



## Improved access to health care for Australian participants of British Nuclear Tests and veterans of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force

This measure will provide a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Health Card – All Conditions (Gold Card) to Australian participants of the British Nuclear Testing (BNT) program and veterans of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF).

### Why is this important?

Former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and civilians whose historical service, employment or proximity was associated with possible exposure to ionising radiation will be able to access treatment for any condition. .

A DVA Gold Card will be provided to those who participated in the BNT program in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as veterans who served as part of the BCOF, during the occupation of Japan immediately following the Second World War.

The Gold Card will be provided under existing legislation, the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006* (to be renamed to account for BCOF veterans), which, in its current form, provides more limited treatment benefits to BNT participants.

### Who will benefit?

Around 1,800 BNT participants and around 1,100 BCOF veterans are expected to become eligible for the Gold Card.

### Date of effect?

1 July 2017 – Gold Cards will be issued later this calendar year. In the interim, any eligible people who incur medical expenses from 1 July 2017 should contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs for reimbursement.

### How much will this cost?

This measure will provide funding of \$133.1 million over four years.