



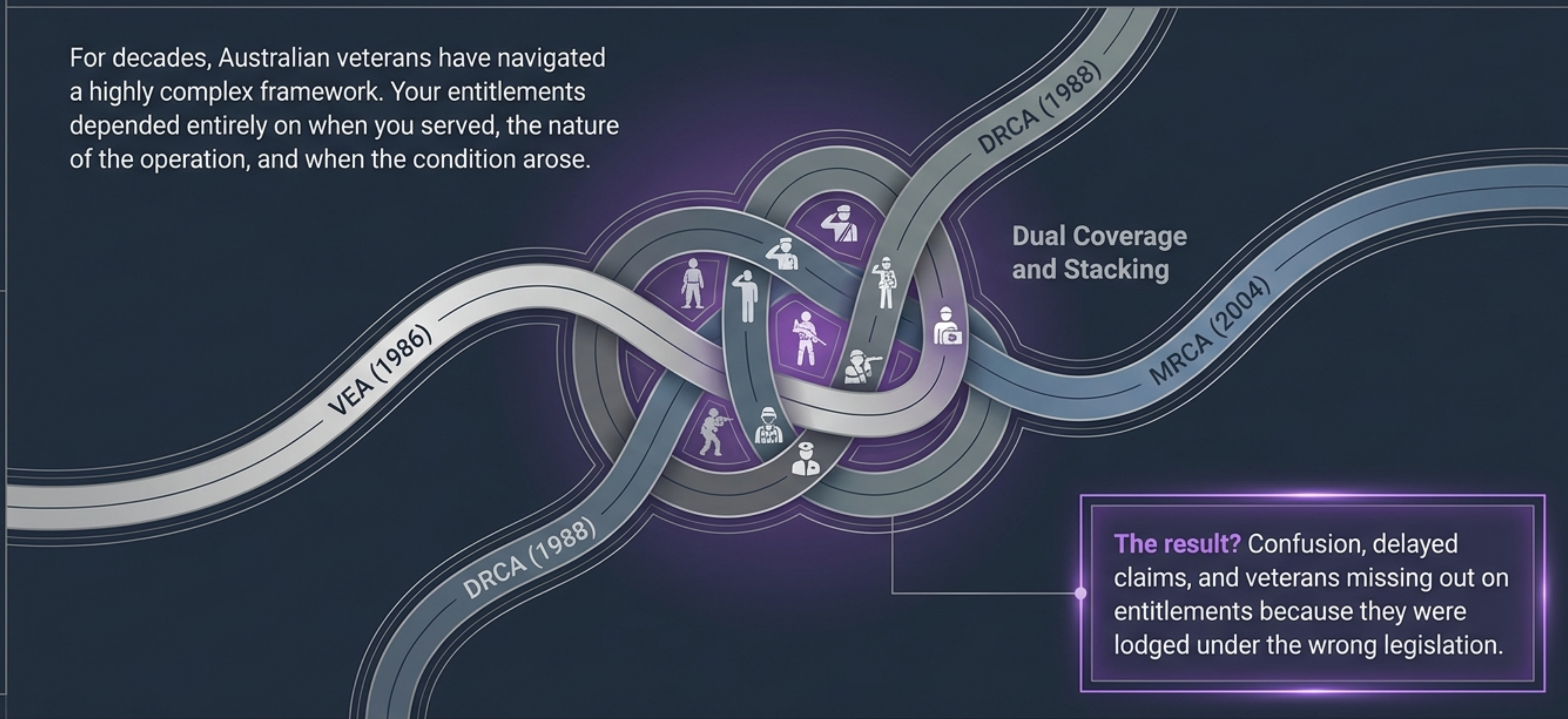
Navigating the VETS Act 2026

A Client Guide to Securing Your Entitlements
Under Australia's New Veterans' Legislation

