

# RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

3 December 21

The final Sub-Branch OGM for 2021 on Tuesday 30 November 2021 featured special guest Cyndy Jakobi, the Mental Health Advisor at RSL National HQ.







# Reminder

**Closing date for booking a seat at  
Christmas lunch 8 December  
by 3.00 pm.**



**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 Sirloln**  
**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](mailto: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.**



The Hon Andrew Gee MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel

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## Morning Show, Mark Rorke interview discussing the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Tuesday, November 30 2021

**MARK RORKE:** After a long and winding road last Friday, finally the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide began with all of the families and ex-service personnel starting in Brisbane to share their stories yesterday. Joining us to cover what the Royal Commission is hoping to achieve, what it will achieve and how those can be a part of it is the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel, Andrew Gee. Andrew, as always, thank you for your time. These stories will be hard for many to hear, certainly very hard for those to retell. But they really are the stories that the nation needs to hear. Good morning.

**ANDREW GEE:** Yes, good morning, Mark. They are heart breaking and tragic stories. They're stories of loss and anguish and pain. And, as you said, difficult though these stories are to hear, our nation must listen to them and must hear them. Because those stories are being told in the hope that our country will ensure no one else has to go through what these veterans and their families have endured. We can't let them down.

I believe that mistakes and failings must be acknowledged, the truth must be told and action must be taken. This is the moment. It's a crucial piece of national work, and it is my hope that this Royal Commission can be a catalyst for positive change in the treatment and care of men and women of the ADF, veterans and also their families.

**MARK RORKE:** One way to look at this, Andrew, is that they are stories that are being told privately or perhaps not being told, those that are keeping the matters well within themselves. But can you take us through in a broad sense what the Royal Commission will actually be taking a look at?

**ANDREW GEE:** Well, obviously the Royal Commission is separate to the government. So the government doesn't direct them.

**MARK RORKE:** Sure.

**ANDREW GEE:** But they'll be looking at issues such as claims processing and the impact that processing veterans' compensation claims has had on veterans' welfare and how we can make that better. They'll be looking at issues such as the harmonisation of these different pieces of veterans' legislation that's out there. They'll be looking at the causes of Defence and veteran suicide and what we can do to prevent that from happening. They'll be looking at transition the transition between military and civilian life. And they'll also be looking at issues such as new medical treatments, issues such as assault and sexual assault in the armed services and the impact that has had on veteran health and wellbeing and suicide.

So it is broad ranging. The government doesn't tell the Royal Commission what to do; it's totally up to them. But they are some of the issues that I believe the commission will be looking at.



MARK RORKE: Andrew, one thing that the government has facilitated is a way for those who do wish to engage with the royal commission. So can you tell us a little bit about the free legal advisory service that is up and running for those who would like to come forward and possibly be a part of what we've been talking about this morning?

ANDREW GEE: Yes, so those who are wanting to engage with the commission can do so. So there is a free legal service available for veterans or families or people wishing to engage with the commission. People can still make a submission, and the Defence and Veterans' Legal Service is a free national service that provides independent information and legal advice to assist ADF personnel and veterans and their families to engage with the commission. That is funded by the Australian Government. You can call them on 1800 331 800. We're also providing legal financial assistance for people giving evidence or other forms of formal engagement with the Royal Commission.

You can still send in a submission to the Royal Commission or you can actually book a private session. So people are invited to share their experiences and register for a private session if you so choose, and the Commission may hear your evidence publicly as well.

MARK RORKE: Andrew, the Royal Commission's Interim Report will be released in August 2022 and then their final report almost a year later in July 2023. Is the government planning to wait for all of the reporting to come out, or as you see bits and pieces coming through start working on implementing any recommended changing immediately?

ANDREW GEE: Look, I think it's very clear that the government's got to get cracking on change straight away. There is a sense of urgency about this and we can't wait for the Royal Commission to do that. So, for example, with claims processing, there's a backlog of — 55,000 to 60,000 claims.

MARK RORKE: wow.

ANDREW GEE: We need to clear that backlog with compassion and empathy and sympathy, and it needs to be done ASAP. So I've got people in there at the moment working out the most efficient way of doing that. You know, why is it taking so long to brief specialist doctors, for example? That's one bottleneck we're looking at. We've got to get the claims backlog down.

We've got to get the transition peak down as well, this transition between military and civilian life. It has been described to me being in the ADF as being like an elite sports person — you're in a highly focused group environment, very task orientated, and if you are suddenly taken out of that, for example, if you're injured and suddenly your career is over, it can be very confronting. We've got to make sure that when our veterans exit the system they are as well prepared as possible. So as soon as you come into the ADF you've got to start thinking about what happens when my career is finished. The average career lasts seven to 10 years.

But I think we've got long way to go, and we've got to make this transition courses compulsory. So, you know, when you're young you think that nothing bad is ever going to happen to me. But we have to make these courses compulsory so when they come in they are forced to actually think

about it and what happens when they leave. You know, there's a lot of work to do. They're just a couple of examples.

MARK RORKE: Yeah, and some great stuff there you mentioned, Andrew, particularly that forward planning aspect of it because, as we all know, seven to 10 years can go by very, very quickly. Well, the Royal Commission is happening right now. It will unfold over the next couple of years as the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide hearings have begun this week.

And a reminder, if you do need support or anyone in your family that's doing it a bit tough, a couple of places you can reach out to: Open Arms Veterans' and Families Counselling. That's a free call, 1800 01 1 046. And you can remain anonymous by contacting Safe Zone Support, 1800 142 072. Those calls are confidential and never recorded. I'll give you those numbers again in just a few minutes in case you missed them.

But, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and also the Minister for Defence Personnel Andrew Gee, always a pleasure. Some tough work ahead, but it is very important work for the nation. Thank you so much for your time.

ANDREW GEE: Thanks for having me on the show, Mark. Thank you for your support of veterans, and I just wanted to give my best wishes to everyone in the Hunter — the mighty Hunter where I grew up — who may be struggling with rising flood waters at the moment. I hope you're getting through it okay.



# NAPIER WALLER ART PRIZE

**There are two weeks left to submit your entry in the 2022 Napier Waller Art Prize. Entries close at midnight on Sunday, 12 December 2021.**

**The winning artist receives a \$10,000 cash prize.**

**Enter now: [www.awm.gov.au/nwartprize](http://www.awm.gov.au/nwartprize)**

**Image: Glen Braithwaite, Isolation, 2020, digital photograph, 40 x 60 cm**







## **The Hon Andrew Gee MP**

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

### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

26 November 2021

## **ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE HEARINGS BEGIN**

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has opened in Brisbane today, with a ceremonial hearing beginning the proceedings.

On Monday, current and ex-service personnel and their families will begin sharing their very personal stories in Brisbane at the first of many public hearings to be held around the country.

Over coming months we will hear many devastating and tragic accounts from current Defence personnel, veterans and those who have lost loved ones to suicide. These will be extremely difficult to hear, but the nation must hear them.

My hope is that this Royal Commission will be a watershed moment in how we look after our service personnel and our veterans, now and into the future.

It is a crucially important body of national work, and I hope that it will be a catalyst for positive, lasting change and reducing the incidence of suicide in the Defence and veteran community.

I look forward to reviewing the Interim Report in August 2022 and a Final Report in July 2023, but I will not be waiting until then to get cracking on important reforms.

Our servicemen and women and their families have sacrificed so much for our nation and we have a moral duty to ensure we give them all the support they need and deserve.

To achieve what it must, the Royal Commission needs to hear from as many people as possible.

It is not too late to make a submission, and I encourage everyone with a personal experience to share it. You can also do so anonymously and without leaving your contact details.

**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.

The Australian Government has established a free, independent legal advisory service to help people who want to engage with the Royal Commission. Free counselling and support services are also available.

This has been a tough year for many in our veteran community, with the additional combined stress of COVID-19 restrictions and the Australian withdrawal from Afghanistan. I expect the Royal Commission hearings and the associated media coverage will cause further distress for many.

Anyone who needs support, or who knows someone doing it tough, should reach out to **Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling on 1800 011 046**. Those wishing to remain anonymous can contact **Safe Zone Support on 1800 142 072**. Calls to Safe Zone are confidential and never recorded.

More information about the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, including how to contribute and where to get support, is available on the [website](#).

**ENDS**

**MEDIA CONTACTS:  
Minister Gee office: 0459 966 944  
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466**

**Office of the Hon. Andrew Gee, Canberra ACT.**





## 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](mailto:tony@wearebright.com.au)

# 2021 Ginger Meggs Turns 100! Coin Sets

Here is a milestone I thought your members might be interested in...

**Ginger Meggs, the redheaded Aussie schoolboy who has delighted newspaper readers around the world, turns 100!**

The Royal Australian Mint has recently released two Centenary of Ginger Meggs – Two Coin Sets.

- 2021 \$1 Coloured Uncirculated Coins
- 2021 \$1 Coloured 1/2oz Silver Frosted Uncirculated Coins



## **The history:**

A century ago, Sydney artist Jimmy Bancks created an iconic Aussie character, a red-headed boy called Ginger Meggs. Part battler, part larrikin, part philosopher, Ginger Meggs is one of Australia's most successful cultural figures, ranking alongside Dame Edna, Crocodile Dundee and Blinky Bill. Ginger Meggs first appeared in the Sydney Sun newspaper in 1921. Fame soon followed and Ginger Meggs became Australia's most successful comic strip, appearing in newspapers around the world. Following Jimmy Bancks' death in 1952, the Ginger Meggs comic strip has been produced by a succession of talented artists, most recently Jason Chatfield since 2007.

With his wry, larrikin humour Ginger Meggs continues to delight readers of all ages.

## **How to own a part of history:**

These coins can be purchased from the Royal Australian Mint's [eshop](#) and through its call centre (1300 652 020).

**Customer Service Team**

**Royal Australian Mint**





Australian War Memorial ✓

15 hrs · 🌐

Calling all Australian Navy ex-DDG (Charles F Adams Class). All ranks and rates.

The Australian War Memorial is seeking to connect with former DDG sailors and officers to interview for the forthcoming AWM DDG Bridge Exhibition. We want to tell the history of all three DDGs through the eyes of the people who served in them.

If you're interested in participating please email [Andrew.schroder@awm.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.schroder@awm.gov.au) to enable interviews to be coordinated early in the new year.

If you know other sailors or officers who served in #HMASPerth, #HMASHobart or #HMASBrisbane, please share this post with them as AWM would like to hear from as many DDG personnel as possible.

#OurContinuingStory



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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/covidvaccineproof)

For the latest COVID-19 updates and advice, go to [australia.gov.au](https://australia.gov.au)



\* Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only.

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## **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**

## **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

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.rslwoden.org.au](http://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](http://www.rslwoden.org.au)**