

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

26 November 21

Departing staff member Rania Kalimeris invited a few members along for afternoon tea. Guests included Les Cook, Janny Poate and Terry Colhoun. Peter Sutton, our new Senior Welfare Advocate, and staff Trish Law and Alex Solecka are also pictured.





RSL
Australia

THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE

RSL Australia welcomes the Royal Commission and the opportunity it represents to address the devastating phenomenon of Defence and Veterans' suicide in Australia.

Building on the contribution of its State Branches and the interest, consideration, reflection and personal input of its membership, RSL Australia has provided a submission to the Royal Commission identifying issues, risks and opportunities to improve the current landscape for Australia's Defence Members and Veterans. You can find a link to our submission below.

RSL Australia is committed to working with the government, the ESO sector and veterans to coordinate the response needed to minimise the risk of suicide and maximise the wellbeing of Australia's Defence members and Veteran community.

The Royal Commission will accept submissions until at least the end of March 2022. Information on the [public hearings](#) will be publicised on the [Royal Commission website](#) and [you can subscribe to the mailing list](#) for emails including details about hearings.

Below is the link to RSL Australia and states/territories submissions to Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

https://www.rslaustralia.org/royal-commission?fbclid=IwAR3zjc2yTA7KC6Yp6ctwi_L6ka2DwZ2GXhRR1Aft-ZYiqCpp_kr6xRXxqQ



MEDIA RELEASE

25 November 2021
For immediate release

Solutions Must be Found to Address Veteran and Defence Force Member Suicide

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) says the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide represents an opportunity to address this devastating impact on veterans, serving Defence Force personnel and their families.

RSL Australia President Greg Melick said ex-service organisations, the Government and Australian society must find solutions to minimise Defence and veterans' suicide, and in doing so, honour the covenant between the Australian people and those who have served and sacrificed so much on their behalf.

RSL Australia reaffirms its support for the Royal Commission and has always sought to engage with whichever process can achieve the best outcomes for Defence members, veterans and their families regarding mental health and suicide.

The RSL welcomes the opportunity to present a detailed submission identifying issues, risks, and opportunities to improve the current landscape for Australia's Defence Force members and veterans. The submission builds on the contribution of State branches and the interests and input of RSL membership.

The RSL Australia's submission to the Commission builds on 21 previous inquiries and reports conducted into matters relevant to Defence Force and veteran suicide conducted since 2007 and the more than 335 recommendations from those inquiries that have not been implemented.

Greg Melick said a full review of previous findings, factual data and implementation of past recommendations should be undertaken by the Commission.

"Between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2019, there were 1,273 certified suicide deaths among those with at least one day of ADF service from 1985," he said.

"Each suicide represents an individual tragedy for the Defence Force member or Veteran involved, as well as for their loved ones.

"The community expectation is that the time to act is now and the Royal Commission must be the catalyst for that action.

As a member-based ex-service organisation, founded on the Australian principle of mateship, empathy and taking care of each other, the RSL is uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in supporting the veteran community.

The RSL's submission identifies key areas for consideration by the Commission including the governance arrangements from covering legislation to resourcing and funding, coordination of Veterans' Affairs to provide better outcomes for veterans and targeted mental health programs.

The RSL has increased its support in the field of mental health and would continue to contribute in this area, noting that mental health issues impact on all Australians.

"The RSL is introducing a nationwide awareness program to help veterans and their families understand mental health issues and risks, in conjunction with Open Arms which is Australia's leading provider of mental support program for veterans and their families.

"It is also leading a national 'first-of-its-kind' initiative, with other ex-service organisations to develop a catalogue of programs and services available to Defence members and veterans.

"The RSL has relaunched its national employment program for veterans seeking employment opportunities and this is also available to spouses and partners of transitioning Defence members and veterans.

"We are also expanding our Transition Booth initiative at ADF events to assist Defence Force personnel move into civilian life and have launched nationally a best practice sport and recreational program developed by RSL Victoria called RSL Australia Active.

"As well, State branches and sub-branches continue to offer and manage a variety of programs to support veterans."

RSL Australia is committed to working with government, the ex-service organisation sector, veterans and their families to coordinate the response needed to minimise risk of suicide and maximise the wellbeing of Australia's Defence Force members and the veteran community.

"The RSL has the network, the experience, and the expertise to lead the ex-service organisation response to the outcomes of the Royal Commission, and in doing so, help to improve the lives of Australia's Defence members, veterans and their families.

"RSL Australia's 150,000 members and its more than 1,150 sub-branches stand ready to offer whatever support and advice that is required.

