

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



Special edition weekly Lockdown eNews 1 October 21

Dear Members,

Welcome back to our weekly newsletter. I'm not sure about anyone else, but I'm finding that time seems to be flying by while we're in lockdown, even though we're all limited in what we're able to do, with whom and where we're able to do it, while most of us have all the time in the world to do not very much!!

Sorry about that introduction but you have a lot of reading ahead of you in this week's edition of our newsletter, and I wanted to catch your attention. Similarly, some of the items in this edition cover some difficult and even disturbing issues.

Firstly, please note that our staff and volunteers are continuing to support our members by providing as many services as they can, as smoothly as possible. Hopefully, no one who wants or needs support is missing out. In this regard, you can call our normal office number (6285 1931) if you'd like some advice or have any problems.

I thank all of our Sub-Branch team who are providing this support.

Following the Chief Minister's briefing this morning, it seems the ACT Government is still aiming for the lockdown to at least ease on 15 October as they had planned. However, as and if things change, we'll keep you posted of developments as they are announced, including any easing or indeed tightening of restrictions, either through this newsletter or, if appropriate, in a mass email.

In addition to information about the COVID situation in the ACT, this edition includes media releases from the Federal Minister for Veterans Affairs and the National President of the RSL about some events and issues that affect many of us. There is also a summary of the August meeting of the ESORT at which the committee briefed the incoming Minister, the Hon Andrew Gee, about matters of interest and/or concern to the Veteran Community. The ESORT is the forum that represents the broad views of the Veteran Community and attempts to provide a unified voice on matters that are shared or are specific to elements of that Community. The National President represents the RSL views on the committee.

Please also note the article on misinformation about DVA services and the SCAM warning that could affect any of us.

As I have mentioned previously, I continue to liaise with key people and organisations who are aware of our work and our needs at the Sub-Branch and the issues that affect other clients who seek our help. In that regard, I recently participated in a Standing Committee that the National Office convened to manage the League's involvement in the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. This committee has been meeting each fortnight since about August and, while it's a privilege to have been invited to participate, it will take a few resources to do so properly while also offering an opportunity to offer our advice and comments on these critical issues based on what we have been seeing through our work at the Sub-Branch.

Lastly, you will find some useful advice towards the end of this edition and some examples of the contributions that members have provided to lighten our respective loads and brighten our days.

Thanks again to everyone for whatever it is you're doing to cope with your respective and our shared trials, please keep up the good work and don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

Best wishes to all, stay well and stay safe,

Jim Gilchrist

Dear members,

The ACT lockdown will prevent the Sub-Branch having sufficient time to plan the scheduled dinner on Tuesday 26 October 2021, so it is cancelled.

In accordance with the ACT Government's Pathway, the Grant Cameron Centre might reopen soon after 14 October 2021, so the Board has decided to 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. Details will be confirmed closer to the date.

Regards,

Greg



Woden Valley Sub-Branch

Greg Kennett

Secretary

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THE ACT'S COVID-19 PATHWAY FORWARD – FROM 1 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.
- In recognition of strong community compliance and a stable public health situation, we will make some minor amendments to restrictions on 1 October.

- Lockdown will be lifted on **15 October** when we expect our community will have reached 80 per cent full vaccination and the nation is expected to have reached 70 per cent.
- By **29 October** our surrounding region will likely have achieved the 80 per cent vaccination threshold and the nation will likely reach 80 per cent soon after. This may enable further easing, if the public health situation allows.
- Before we take any further steps, **beyond 29 October** we will need to closely consider the epidemiological situation, cases in our surrounding region and our public health and hospital system capacity.

Our steps forward

Before we take each step we will consider:

- our vaccination rates, including in our vulnerable communities;
- our health system capacity, including the impact of COVID-19 in regional NSW;
- case numbers and current trends;
- testing rates and turnaround times;

- the levels of community transmission, especially the proportion of cases infectious in the community;
- our ability to quickly test, trace, isolate and quarantine (TTIQ);
- how well the community and businesses are complying with the restrictions; and