BALDWIN ADVOCACY & CLAIMS - STRATEGIC TRANSITION BRIEFING

The Problem: Three Overlapping Acts

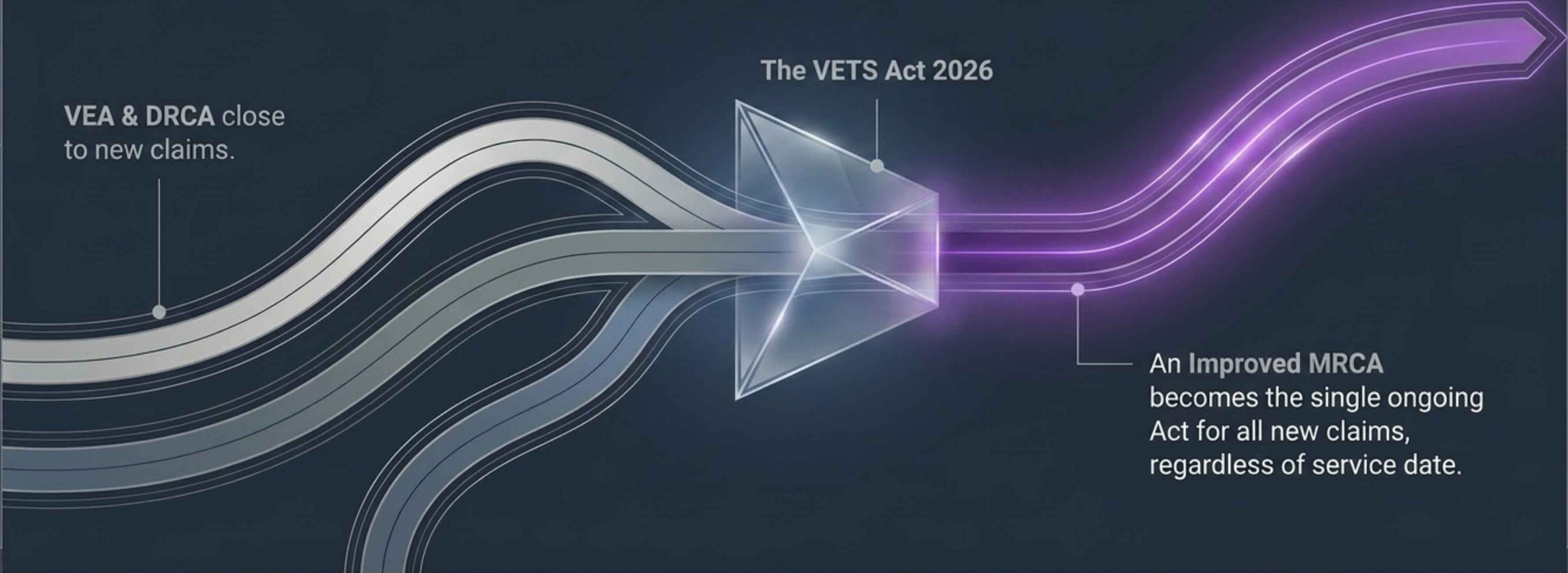
For decades, Australian veterans have navigated a highly complex framework. Your entitlements depended entirely on when you served, the nature of the operation, and when the condition arose.



The Solution: One Act Replaces Three

On 1 July 2026, the VETS Act consolidates the complex tri-Act system into a single, streamlined framework.

VEA & DRCA close to new claims.

A diagram illustrating the consolidation of three acts into one. On the left, multiple wavy lines in shades of grey and blue represent the existing VEA and DRCA acts. These lines converge into a central, glowing, multi-faceted blue arrow labeled 'The VETS Act 2026'. From this central point, a single, wide, glowing purple arrow extends to the right, representing the streamlined framework. A callout line connects the text 'VEA & DRCA close to new claims.' to the left side of the diagram. Another callout line connects the text 'An Improved MRCA becomes the single ongoing Act for all new claims, regardless of service date.' to the purple arrow.

The VETS Act 2026

An Improved MRCA becomes the single ongoing Act for all new claims, regardless of service date.

What This Means For You



One Set of Rules

No more determining which Act applies based on service dates. One claims process, one standard of proof.



Consistent Support

The same service-related condition attracts the same level of support, regardless of when the injury occurred.



No Disadvantage

The most critical rule: Existing benefits are completely protected.

The Grandparenting Principle: Your Shield

If you are already receiving payments, your entitlements are secure.



