

# RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

26 May 2023

## REMINDER! Meeting News

### AGM/OGM

Dear members,

The 2023 AGM RSL WV Sub-Branch will be held at 1400 hours on Tuesday 30 May 2023 in the Sub-Branch office in Holder. The AGM will be followed by the monthly Ordinary General Meeting (OGM).

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM/OGM.

Light refreshments will be provided following the OGM.

Kind regards,

Greg



**Greg Kennett**  
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## Update 24 May 2023 - 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War

The Australian Government will mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War with:

- a televised Commemorative Service (service) at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra on Friday 18 August 2023; and
- production and distribution of a Commemorative Medallion (medallion) and Certificate of Commemoration (certificate).

### **Commemorative Service on 18 August 2023**

#### **Overview**

Location: Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial  
Anzac Parade, Campbell, Canberra

Date/Time: Friday 18 August 2023  
Pre-Service commences at 10:00am  
Commemorative service commences at 10:30am

#### **Broadcast**

The service will be broadcast live across Australia by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and streamed online. The ABC will also make the broadcast available to other networks to provide all members of the community the opportunity to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

#### **Ticketing for in-person attendance**

All attendees must register in advance. An attendance pass is essential for entry to the service. Further information regarding attendance passes will be announced by DVA shortly and made available on the DVA webpage.

## Planning your attendance

Attendees are encouraged to plan their journey and arrival times carefully. We encourage you to arrive early to ensure you have sufficient time to progress through ticket scanning and be seated before the service commences.

A pre-service program commences at 10:00am, it is an educational experience designed to provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Australian experience of the Vietnam War.

Seating is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Accessible seating and support are provided to those who need accessible assistance.

Complimentary tea, coffee and (limited) bottled water will be available onsite.

## Travel to the service

Attendees can travel by the following means:

- Chartered shuttle bus
  - Transport Canberra will provide free chartered bus services to and from the Commemorative Service. Board the shuttles at the City Interchange Bus Station in Canberra City only. Shuttles will not stop at other bus stops en route.
  - The shuttles include seated and standing positions. Seating is not guaranteed.
  - A dedicated accessible shuttle is also available for attendees with accessibility requirements. The dedicated shuttle is equipped with 'Easy Access' low floor accessibility and will operate from the City Interchange Bus Station in Civic.
  - Attendees do not need to pre-register to catch the chartered shuttle bus. On the day, passengers will need to present their attendance pass in either electronic or paper form to Transport Canberra staff.
  - The chartered shuttle service, including the accessible shuttle, will include return services on conclusion of the Commemorative Service. Attendees catching the return shuttle need to commence boarding from 11:50am. Shuttle buses will depart at 12:00pm for return to the City Interchange.
  - Further information about the chartered shuttle bus and accessible assistance shuttles departure timings and will be available soon on the DVA webpage.
- ACT public transport
  - ACTION bus service, including the light rail, will provide free travel to and from the city and the commemorative service. Attendees will need to present their attendance pass in either electronic or paper form to Transport Canberra staff.
  - Attendees will need to make their own way from the bus stops, these are located in close vicinity to the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial.

- Private vehicle
  - Travel by private vehicle is not recommended. There is very limited on-street parking available in the vicinity of Anzac Parade.
  - Limited reserved parking on Anzac Park East is available for those requiring accessibility parking and can present an appropriate government issued Disability Parking Permit.
- Taxi (this method of travel is to be arranged by attendees at their own expense).
- Walk, cycle or scooter.

Note: There will be road closures in place surrounding Anzac Parade and Anzac Park between Constitution Avenue and Currong Street/Blamey Crescent. Access to these roads will be by authorised vehicles only.

## **Commemorative Medallion and Certificate**

While Australia can never repay the debt we owe to the 60,000 who served in Vietnam, the Commemorative Medallion and Certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour their service and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home. The medallion and certificate is available to every living Vietnam War veteran, widows of Vietnam War veterans or other family members. Only one medallion is available per Vietnam War veteran/family. The medallion is provided free of charge.

The medallion is presented in a display case with a card that has an expression of gratitude and also explains the medallion's design. The design of the commemorative certificate complements that of the medallion. The design includes the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, 'Australia Remembers' wording and includes the signature of both the Governor-General and the Prime Minister. The certificate is contained within its own folder, and is suitable for independent display, framing and mounting.

The obverse design of the medallion features the Commonwealth Coat of Arms with 'Vietnam War' inscribed at the top and 'Australia remembers' at the bottom. The medallion's reverse design features words of thanks at the bottom, with the years 1962-73 inscribed at the top to represent the years in which Australia was involved in the Vietnam War. The medallion also features depictions of a UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" Helicopter, HMAS Sydney (III) "Vung Tau Ferry", and an Australian soldier holding an SLR.

