

# Veterans' Support Act Review: submission form

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Your submission will inform the review of the Veterans' Support Act 2014. Submissions are due by 5pm, Friday 15 September 2017.

## Your details

Your details are useful for analysing your feedback. If you don't want to provide your details, your submission will still be accepted and considered.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Email:**

**Group or organisation:**

**Your position in group or organisation:**

**You are making this submission:**

- As an individual or individuals
- On behalf of a group or organisation

**If you're an individual, what is your age range?**

- Under 25     45–64     85+
- 25–44     65–84

**If you're a group, how many people does this submission represent?**

**Your submission may be published on the New Zealand Defence Force website unless you tick the box below. Your personal details will be removed.**

- Don't publish this submission

**Anyone can request your submission under the Official Information Act. Your personal details will be removed unless you tick the box below.**

- Don't remove personal details

**Which of the following categories apply to you or your group? (tick all that apply)**

- Veteran
- Veteran's spouse or partner
- Veteran's child or dependant
- Other family / whānau member or friend of veteran
- Person receiving support from Veterans' Affairs
- Serving member of the NZ Defence Force
- Ex-serving member of the NZ Defence Force
- Service provider
- Other:
- Representative organisation
- Professional association
- Advocate
- Academic / researcher
- Māori
- Pacific
- Non-governmental organisation
- Government organisation

## Your comments

You can answer as many or as few questions as you wish, and please feel free to raise any other ideas or issues you have.

To read more detail about each question, see the discussion document *How well is the Veterans' Support Act 2014 working?* (available on the New Zealand Defence Force website at [www.nzdf.mil.nz/corporate-documents/vsa](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/corporate-documents/vsa))

If you want to have your say on how the Act is working, but you don't have time to respond to all the questions, you can just answer these three main questions.

**1. What do you think works well in the Act?**

**2. What doesn't work well, or could be improved or clarified?**

**3. Would you like to see any specific changes? If so, what are they, and why is change needed?**

4. Do you have any views on how to eliminate barriers to seeking and accessing assistance under the Act?

5. Do you have concerns about how the principles in the Act have been put into practice over the past 2 years?

6. Do you think any changes are needed to the principles? What changes would you like, and why?

7. Do you think the Act should place responsibilities on the people receiving entitlements and support under the Act? If so, what should they be?

8. Do you think the current threshold of “significant risk of harm”, for the Minister to declare “qualifying operational service”, is too high? Do you think factors other than operational and environmental threats should be taken into account? If so, what are they, and why are they relevant?

9. Do you agree with the definition of “veteran” used in the Act? If not, what would you change?

10. Do you think the Act should make clear how to manage multiple entitlements? If so, how do you think multiple entitlements should be managed?

11. Do you think eligible veterans should automatically receive a Veterans’ Pension instead of New Zealand Superannuation? Do you have anything else you’d like to raise about the Veterans’ Pension?

**12. Do you think the estate of a deceased veteran or claimant should be able to access a lump sum or other entitlements? If so, why, and under what circumstances?**

**13. Do you think family members, not just veterans' estates, should be able to access lump sums or other entitlements?**

**14. Do you think all entitlements should continue to be paid for 28 days after the death of a veteran?**

**15. Do you think the current eligibility criteria could be simplified so that all spouses or partners of deceased veterans with qualifying operational service are eligible for a Surviving Spouse or Partner Pension? If so, why?**

**16. Do you think the Surviving Spouse or Partner Pension should be able to be reinstated after the spouse or partner enters then leaves a new relationship? Should the Act state how many times this can happen?**

**17. Do you think the current definition of "child" is adequate? If not, how would you change it? Do you think the definition should reflect the financial dependence of the child on the veteran?**

**18. Does the range and type of services provided under the Act meet your needs? If not, why not? Should any other services or support be included?**

**19. Can you suggest how to better include families in a veteran's rehabilitation and treatment?**

**20. What other services would be helpful for families as part of a veteran's rehabilitation and treatment?**

**21. Do you think children in any type of unpaid full-time or part-time study or training should be eligible for the Children's Bursary?**

**22. Should the Act allow Veterans' Affairs to pay for private treatment of injury or illness? If so, when and why?**

**23. Are there any treatment providers not currently recognised under the Act that you think should be added to the regulations? Who, and why?**

**24. What support should veterans and their families be eligible for while overseas? What considerations should be taken into account? Should it matter whether veterans and their families are living in another country or just visiting temporarily?**

**25. Should the support given to a deceased veteran's spouse, partner and other family members under the Veterans' Independence Programme be based on the family's needs, rather than the services and support the veteran was receiving? How would this change the nature of services provided?**

**26. Should families have the choice to access their 12 months of support under the Veterans' Independence Programme when a veteran moves into permanent care?**

**27. Would you like to raise any other matters about the services provided under the Veterans' Independence Programme?**

- 28. Should the families of all veterans be entitled to support for a veteran's funeral (not just families of veterans whose death is due to qualifying service, or who are receiving income support entitlements). Why? Or what would you propose instead?**

- 29. Is Veterans' Affairs' current contribution to funeral costs sufficient? If not, what level of support would you propose instead?**

- 30. Should the families of all veterans, including Commonwealth veterans, be entitled to assistance for the cost of plaques and headstones? Why?**

- 31. Has the right balance been struck between what is in the Act, regulations and operational policies? If not, what would you change?**

- 32. Where could the Act be clarified or made more consistent? What would you change?**

- 33. What common provisions in the Act should be grouped in the same place?**

- 34. What words or phrases in the Act would benefit from a definition or change of terminology?**

- 35. Should the Act allow Veterans' Affairs to reconsider any decision under the War Pensions Act 1954 or the Veterans' Support Act 2014, if it thinks there may have been an error or if there's new information?**

**36. Does it make sense to combine the common elements of treatment and rehabilitation into common provisions in the Act? If not, why not?**

**37. Is the 30-day timeframe for making decisions about entitlements too restrictive? Should the Act be changed to require Veterans' Affairs to deal with decisions promptly, taking into account the particular circumstances and considerations of fairness? If not, why not? What would you propose instead?**

**38. Could agencies and sectors work together better when delivering support to veterans? If so, how?**

**39. Are any changes needed to the role and operation of the advisory or decision-making bodies under the Act? If so, what and why?**

**40. Do you have an opinion on how the Australian Statements of Principles are used to determine entitlements? Would you suggest a different approach? What, and why?**

**41. Is there an easier way to adopt the Statements of Principles? If so, what would you recommend, and why?**

**42. Should any entitlements be combined to increase efficiency and effectiveness? If so, what are they, and why?**

**43. Do you have any ideas about how to make sure the Act supports veterans and their families into the future?**

**44. Do you think a further review of the Act is needed? If so, when, and what do you think should be covered?**

**45. Do you have any other matters you'd like to raise?**