

# RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

22 October 21

Dear members,

As you will be aware by now the scheduled dinner on Tuesday 26 October 2021, has been cancelled.

The Board will hold an OGM on Tuesday 26 October 2021 at 1400 hours in the Sub-Branch office at Holder.

Following the OGM, refreshments will be provided.

Regards,

Greg



Woden Valley Sub-Branch

**Greg Kennett**

Secretary

Woden Valley Sub-Branch

Australian Capital Territory

P: (02) 6285 1931

M: 0438 884 896

E: [secretary@rslwoden.org.au](mailto:secretary@rslwoden.org.au)

W: [www.rslwoden.org.au](http://www.rslwoden.org.au)



## **The Hon Andrew Gee MP**

Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel  
Federal Member for Calare

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

16 October 2021

## **VETERANS CLAIMS SYSTEM TO BE OVERHAULED**

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee has announced the appointment of independent consultants to overhaul the Department of Veterans' Affairs' claims processing system.

Consultants McKinsey & Company will work with families who have lost loved ones to suicide, to formulate recommendations that will overhaul the system to better serve our veterans.

Minister Gee said the backlog of claims is unacceptably high which is delaying veterans and their families access to vital services and funding.

"One of my top priorities is to improve the claims processing system and cut waiting times for veterans and their loved ones, and as such, I have directed that this rebuild takes place as a matter of urgency," Minister Gee said.

"This is not another review.

"McKinsey will immediately examine how the Department can simplify the claims process, how it is currently processing claims, and identify how we can have a faster, more efficient and effective system for all veterans and their families.

"As part of this vitally important work, I have directed McKinsey to hold meetings with families of veterans who have suffered the tragic and devastating loss of a loved one, so that those rebuilding the system can gain a first-hand understanding of the impact of veteran suicide and the importance of a quick and efficient claims processing system.

"We can't wait for the Royal Commission to get cracking on this crucial reform.

"In the recent Budget \$98.5 million was delivered for hundreds of new claims processing officers for veterans which is welcome news. However, I don't want to see these officers dropped into an inefficient system, tangling themselves up in red tape.

"If that budget boost is to have maximum effect we need to make sure that the fundamentals of the claims processing system are right."

Karen Bird, who lost her veteran son Jesse to suicide, said she was eager to participate in the meetings, together with her lawyers who represented the family during the coronial inquest, and hopes that the feedback will provide clear direction on what is required to

**Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling** provides 24/7 free confidential crisis support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families on 1800 011 046 or [openarms.gov.au](http://openarms.gov.au). **Safe Zone Support** provides anonymous counselling on 1800 142 072. **Defence All-Hours Support Line** provides support for ADF personnel on 1800 628 036 or [defence.gov.au/health/healthportal](http://defence.gov.au/health/healthportal). **Defence Member and Family Helpline** provides support for Defence families on 1800 624 608.

overhaul the claims processing system, making it a positive experience for veterans and their families.

McKinsey will deliver its action plan in December 2021. Minister Gee has reiterated that he wants to see immediate progress so that veterans and their families can receive the support they deserve and require.

"McKinsey will be tackling the issue with an independent set of eyes to ensure that claims are processed in a timely manner. I won't be waiting to action this roadmap," Minister Gee said.

"McKinsey will provide recommendations with clear milestones and deliverables that can be tracked, measured and monitored by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian Government at three, six, 12, 18 and 24-month intervals.

"The Australian Government is currently supporting more than 336,000 veterans and their families and we're committed to ensuring they have the support they need, when and where they need it.

"Our veterans have served our nation with courage and distinction and we must give them the best possible care and support. They deserve nothing less."

If any veteran or their family member has information that will help this process, I encourage them to get in touch by emailing [office.ministergee@dva.gov.au](mailto:office.ministergee@dva.gov.au).

**Minister Gee's office: 0459 966 944**

## Check In CBR card

A Check In CBR card is now available. This is designed for those people who do not own a smartphone or who are unable to download and use the Check In CBR app. This free card contains a unique QR code which can be scanned at the majority of businesses and venues across the ACT. This will make checking in a quick and private process for card holders. Note that the Check In CBR card cannot be used at those locations where there is no-one to assist with scanning of the card (for example on public transport).

