

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

13 October 2023



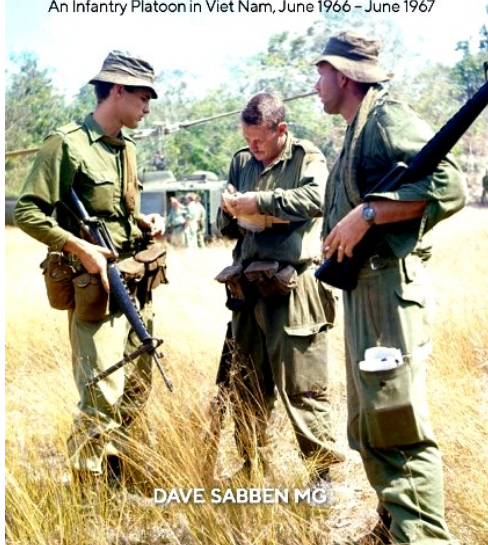
The Sub-Branch needs the help of volunteers to continue the tradition of selling poppies in November.



Please call the office on 2685 1931 if you can spare two hours at Cooleman Court Shopping Centre between the 6th and 10th of November to support Poppy Appeal.

MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

An Infantry Platoon in Viet Nam, June 1966 – June 1967



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Price \$82.00



Greetings Friends of the Band,

The Band of the Royal Military College is excited to invite you to our next instalment of our Music at Midday series. The program has been selected paying homage to current works being performed or honoured around the world!

Tuesday, 17 October, 12 Midday

Canberra Theatre Centre

Click the link below to book tickets

[Music at Midday \(canberratheatrecentre.com.au\)](https://canberratheatrecentre.com.au)

Entry to this event is a gold coin donation supporting Veterans Support Centre Belconnen.



OFFICIAL



**THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFJOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

6 October 2023

VETERANS' MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Federal, State and Territory Ministers responsible for veterans' matters met in Perth today, committing to strengthening national collaboration on the services and supports available for veterans and their families.

The Veterans' Ministerial Council was joined by the United Kingdom Minister of State for Veterans' Affairs, the Rt Hon Johnny Mercer MP, who is currently visiting Australia. Minister Mercer provided an update on matters of importance to UK veterans and families and shared insights into the UK veteran landscape.

Harmonisation of veteran recognition and concessions

Given the transient nature of defence service and the probability of a veteran family relocating following service, Ministers acknowledged the need for clearer and more consistent veteran concession arrangements. Ministers discussed opportunities for national harmonisation and mutual recognition of relevant identification documents, such as concession cards. Ministers agreed to work collaboratively towards this goal, recognising the need to improve collaboration in support of currently serving defence personnel and families who frequently move around the country.

Similarly, Ministers acknowledged this transient lifestyle had an impact on Defence and veteran families, particularly children. They considered the merits of including a 'Defence and/or Veteran Family' identifier on school enrolment forms to help identify the children of current and former Australian Defence Force personnel and other strategies to simplify access to education. This initiative is currently being progressed in the ACT and South Australia. Ministers noted the potential benefits of this initiative, intended to improve the school based supports for children from veteran families. Ministers agreed to explore this in their relevant jurisdictions.

Veteran Mental Health Support

The Council agreed that the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has made it abundantly clear that more needs to be done to support the mental health and wellbeing of Defence personnel, veterans and families. The Council was briefed on the development of the inaugural joint Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy; progress of the Veterans' and Families' Hubs program; the recently released Veteran Transition Strategy; and the implementation of the recommendations of the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

With this commitment to improving mental health outcomes for Australian veterans and families, Ministers discussed the desirability of a national approach to psychiatric assistance dog accreditation and agreed to work together to progress national standards.

Research underway

Representatives from the Western Australian and South Australian Governments delivered a presentation on the work they are doing to better support and understand veterans in the corrective services system. The Council discussed the need to improve data collection relating to veterans' incarceration and homelessness, with research into these issues currently underway.



RSL
Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

29 September 2023
For immediate release

RSL Australia Calls for Greater Spending and Increased Army Priority in Defence Moves

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has called on the Federal Government to increase defence spending and ensure that our nation's Defence Forces are balanced and appropriate for the current unstable strategic environment in our region.

Responding to this week's major re-organisation of the Army and particularly the northern deployment emphasis, the RSL said the Government must address its earlier decision which saw resources denied to the Army to fund appropriate enhancements to Australia's Navy and Air Force.

