

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

29 October 21

The first (non-dinner) RSL WV Sub-Branch OGM since July finally took place on the afternoon of Tuesday 26 October. Having measured up the rooms available to us since we lost access to the Southern Cross Club, we concluded that only the corridors at the Grant Cameron Community Centre could meet the COVID requirement for four square metres of space per person.



Dear members

If you are visiting the Sub-Branch next week, please note we have been advised that the side carpark will be cordoned off for repairs on Friday 5 November. You should be aware that the front carparks are for two-hour periods only, but there are longer term school carparks to the right hand side of the Grant Cameron Community Centre.

A Strength For Life - Session on 21 October at RSL WV Sub-Branch

Presenter: Diane Percy

Active Ageing Coordinator ACT



This year the RSL Poppy Appeal celebrates its historic centenary.

For 100 years the Poppy Appeal has enabled the provision of assistance to veterans and their families.

Through the Poppy Appeal, you can contribute to changing the lives of veterans and their families. Every current and former service person of this great nation deserves our support. Your support or donation can help provide support to thousands of veterans and their families.

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 Woden or Coleman Court Shopping Centres between the 6th and 11th of November to support Poppy Appeal.



On 11 November 2021 the Australian War Memorial will hold the Remembrance Day National Ceremony which will be broadcast live on ABC from 10.45 am AEDT and streamed live on the Memorial's Facebook page.

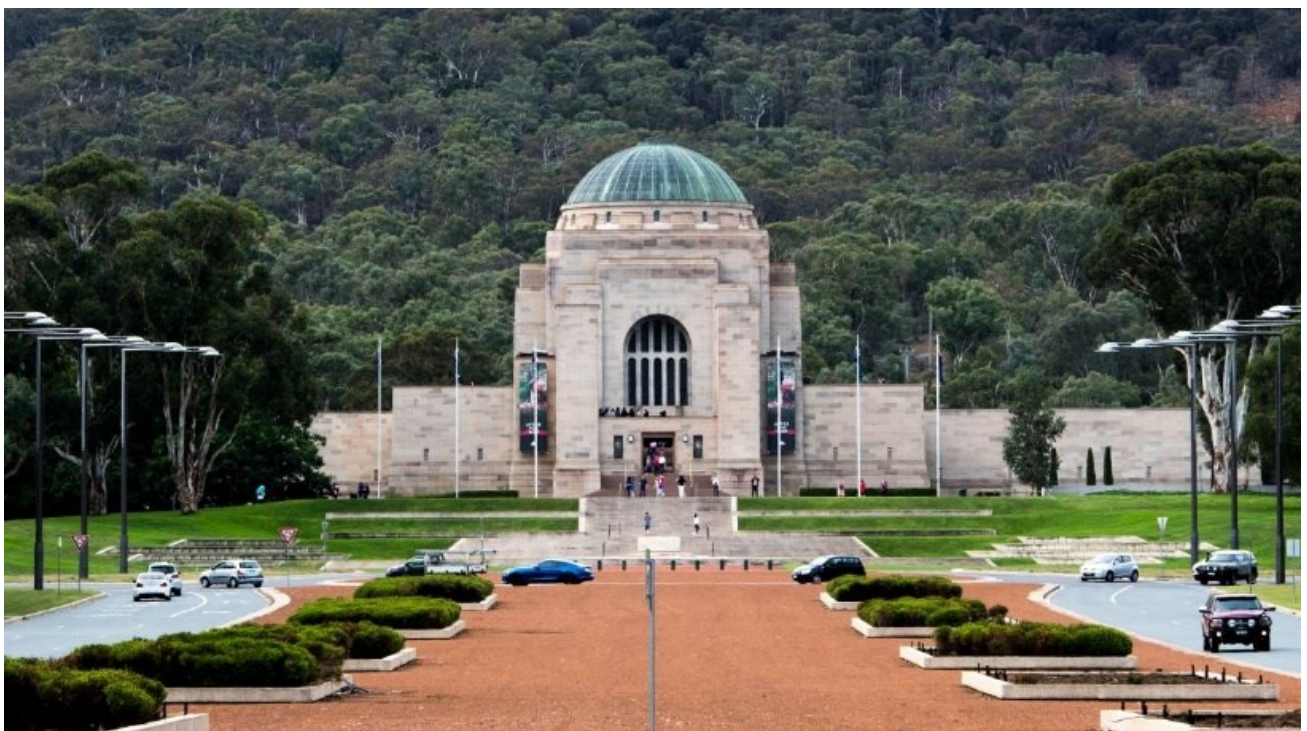
The ceremony will include a formal wreath laying and the observance of one minute's silence at 11 am.