### **How to obtain a medallion and certificate**

Applications are made online at this [link](#):

[www.dva.gov.au/recognition/commemorations/commemorative-services/commemorative-services-australia/50th-anniversary](http://www.dva.gov.au/recognition/commemorations/commemorative-services/commemorative-services-australia/50th-anniversary)

Please note that you will need to provide your service number, or the service number of the veteran you are applying on behalf of. You will also need to ensure that the first and last names used exactly match DVA's nominal roll: <https://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/>

### **Who can I talk to if I require assistance to apply?**

If you are having difficulties completing the online application and require assistance, please phone 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) between 9am and 5pm AEST Monday to Friday, and when prompted say the word 'medallions'. You can also email [commemorations@dva.gov.au](mailto:commemorations@dva.gov.au).



## VETERANS CONDEMN CDF PROPOSAL TO STRIP SOLDIERS OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDALS AWARDED IN THE AFGHANISTAN WAR

24 May

### **MEDIA RELEASE: Australian SAS Association**

Senior Veteran leaders are calling on the federal government to reject outright the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) General Angus Campbell's second attempt to strip awards for distinguished and conspicuous service on warlike operations from soldiers who served the nation with honour and resolve in the Afghanistan war. We are advised that General Campbell wrote to at least seven officers in recent days telling them he has decided to go ahead with his effort to remove the awards, stating that.

"... I am... referring the matter to the Minister for Defence (the Minister) for consideration. It is then for the Minister to independently determine whether he accepts the assessment in my letter after considering the relevant information including your response. If he is of the view that your award should be cancelled, the Minister will make a recommendation to the Governor General. The Governor-General will then make a decision. This is in accordance with the Letters Patent. My consideration of your command accountability is now closed."

In a joint statement in November 2022, the Australian Special Air Services Association (ASASA) and the Commando (CDO), with the support of the Returned and Services League (RSL) expressed the clear view that any administrative action against soldiers should cease until criminal charges were dealt with and the facts established, in accordance with due process. The SAS Association wrote to the CDF on 8 February 2023 repeating the request. General Campbell has ignored our advice. Mr HamiltonSmith said.

**"Whilst we respect the institution of the ADF and the appointment of CDF as part of that institution, we now recognise that General Campbell's actions necessitate a more prescient response. In our opinion this CDF has mishandled the yet to be proven war crime allegations from the outset and has in the view of many veterans, created an inference of guilt against those involved before the defendants account of events had been heard, in accordance with due process.**

**"The removal of awards for distinguished and conspicuous service from soldiers after a war in this way appears unprecedented in the history of ANZAC. This second attempt by CDF in effect impugns and humiliates dedicated young commanders who led brave soldiers in the fight against terror in Afghanistan with great distinction. It is in the opinion of veterans both 2 unjustified and a stunning demonstration of poor leadership from our top-ranking military officer."**

**"SAS soldiers volunteered to get the job done but they were worn down and overused by their government in a lethal and under resourced workplace to minimize the government's political risks and to fight the war on the cheap by avoiding the need to deploy and put at risk, larger conventional combat forces. Because they were so few, some soldiers were required to deploy on 9 to 10 rotations and spent up to three and a half years in combat. Our soldiers and their families paid physical, psychological, and moral price for their service. Each of them continues to carry a burden.**

**"General Campbell was commander of these soldiers as Commander Task Force 663 in 2011- 12. He had oversight of all operations and reviewed after action reports. On the back of the efforts of Special Forces facing the enemy in the Afghan desert, General Campbell was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), the same award he wants to take away from the soldiers. As the senior Australian commander General Campbell had a moral and command responsibility for Australian operations. He excludes himself from the standard he requires of others. The General should hand in his own medal, or he has no credibility. This is not the leadership example of Sir John Monash or Weary Dunlop." Mr Hamilton-Smith said,**



We are concerned first and foremost for each of the individual veterans who were ordered to fight the Afghanistan war, particularly former troopers, commandos and noncommissioned officers, officers, and their families. We are sensitive to the work of the Royal Commission into Veterans Suicide currently undertaking hearings in Perth. General Campbell's actions this week follow the constructed dismissal of soldiers from their employment, a high rate of medical discharges and will further impact veterans' mental health and that of their spouses and children. On behalf of the Commando Association Steve Pilmore said.