Applying for a Check In CBR card is a quick and simple process and can be done on behalf of an individual if they are unable to do so.

Apply for a Check In CBR card at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/check-in-cbr-app/check-in-cbr-app-form>

If you are unable to apply for a Check In CBR card online, please contact the ACT Health Digital Solutions Support team on (02) 5124 5000 for assistance.

If you are unable to check in on public transport, please ensure that you have a registered MyWay card or keep good records of the services you have used.





## 42 for 42 walk at Suncorp stadium



Kelly Walton, whose partner Rick Milosevic was killed along with Robert Poate and Janny Poate standing beside a veteran of the Afghanistan war. Families and veterans affected by war standing side by side to unite in building a memorial has been a great healing process.

### 42 for 42

41 Australian soldiers lost their lives during the Afghanistan war. The 42<sup>nd</sup> in the name 42 for 42 represents those soldiers who have taken their own lives and, regrettably, have continued to do so since returning from that war. This number now exceeds 500.

In 2015 four combat engineers, led by Corporal Sean Mulqueen, who lost some of his men during his deployment in 2010, started the ball rolling with a mission to build a memorial garden in Brisbane in remembrance of the men and explosive detection dogs who were killed in Afghanistan. 42 for 42 has also become a network of support for contemporary veterans to help them rehabilitate into civilian society. The memorial is being built solely by volunteers comprising veterans and family members of fallen soldiers.

**42 for 42 was formed by veterans, is administered by veterans and is serving veterans and their families. None of the volunteers or administrators are paid. 42 for 42 is a charity in the true meaning of that word. This charity is fortunate to have MAG GEN Susan Coyle, and Brigadier John Carey as its patrons, both of whom have been very passionate supporters.**

**The memorial is being built in a lovely garden setting on a parcel of land adjoining a small Anglican Church adjacent to Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane. It has taken six years to raise sufficient funds to architecturally design the memorial, receive council approvals and have plaques and artefacts made. The official opening was held on 16 October this year.**

**The Memorial garden will include a plaque and photo of each soldier and explosive detection dog lost in Afghanistan. The plaque of each soldier will also incorporate a unique feature, a QR code. Visitors will be able to click on the QR code with their mobile phone to see a written and pictorial history of the soldier from his childhood through to his service in Afghanistan. Each pictorial story line is being provided by the family of each soldier.**

**The Memorial Garden includes three large bronze statues. One is an Australian soldier with his arms opened in the direction of another, a young Afghan girl as though he is helping her. The third bronze statue is an explosive detection dog.**

**Fund raising commenced in 2016 primarily from two events - an annual luncheon, and an annual '42 for 42 walk'. The 42 for 42 walk has been the main fund-raising event and involves walking around the concrete concourse of Suncorp Stadium for 42 hours carrying a pack weighing 42 kgs. Every hour is dedicated to a soldier in the order in which they were killed, and his photo is displayed on the large screen at Suncorp Stadium for his hour. It commences with Andrew Russell who was the first soldier killed. Our son Robert is honoured for the 36<sup>th</sup> hour which is usually about 3 am. It is a long 42 hours! While some walkers like to be alone, most soldiers are represented by a team in which each member shares the burden of the 42 kg pack for various circuits of the stadium during their soldier's hour. Most teams include family members, veterans and current serving members from battalions of the deceased soldiers. The teams pay what they can afford to enter the event, and many are also sponsored by some large corporate organisations.**

**Janny has participated every year since it commenced and has walked well over 100 kms around Suncorp in the earlier years. She now knows every crack in the concrete of that concourse and takes me rest breaks!**

**Walking together and supporting each other, while remembering those who have made the supreme sacrifice has been a powerful force for a common good. In addition to raising funds to build the memorial, many new friendships and support groups have been formed over the years.**

**For those who wish to find out more about 42 for 42 there is a website called: [www.42for42.org.au](http://www.42for42.org.au)**





**This is a small portion of the 42 for 42 Memorial garden. Note the huge mural in the background. Hidden by some brown plinths is a Sniper aiming towards a Bushmaster vehicle. In the foreground is a bronze sculpture of a soldier kneeling down to help an Afghan child, representing the help and care given by our troops.**



# THE ACT'S COVID-19 PATHWAY FORWARD – FROM 21 OCTOBER 2021

## Our guiding principles

- We will always put the health and wellbeing of the community at the forefront of our decision making, especially the impact on mental health.
- We will get as many people back to work as soon as we can.
- We will continue to listen to the community and businesses about the impact of the public health measures.