- ✓ Disability Compensation Payments (DCP) including Special Rate (TPI).
- ✓ Income support (Veteran Payment, Service Pension, Income Support Supplement).
- ✓ Existing Veteran Gold and White Cards.
- ✓ Medical and treatment entitlements for currently accepted conditions.

Grandparented payments continue uninterrupted and will be indexed as normal.

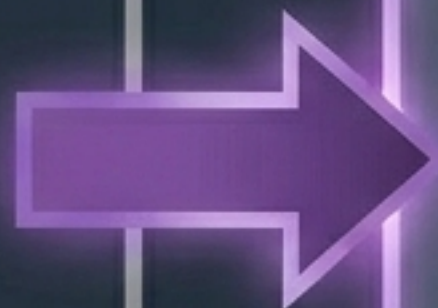
The Automatic Upgrade

DRCA Incapacity Payments Transition to MRCA

The VETS Act grandparenting rules protect existing payments, with one highly beneficial exception.

Current State:

DRCA incapacity payments
(includes the historic 5%
superannuation 'haircut').



1 July 2026:

Veterans automatically transition to
MRCA incapacity payments. This
system is materially more generous
and removes the DRCA
superannuation penalty.

No application is required for this
specific upgrade.

Unlocking New Pathways for DRCA Veterans

For the first time, veterans with older service records can access top-tier MRCA benefits.



The Gold Card Pathway: DRCA veterans who reach 60 impairment points (and experience a 5-point worsening or have a new MRCA condition accepted) become eligible for full Gold Card treatment.



SRDP Access: Special Rate Disability Pension is now open to severely incapacitated DRCA veterans.



The ADA Safety Net: Introduction of the Additional Disablement Amount (ADA)—a new MRCA benefit replicating the VEA Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) for pension-age veterans.



The Improved MRCA: Substantive Enhancements



Medical Events on Duty.

Materially easier to prove liability if a medical event (e.g., heart attack, stroke) occurs while on duty.



Dependants & Education.

Expansion of the MRCA education scheme to include children of highly impaired DRCA veterans.



Funeral Benefits.

Increased funeral allowance and reimbursement of expenses up to \$14,062 for all service-related deaths post-1 July 2026.



Expanded Liability.

Expanded coverage for treatment-related injuries, expanded reservist coverage, and preservation of the pre-1998 tobacco-use pathway.

The Strategic Window: Timing Is Everything

This is the final cut-off. From 11:59 PM AEST on 30 June 2026, the VEA and DRCA permanently close to new compensation and rehabilitation claims.



June 30, 2026

11:59 PM AEST

Every claim sitting on an advocate's desk today must be triaged against this deadline.
Making the wrong choice of when to file could cost you over a lifetime.

The Lodgement Rule (The Insider Secret)

You do not need to wait for a decision to beat the clock.

