplace stressors from exposure to combat, periodical geographical relocations, and lengthy separation from family. Military service also increases the likelihood of exposure to life threatening situations, which may result in physical and mental trauma and moral injury (Jones et al. 2020).

**Healthy soldier effect**

The healthy soldier effect is the observed phenomenon that military populations are healthier than the general population. This builds upon the healthy worker effect (McLaughlin et al. 2008), whereby people who are currently employed are generally healthier than the general population, usually due to lower participation in employment among people with serious illness, injury, or disability.

The healthy soldier effect is generally thought to be the product of several factors. The first is the selection bias for enlistment. When people apply to enlist in the military, they are subject to extensive medical and psychological screening (Wilson et al. 2005a). People with life-limiting illnesses or behavioural disorders are excluded, which raises the average health status of the military compared with that for the general population. Further, if a person develops a medical condition while serving in the military and becomes medically unfit, they can be discharged involuntarily (Dunt 2009). Again, this can raise the average health of the serving military population, compared with both the general population and the ex-serving population.

Beyond this selection effect, ongoing military service itself can potentially act as a protective health factor. People serving in the military are required to maintain a high level of physical fitness and good physical and psychological health (Wilson et al. 2005b). They also have access to funded medical services through ADF member free healthcare (Department of Defence n.d.). The selection effect and these ongoing protective factors can result in military populations having a substantially raised health status compared with that of the general population.

The presence of the healthy soldier effect over time has been found to vary substantially between different causes of death and different cohorts of the veteran population (Waller & McGuire 2011).

In time of need to assist a veteran where does one turn? We recognise there are a plethora of organisations, whether for profit or a not for profit with varying agendas. That said, the purpose of the handy billy is to provide a list of recognised organisations that can offer advice, if necessary, physical resources when and where necessary and support.

The links below can be accessed by moving the mouse cursor across the highlighted text.

1. <https://www.victorianveteranscouncil.org.au/ex-service-and-veterans-service-organisations>

Find major national and Victorian ex-service organisations (ESOs) and veteran organisations that provide support to current and former ADF members.

* [Welfare and assistance](https://www.victorianveteranscouncil.org.au/ex-service-and-veterans-service-organisations#welfare-and-assistance)
* [Wellbeing and community](https://www.victorianveteranscouncil.org.au/ex-service-and-veterans-service-organisations#wellbeing-and-community)
* [Further support organisations](https://www.victorianveteranscouncil.org.au/ex-service-and-veterans-service-organisations#further-support-organisations)

1. <https://rsllifecare.org.au/veteran-services/>

At RSL LifeCare Veteran Services are focused on helping Australian veterans and their families by providing support and wellbeing programs that are veteran-centric and recovery focused. We give you access to a range of practical support services to help support your finances, mental health, and physical wellbeing. Telephone: (02) 8088 0388

1. <https://rsllifecare.org.au/veteran-services/veteran-wellbeing-centres/>

* Veteran wellbeing centre.
* Wellbeing support
* DVA claims and advocacy.
* Employment assistance
* Homelessness and housing support

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/support-families>

* Family and domestic violence help
* Service Pension for partners
* Defence, Veterans’, and Families’ acute Support package
* Comparison of benefits for dependants
* Compensation for dependants under MCRA
* Bereavement payments
* Pension for orphans and war widow(er)s
* Support for children of Vietnam veterans
* Dependent children and income support payments
* Student support
* The effects of a special disability trust

1. <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-veterans>

[What support can I receive through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs?](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-veterans#dva-support)  
[What support can I receive from My Aged Care?](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-veterans#mac-support)  
[Can I receive services from DVA and My Aged Care at the same time?](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-veterans#services-dva-and-mac)

Other Services offered by myagedcare are:

[Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people)

[Support for Care Leavers](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-care-leavers)

[Support for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-people-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-backgrounds)

[Support for financially disadvantaged people](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-financially-disadvantaged-people)