"The heritage of the RSL Australia-wide – where mates have voluntarily helped mates independently for some 105 years – will continue to be the bedrock of our service and veteran support throughout the Royal Commission process," Greg Melick said.

ENDS

National Media contact: Tony Harrison – 0417 318 178; tony@wearebright.com.au

RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch
is pleased to invite members and their guests
to the

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Wednesday 15 December
12:00noon for 12:30pm
Orion Room Canberra Southern Cross Club Phillip
\$40 per person

Menu (alternate service):

MAIN

***Roast Turkey or
Slow Roasted Black Angus Sirloin***

DESSERT

***Traditional Christmas pudding or
White Chocolate Pannacotta (gf)***

Charge includes soft drinks, selected wines and beers.

Spirits at own expense.

Please RSVP by 3pm 8 December 2021

Phone 62851931 or email admin@rslwoden.org.au

Direct Credit (Don't forget to include your name in transfer)

A/C name: Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch

BSB 062-908, Account 1084 1897 (include your name)

Credit Card; Phone 6285 1931

By cheque: mail to 14/27 Mulley Street Holder ACT 2614

Sorry, no refunds are possible after cob 8 December 2021.

Residential aged care accommodation design standards consultation

The Australian Government is developing new residential aged care accommodation design standards and consultation discussion papers can be viewed at: <https://consultations.health.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/new-residential-aged-care-design-standards>

The New Residential Aged Care Accommodation Framework Overview discussion paper provides context for development of residential aged care design standards.

The New Residential Aged Care Accommodation Framework Design and Innovation discussion paper explores the drivers for change and key elements that impact residential aged care accommodation design, including:

- accessibility
- dementia-friendly design
- diversity
- small home environments
- location
- safe design standards, and

ensuring standards do not limit innovation.

We are inviting residential aged care providers to read the New Residential Aged Care Accommodation Framework Overview and the Design and Innovation discussion papers and provide us with feedback to inform our work.

We would like to request that you promote the following message to your members for feedback submission.

Have your say: new residential aged care design standards

What is important in the design of high, quality residential aged care accommodation?

Residential aged care providers, stakeholders and technical experts are asked to provide feedback on discussion papers at <https://consultations.health.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/new-residential-aged-care-design-standards> that explore the drivers for change and key elements that impact residential aged care accommodation design.

Contribute to the design standards to create:

safer, more innovative residential aged care accommodation options
accessibility and enablement, improving quality of life and
dementia-friendly services.

Feedback and insights from providers will help ensure accommodation best meets care needs for diverse populations.

Email feedback to us by 17 December 2021 at accommodationdesign.reform@health.gov.au.

Your assistance with this messaging will ensure more providers have the opportunity to contribute.

Thank you

Accommodation Design Reform Team

Market and Workforce Division | Ageing and Aged Care Group

Dementia, Diversity and Design Branch

Australian Government Department of Health

E: accommodationdesign.reform@health.gov.au

Location: Sirius Building 4.S.410

GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia



Scamwatch radar alert

Watch out for fake online deals and avoid scammers this sales season

Australians have already lost about \$12.9 million to online shopping including classifieds scams so far this year, and the ACCC is urging consumers to watch out for dodgy deals as pre-holiday sales approach.

Scamwatch has received over 26,000 reports of online shopping scams, more than the total reported through all of 2020. This is consistent with global trends from 2020 as more people shop online during the pandemic.

“This is a very busy time of year, and scammers often try to take advantage of unsuspecting shoppers rushing to organise gifts,” ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

“People are often searching for the best deals online, especially in the Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales, so it’s easy to be caught off guard and fall for a scam.”

In an online shopping scam, scammers create realistic looking fake online stores selling items at heavily discounted prices, however the items are fake, or never delivered to buyers.

Scammers have also created fake stores on social media platforms or post fake ads on legitimate classifieds websites. They may request payment or offer discounts for payments made through direct bank transfers or cryptocurrency.

“Before you buy, it’s important to be aware of the possibility of scams. While some scammers try to make online stores look legitimate by requesting payment via PayPal or credit card, always double check that the real PayPal platform is being used. Be suspicious of too good to be true offers and any sellers that ask you to pay by bank transfer, gift cards or cryptocurrency,” Ms Rickard said.

“Research the seller and make sure you know who you are buying from. Search online for the product or company name, plus “complaint” or “scam” to see what other people are saying. If you are buying from a social networking site, check the seller’s history and read reviews from other people who have dealt with them.”