This year's ceremony will be held in a reduced format and attended by a limited number of guests and members of the public. In line with the ACT Government's COVID-19 guidelines, 500 ticketed attendees will be able to attend.

Tickets will be available for members of the public to book online from 10 am AEDT on Friday, 29 October 2021.

Tickets are free and will be required for entry.

The Remembrance Day Last Post Ceremony will be live streamed on the Memorial's Facebook page and website at 4:45 pm AEDT.





Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Mental Health & Wellbeing Services Division

The past 12 months has seen an increasing number of presentations from veterans and families seeking mental health and wellbeing support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

This has been particularly evident in one Division within DVA, the Mental Health & Wellbeing Services Division, which encompasses the Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling service, Coordinated Client Support providing case management and on-base services, and the Department's Communications capability.

To adapt and be better positioned to meet the changing needs of our veteran community, a new Branch will be established in this Division.

This Branch will tentatively be called *Mental & Social Health Programs*, and will consolidate all of the Division's mental and social health programs as well as practice improvement, clinical governance, innovative research and pilots.

Additionally, the overall focus of the Division means Open Arms can work closely with the Triage and Connect team, which is the gateway to all supports under DVA's Client Support Program, providing a single access point for advice, assessments and response to urgent, high risk, complex, or escalated client matters identified by internal DVA staff and external stakeholders.

Open Arms remains a separate Branch, proudly maintaining the legacy of its founding organisation, Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service (VVCS). It will always be a counselling service focused on meeting the needs of the veteran community, which is different, but complementary, to the range of services offered by the broader Department.

Coordinated Client Support Branch will focus on case management support and on-base services.

Communications Branch will continue to provide professional external communications and media services to the Department and the Minister.

The consolidation of mental health and social programs, practice improvement, innovation and clinical governance into one branch will strengthen these functions, and also enable the two mental health and wellbeing service delivery areas to focus solely on working together to ensure that the Department can respond quickly and effectively to veterans and families at risk.

We are very pleased to advise that Dr Stephanie Hodson has been selected to undertake an important role in the Department of Health, supporting the COVID vaccination drive. The role focusses on the messaging and media around the vaccination roll-out, which will allow Dr Hodson to combine her considerable skills and experience in mental health and communications. This is a temporary transfer, for three to six months. We all congratulate Steph and wish her well in supporting Australia's return to a post-COVID state as soon as possible.

When she returns, Dr Hodson, who has been the National Manager of Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling for almost five years, will lead the new Branch. During Dr Hodson's tenure as National Manager Open Arms, she has led the service through a period of significant growth and

transformation. In her new role she will to continue the program of practice change and innovation in the Division and across DVA.

An Expression of Interest for the position of National Manager of Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling has been conducted, and will be temporarily filled by the current Assistant National Manager – Ms Helen Braun. Dr Hodson's position will be temporarily backfilled by another member of the Open Arms team – Ms Rachael Farrell as Assistant Secretary Mental & Social Health Programs.

These changes will further improve the support to Veterans and their families within the mental health space and ensure that we are complying with best practice in treatment, policies and protocols.

From RSL Australia

Applications for the RSL Scholarships and the Reg Saunders Scholarships will close at midnight on 31 October 2021. As an ex-service veteran, you may have children or grandchildren who are eligible for one of the RSL scholarships for tertiary study.

**Learn more and apply online via the AVCAT website:
<https://avcat.org.au/forms/apply/>**

**RSL
SCHOLARSHIPS
&
REG SAUNDERS
SCHOLARSHIPS**

Applications close 31 October



Thank you to all RSL Members who participated in the 2021 Census. RSL Australia received a letter of thanks from the General Manager of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, thanking RSL for playing a support role in encouraging #ourRSL to get involved.

For the first time, 2021 Census - Australia data will provide information about service with the Australian Defence Force. The data is expected to be released in stages from June 2022 - mid-2023



Good afternoon,

Thank you for your generous support in encouraging and assisting communities to participate in the 2021 Census.

More than 10 million Census forms, representing around 25 million people, have been completed. Our target was 95% response across Australia. We expect to exceed that, thanks to your support.

The Census website and contact centre have closed, although people can still return paper forms. Information about the Census is on the [ABS website](#), including an online enquiry form.

We have already commenced preliminary processing of the data received and we expect the first release of Census data in June 2022. The remaining results will be released in stages from June 2022 to mid-2023. You can find out more about the [2021 Census data release](#) on the ABS website.

For the first time, 2021 Census data will provide information about long-term health conditions and service with the Australian Defence Force. The data will also provide valuable information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the living and working arrangements of everyone in Australia.

Your support and assistance have been crucial in helping us to achieve such a strong result. Here's a [social media tile](#) you can share to say thank you to your community.