"Soldiers and veterans feel the system which sent them to war has turned its back on them. It feels to them like organisational betrayal." The suggestion that any soldier or officer not subject to any allegation within the Brereton Report is guilty by association of wrongdoing warranting punishment, is a very dangerous precedent with potential ramifications to the very top of the chain of command. "Any punitive administrative action taken to remove awards or sanction veterans must be supported by evidence, it must be fair and considered, and individuals must be afforded due process. General Campbell has not made the case that awards should be removed from soldiers, and he has not held himself accountable as an SAS officer and as Commander of the Australians in Afghanistan in 2011-12." Mr Pilmore said.

Ministers Dutton and Hastie in the former government dealt with general Campbell's first attempt at this folly decisively. How Defence Ministers Marles, Conroy, Keogh, and Thistlethwaite deal with it and with the Governor General, will demonstrate to Australians whether they have a government which stands with veterans and their families, or with a General who is manifestly out of touch with Australian community sentiment.

"This action by CDF disparages our ANZAC legacy and the foundations of military leadership, it is putting at further risk soldiers' mental health, it is delivering adverse publicity to Defence, a drop in recruiting and an alarming separation rate. General Campbell should be focussed upon the future, upon lifting recruiting and retention, implementation of the Defence Strategic Review and unblocking defence procurement and capability. The General's preoccupation with events 10 years ago during the last war in Afghanistan, is a distraction" Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

Supporting the SAS and Commando veterans Associations, RSL national president Greg Melick said,

The RSL is concerned about this recent development from Defence to remove awards from commanders. Whilst the RSL believes that there must be command accountability for any wrongdoings on their watch the facts of allegations of wrongdoing in Afghanistan are untested and the truth not yet established by a court. It is expected that the legal processes underway at the moment may do that. The RSL believes that until those processes are complete no further action against commanders, or anyone else, should be taken. In the meantime, all involved have a right to a presumption of innocence. We remain very concerned about the breadth and depth of the impact that this is having on the mental health of our veterans. We call for the legal processes to be worked through fairly but also as quickly as possible. In the meantime, the RSL offers its support and services for the wellbeing of any veterans affected". Greg Melick said.

The ASASA and CDO Associations and the RSL will discuss these issues widely with Ex-Service Organisations and the Australian community to determine next steps. We ask no more than that expected of any capable Australian leader; we expect judgement guided by compassion, a deep respect for democratic and legal due process and the moral courage to support and respect the service of those placed in harm's way by Australian government and senior ADF commanders' decisions.

We look to the government to stand beside veterans and their families by rejecting General Campbell's recommendation and his advice on these matters.

<i>Hon Martin Hamilton-Smith</i>	<i>Steve Pilmore</i>	<i>Greg Melick</i>
National Chairman	Vice President	National President
Australian SAS Association	Australian Commando Association	RSL Australia



# RSL AUSTRALIA WELCOMES ADDITIONAL \$328M COMMITTED TO VETERANS IN FEDERAL BUDGET

## MEDIA RELEASE

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has welcomed the 2023-24 Federal Budget and the more than [\\$328 million in funding](#) that has been allocated to veterans and their families through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

RSL Australia National President Greg Melick said it was encouraging to see a significant injection of funding to support those who have served our country.

"This commitment to the health and wellbeing of veterans, in addition to a substantial investment to address key recommendations from the Interim Report for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, is incredibly promising and addresses a number of challenges experienced by veterans," Greg Melick said.

"It is also heartening to see the inclusion of a number of cost of living measures from Medicare reform to subsidise energy bills and an increase in rent assistance to support Australians across the country, including many in the veteran community.

"We welcome the investment to strengthen Medicare and increase access to primary healthcare, and we hope that this will increase access for veterans seeking appointments with GPs once we understand the impact of this measure more broadly.

"However, we are disappointed that the Budget did not include identified funding for the full implementation of all recommendations of the ongoing Royal Commission, as well as a commitment to implement demand-driven funding to support veterans' welfare, rather than having to fight for funding each budget year."

While supportive of the commitment of funding to DVA, Greg Melick said RSL Australia looked forward to engaging with the Federal Government on additional measures to support the more than 581,000 veterans and their families across the country.

"We acknowledge that the economic environment is uncertain and fiscal conditions are tight, but for these reasons, we made extensive calls on government for sustained funding to address the inequities and barriers that continue to be experienced by the veteran community," he said.

"We remain committed to our pre-budget calls for the establishment of an implementation body to oversee the recommendations of the Royal Commission and will continue to advocate to the Federal Government to ensure this remains a priority.

"Our veterans are skilled and capable people who make significant contributions to our communities post-service. Investing in services, support systems and wellbeing programs to strengthen their health and welfare remains our core focus.

"Veterans and their families can take heart in knowing that Australians continue to value their service and sacrifice, both during and after their ADF service, and we will continue to work tirelessly with the Federal Government to ensure our members are supported with practical services and programs."

