



Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024

Automatically granted death benefits for VEA dependants – Factsheet

If agreed to by Government, the changes would see the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) closed to new claims from 1 July 2026 and all claims from veterans and their families determined under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* (MRCA) after that date.

Under the VEA, compensation is automatically granted to dependants of veterans who were:

- ex-prisoners of war; or
- were in receipt of pension at the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI), Totally and Temporarily Incapacitated (TTI), Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) or Intermediate rate; or
- in certain cases, were in receipt of an increased rate of pension due to amputation and/or blindness.

VEA compensation following the death of a former member is comprised of a fortnightly pension and Gold Card to eligible dependants. The Bill ensures that these automatic grants *will* continue under the new arrangements. The arrangements will also allow for the families of deceased veterans to claim under the MRCA where deaths are related to service.

Under the revised arrangements, the automatic funeral benefits which are payable in respect of the veteran's VEA claims will continue to be paid but will be increased to \$3,000. If the veteran died of a service related condition, up to \$14,062.53 for funeral expenses may be reimbursed to whoever paid for the funeral.

How will this affect me?

VEA dependants who would be eligible for an auto-grant death benefit under the current system will retain their eligibility under the single ongoing Act.

If the veteran's death is determined to be compensable under the MRCA, the VEA dependant can also claim for the additional benefits available under the MRCA, including the higher rate for funeral benefits and Eligible Young Persons payment.

Who will benefit?

Dependants of deceased VEA veterans will become eligible for additional compensation after the commencement of the new system.

Date of effect?

Ongoing from 1 July 2026.