Thank you again for helping us share the message that every stat tells a story and how those stats matter.

Yours sincerely

Chris Libreri
General Manager, Census Division





From the Australian War Memorial:

El Alamein was one of the great battles of the Second World War, and is frequently described as a turning-point of that conflict.

The epic struggle began on 23 October 1942 and lasted until 5 November. Members of the 9th Australian Division took a leading role in the battle. Its three field artillery regiments provided about 80 of the 880 guns that fired the extraordinary opening barrage at 9.40 p.m. on that first night, 23 October. They were still firing when the final breakthrough was achieved on the night of the 2 November, and in between they were often the crucial factor halting enemy advances and making Commonwealth ones possible.

The battle was a slogging match, for it soon became apparent that the original plan of the overall British commander, General Montgomery, to achieve a quick breakthrough with tanks, was impossible. The main theme of this slogging match or 'dogfight', became the necessity of drawing the best Axis formations, the German units, to a part of the battlefield where they could be pinned down and worn down. That would allow a breakthrough by the British tanks in an area that was denuded of these fine troops.

In what Winston Churchill called "ceaseless bitter fighting", it was the Australians on the northern, coastal, flank of the battle, who managed to achieve this magnetic pull on the German armour and men. Churchill, General Montgomery and other British commanders acknowledged the crucial value of the Australian contribution at the time.

In 2017, the Memorial invited 23 veterans of El Alamein to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the battle. Watch the Last Post Ceremony here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzOWp0uMX60>

Image: Veterans of El Alamein attending the Last Post Ceremony commemorating Acting Corporal R A Matheson and the 75th anniversary of the second battle of El Alamein, 23 October 2017.

Around Australia

Two people have died with COVID-19 in NSW, taking the state's COVID-19 death toll to 508.

NSW had 293 fresh cases in Thursday's update, with 381 people in hospital and 82 requiring intensive care.

93.3 per cent of people aged 16+ have had one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, while 86 per cent of people aged 16 years and older have had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Victoria recorded 1923 COVID-19 cases and 25 deaths in the 24 hours to midnight, bringing the total active cases in the state to 22,189.








There are 746 patients with coronavirus in hospitals, 137 in ICU and 85 ventilated.

The state now has 77 per cent of the population aged 16 years and over fully vaccinated. More information at www.covid19.act.gov.au

From 11:59pm tonight, 28 October 2021, face masks will no longer be mandatory outdoors in the ACT.

Although you won't need to wear a face mask outdoors, you must always carry a face mask with you, even when you're outside.

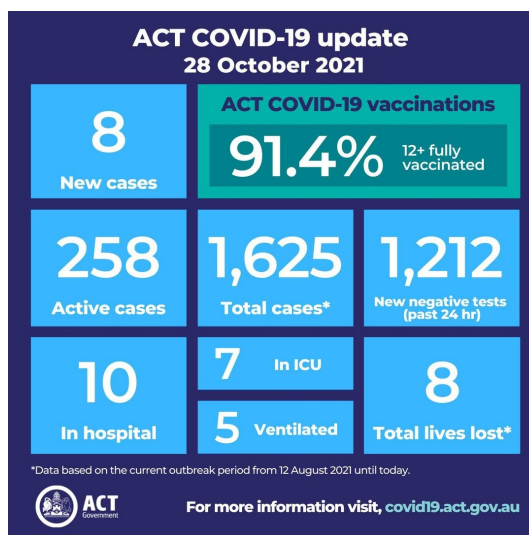
It's important to know it will still be mandatory for everyone aged 12 years and over to wear a face mask when indoors, including:

-  At grocery shops
-  In common areas of apartment buildings
-  In offices, unless at a workstation and 1.5m away from anyone else
-  At retail shops
-  In cafes and restaurants, unless seated at a table
-  On public transport and while using ride share services
-  In a car with people from another household.

Please remember that not everyone can wear a mask safely. Those who have a physical or mental health illness or condition, or a disability that makes wearing a fitted face covering unsuitable, do not need to wear a mask.

People can also remove their mask indoors in certain situations, such as when they are eating, drinking, or doing vigorous exercise.