## Our steps forward

- Before we take each step we will consider:
- the current COVID-19 risk, both in the ACT and regional NSW
  - our vaccination rates and effectiveness, including in our vulnerable communities

- the capacity of our health system
- our test, trace, isolate and quarantine measures and their effectiveness
- the vaccination rates of our younger groups until they reach 80% vaccination coverage to ensure the best possible protection for our community.

- From 29 October, our restrictions will be largely in line with NSW restrictions for vaccinated people
- We will continue to assess the situation here and in regional NSW, and remain flexible to adapting our pathway forward as necessary.

From 1 October 2021	From 15 October 2021	From 29 October 2021	From 26 November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lockdown continues</li> <li>No more than 2 people to visit another household at any one time</li> <li>1 household (any size) or up to 5 people can gather outdoors for up to 4 hours for physical or recreational activities</li> <li>All non-essential retail can operate click &amp; deliver or click &amp; collect – up to 5 staff or 1 per 4 sqm</li> <li>Small businesses can operate click &amp; collect or click &amp; deliver or by contactless means – up to 5 staff or 1 per 4 sqm</li> <li>Outdoor bootcamps and personal training can recommence with no more than 2 people (excluding instructors)</li> <li>Outdoor and contactless coaching can recommence with no more than 2 people (excluding the coach)</li> <li>Nature Reserves and National Parks can open for recreational purposes – outdoor gathering restrictions apply</li> <li>All dental services can be undertaken, including preventative services</li> </ul>	<p>Lockdown lifted (11.59pm 14 October 2021)</p> <p><b>The following activities can operate with a capacity of 25 people or density of 1 per 4 sqm, whichever is less for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gyms (excluding classes) &amp; organised outdoor training, weddings, outdoor play centres or amusement centres, places of worship, outdoor auctions, gaming &amp; gambling venues, outdoor tours, community centres or facilities, to broadcast a performance</li> <li>Licensed venues, cafes and restaurants for seated service up to 25 people across venue or 1 per 4 sqm indoors. Businesses can have up to 50 people or 1 per 4 sqm if outdoors only. Not both.</li> <li>5 people can visit another household at any one time</li> <li>25 people can gather outdoors</li> <li>All non-essential retail can operate a click &amp; collect or click &amp; deliver service. Small business can also operate by contactless means – up to 10 people allowed or 1 per 4 sqm</li> <li>Open – hairdressers, beauty and personal services – up to 5 clients</li> <li>Open – accommodation, campgrounds, caravan parks and campsites – gathering restrictions apply</li> <li>Open – swimming pools for lessons only – up to 25 swimmers</li> <li>Open – swimming pools for lessons only – up to 25 swimmers</li> <li>Gradual return to the workplace where it suits you and your employer</li> <li>Funerals increased to 50 attendees</li> </ul> <p><b>Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 October – year 11 &amp; 12 return to on campus learning</li> <li>25 October – early childhood reopens, pre-school to year 2 and years 6,9 &amp; 10 return to on campus learning. Out of school hours care available to on campus learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facemasks for indoors only</li> <li><b>From 1 November</b> – travel to all of NSW open and managed by restrictions in high risk LGAs only</li> <li>No more than 10 visitors at home</li> <li>30 people can gather outdoors</li> </ul> <p><b>The following activities can operate without density limits up to 25 people. If over 25 people the following applies:</b></p> <p><b>Indoor 1 per 4 sqm:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hairdressers, beauty &amp; personal services</li> </ul> <p><b>Indoor 1 per 4 sqm, or outdoor 1 per 2 sqm or up to 300 people:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospitality and licenced venues, gaming &amp; gambling venues, cafes &amp; restaurants, places of worship, weddings &amp; funerals, gyms, fitness &amp; sport, play centres &amp; amusement centres, community centres, facilities &amp; youth centres, real estate &amp; auctions</li> <li>Food courts for seated service – 1 per 4 sqm</li> </ul> <p><b>Indoor 1 per 4 sqm or outdoor 1 per 2 sqm or up to 500 people:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organised sport and swimming pools – changerooms open</li> <li>Organised events can have up to 500 people without exemption – must be ticketed</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open with restrictions – cinemas, galleries, museums, cultural institutions, historic sites &amp; outdoor attractions</li> <li>Open with restrictions – events &amp; performance venues, conferences &amp; cinemas</li> <li>Dance classes, choirs &amp; bands commence – up to 20 people or 1 per 4 sqm</li> <li>Businesses not covered elsewhere in the Direction (incl. retail) can open with 1 per 4 sqm to any areas accessible to the public</li> </ul> <p><b>Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1 November</b> – years 3,4,5,7 &amp; 8 return to on campus learning</li> <li>All students can attend their usual out of school hours care programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facemasks for indoors only (high risk settings)</li> <li>All interstate travel managed by restrictions in high risk LGAs only</li> <li>No limit on visitors at home or outdoor gatherings</li> <li>All retail permitted to open with 1 per 2 sqm</li> <li>Businesses not covered elsewhere in the Direction can open with 1 per 2 sqm to any areas accessible to the public</li> </ul> <p><b>The following activities can operate without density limits up to 25 people. If over 25 people the following applies:</b></p> <p><b>Indoor 1 per 2 sqm:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hairdressers, beauty &amp; personal services</li> </ul> <p><b>Indoor 1 per 2 sqm, or outdoor 1 per 2 sqm:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospitality &amp; licenced venues, food courts, gaming &amp; gambling venues, cafes &amp; restaurants, places of worship, weddings &amp; funerals, gyms, fitness &amp; sport, play centres &amp; amusement centres, community centres, facilities &amp; youth centres, real estate &amp; auctions, dance classes, choirs, bands &amp; orchestras</li> <li>Eating, drinking while standing permitted</li> <li>Dancing is permitted</li> <li>No limit on class numbers for gyms</li> <li>Cinemas – 100% fixed seating</li> </ul> <p><b>Indoor 1 per 2 sqm or outdoor 1 per 2 sqm or up to 1000 people:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organised sport and swimming pools</li> <li>Events can have up to 1000 people without exemption – must be ticketed</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open with restrictions – galleries, museums, cultural institutions, historic sites and outdoor attractions</li> <li>Open with density limits – events &amp; performance venues, conferences.</li> </ul>