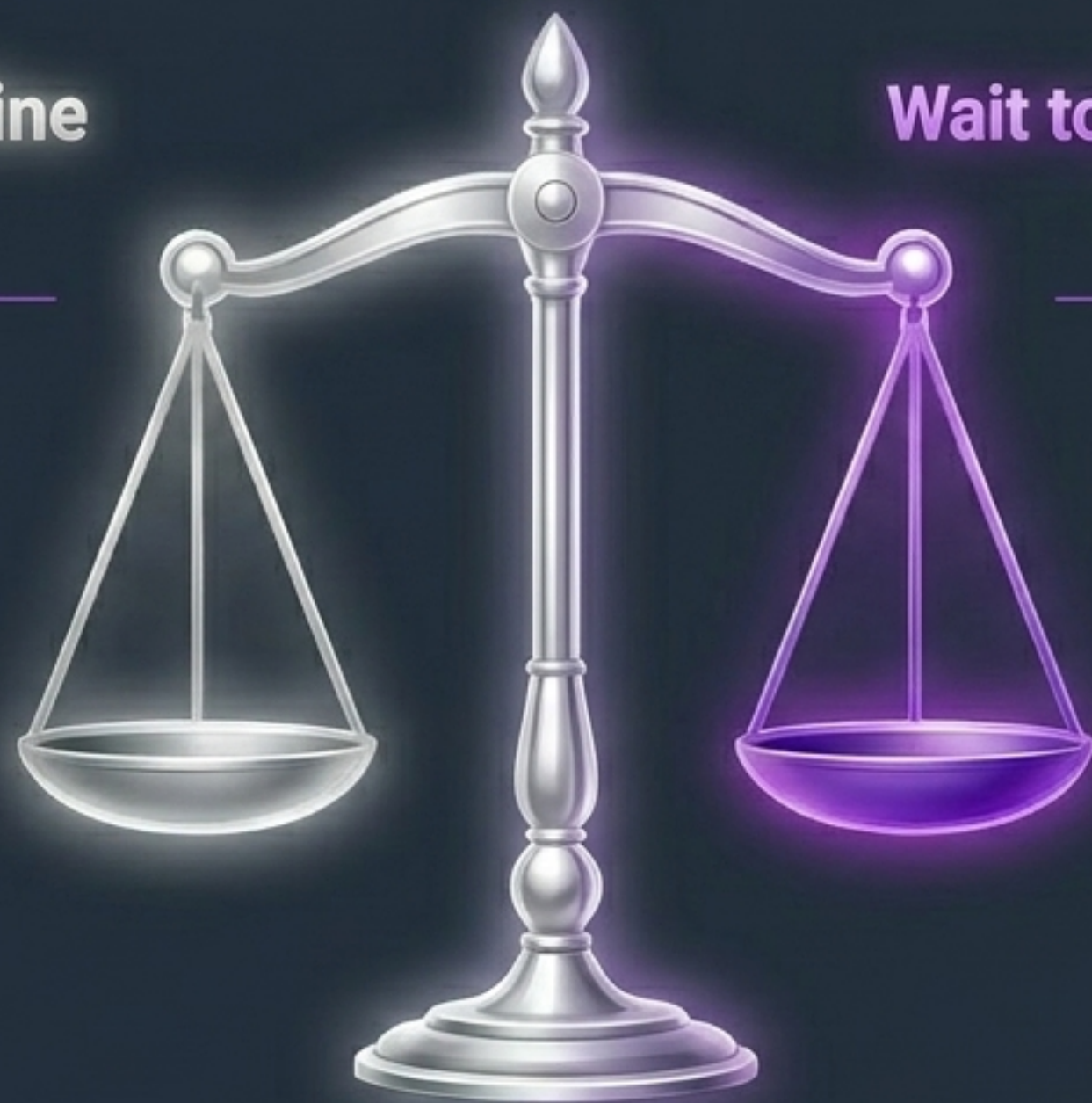


Key Insight: The cut-off applies to the lodgement date, not the decision date. As long as your paperwork is formally submitted before 11:59 PM on 30 June 2026, it will be assessed under the old Acts—even if the DVA determination takes months to land.

Strategic Comparison: Should You Lodge Before or After?

Lodge **BEFORE** the Deadline Pre-July 2026 (Old Acts)

- Pension-age veterans seeking VEA EDA or TPI (Special Rate).
- Veterans claiming specific DRCA lump-sum payments that yield a higher quantum.



Wait to Lodge **AFTER** the Deadline Post-July 2026 (New MRCA)

- Claims turning on a medical event on duty (stroke, heart attack).
- Treatment-related injuries or adverse reactions.
- Pension-age veterans seeking the new MRCA ADA benefit.



The Danger of Speculative Claims

DVA has signaled that thousands of speculative claims will flood the system in late June 2026.

Warning: A poorly evidenced claim rushed and lodged on June 29 just to “beat the clock” will not magically produce a better outcome. It will join a massive processing backlog and likely face rejection due to incomplete evidence.

Takeaway: Quality still overrides timing—unless the strategic benefit of the timing is mathematically proven.

Why Professional Advocacy Matters Now More Than Ever

Transitioning Acts isn't just about filling out forms; it is an exercise in lifetime financial modeling. Hidden traps exist for the unwary:



Trap 1: Centrelink Coordination

New MRCA incapacity payments can inadvertently knock out Centrelink JobSeeker or DSP entitlements if not sequenced correctly.



Trap 2: GARP M Reassessment Risk

Crossing a VEA-only veteran into the MRCA system means conditions are assessed under new impairment tables. 70% VEA does not automatically equal 60 MRCA points.