The measures below 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 1 October 2021	From 15 October 2021	From 29 October 2021	End Nov- Early Dec 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lockdown continues No more than 2 people to visit another household at any one time 1 household (any size) or up to 5 people can gather outdoors for up to 4 hours for physical or recreational activities All non-essential retail can operate click & deliver or click & collect – max 5 staff or 1 per 4 sqm Small businesses can operate click & collect or click & deliver or by contactless means – max 5 staff or 1 per 4 sqm Outdoor bootcamps and personal training can recommence with no more than 2 people (excluding instructors) Outdoor and contactless coaching can recommence with no more than 2 people (excluding the coach). Nature Reserves and National Parks can open for recreational purposes – outdoor gathering restrictions apply All dental services can be undertaken, including preventative services Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 October - Year 12 students can begin returning to on campus learning. Year 11 attend only for essential assessments that cannot wait until 18 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lockdown lifted (11 59pm 14 October 2021) The following activities can operate with capacity of 25 people or density of 1 per 4 sqm, whichever is less for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gyms (excluding classes) and organised outdoor training Weddings Outdoor play centres or amusement centres Places of worship Outdoor auctions Gaming and gambling venues Outdoor tours Community centres or facilities To broadcast a performance Licensed venues, cafes and restaurants for seated service. Max 25 people across venue or 1 per 4 sqm indoors. Businesses can have max 50 people or 1 per 4 sqm if outdoors only. Not both. 5 people can visit another household at any one time 25 people can gather outdoors All non-essential retail can operate a click & collect or click & deliver service. Small business can also operate by contactless means – max 10 people allowed or 1 per 4 sqm Open – hairdressers, beauty and personal services – max 5 clients Open – accommodation, campgrounds, caravan parks and campsites – gathering restrictions apply Open – swimming pools for lessons only – max 25 swimmers Gradual return to the workplace where it suits you and your employer Funerals increased to 50 attendees Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 October – year 11 and 12 return to on campus learning 25 October – early childhood reopens, pre-school to year 2, and years 6, 9 and 10 return to on campus learning. Out of school hours care available to on campus learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following activities can operate with max 25 people across the venue before density limits apply. Over 25 people: indoor 1 per 4 sqm or max 100, outdoor 1 per 2 sqm or max 150. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed venues, cafes and restaurants Gyms (classes limited to 20 people) Organised sport and swimming pools Play centres or amusement centres Places of worship Real estate services and auctions Gaming and gambling venues Outdoor attractions Weddings Funerals Community centres or facilities 10 people can visit a household at any one time 30 people can gather outdoors Ticketed and seated events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor can have up to 500 people Indoor with fixed seating 75% capacity up to 500 Indoor with unfixed seating 1 per 4 sqm, capacity up to 150 All retail permitted to open with 1 per 4 sqm Less restrictive travel in our region Open with restrictions – cinemas, galleries, museums, cultural institutions, historic sites and outdoor attractions Dance classes, choirs and bands commence – max 20 people or 1 per 4 sqm Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 1 November – Years 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 return to on campus learning. All students can attend their usual out of school hours care programs 	<p>All public health social measures to align with the National Plan, taking into account the local situation.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger events and gatherings with some limits. Exemptions may still be required. Reduced density requirements eg: 1 person per 2 sqm Reopening of food courts Reopening of nightclubs Return to face-face learning for higher education Further easing of travel restrictions – any interstate or overseas travel will be subject to the decisions of the Commonwealth and other State and Territory Governments <p>NOTES: * Vaccination data indicative only and based on ACT double dose of COVID-19 vaccination for ACT residents aged 12 and over. ** More detail can be found in the Summary of Proposed Restrictions Table.</p>

Ongoing



For more information:
covid19.act.gov.au



Read more: [The ACT's Pathway Forward - Framework - COVID-19](#)

The lockdown commenced at 5:00pm Thursday 12 August 2021 and will continue until Friday 15 October 2021.

These restrictions are to help slow the spread of the virus and allow contact tracers to do their work.

Essential reasons you can leave your home during this lockdown include:

- to buy essential groceries and medicine
- to access essential healthcare including in-home care
- for essential work
- to exercise outdoors for two hours per day in your region
- to get a COVID-19 test
- to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

Update to lockdown restrictions

The following changes come into effect from 12.01am this Friday (1 October).

Home and Visitors

- Two people able to visit another household at any one time, for any reason. If visiting a household for childcare purposes, more than two children can visit.
- One household, or up to five people, able to gather outdoors for exercise or non-organised recreation for up to four hours.

Retail

- Non-essential retail businesses permitted to operate click and collect or click and deliver services with no more than five people in the business at any one time, or one person per four square metres, whichever is less.

Fitness, Sport and Outdoor physical recreation and campgrounds

- The recommencement of outdoor bootcamps and personal training, with no more than two people, excluding instructors.
- The recommencement of outdoor and contactless coaching activities with no more than two people, excluding the coach.
- The reopening of nature reserves and National Parks for recreational purposes.