### NOTE:

- Further detail can be found in the Summary of Proposed Restrictions Table available on the ACT COVID-19 website on Thursday 21 October 2021.
- These measures are indicative. It is difficult to predict the future with so many competing factors to consider.
- If the situation worsens we may need to delay further easing of restrictions or tighten restrictions again.

### From 11.59pm on Thursday 21 October 2021 - Non Essential Retail and Certain Essential Retail Businesses

- Click & Collect requirements to be removed and businesses can reopen to the public
- Businesses must meet their work, health & safety obligations
- 1 person per 4 sqm must be applied to any areas of the business which are accessible to the public.

## Ongoing



For more information: [covid19.act.gov.au](https://covid19.act.gov.au)



# THE ACT'S COVID-19 PATHWAY FORWARD

## Our guiding principles

- We will support the work being undertaken nationally and locally to achieving a COVID normal life as soon as it is safe.
- We will put the health and wellbeing of our community at the forefront of our decision making. While COVID-19 continues to circulate in the community and we are working to increase our vaccination coverage, restrictions will remain in place.
- We will look to get as many people back to work as soon as we can.
- We are aware of the impacts on mental health of ongoing restrictions and we will support mental health measures and prioritise outdoor activity.

- Given our expected high levels of vaccination, we do not anticipate needing proof of vaccination to access public and private sector services.
- We will balance the risks posed by COVID-19 to ensure we do not overwhelm our health system.
- We will move through the phases of the National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 response. Movement through each phase is triggered when the average vaccination rates across the nation, as well as in the ACT, have reached the required thresholds. In the ACT we acknowledge that effective vaccination occurs two weeks after the threshold is reached.

- We will count all people aged 12 years and over when determining whether we've reached the National Plan thresholds. We will also consider the vaccination rates for vulnerable groups, as well as the overall rates.
- We will continue to contribute to work of National Cabinet including planning for our:
  - Health System
  - Public Health Responses - Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine (TTIQ)
  - Public Health Social Measures (public health restrictions) including how these relate to the National Plan.