Trap 3: Invalidity Sequencing

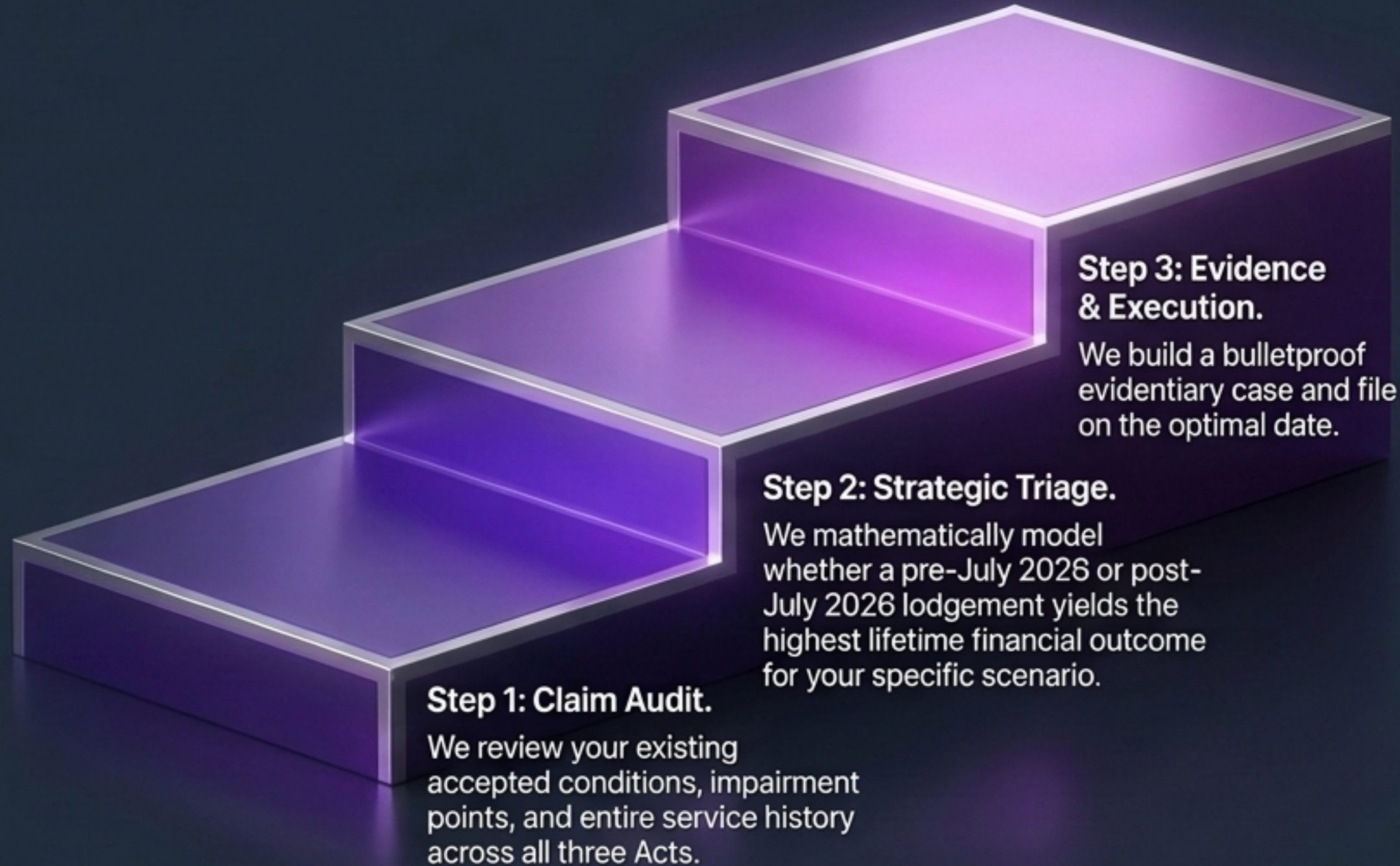
Pursuing CSC Retrospective Invalidity requires precise timing to avoid severe incapacity-payment recovery shocks.

Your VETS Act Transition Action Plan

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Don't leave your lifetime entitlements to chance. The window is closing. Book your transition review today.