Healthcare

- The recommencement of preventative dental services.

At this time, masks will continue to be required at all times upon leaving home, including in workplaces, if you are aged 12 years and over.

Further information is available on the [ACT's pathway forward](#).

The ACT is currently in lockdown and Canberrans are being asked to stay at home to assist in our response to positive cases of COVID-19 in the ACT.

Read more: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/lockdown>



Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SENATE
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Hon Andrew Gee MP

MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR CALARE

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

29 September 2021

**GOVERNMENT WELCOMES INTERIM NATIONAL
COMMISSIONER'S PRELIMINARY INTERIM REPORT**

The Australian Government welcomes the Preliminary Interim Report of the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, which has today been tabled in Parliament.

The interim National Commissioner, Dr Bernadette Boss CSC, commenced her work on the Independent Review of Past Defence and Veteran Suicides on 16 November 2020. This Report sets out the duties Dr Boss has undertaken to date, including preliminary findings and initial recommendations. It will form an important foundation for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which was established on 8 July 2021.

"On behalf of the Australian Government, I would like to thank Dr Boss for her significant effort in completing this valuable Interim Report and express my gratitude for the dedication of those involved," the Attorney-General, Michaelia Cash, said.

"Above all, we want to thank and recognise the defence members, veterans, family members, and others personally affected by a death by suicide, who came forward to share their stories and contribute to this important work. I acknowledge the difficulties and challenges which may be involved in sharing this lived experience, and I am grateful for their valuable contribution."

The Report examines issues related to ADF member and veteran wellbeing, mental health and suicide. The Report makes findings on prevalence, risk and protective factors, and highlights particular areas which require closer examination and change in relation to defence and veteran suicide.

The interim National Commissioner's wide-ranging activities included conducting 36 private meetings with individual families, defence members and veterans, and hosting 29 round tables with more than 150 ex-service and support organisations. The report also considers extensive information and documents produced by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and

the Department of Defence relating to policies, practices and information about specific cases.

“This Report will provide invaluable preliminary findings to Government in preventing future deaths by suicide in the veteran community, as well as areas of interest for the Royal Commission as it commences its own inquiries,” the Attorney-General, Michaela Cash said.

“I have read the report and discussed it with Dr Boss. I believe the report will make a significant contribution to current and future work being undertaken to improve veterans’ services,” the Veterans’ Affairs and Defence Personnel Minister, Andrew Gee said.

“I have no doubt the Royal Commission will also find it extremely useful and helpful,” Minister Gee said.

“We won’t be waiting until the conclusion of the Royal Commission to get cracking on reform.

“I have already directed the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to overhaul and speed up the cumbersome claims processing system and harmonise the complex veterans’ compensation legislation. That work is underway.

“Transition is of critical importance to our service men and women and their families as they move from military to civilian life.

“I have directed the Department of Defence to expedite the work of the Joint Transition Authority and its Implementation Plan.

“I have also already directed the Department of Defence to assess Dr Boss’s recommendations about mandatory transition courses to evaluate how they could integrate with existing initiatives.

“I would like to thank Dr Boss for delivering this report. Her commitment to advancing veteran support and wellbeing is greatly appreciated.”

The report is available [here](#).

If you, or someone you know, need support, you can contact:

- Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467
- Open Arms (current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families are able to seek this free and confidential support) – 1800 011 046
- ADF Mental Health All-hours Support Line (for current serving ADF personnel and their families) – 1800 628 036.
- Safe Zone Support (for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families) – 1800 142 072. When you call Safe Zone Support, you do not need to identify yourself if you do not want to.
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

Individuals wishing to contact or make a submission to the Royal Commission can do so at [here](#) or contact:

- Email: dvsr.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au
- Telephone: 1800 329 095, 9:00 am to 7:00 pm AEST Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays
- Post: GPO Box 3273
Sydney NSW 2001

MEDIA CONTACTS

Attorney-General - Guy Creighton – Guy.Creighton@ag.gov.au – 0438 815 302

Minister Gee - Ashleigh Weidmann – 0459 966 944



The Hon Andrew Gee MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE

29 September 2021

ANNUAL AIHW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR VETERAN SUPPORT

The Australian Government has today received a report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) into the rate of suicide among serving and former-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The Report outlines that of the almost 373,500 men and women who have served over the past 36 years, tragically 1,273 have taken their own lives in the last two decades.

