



# Have you ever served in the military?

The Veterans' Advocacy Service is a specialist service at Legal Aid NSW giving free help to military veterans and their families.



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## You can get our help if you:

- enlisted in the Australian Defence Force (including Reserves) regardless of how long or where you served
- are a member of a military veteran's family, or
- are a member of the Australian Federal Police who served on peace-keeping operations.

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## What we do

We give free legal advice, assistance and representation about:

- your rights to veterans' benefits
- compensation for abuse or injuries in the military
- military superannuation, and
- accessing other veteran supports.

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## Does everyone get free help?

All veterans get free advice from us. If you are in financial hardship or face other barriers, we may give you more help, including legal representation. We talk to you about this at your first appointment.

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## How do we help you?

We ask you questions to let you know if you're getting all of the benefits you have a right to as a veteran, and to see if you have other legal problems. If you do, we can refer you for other help.

We help veterans understand their rights, prepare claims for benefits and help you through the process.

With your permission, we can speak to government departments, doctors, and other service providers for you.

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## Can you help me with an appeal?

If you put in a claim and it is rejected, we can help you appeal and represent you at:

- the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) internal review
- Veterans' Review Board
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal, or
- higher courts.

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## What benefits can I get?

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Depending on your situation you may get the following benefits:

### Financial

If you are successful in an injury or disease claim you may get a disability pension or compensation.

If you are in financial hardship, sometimes you can get an immediate basic payment while your case is being decided.

### Change of discharge

Some veterans are discharged for the wrong reason. We can help you fix this. You could get more benefits.

### Health care

Depending on your situation you could get your medical expenses paid with a White or Gold card. Medical expenses can include travelling to medical appointments and accommodation.

You can get free counselling for any issue and rehabilitation support for service-related conditions.

### Veterans' families

- Families can get free support from *Open Arms* counselling service and other welfare services.

- A dependent child of a veteran may get financial help with their education up to the age of 16 or 25 if in full-time study.
- Veterans and their spouses can have Centrelink benefits paid through DVA.
- Partners and children of veterans can claim compensation for a service-related death. For surviving partners this could be as a War Widows Pension or lump sum compensation.

### Reparations

If you suffered serious abuse in the military before 2014 you can report this to the Commonwealth Ombudsman before June 2022. You may receive up to \$50,000 and an apology.

### Debts

If you have a debt with DVA, we can let you know if you can challenge it and have it waived.

### Serious mistakes

If the DVA makes a serious mistake that affects you, you may be able to get compensation.

### Contact us for free and confidential legal help

 (02) 9219 5148

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