

[REDACTED]

Hello to DVA

Submission by [REDACTED] Thomas Brian [REDACTED]

- I agree to my submission being published under my name

My submission is in relation to the Veterans Home Care packages currently being provided to veterans who receive pensions under the rules established for VEA and the assistance currently provided under the rules governed by DRCA and MRCA as there are big differences **which are unfair to older veterans**

Example

A veteran who served in World War 2, Korea, Malaya, Malaysia, Vietnam and Peacekeeping activities and then receives a pension under VEA can access Domestic Assistance for one hour per week and make a co payment of \$5 for each visit. That same veteran may be able to access Lawn and garden maintenance and some other assistance like window cleaning, light bulb changing and similar, **but has a maximum of 15 hours per year and has to make a co-payment of \$5 for each hour**

For a veteran who lives in Queensland or any state where the summer weather includes high humidity and regular rainfall, a 15 hour allocation for lawn and garden maintenance is well below what is needed to be able to keep lawns and gardens neat and tidy and makes the homes of veterans appear to be homes that have been abandoned. In the states where the weather in summer is humid and has regular rain lawns and shrubs need to be attended to on a weekly basis at the minimum. It is known that many people will cut their lawns twice in each week during the months of September through to the end of April, (and that is what I always did when I was still physically able to do those tasks) then for May through to mid August will most likely only cut lawns and trim shrubs about once in every three or four weeks as they do not grow as much during those months

Domestic Assistance and Garden maintenance for these veterans who receive pensions under the rules of the VEA is managed by a civilian firm in Queensland trading as [REDACTED] and are in fact a company contracted to DVA to manage the system and they are [REDACTED]. The staff of [REDACTED] are not helpful and appear to believe they are the arbiters of what a veteran can be given and act as if they are actually paying the cost of domestic assistance and garden maintenance out of their own pocket, and they are rude to veterans and try to dictate when services are provided, yet the programme of when the service is to be provided should be at the discretion of the veteran, not the [REDACTED] staff.

Those veterans whose pension has been granted under the rules for MRCA and DRCA have a totally different system

For example, for a veteran governed by the VEA rules garden maintenance is only provided where the veteran has physical disabilities that prevent the veteran from performing those tasks themselves. A defence force member who enlists and would be covered by DRCA or MRCA could enlist one day, fall down stairs the next day while at recruit training and be discharged medically unfit, and then for the rest of the life of that person, who should not, but is classified as a Veteran (but a veteran of what, one day at recruit training) and can then have his garden maintenance done under the conditions as shown below

How much you can receive

Your clinical needs determine the services you can receive. The provider who undertakes your initial assessment will recommend the services you need.

We can reimburse you or pay your service provider directly for approved services they provide. There is a maximum amount we can pay per week. If your injury or condition is accepted under:

MRCA the maximum is \$573.61

DRCA the maximum is \$552.12

Standard maximum rate for household services

The standard maximum rate your service providers may charge for the 2024 calendar year is \$72.75 per hour inclusive of GST. You do not need to seek further DVA approval for your provider to charge up to the rate published each calendar year for the duration of your approved service period.

The above rules mean that the defence force member who fell down the stairs and suffered an injured back will for the rest of their life be able to spend up to the amounts shown in having garden maintenance done on a weekly basis, and have domestic assistance done, and that is to the weekly limit of the amounts shown

Under the traditional interpretation of what a “Veteran” is the government always meant - A Veteran is a person (or deceased person) who has: rendered eligible war service, or, is a member of the defence forces who on or after 31 July 1962 was outside Australia, but not on operational service, who was killed or injured by the action of hostile forces.

The interpretation of what a Veteran is under VEA legislation is –

A Veteran is a person (or deceased person) who has:

<rendered eligible war service, or
is a member of the defence forces who on or after 31 July 1962 was outside Australia, but not on operational service, who was killed or injured by the action of hostile forces.

Extended definition for service pension purposes

For the purposes of service pension eligibility the term Veteran also means a person who is:

**a commonwealth veteran; or
an allied veteran or
an allied mariner.**

There appears to be very little difference in the two definitions above, yet it still appears that the defence force member who fell down the stairs on the first day at recruit training is given far more in assistance than a defence forces member who actually fought during war service, **is that fair?**

The new legislation when it is passed by the parliament should provide that the real veterans - those who meet the traditional definition of what a Veteran is, as shown below

A Veteran is a person (or deceased person) who has: rendered eligible war service, or, is a member of the defence forces who on or after 31 July 1962 was outside Australia, but not on operational service, who was killed or injured by the action of hostile forces.

Real "Veterans" should at the least be provided with assistance that is at the same or more than what which is currently provided to those who do not meet the conditions of being a veteran who had injuries while not in danger, not on war service and not even serving outside of Australia. That is, they should at least be provided with services up to the amount of \$573.61per week as is currently given to those who are covered under DRCA, and that amount should be increased at least twice in each year to the amount of the CPI or the percentage increase of service pensions, whichever is the higher of those increases.

This submission is based on what I currently receive under VEA from [REDACTED] who have been sending a person to cut my lawns and trim my bushes without my knowledge every two weeks (according to them) and the 15 hours of garden maintenance then was used up by October 2023 and my lawns were not cut nor my shrubs trimmed from early October 2023 until about two weeks ago when a man came and spent 30 minutes cutting my lawns and doing probably the worst job of lawn cutting I have ever seen, then another man came three days later and trimmed my bushes and now I will not have another garden maintenance service till some time in August or September because [REDACTED] have told me I have had my 15 hours.

Tom Vincent
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