RSL National President Greg Melick says the reality is with current international instability and particularly increased tensions in the Asia Pacific region, Australia should not lose sight of the fact that the nation's defence capabilities have been grossly inadequate for too many years.

"Australia's defence spending should immediately rise from the 2.11 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) projected this financial year, to at least 3 percent or more," Greg Melick said.

"Restricting resources available to the Army to make appropriate enhancements to RAN and RAAF will create an unbalanced Defence Force. These proposed deployment changes may also mean that we will be unable to provide the necessary rotation and concurrency of our forces significantly further degrading the Army's capabilities.

"The strategic situation in our region has not been this unstable for 80 years and successive governments have been derelict in their duty to provide adequate resources for Defence for far too long.

"This latest response to the 2023 Strategic Defence Review provides the opportunity for the current Government to redress this situation."

Greg Melick said as well as developing our nuclear industry to support the AUKUS submarine program, Australia must also acquire more strategic reserves of fuel, ammunition, and other supplies to provide an adequate safeguard in the event of a defence emergency. It was concerning such reserves had been allowed to remain at such dangerously low levels but we welcome recent initiatives to increase the local production of ammunition.

"Lifting defence spending and increasing the Army's priority are necessary steps in ensuring Australia's defence preparedness and these steps must be taken without delay, there is too much hollowness within Army" he said.

"The RSL fully supports the enhancements to the RAN and RAAF, but these should not come at the expense of our Army.

"Our soldiers will continue to play a vital role at the forefront of our nation's defence and while the latest announcements regarding deployments and locations are in line with strategic needs, the broader issue of defence spending and the Australian Army's share of this must be addressed.

"The RSL remains an apolitical patriotic organisation and looks forward to continuing to work with the Government supporting policies to improve and maintain the security of our proud nation."

ENDS

National Media contact: Tony Harrison – 0417 318178 tony.harrison@rsl.org.au



Ex-Service Organisations Round Table September 2023

Ex-Service Organisations Round Table Meeting

A meeting of the Ex-Service Organisations Round Table was held on Monday 18 September, 2023. A broad range of issues was covered in the meeting.

Open Arms - 2023-24 Model of Care

Open Arms - Veterans' & Families Counselling provided a presentation on its new Model of Care which refines the building blocks of Open Arms' offering to the veteran community. The Model defines what Open Arms can deliver while highlighting areas for future development. Engagement of primary care is an important area of future development.

Royal Commission Update

DVA is fully cooperating with the work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The Department strives to provide information in line with requested deadlines as requested by the Royal Commission at all times.

Legislative Reform

DVA understands there is a strong interest in legislative reform. The Government is considering feedback on the pathway to simplify veterans' legislation. Draft legislation is expected to be released for public comment by early 2024. Member submissions relating to grand parenting of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA), differences in compensation payments under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) and VEA and the 'Wholly Dependent Partners' definition under MRCA were discussed.

Claims Processing Update

An ongoing priority for DVA is to reduce the claims processing backlog and wait times. DVA is on track to clear the Initial Liability backlog by the end of 2023 – largely due to a significant increase in claims delegates. The Initial Liability backlog is lower than the Permanent Impairment backlog for the first time in three years. The need for clear messaging on the DVA website to encourage veterans' to engage with an advocate was discussed.

Advocacy Working Group

Advocacy is an area of strong interest for Round Table members. Discussion focused on progress to enhance and support advocacy services in the future. There is a need to leverage information across the veteran support system to ensure a sustainable model of advocacy that incorporates increases to grant funding to improve the capacity of Ex-Service Organisations to employ advocates. Good leadership and commitment is required to enhance and support advocacy across organisations and further consultation on a range of issues is required. The challenging nature of advocacy and efforts of the Working Group to date were acknowledged. A Member submission on advocacy was discussed.

Aged Care

Supporting veterans during their transition to aged care was discussed including concerns about being able to visit veterans in aged care facilities and the promotion of shared information products. In recognition of these challenges, DVA continues to advocate for veterans to be a priority group, with the Department of Health and Aged Care and with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. DVA also continues to engage with the aged care sector to promote a greater understanding of the veteran community and its needs.

Retirement Income Product Presentation

The Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation provided a presentation on a Retirement Income Product for ADF Superannuation members.

