HONOURING THOSE WHO SERVED

National honours the contribution of our veterans to the peace, freedom, and security New Zealand enjoys today.

We are committed to ensuring there is appropriate recognition of those who gave service to New Zealand, and to providing support for those who suffered ill-health effects as a result of their service.

National has passed the Veterans’ Support Act, the first major re-write of veterans’ legislation in 60 years. This was a central part of a $60 million package for veterans.

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

➔ Maintaining the Veteran’s Pension and Superannuation at 66 per cent of the average wage, meaning payments increase faster than inflation over time.

➔ Passed the Veterans’ Support Act – the first major re-write of veterans’ legislation in 60 years – as the central part of a $60 million package for veterans.

➔ Provided a one-off 5 per cent increase to the War Disablement Pension and Surviving Spouse Pension on top of annual cost of living increases.

➔ Extended eligibility for the Veteran’s Pension to all those with qualifying service, increasing eligibility from 8,000 to 25,000 New Zealanders.
NATIONAL IS…

**SUPPORTING VETERANS**

- Passed the Veterans’ Support Act – the first major re-write of veterans’ legislation in 60 years – as the central part of a $60 million package for veterans.
- Increased all Pension entitlements annually to keep up with the cost of living.
- Provided a one-off 5 per cent increase to the War Disablement Pension and Surviving Spouse Pension, in addition to annual cost of living increases.
- Paid grants worth $300,000 to the RSA to support its welfare activities.

**ENSURING NEW ZEALAND WILL NEVER FORGET**

- Organised and funded World War II and Korean War Veterans to attend 70th and 60th anniversary commemorations overseas.
- Funded eligible veterans who served in the RNZAF to attend the unveiling of an official memorial in Green Park, London.
- Successfully ran the ballot for places to Gallipoli 2015, following a public consultation process that resulted in special places reserved for veterans and direct descendants of those who fought at Gallipoli.
- Announced a second national centenary service at Gallipoli on 8 August 2015.
- Contributing to Sir Peter Jackson’s vision of creating a special World War I exhibition to mark Anzac Day 2015 and run for the duration of the centenary period.
- Dedicated plaques in the parliamentary debating chamber to commemorating our service in Afghanistan, East Timor and Missions in Support of Peace.
- Launched the annual Passchendaele multimedia competition.
- Introduced the New Zealand Malayan Veterans’ Day.
OUR RESULTS SO FAR

HELPED COVER LIVING COSTS

All rates of the Veteran’s Pension and Superannuation have increased by 28 per cent since 2008, far ahead of inflation. The married rate is up by $249 a fortnight, while the single living alone rate is up by $162 a fortnight.

We have expanded the Veteran’s Pension – 17,000 more people now qualify, taking the total number of eligible recipients to around 25,000.

We’ve also increased the Travel Mileage Allowance rate by 20 per cent from 1 July 2014.

BETTER SERVICES FOR VETERANS

We have cleared the entire 11,000 claim backlog for War Disablement Pensions that existed when Labour left government in 2008.

Veteran Affairs case managers handle more than 45,000 phone queries from individual veterans a year, process 72,000 invoices for veteran care and wellbeing, and ensure more than 16,000 veterans and surviving spouses receive their pension entitlements.

Some 2,500 files with 4,400 separate claims have been processed, and dozens of appeal decisions have been reached by the War Pensions Appeal Board.
WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

1. HONOUR OUR VETERANS

→ Continue to work with our Turkish and Australian counterparts for the Gallipoli 2015 centenary commemorations.

→ Fund veterans to attend the major commemorative milestones associated with their service overseas.
   This includes business class or RNZAF flights, meals and accommodation, medical assistance and support staff.

→ Put in place a significant commemorative programme to mark the 50th anniversary of New Zealand’s contribution to the Vietnam War.
   Our Vietnam veterans were let down by the New Zealand government of the day when they returned from war. It is important that we provide the appropriate recognition and commemorate their service as we mark 50 years.

2. MAINTAIN VETERAN’S PENSION AND TRAVEL GRANTS

Veterans have worked hard and deserve to enjoy their retirement. Having financial security is a big part of this.

→ Maintain the Veteran’s Pension and Superannuation at 66 per cent of the average wage.

→ Introduce indexing of the mileage allowance rate to ensure it reflects increasing costs.
   This change comes on top of the 20 per cent rate increase implemented on 1 July 2014.

→ Increase the travel grant from $2,000 to $2,500 to help veterans with the cost of attending a commemoration associated with their service.

3. IMPLEMENT THE VETERANS’ SUPPORT ACT

Service in defence of our nation, for freedom and democracy around the world, is a sacrifice that needs appropriate recognition in legislation.

National passed the Veterans’ Support Act, the first major re-write of veterans’ legislation in 60 years. This Act was the central part of $60 million package designed to improve support for veterans.

The Act will help better meet the needs of both older veterans who require assistance to remain in their own homes, and veterans of modern-day deployments. Most will benefit from changes that will see more support provided to veterans and their families through:

→ Increased entitlements, care and support
→ A clearer decision-making process for applicants
→ A better monitoring process, so veterans and their families can more easily track the progress of their application
→ Top-up payments additional to the ACC programme to recognise military service.
→ New rehabilitation services that are tailored to the individual.
→ Extended eligibility for the veteran’s pension.

Scheme One will come into force on 7 December 2014, and Scheme Two (for those with post-1974 service) will follow on 7 December 2015.

DON’T PUT IT ALL AT RISK

Labour and the Greens would:

✗ Make people work two more years before collecting the Veteran’s Pension or Superannuation, whereas National will keep the retirement age at 65.