You can find more information here: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/.../ACTs-Pathway-Forward...>



THE ACT'S COVID-19 PATHWAY FORWARD – FROM 29 OCTOBER 2021

Our guiding principles

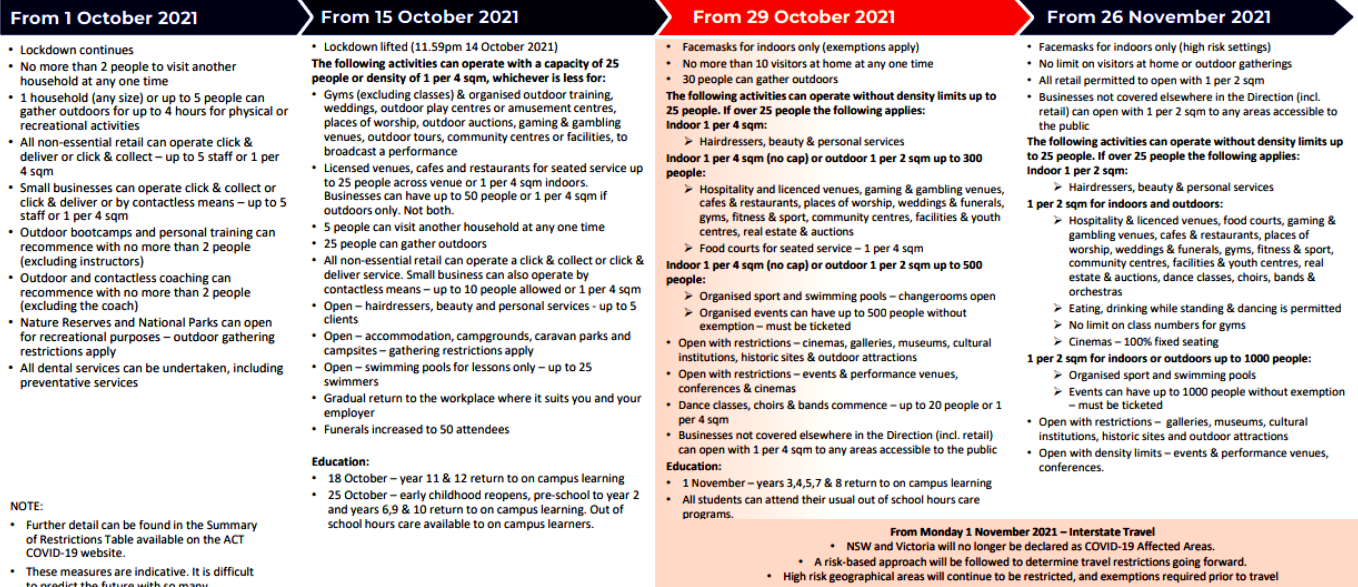
- We will always put the health and wellbeing of the community at the forefront of our decision making, especially the impact on mental health.
- We will get as many people back to work as soon as we can.
- We will continue to listen to the community and businesses about the impact of the public health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



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.

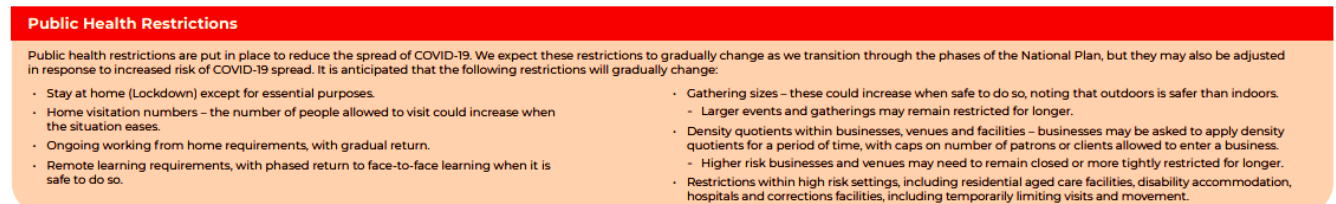
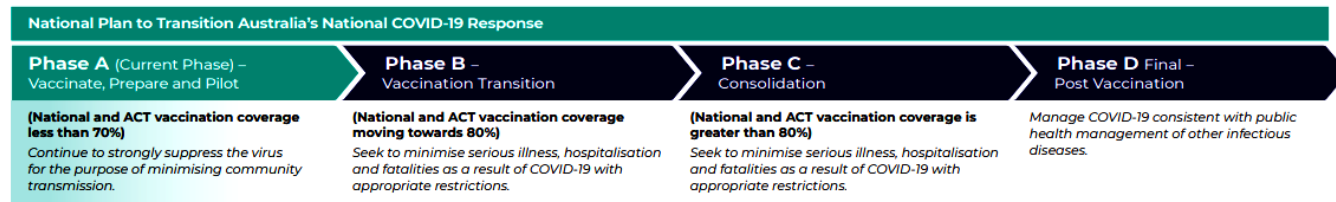
TTIQ must be effective and efficient – we need to continue testing, rapid contact tracing and effective isolation and quarantine measures. This will include continuing to support people to isolate and quarantine in alternative accommodation where their home is not appropriate.

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



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