## Our current situation

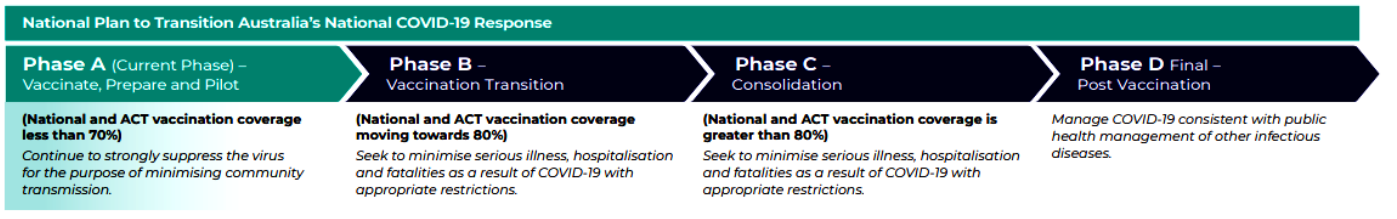
The ACT is currently experiencing concerning levels of community transmission. This means that we need to keep high level public health restrictions in place to minimise the spread of the virus.

Our priority is vaccinating as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, including our vulnerable communities. TTIQ must be effective and efficient – we need to continue testing, rapid contact tracing and effective isolation and quarantine measures. This will include continuing to support people to isolate and quarantine in alternative accommodation where their home is not appropriate.

Australia currently looks set to reach 70 per cent full vaccination by mid to late October and 80 per cent by early to mid November. The ACT anticipates crossing these thresholds earlier.

## Our steps forward

- When looking to change restrictions we will consider:
- national and local vaccination rates
  - our health system capacity, including the impact of COVID-19 in regional NSW
  - the levels of community transmission, especially the proportion of cases who were not in quarantine while infectious
  - testing rates and turnaround time
  - our ability to quickly test, trace, isolate and quarantine
  - how well the community and business are complying with restrictions
  - data on the effective reproduction ratio and transmission potential



## Public Health Restrictions

Public health restrictions are put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We expect these restrictions to gradually change as we transition through the phases of the National Plan, but they may also be adjusted in response to increased risk of COVID-19 spread. It is anticipated that the following restrictions will gradually change:

- Stay at home (Lockdown) except for essential purposes.
- Home visitation numbers – the number of people allowed to visit could increase when the situation eases.
- Ongoing working from home requirements, with gradual return.
- Remote learning requirements, with phased return to face-to-face learning when it is safe to do so.
- Gathering sizes – these could increase when safe to do so, noting that outdoors is safer than indoors.
- Larger events and gatherings may remain restricted for longer.
- Density quotients within businesses, venues and facilities – businesses may be asked to apply density quotients for a period of time, with caps on number of patrons or clients allowed to enter a business.
- Higher risk businesses and venues may need to remain closed or more tightly restricted for longer.
- Restrictions within high risk settings, including residential aged care facilities, disability accommodation, hospitals and corrections facilities, including temporarily limiting visits and movement.



For more information: [covid19.act.gov.au](https://covid19.act.gov.au)





## COTA ACT Webinar series

### Spring-clean your way to better health –a two part webinar series presented by COTA ACT and the Heart Foundation

COTA ACT and The Heart Foundation are collaborating to bring you a two-part webinar series focused on improving your health. Join us as we interactively discuss good health behaviours for active ageing with presentations from COTA ACT, The Heart Foundation and Asthma Australia. This series will be focusing on: physical activity, heart health, spring asthma essentials and exercise-induced asthma, mental health, lifestyle risk factors, nutrition and programs/tools to support. We look forward to engaging with you as we talk about the many things that can be done to manage and improve your health.

Dates: Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

Time: 1.00pm, - 2.00pm

Register for both webinars via [this link](#)

**Diane Percy**

**Active Ageing Coordinator ACT**

Please note that my work days are Mondays(11-5pm), Thursdays(9-5pm) & Fridays(9-1pm)



**Strength for Life**



Hughes Community Centre, 2 Wisdom Street, Hughes ACT 2605

Phone: 02 6282 3777 / Website: [cotaact.org.au](http://cotaact.org.au) / Facebook: [COTA ACT](#)