SeMPRO

The Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response Office (SeMPRO) gave a detailed presentation to the Round Table explaining its role and responsibilities.

SeMPRO provides immediate and confidential help to those impacted by sexual misconduct, including:

- Current or ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families
- Current ADF cadets
- Current Defence Australian Public Service employee
- Current Defence contractors

SeMPRO social workers and psychologists are available 24/7 to assist or refer.

SeMPRO services are confidential and are accessible without needing to make a report to Defence, the military police, or civilian police. Client may choose to remain anonymous.

Support is client-focused and customised to each person's unique needs. SeMPRO can assist with strategies, such as how to help support a friend or approach a difficult conversation, in order to promote the wellbeing of everyone involved. SeMPRO can also help with navigating Defence and civilian health care services.

SeMPRO is not an investigation service, but can guide and support clients through reporting, investigation, and legal proceedings

UNOPAA

The United Nations & Overseas Policing Association of Australia provided a presentation on the work of their organisation and the issues facing their organisation and membership.

Younger Veterans – Forum Update

The Round Table received an update from the Younger Veterans - Contemporary Needs Forum. Of key interest is the cost of veteran travel expenses, particularly in context of cost of living increases.



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

New VLO at TCH/UCH

I am writing to update you about the VLO role at TCH.

At present there is still one VLO covering both The Canberra Hospital and University of Canberra Hospital.

I will be moving to a new role at UCH, my last day in the VLO role is Wednesday 27/9/23.

A new VLO has been recruited, Lysette de Clair, and will be commencing in the role on Monday 25/9/23.

Lysette's contact details will be the same as you currently have for the VLO service i.e. email VeteransLiaison-TCH@act.gov.au, phone – 51243696 or 0438877087.

It has been a pleasure to work with you all over the years, and thank you for all the support you provide to the Veteran Community.

Kind Regards

Rhondha Capamagian | Veterans Liaison Officer

Rehabilitation, Aged and Community Care
Canberra Hospital & Health Services

Veterans Lounge
Canberra Hospital,
Building 2, Level 2.
77 Yamba Drive
Garran ACT 2605

P: (02) 5124 3696 Mob: 0438877087

E: Rhondha.Capamagian@act.gov.au

DVA Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT Update

Congratulations to all the winners and finalists in the **Prime Minister's National Veterans' Employment Awards**, celebrated on 13 September. It is great to see the range of organisations and individuals being recognised for their support of veteran employment – with a record number of 165 nominations.

Also, a reminder that next week is **Veterans' Health Week!** Running from 8 to 15 October, the theme is *Mental Wellness Matters*. I encourage you all to participate in supporting and promoting this week, to aid in continuing to raise the importance of mental wellness and wellbeing. For a list of event opportunities in your State or Territory, check the national event calendar: www.dva.gov.au/vhw.

Further information is available below on other key activities underway:

[New Repatriation Commissioner](#)

[Saluting Their Service grants](#)

[Veterans' and Families' Hubs](#)

[Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide](#)

[DVA TV recent videos now available for viewing](#)

[Commemorations](#)

Warm regards,

Victoria

[New Repatriation Commissioner](#)

- Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM has been appointed as Australia's new Repatriation Commissioner.
- Son of a war widow and a Vietnam War veteran, Mr Fegan has served for over 30 years in the ADF, including in Afghanistan and as the Commander of the 3rd Combat Brigade in Townsville.
- The Repatriation Commissioner is independent of the Government and provides advice to DVA on policies and initiatives to ensure veterans and their families' needs are supported.

[Saluting Their Service Grants](#)

- Sixty eight community organisations across the country have shared in more than \$750,000 of Saluting Their Service Grants to honour Australia's veterans through locally delivered projects and activities.

For a full list of successful recipients, see the Minister's media release: [Saluting the service of local veterans | Minister for Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

Veterans' and Families' Hubs

- Hubs are currently under development in Southeast Queensland (Caboolture) and Tasmania. The lead organisation, Lives Lived Well, is establishing the hub in Caboolture, which is on track to be officially opened by the Minister in October 2023.
- RSL LifeCare Veteran Services in partnership with RSL NSW will be funded to develop a business case setting out how a unique Hub network would be established and managed panning across the Hawkesbury and down to South Western Sydney.
- Planning is well underway for eight new hubs in Southwest Perth, Northern Adelaide, the Surf Coast/Geelong region, the Hunter region, the Hawkesbury region, the Tweed/North Coast region, Queanbeyan and Ipswich.