This report builds on previous editions by expanding the cohort analysed from those with at least one day of ADF service since 2001 to those with at least one day of service since 1985.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee said the report highlights the long term nature of the issue of veteran suicide and re-affirms the need for Australia to give our veterans and their families the best support possible.

"My priority is putting veterans and their families first, and making sure they are getting the services they need, when and where they need it," Minister Gee said.

"While there has been important national progress in addressing the issue of veteran suicide such as free mental health treatment for life, there is clearly much more to be done and we can't wait for the conclusion of the Royal Commission to get cracking on it.

Overhauling the claims process

"I have directed the Department of Veterans' Affairs to make the speeding up of claims processing as well as reducing the backlog a matter of utmost urgency so that we can make sure our veterans receive the necessary financial support and wrap-around services.

"To this end I have also directed that the Department overhaul the veteran claims processing system and accelerate the appointment of independent consultants to deliver a plan, and yield results within three months of their work being provided to the Australian Government.

"This work will include three-monthly milestones, and deliverables that are veteran centric and draw upon international best practice for implementation.

"It will include an examination and assessment of the claim forms and processes used to brief and engage external medical advisers and specialists.

"This will expedite the claims process and identify inhibitors so our veterans and their families can receive timely payments.

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. **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. **Defence Member and Family Helpline** provides support for Defence families on 1800 624 608.

"It will also make sure that the \$98 million allocated to addressing the claims backlog in the May budget is used as effectively as possible.

Joint Transition Authority

"The transition from military to civilian life is one of the keys to addressing this issue which means the work of the Joint Transition Authority (JTA) is of critical importance and I am keen to see it fast-tracked.

"I've directed the Department of Defence to provide me with detailed options and a proposed timeline to speed-up the JTA Implementation Plan to ensure that we provide better support to our ADF members and their families as they transition from military to civilian life.

Harmonising legislation

"Veterans' legislation has long been cumbersome and confusing for veterans to understand.

"I am focused on the issue of structural and legislative reform and have also instructed the Department of Veterans' Affairs to create a roadmap to harmonise the three Acts dealing with veterans' compensation and rehabilitation.

"This report once again highlights the unacceptably high rate of suicide in the Defence and veteran communities, and the importance of the work of the Royal Commission.

"Suicide doesn't just affect the individual, it is deeply traumatic for loved ones, families and whole communities. Our nation needs to do everything it can to prevent it."

This is the fourth annual monitoring report of its kind, and expands on earlier work by including historical records of members with at least one day of ADF service since 1985. Previous research dated back to 2001.

The AIHW report is available at www.aihw.gov.au.

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

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. **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. **Defence Member and Family Helpline** provides support for Defence families on 1800 624 608.



MEDIA RELEASE

29 September 2021
For immediate release

Latest Report on Veteran and ADF Suicide Timely

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) says the release of the latest report on the incidence of suicide within the veteran community and the Australian Defence Force provides a salutary reminder of the extent of this national tragedy.

The report, the fourth from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), expands on earlier information and provides more complete data on the extent and seriousness of the issue. It is timely, coming as the Royal Commission into Veteran and Service Suicide commences its work.

RSL Australia President Greg Melick welcomed the release of the report and said the information would assist the Royal Commission in its deliberations.

"The sad reality is that our ex-service men and women have a higher risk of suicide than other Australians and the 1273 certified deaths by suicide among former ADF service members between 2001 and 2019 is a national tragedy.

"The AIHW report provides a blunt and sombre reminder of the scope of the challenge and the pressing need for action. Australia cannot allow this to continue.

"It reinforces what we already know that the highest risk group is younger veterans within five years of separating from the ADF.

Greg Melick said it would be difficult to identify an issue closer to the heart of the RSL or one that the organisation takes more seriously, both in terms of the truly horrific impact it has on families and the broader defence community, to say nothing of the entire nation.

"Commensurate with the central importance of this issue to the RSL and those we represent now and into the future, we will take every opportunity to use this timely and highly relevant report to support our submission to the Royal Commission.

"The Royal Commission is an opportunity to address the serious issue of veterans' mental health and veteran suicide and provides the prospect of securing a clear pathway for better outcomes for our veteran community in the future.

"The RSL will continue to actively work with Open Arms and other support bodies as well as with all members willing to assist their fellow veterans," Greg Melick said.

ENDS

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



RSL
Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

23 September 2021
For immediate release

RSL Condemns Misuse of National Flag and Red Ensign

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has condemned the misuse of the Australian National Flag and Red Ensign flag by the Melbourne anti-vaccination, anti-lockdown protesters.