Other budget highlights include:

- An additional \$4.8 billion in funding for veterans' compensation and support payments.
- \$254.1 million over four years to modernise and sustain ageing IT systems, and ensure more timely payments and access to services for veterans and families through DVA.
- \$64.1 million in 2023-24 to retain more than 480 DVA staff who are working to deliver frontline services to veterans and families;
- \$2 million over 2 years from 2023–24 to continue the Department of Veterans' Affairs mental health literacy and suicide intervention training program for the ex-service community
- Expanded eligibility for the Acute Support Package (ASP) introduced in the October 2022 Budget to include grandcarers – grandparents who are full-time carers of children of veterans
- \$82.5 million for the Veterans' Home Care Program and Community Nursing services

The RSL also welcomed the \$50,000 re-enlistment bonus for Australian Defence Force personnel but said this should be seen as just the first step in a campaign to build an increased and sustainable military complement.

The RSL also reiterated its concern that some 30 projects have been either reduced, delayed or scrapped in a bid to save \$7.8 billion, with funding reprioritised as part of the \$19 billion reinvestment to help fund the recommendations of the Defence Strategic Review. This funding is fully offset from Defence's current budget.

# 2024 AVCAT Scholarships & Long Tan Bursary

## AVCAT Scholarships

Hello,

[AVCAT scholarships](#), including the [Long Tan Bursary](#), 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 [avcat.org.au](https://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 [here](#).

Find information about scholarships, the application process or scholarship eligibility at [avcat.org.au](https://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



# **DVA funded 12 month health and fitness program - Heart Health Program - Registrations Open**

**DVA Heart Health Program for Returned Veterans & Peacekeepers & those covered by  
the ADF Firefighters Scheme**

**12 Months of Health coaching**

**Gym or Pool membership assistance available**

Did you know the DVA provides a free 12-month health and fitness program that can be delivered to returned Veterans and peacekeepers with operational service and those covered by the ADF firefighters scheme anywhere in the country. The program is flexible and able to accommodate participants living in metropolitan areas, regional or remote areas, those still working or retired, studying or with other time constraints. Run on behalf of the DVA by Corporate Health Management the program aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through practical exercise support and 12 months of health coaching and advice on healthy lifestyle choices provided by one of our team of highly qualified allied health professionals.

## **Am I eligible?**

Started 20 years ago for those returned from Vietnam, the Heart Health Program is free and now open to all returned veterans and peacekeepers with operational service and those covered by the ADF Firefighters Scheme who have not previously done the Heart Health Program before. To check your eligibility visit <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility/>

## **Individual Heart Health Program – How it works**

Each participant receives 12 months of healthy lifestyle coaching from a highly qualified and dedicated allied health professional via fortnightly health coaching calls with information and advice tailored to each individuals health and fitness goals. The health coach will use their extensive knowledge along with health surveys and food diaries to guide you through the program. The program covers a range of topics including:

- setting healthy goals
- nutrition and diet advice
- advice on lowering alcohol consumption
- developing better sleep patterns
- stress management
- managing diabetes
- taking care of your body
- managing your weight

and maintaining a healthy heart

## Program Exercise Resource – Exercise how you like to

The program can provide an exercise resource to help participants to exercise the way they like to or provide an opportunity to try something that's different than the usual. Resources can take the form of:

- Assistance with the cost of a gym or pool membership or
  - Provide a piece of exercise equipment for use at home or
- Provide assistance with accessing new exercise or training gear

## Registering Your Interest

Registering your interest or checking eligibility is easy. Simply visit <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility/> and follow the steps. Or please call the program phone number **1300 246 262** at any time to speak to one of our team.

Kind regards

**Heart Health Team** - DVA Heart Health Program

Program proudly delivered on behalf of the DVA by:

**CHM Corporate Health Management Pty Ltd**

Toorak Place, 521 - 529 Toorak Road, Toorak VIC 3142

Direct: 1300 246 262

Email: [hearthealth@chm.com.au](mailto:hearthealth@chm.com.au)

Web: <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au>





# COST OF LIVING

## Community Support & BBQ

Mura Lanyon Youth  
and Community  
Centre

Thursday 1 June  
9:30am - 11:30am

22 Sidney Nolan Street, Conder

Come for a free BBQ lunch and a chance to win a \$100 Woolworths gift card lucky door prize

### Are you feeling the pinch?

Chat with participating services about support and advice relating to household bills and debt, emergency relief programs, government rebates and concessions and more!

#### PARTICIPATING SERVICES INCLUDE





**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.**



**Contact Us**

Give us a call for more information  
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**PS.**

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