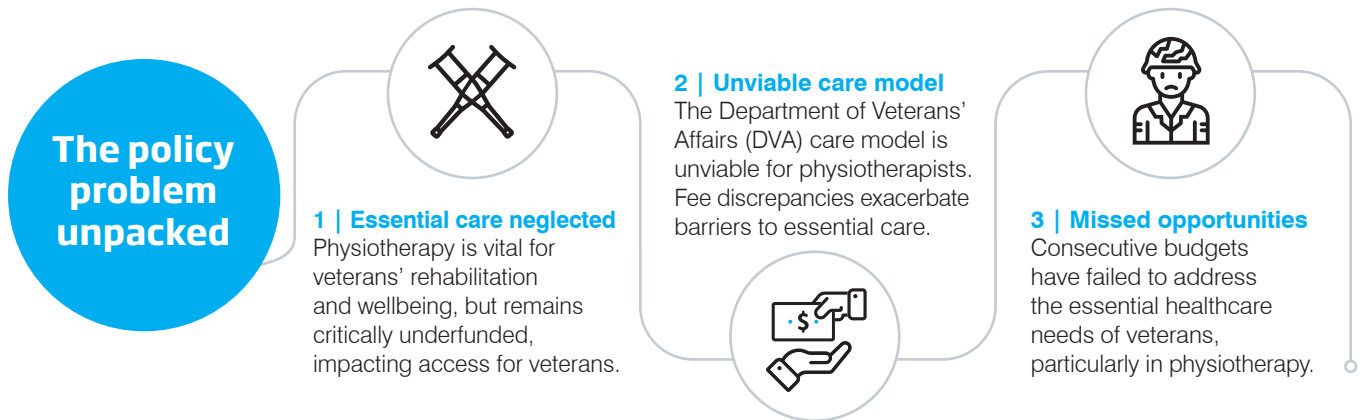


Physiotherapy in Veterans' Care



New data highlights urgent need for better physiotherapy funding for veterans

New data from the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) shows the critical impact of insufficient funding on veterans' access to physiotherapy care. The Government must take immediate action to enhance healthcare services for Australia's veterans.



1 | LEAVING PHYSIOTHERAPY BEHIND LEAVES VETERANS BEHIND

The **Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide** highlights the critical link between physical health and mental wellbeing.



CHRONIC PAIN: A key risk factor for mental ill-health in defence and veterans.

88% of transitioned members experience some level of pain.

31.7% of ex-serving veterans reported pain that was either high-intensity or disabling.



The most common physical injury in veterans is **musculoskeletal**, accounting for **58.6% of injuries.**

2 | DVA FEES CHALLENGE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES FOR VETERANS

DVA services are not viable

The APA's data shows significant impacts on the physiotherapy workforce



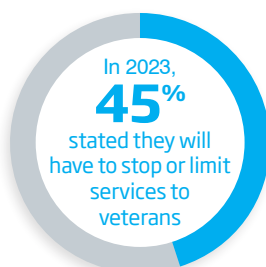
90% believe that the current funding provided by the DVA is insufficient to sustain viable healthcare services for veterans.

52% face a pay cut of at least **\$40 per DVA service** provided.

98% incur financial losses under the DVA low fee structure.



More and more physiotherapists report that they will have to stop providing this care if funding does not increase.



The majority are now struggling to sustain service for veterans under DVA's low funding model.



Veterans will suffer if they cannot access the critical physiotherapy treatment they need.

3 | GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO ADDRESS THE ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS OF VETERANS

Physiotherapists are passionate about veterans' health



Chronic pain is a significant and growing issue among veterans, affecting 27–57% during their service and return to normal life.¹

The burden of chronic pain is more burdensome compared to the general population, contributing to various challenges such as depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and substance use disorder.²



Physiotherapists are committed to delivering this vital care, but this currently relies on them providing unsustainable services out of genuine concern for veterans.

The significant shortfall for physiotherapists reflects the government's undervaluation of quality healthcare for veterans.

9 in 10

physiotherapists expressed doubts about the government's seriousness in this area.

70%

of physiotherapists feel that the government does not support the role of physiotherapy in veterans' health care.

Physiotherapists are essential to this care, yet they are funded **\$50 less per service** compared to other allied health options like occupational therapy.

Join the campaign: australian.physio/veterans

To ignore physiotherapists, is to ignore our veterans' most critical healthcare needs.

1

Support veterans' healthcare:

Help us ensure veterans receive the best healthcare possible. Every veteran deserves access to the critical care they need, when they need it without the government's red tape.

2

Access to physiotherapy for veterans:

Veterans are missing out on essential healthcare. Advocate alongside the APA for their right to consult highly qualified physiotherapists and achieve the better health outcomes they deserve.

3

Improve DVA funding for veterans:

An increasing number of physiotherapists can't provide care under the current DVA funding scheme. Let's push for better support and funding from the government to ensure veterans get the healthcare they deserve.

SOLUTION: THE DVA PRICING FRAMEWORK NEEDS TO BE ALIGNED AT NDIS LEVELS

The [Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Final Report](#) highlights that payments from the DVA to practitioners are often lower than those from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other compensation schemes.

The APA recommends that DVA adopt an urgent fee increase for physiotherapy to align the fee schedule with the NDIS, at a minimum, to:

- fix the viability issues related to physiotherapy services for veterans
- progress implementation of Recommendation 71 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.



Sources:

¹ BehaviourWorks Australia (2022) 'Association between chronic pain, suicidal thoughts and behaviour in military and veteran populations'.

² Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (2024) Final Report, Commonwealth of Australia.

³ Australian Physiotherapy Association (2024) 'Viability of physiotherapy veterans' healthcare under DVA', APA Member Quick Poll.