“When you’re paying, avoid arrangements that ask for up-front payment via bank transfer, or payment through digital currency, like Bitcoin. Always try to use a secure payment service such as PayPal or credit card transaction,” Ms Rickard said.

If you’re waiting for your parcel, remember that scammers also take advantage of people expecting deliveries.

“Australia Post and other parcel delivery companies will never email, call or text you asking for personal or financial information or a payment. Many delivery companies have apps where you can track your parcels rather than clicking on links in messages or emails,” Ms Rickard said.

Losses to online shopping scams are spread across most age groups, but people aged 25-34 lost the most money, at \$2.4 million.

The number of reports involving a financial loss has decreased this year, indicating that more people are able to recognise and avoid online shopping scams, however those that are losing money are losing more, with an average loss of more than \$1,450, compared to \$1,190 last year.

Some of the more significant losses reported to Scamwatch during the year relate to high value purchases:

- Pet scams were the most reported when it came to online shopping scams and were also the most financially damaging. Scamwatch received over 2,800 reports and almost \$3.5 million in losses so far, a 78 per cent increase compared to the same period last year.

- Vehicle sale scams resulted in big losses at more than \$1.9 million, while other common products included caravans, shipping containers and electronics such as laptops, phones, and gaming consoles.
- Shipping container scams were a new trend this year, fleecing consumers of over \$676,000. They were popular on marketplaces and classified sites, but scammers also created fake websites and pretended to have real ABNs. Scamwatch has taken action to get some fake websites removed.

People who think they have been scammed should contact their bank or financial institution immediately. If the scam occurred on a social media platform, contact the platform and inform them of the circumstances surrounding the scam.

They can also [make a report](#) to Scamwatch and find more information on where to [get help](#) on our website.

Know your consumer rights

The ACCC is also urging people to be aware of their consumer rights if something goes wrong, even if the item was purchased during the sales season.

“Remember that you are entitled to consumer guarantees under the Australian Consumer Law, so if you’ve received a gift or purchased something in the sales and the product stops working or isn’t as it was described, you are entitled to a remedy depending on the nature of the problem,” Ms Rickard said.

“If you’re having an issue with your product, you should first contact the retailer. They cannot refuse to help by sending you to the manufacturer. Your local state and territory consumer protection agency can provide more information about your rights, and may also be able to help negotiate resolutions between you and the seller.”

More information about [consumer guarantees](#) is available on the ACCC’s website.

Read more in the [media release](#).

[Watch out for fake online deals and avoid scammers this sales season | Scamwatch](#)



THE HON MICHAEL SUKKAR MP
Assistant Treasurer
Minister for Housing
Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing

THE HON ANDREW GEE MP
Minister for Defence Personnel
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

24 November 2021

GOVERNMENT PROTECTING VETERANS' INTERESTS FOLLOWING COURT DECISION

In a significant win for veterans across the country, the Morrison-Joyce Government has taken action to ensure no veteran will be made worse off due to a Federal Court decision.

The court's decision in *Commissioner of Taxation v. Douglas* (the *Douglas* decision) had meant that invalidity pensions paid under the Military Superannuation and Benefits (MSB) and Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) schemes which commenced after 20 September 2007 would be taxed as superannuation lump sums rather than superannuation income stream benefits.

The Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar said that without a swift response from the Australian Government, the *Douglas* decision would have had potentially harmful financial implications for some veterans.

"The court's decision had meant that invalidity pensions paid under certain superannuation schemes would be taxed differently," Assistant Minister Sukkar said.

"By developing legislation to ensure these benefits are again treated as income streams rather than lump sums for tax purposes, we are removing the impact on adversely affected veterans while also preserving the better tax outcome for veterans who welcomed the *Douglas* decision."

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee said the Australian Government was putting veterans first.

"Almost 6800 veterans would have had more tax withheld from their pension payments as a result of this court decision, meaning less money in their pockets every fortnight. In some cases this was up to \$100 per fortnight, and that was unacceptable to me," Minister Gee said.

“Thousands of veterans were also facing the prospect of being hit with a notice for back-taxes going back to 2017. It would have devastated so many vulnerable veterans.

“These veterans on invalidity pensions have given Australia their best. Having their pensions cut and then slugging them with back taxes would have been unconscionable.

“This financial storm for veterans has been brewing since December 2020. Decisive action needed to be taken to address it and that is what I have done.

“I’d like to acknowledge the Coalition Backbench Committee, chaired by the Member for Fisher Andrew Wallace, for their work on this vitally important issue.