[Support for people with disability](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-people-with-disability)

[Support for people facing homelessness](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-people-facing-homelessness)

[Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-people)

[Support for people living in rural and remote areas](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/support-people-living-rural-and-remote-areas)

**DVA**

**Eligibility**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/financial-support/income-support/eligibility-benefits-and-payments>

**Qualifying Service**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/financial-support/income-support/qualifying-service>

**Income Support Japan Service**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/financial-support/income-support/support-members-british-commonwealth-occupation-force-and-people-who-served-japan>

**What changes your income support?**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/financial-support/income-support/what-changes-your-payments>

**Service Pension**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/financial-support/income-support/service-pension>

**Income Support – when you can’t work.**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/financial-support/income-support/support-when-you-cannot-work>

**Allowances**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/allowances>

**Crisis Payment**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/financial-support/income-support/crisis-payment>

**Financial Help for the Blind**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/financial-support/income-support/financial-help-if-you-are-blind>

**Income Support Prisoner of War**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/financial-support/income-support/support-former-prisoners-war>

**Income Support Participants in the British Nuclear Tests**

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/financial-support/income-support/support-civilians-and-participants-british-nuclear-tests>

[RSL](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/) Victoria

<https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/veteran-central>

* Veteran Central is a service for Victorian veterans to interact with Ex-Service Organisations and get the support they need to maintain their wellbeing. Our **1300 MILVET** (1300 645 838) number is staffed by Navigators who will work directly with you to find and link you to supports that are available. This might be within RSL programs, our Ex-Service Organisation community in Australia, or help navigating the DVA system or Commonwealth aged care system.

Services and staff are located across Victoria and often in person support is also available to many veterans and their families.

**Compensation Support**

* If you are thinking of submitting a claim to DVA for an injury or illness, we recommend that you use an advocacy service to help the claims process.
* We know that undertaking any kind of claims process has the potential to be difficult and to impact your mental health, so if you are in distress, placing a claim for a mental health condition, or have a complex claim, the best option is to contact Veteran Central on 1300 MILVET (1300 645 838) for support.
* There are two ways of submitting a claim and we can help with both. You can complete a self-submission via the MyGov website, or you can have an Advocate submit on your behalf via the ESO Portal.

**Health and Wellbeing Support**

* RSL Victoria supports wellbeing by offering veterans and their families programs that reduce social isolation, encourage mateship and provide direct financial assistance to veterans and their families when in need.  
    
  With the creation of the Resilient Veterans Strategy, RSL Victoria has formalised our wellbeing model, and is actively evaluating current programs and building new ones to contribute to greater wellbeing for veterans and their families.

**[RSL Active](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/rsl-active)**

[RSL Active is a program from RSL Victoria designed to support the physical health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. The services are:](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/rsl-active)

# **Veterans' Employment Program**

Employer partners are seeking to attract top veteran talent like you. Let us connect you.

* **[Financial Welfare](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/financial-welfare)**

[RSL Victoria is committed to helping veterans access the support they need and providing emergency benevolent support when it is required.](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/financial-welfare)

* **[Mental Health Initiative](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/mental-health-initiative)**

[RSL Victoria has partnered with Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling to provide suicide intervention and mental health literacy workshops across the State.](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/mental-health-initiative)

* **[Veteran Reference Group](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/rsl-victoria-veteran-reference-group)**

[RSL Victoria is seeking Expressions of Interest from those who feel they could contribute to our Veteran Reference Group (VRG).](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/rsl-victoria-veteran-reference-group)

* **[The Veterans & Families Hub Wodonga in Honour of Tim Fischer AC](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/the-veterans-and-families-hub-wodonga-in-honour-of-tim-fischer-ac)**

[Inside the newest addition to RSL Victoria's network of Veterans & Families Hubs.](https://rslvic.com.au/veteran-support/the-veterans-and-families-hub-wodonga-in-honour-of-tim-fischer-ac)