



## Advocacy Network and Integrity Activities

The Australian Government will provide \$203.1 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$66.2 million per year ongoing) to strengthen the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) provider integrity capability by improving the prevention, detection and response to service provider fraud across veterans' benefits and services, as well as expand the support of professionalised advocacy services for veterans and families of veterans.

Funding includes:

- \$151.0 million over four years from 2025–26 (plus \$52.0 million in 2029-30 and \$45.2 million per year ongoing from 2030-31) to improve provider integrity capability at DVA
- \$44.7 million over three years from 2026–27 (and \$21.0 million per year ongoing) to increase funding for free veteran advocacy services through the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) grants program
- \$4.4 million over three years from 2025–26 for the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and the Professional Services Review, to investigate options to respond to inappropriate practices relating to veterans' health services
- \$3.0 million over four years from 2025–26 to support the operations of the Institute of Veterans Advocacy.

### Savings

Through this measure, the Government will achieve savings of \$881.6 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$382.7 million per year ongoing) by strengthening provider integrity across the Veterans' Affairs portfolio.

Savings include:

- \$685.9 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$313.6 million per year ongoing) by reducing non-compliance and fraud across veterans' benefits services
- \$130.0 million over three years from 2026–27 (and \$45.9 million per year ongoing) by making regulatory improvements to DVA's Medicinal Cannabis Framework
- \$65.7 million over three years from 2026–27 (and \$23.2 million per year ongoing) by reforming and regulating the commercial veterans' advocacy industry.

### Consultation

The Government will promptly consult with the veteran community on the best mechanisms to reform the veteran advocacy sector, including the legislative framework to regulate inappropriate billing practices.

### Improving provider integrity at DVA

\$151.0 million over four years from 2025–26 (plus \$52.0 million in 2029-30 and \$45.2 million per year ongoing from 2030-31) will be invested to improve DVA's provider integrity capability.

This new funding will allow DVA to protect the veteran support system by significantly increasing its fraud detection and response capability to protect veterans and families of veterans from those who would take advantage of them.

---

DVA will allocate 51 new compliance staff in 2025-26, rising to 168 staff in 2028-29, and then 180 staff on an ongoing basis. These staff will be tasked with finding and taking action against unethical and fraudulent service providers and advocates. These staff will be allocated from within the department's current staffing footprint.

This funding will also allow DVA to reform legislation and to make regulatory improvements to enable stronger action for non-compliance and ensure that funding for veteran treatment and wellbeing goes to supporting veterans and families of veterans who need it.

This will include enhancements and updates to DVA's fee schedule for medical reports for compensation claims, ensuring payments for reports are more consistent with other relevant jurisdictions and better reflect actual costs to practitioners.

In parallel, DVA will increase monitoring of invoices submitted and appropriate action will be taken where inappropriate activities are identified. This may include refusal to pay invoices, refusal to engage the provider for future assessments or referral to relevant authorities.

Importantly, this will not affect veterans' access to these essential services.

### **Additional funding and restructure of the BEST grants program**

\$44.7 million over three years from 2026-27 (and \$21.0 million per year ongoing) will be provided to increase and restructure funding available to ESOs through the BEST grants program, which supports free advocacy services.

This will more than double the current funding available under the program from 1 July 2026 to provide free, professional advocacy services to veterans and families of veterans.

In addition, the program will also be updated from 1 July 2026 to provide for the provision of 3-year grants, providing greater certainty to ESOs, and security for their advocate workforce. It will also reduce ESO administration effort by removing the need to apply for annual grant rounds.

### **Funding for the Institute of Veterans Advocacy (IVA)**

The IVA has been established as an independent charitable entity and will act as the professional association for veteran advocates, registering advocates, setting competency and training standards, and administering a code of conduct and complaints mechanism.

The Government's \$3.0 million investment in the IVA will enable it to complete its establishment activities, supporting a public presence through a website, receiving and assessing applications from prospective members, registering advocates, and publishing a list of registered members. Further, the IVA will monitor members' compliance with relevant ethical, training and service standards, administer a code of conduct, and establish and administer a national complaints mechanism, including referring complaints to other professional bodies where relevant.

### **Legislation to veteran advocacy practices**

The Government has committed to legislative responses to better protect veterans, while not over-regulating a largely volunteer service. Following a period of public consultation, the Government intends to develop legislation to regulate inappropriate billing practices, including the potential to prohibit practices that may cause harm to veterans and families of veterans.

Consultation will also include legislative responses to offshore data holding, to require membership of the IVA, to regulate certain practices or conduct, and enforcement arrangements.

---

## Medicinal Cannabis

Changes will be made to DVA's Medicinal Cannabis Framework, to address identified risks regarding patient safety.

These changes will ensure pharmaceutical arrangements for veterans remain safe and effective and continue to support patients to access innovative and evidence-based therapies.

## Why is this important?

Significant investments in recent years see DVA better resourced than it has been in decades, meaning funding for veteran treatment and wellbeing is flowing again.

An unintended consequence of speeding up claims processing has been a rise in unethical behaviours from paid and commission-based advocates, as well as a concerning rise in inappropriate and sometimes illegal profiteering by service providers, to the detriment of veterans.

DVA has observed new, unscrupulous, practices from some service providers and advocates, including:

- billing for services never received
- provision of false information to DVA
- referrals to generate billing rather than to support veterans and families of veterans
- business models that seek to maximise profit from statutory compensation payments to veterans and families of veterans, and undermine veteran and family wellbeing.

This funding enables DVA to increase its integrity and compliance capability to ensure the veterans and families of veterans are not exploited and receive the services they need.

This measure also addresses Recommendation 99 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which recommended improving compensation advocacy by funding professional, paid advocates.

This measure further responds to several recommendations of the recent Senate Inquiry into issues relating to advocacy services for veterans accessing compensation and income support:

- Recommendation 1 relating to legislative action to address harmful advocacy behaviours and business models.
- Recommendation 4 relating to investigating solutions to address risks posed by offshore commercial advocacy providers.
- Recommendation 6 relating to the implementation of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's recommendation 99.
- Recommendation 7 relating to supporting the establishment of the Institute of Veterans Advocacy.

## Who will benefit?

All Australian veterans and families of veterans.

---

## Date of effect?

1 January 2026.

## How much will this cost?

\$203.1 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$66.2 million per year ongoing).

Through this measure, the Government will achieve savings of \$881.6 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$382.7 million per year ongoing).