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

- On 14 September, Parliament passed new laws that will support the Royal Commission to complete its important work by making it possible for more people to participate in face-to-face private sessions.
- Submissions to the Commission are **closing on 13 October**.
- The next public hearing will be in Sydney from 20 November. This is your chance to share your thoughts and to contribute to the outcomes of the Royal Commission.
- The Commission is considering holding a final block of hearings in early 2024 to test its proposed recommendations while writing the final report; the report is due by 17 June 2024.

DVA TV recent videos now available for viewing

Now available for viewing :

[Veteran Central in Perth offers one-stop shop](#)

[Get involved in Veterans' Health Week](#)

Commemorations

UNESCO World Heritage listing for Western Front

The Funerary and Memorial Sites of the First World War's Western Front have been inscribed on the World Heritage List of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Over 295,000 Australians served on the Western Front and some 46,000 lost their lives – the greatest loss of Australian life in any war or conflict.

105th anniversary of the Battle of Montbrehain

5 October – In 1918, the Allies engaged in the Hundred Days Offensive, a series of successful offensives that led to the end of the First World War, including the Battle of Montbrehain, the last Australian infantry battle of the war.

80th anniversary of the Thai-Burma Railway

- 16 October – Around 60,000 Allied prisoners of war, including some 13,000 Australians, and 200,00 rōmusha (Asian labourers) worked on the 'death railway', built in 1942-43 to supply Japanese forces in Burma.

Peacekeeping Symphony postponement to 2026 or 2027



Dear Peacekeeping Symphony supporters

I am writing to formally notify you all of the postponement of the *Peacekeeping Symphony* performance from 2023 to a date to be determined in 2026 or 2027, due to our inability to raise the funds to pay for the performance costs this year.

Our aim is to revisit the project and determine a date aligned with a major anniversary or ideally a peacekeeper's reunion in Canberra in either 2026 or 2027. This time frame is influenced by the fact we have to produce two other major concerts over the next two years: the *Holocaust Memorial* on **Oct 31, 2024 in Melbourne** and the *WW2 Requiem* in **September 2025 in Brisbane**.

It actually does make more sense to run all of these large commemorative projects in chronological order, given the *Peacekeeping Symphony* starts with the establishment of the UN following WW2.

Clearly if we wish to try again to raise the funds for the *Peacekeeping Symphony*, then I am going to have to bring together a consortium of believers to establish a context for the work. I believe my failure this year to raise the money was at least partially due to the fact that I did not connect widely enough and early enough with the broader community of Peacekeepers, in the ADF, AFP and elsewhere.

I wish to restart the project by determining what kind of musical work Peacekeepers would value, adjusting the music we have written so far to match those wishes, and then building a stronger case for funding such a performance. Currently it seems that Peacekeeping does not enjoy universal support, and I believe we will need to strengthen the case for peacekeeping as a worthwhile and affordable activity which can strengthen Australia's reputation in the region and the world.

If any of you would be interested in engaging with a proposed future performance of the *Peacekeeping Symphony*, please let me know. I'm sure I can construct a role that matches your availability and time.

Thank you also for providing supporting letters that accompanied the grant applications. While unsuccessful on this occasion, your support for my project was deeply appreciated.

I am in debt to all of you, and deeply grateful that you saw value in this activity.

Warm wishes

Chris Latham

Artist-in-Residence, Australian War Memorial

Director: *The Flowers of Peace*

Mobile +61 408 440 426

Address 178 Atherton Street, Downer, ACT, Australia, 2602

[The Flowers of Peace](#)



In October, we have 3 groups in Canberra and 1 group in Wagga Wagga, please see the details below.

MANAGING PAIN - [Program registration](#) | [Open Arms](#)
CANBERRA

Wednesday 18th & Thursday 19th October |

9:30am – 4:30pm | 2 days

- Understand the link between physical and psychological aspects of pain.
- Learn strategies to challenge/change unhelpful thoughts and behaviours.
- Discover important lifestyle factors for managing pain.

Develop a Personal Pain Plan.