“Making life better for our veterans, and ensuring they get the support and care that they need and deserve is my top priority. That includes making sure that veterans will not pay higher taxes on their invalidity pension.”

To preserve the preferential tax outcome for veterans impacted positively by the decision, the Australian Government will create a new non-refundable tax offset for recipients of invalidity pensions paid from the impacted schemes.

The offset will ensure that, notwithstanding the change in tax treatment, veterans who would be better off in a particular income year if the invalidity pension were still treated as lump sums would retain that tax benefit. In effect, whichever tax treatment provides the better tax outcome would apply to each affected veteran.

Going forward, invalidity pension recipients who would have been positively affected by the Douglas decision will automatically receive the tax offset on lodgement of their tax returns.

No affected veteran will see reduced fortnightly payments as a result of the *Douglas* decision, and the offset will be incorporated into the fortnightly Pay-As-You-Go withholding system.

The changes will apply retrospectively, which will mean that those who were positively affected will continue to receive any tax benefit following the application of the court decision to historic tax payments, while preventing any tax increases for others.

The Australian Government will continue to engage with affected benefit recipients in the course of delivering this legislation, and is committed to delivering a fair outcome for veterans.

medicare

INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMERS

Get free proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations



Accessing COVID-19 proof of vaccination

There are 3 ways you can show proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations:

- 1 a COVID-19 digital certificate
- 2 your immunisation history statement
- 3 an International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate for overseas travel.

The easiest way to get proof is online using either:


- your Medicare online account through myGov
- the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

USING MYGOV

1. Go to my.gov.au and sign in.
2. Select the **Proof of COVID-19 vaccination** quick link.
3. Select the type of proof you want and follow the steps.

USING THE EXPRESS PLUS MEDICARE APP

1. Log on to the app.
2. Select **Proof of vaccinations** from Services.
3. Select the type of proof you want and follow the steps.

 If you can't get your proof online or need help, call **1800 653 809***.

GET FREE PROOF OF YOUR COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

STORING YOUR PROOF

When you get proof online, you can download and print your own copy.

Once you've had all required COVID-19 vaccinations, you can add your COVID-19 digital certificate to your Apple Wallet™ or Google Pay™. You may also be able to add it to a state check in app.

If you're using the Express Plus Medicare mobile app, you can save your proof to your offline items for easy access on your device.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A MEDICARE ONLINE ACCOUNT

You need to link Medicare to your myGov account to set up your Medicare online account. Sign in to, or create your myGov account at my.gov.au

You can then link Medicare using either:

- your Medicare card number and information from your Medicare history
- a linking code issued by Medicare.

For help linking Medicare to myGov, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicareguides

You can also get your vaccination proof through My Health Record. Just link My Health Record to your myGov account.

KEEP YOUR CONTACT DETAILS UP TO DATE WITH MEDICARE

You can view and update your details using your Medicare online account or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

IF YOU'RE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE OR DVA

You can get your COVID-19 digital certificate or immunisation history statement using the Individual Healthcare Identifiers service through myGov.

If you need an international certificate, you can call **1800 653 809*** or visit a service centre to get your proof.

MORE INFORMATION

For information about getting proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/covidvaccineproof

For the latest COVID-19 updates and advice, go to australia.gov.au



* Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only.

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It was a pleasure to invite Liz Marshall to our sub-branch on Thursday 18th November. Liz brought us the latest information from Dementia Australia including the support and services available to our members and access to education sessions.

My take home statement was: What is good for your heart is good for your brain.

"A healthy brain starts with a healthy heart, being physically active, challenging your brain, being socially active and healthy eating.

" For information on support for living with dementia – and maximising your brain health – call the National Dementia Helpline or visit:

<https://www.dementia.org.au>

**Dementia Australia ACT office:
Endeavour House
Level 3, 2-10 Captain Cook
Crescent Griffith ACT 2603**





Christmas Close Down

The RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch office at Holder will close from noon Friday 17 December 2021 until 3pm Monday 3 January 2022 when our building will reopen for the year

Christmas break for Eddison Day Club meetings with Peter Sutton

Last meeting this year on 17 December 2021

First meeting of new year on 14 January 2022

Contact Us

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

**RSL Woden Valley
Sub-Branch
14/27 Mulley Street
HOLDER ACT 2611**

62851931

admin@rslwoden.org.au

Visit us on the web at
www.rslwoden.org.au

Or drop in for a coffee Fridays
from 10.00am

Our office hours are
9am-3pm Mon-Fri

Did you know?

E-News, Current Items of Interest and *The Serviceman* are also readily available to read on our website www.rslwoden.org.au