

DFISA Talking Points

Background

- In December 2021, legislation was passed which results in an increase in social security payments, removing the need for the Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA) and increasing Rent Assistance to some disabled veterans receiving income support.
- These changes took effect on 1 January 2022.
- It implemented the recommendations of the review by Mr David Tune into the adequacy of the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) payment. It:
 - exempts Disability Compensation Payment (formerly known as Disability Pension) as income under the *Social Security Act*. These changes simplify the support system for veterans and dependants and negates the need for the DFISA.
 - removes a means test imposed on Rent Assistance for certain veterans and dependants. These veterans and dependants are now eligible for Rent Assistance, or an increased rate of Rent Assistance.
 - clarifies that the Disability Compensation Payment is a compensation payment, and that it should not be confused with other income support payments such as Centrelink's Disability Support Pension.
- No veteran will receive lower total payments as a result of this measure. Many will receive more due to now being eligible for Rent Assistance, either for the first time or at a higher rate.

Why don't I have my Defence Force Income Support Allowance in my bank account?

- The Defence Force Income Support Allowance is no longer needed because your underlying income support payment has increased by the same amount.
- This is because your Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Disability Compensation Payment (formerly known as Disability Pension) is no longer taken

into account in the income test for your social security payment (Centrelink payment or Age Pension paid by DVA).

- You should have received a letter from DVA explaining this, however, some letters have been delayed.
- Please see the [DVA website DFISA page under “What’s New” for further information](#).
- Please check your payments online with Centrelink, and DVA’s MyService.

Are veterans receiving less money because of these changes?

- No, you will receive the same total amount, or perhaps more if you are privately renting.
- Please check your online Centrelink account for information about your payment (or your MyService account if you receive Age Pension from DVA), which should have increased by the same amount as your previous Defence Force Income Support Allowance.
- If your payment has not increased, please consider other circumstances that might have changed such as an increase in your income or assets, a change in relationship e.g. single to couple status, a move in residence.
- If your circumstances have not changed, then please ring on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or email DVA (GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au) with your veteran file number and DVA will investigate.
- You may have never received your social security payment before and only received Disability Compensation Payment (formerly known as Disability Pension) and the Defence Force Income Support Allowance from DVA.
- If this is the case, please access your online Centrelink account and check that you are receiving it now.
- Please note that the change is staggered over two paydays because the change took effect on 1 January 2022, which is in the middle of two pay periods.

- The pay day of 27 January will show no DFISA and the full amount of your social security payment.
- Note also that pay days at Centrelink are different for different customers, unlike DVA which has the same pay day for all veterans and their families. Thus, the Centrelink payday may not align with the DVA payday.

Will veterans need to apply for rent assistance?

- No. DVA has contacted those income support recipients who may be eligible and sought up-to-date rent information from them. This information was used to undertake the assessment of Rent Assistance with payments commencing on the first payday of 13 January 2022.
- If a veteran thinks they have missed out, they may be able to update their rental details on MyService or ring DVA.
- Those eligible would be in receipt of the Disability Compensation Payment *and* Service Pension, Income Support Supplement or Veteran Payment.
- They will also need to provide proof of private rent paid above \$127.60 per fortnight for singles and \$206.40 combined for couples.
- The maximum amount of Rent Assistance paid is \$142.80 per fortnight for singles and \$134.60 per fortnight for couples combined.