BEATING THE BLUES - [Program registration](#) | [Open Arms](#)
CANBERRA

Wednesday 25th October & Wednesday 1st November |

9:30am – 3:30pm | 2 days

- A program to help you understand and manage depression
- Understand the signs and symptoms, situations and thinking patterns that contribute to depression.
- Challenge unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours.

Learn techniques to manage stress and depressed moods.

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS - [Program registration](#) | [Open Arms](#)

Thursday 26th & Friday 27th October

9:30am – 4:30pm | 2 days

- Focus on what works well to strengthen your relationship.
- Enhance the resilience of individual partners and the relationship.
- Create shared meaning through values and rituals of connection.
- Understand the emotions behind your partner's life dreams.
- Manage conflict positively and adopt a positive perspective.

This is a couple-only group.

STEPPING OUT - [Program registration](#) | [Open Arms](#)

WAGGA WAGGA

Thursday 26th & Friday 27th October |

9:30am – 4:30pm | 2 days

- A workshop that examines the civilian transition process in both practical and emotional terms
- Discover key issues related to personal and social adjustment following discharge.
- Receive knowledge, skills and resources to assist you in making the transition to civilian life.

ADF members attending the program will be considered 'on duty at another location'.

You can register from **1800 011 046** or through the links above.

Thank you for your support as always.

Australian Capital Territory

Session name	Date	Location	Structure
Managing pain	18-Oct	Canberra	Two day session (18 & 19 October 9:30am-4:30pm)
Beating the blues	25-Oct	Canberra	Two day session (25 October & 1 November 9:30- 3:30)
Building better relationships	26-Oct	Canberra	Two day session (26 & 27 October 9:30 am - 4:30 pm)
Doing anger differently	15-Nov	Canberra	Two day session (15 & 16 November 9:30- 4:30)

Open Arms counselling

Open Arms counsellors and staff have an understanding of veteran and military culture that assists them to deliver specialised support and care to members of this community.

What can Open Arms counsellors help you with?

Open Arms counselling take a tailored approach to work with you enhance your mental health and wellbeing. Common concerns include:

- relationship and family issues
- transitioning to civilian life
- anxiety
- depression
- anger
- sleep difficulties
- PTSD
- alcohol or substance misuse.

Together, we can find effective solutions to improve your mental health and wellbeing.



Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs

Applications are now open for the Long Tan Bursary.

The bursary is named for the Battle of Long Tan, fought by Australians during the Vietnam War.

37 bursaries worth up to \$12,000 will be awarded to eligible children and grandchildren of Vietnam War veterans, to help pay for the cost of tertiary education.

Applications close 31 October 2023.

For more information or to check eligibility, visit :

<https://www.dva.gov.au/about/overview/consultations-and-grants/grants-and-bursaries/long-tan-bursary>



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

LONG TAN BURSARY 2024
Applications now open!
APPLICATIONS CLOSE 31 October 2023.

AVCAT Scholarships

Hello,

Applications for AVCAT scholarships open soon.

[Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#) including the [Long Tan Bursary | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#) are tertiary scholarships for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. Scholarships are \$4000–\$6000 per year, for up to three years.

Applications open on 18 August 2023, Vietnam Veterans' Day, and close at midnight AEDT on 31 October 2023.

Apply online at [Australian Veterans & Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#)

Applicants must be:

- Enrolled or planning to enrol in a full-time course for one or more academic year's duration at a university, TAFE, or RTO in 2024
- The child, stepchild, foster child, or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident

In receipt of, or eligible to receive, a means-tested Commonwealth educational payment – Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy or Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) in 2024

The Long Tan Bursary is sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs. View the complete list of AVCAT Scholarship sponsors [Sponsors | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#)

Find information about scholarships, the application process or scholarship eligibility at [Australian Veterans & Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#)

Spread The Word

Share on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), hang a [poster](#), hand out a [flyer](#), or drop [this notice](#) into your newsletter.

Kind Regards

Len Russell

CEO AVCAT

Find Out More : [Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#)



**COFFEE CATCH UP
EVERY FRIDAY 10-12**

Members and guests are welcome to join us for a chat and enjoy freshly brewed coffee & cake with former service mates. Every Friday from 10 to 12 in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.

The Eddison Day Club will continue to meet for a lunch each Friday at noon until we can once again meet at a reinvigorated Day Club.

Come and join us for lunch at Canberra Irish Club 6 Parkinson St, Weston ACT 2611



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information
or access to our services

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Office hours are
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PS.

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