RSL Australia President Greg Melick said the protestors' flying of the National Flag and Red Ensign, as well as their deplorable action yesterday in occupying Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance simply shows a gross level of disrespect that would be denounced by all reasonable Australians.

Greg Melick said the National Flag and the Red Ensign are an official Australian flag, with the Red Ensign flown at sea by Australian registered merchant ships.

"They are not protest flags and flying them during the unruly and lawless protests in Melbourne is unauthorised and yet another deplorable act by an irresponsible and shameful mob.

"The disrespect of these people apparently knows no bounds. They dishonour Australian service men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation, and they dishonour our national flags.

"Their actions to further their own selfish cause and ambitions are reprehensible, particularly at a time when all Australians should be coming together to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our veterans did fight for the right for Australians to freely express themselves, but they did not fight to enable these people to desecrate our memorials and national flags."

Greg Melick said any misuse of the flags should result in the prosecution of the offenders.

ENDS

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

Meeting Summary

The Chair of ESORT, President of the Repatriation Commission and DVA Secretary, Liz Cosson AM CSC, convened an out of session meeting on 18 August 2021, held via Microsoft Teams. The meeting was convened at the request of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Andrew Gee MP, so that he could engage with the group regarding the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and seek advice on how best to engage with the broader veteran community to advise on the services and support available.

The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming attendees and introduced the Minister. Minister Gee thanked members for their attendance and outlined the context for the session, noting the evolving tragedy in Afghanistan and acknowledging the impacts on veterans and their families. The Minister outlined the current situation and opened the floor to comments from attendees.

Key messages to Government

- ESORT members discussed how best to connect with veterans who are not engaged with ex-service organisations and agreed the value of mainstream media to achieve that.
- Members also agreed the importance of connecting with primary and secondary schools to provide advice on supporting children of those currently serving or who have served.
 - Educative materials on success of service in Afghanistan to be provided to schools.
- ESORT members agreed the importance of Defence and DVA providing positive stories that ESOs can share through social media.
 - It was suggested a letter be written by the Minister that can be shared through ESO newsletters.
 - Members suggested that outreach could be extended if MPs used their electorate newsletters to either distribute information on supports available or call out for veterans to identify themselves if they require assistance.
- Members touched on the impact of the Brereton Report and the high rotation rate for servicemen and women, as significant impactors on mental health.

Key messages to ESORT

- Those who served in Afghanistan did what was asked of them and they achieved the mission as part of a multi-national force supporting the US Alliance and coalition partners, to deny Afghanistan as a safe haven for international terrorism.
- Australians are proud of those men and women who serve or have served in the ADF.
- There is support available for veterans and their families, particularly those who have lost loved ones as a result of their service. We stand with them in acknowledging the sacrifice made in protecting our freedoms.
- Support is available through Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling on 1800 011 046; Safe Zone (anonymous line) on 1800 142 072; Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or Defence all hours support line on 1800 628 036. <https://www.dva.gov.au/>.
- There is a whole community of veterans and family support organisations across the nation that are also ready to stand with you if you need support.

Veterans Home Care Program - misleading information being circulated

Good afternoon colleagues,

DVA has become aware of emails circulating within the veteran community that contain inaccurate information related to the Veterans Home Care (VHC) Program.

The VHC Program provides access to low level services to assist eligible Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients to remain independent in their homes. Eligible DVA clients under the *Veteran's Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) that hold a Veteran Gold Card, or Veteran White Card for an accepted service-related injury or condition, are eligible for an assessment to receive services under the VHC Program, such as domestic help, personal care, respite care, and safety-related home and garden maintenance.

The emails incorrectly state that the VHC Program 'may be discontinued due to lack of participation'.

DVA is not considering the discontinuation of the VHC Program for any reason. The VHC Program continues to be a well utilised and popular program, helping clients remain independent in their own homes. In 2020-21, the VHC Program provided services to over 36,000 clients.

The phone number provide in the email is also incorrect. Eligible DVA clients should contact their VHC Assessment Agency on **1300 550 450** to have an assessment for services. Information on the VHC Program is also available via our website: dva.gov.au/vhc.

Please share this information with your members and colleagues.

Regards,

Victoria

Victoria Benz

Deputy Commissioner, NSW & ACT

Department of Veterans' Affairs

t (02) 9213 7878 | ext 417878 | m 0417 654 347

e Victoria.benz@dva.gov.au

EA: Tania Lam

t (02) 9213 7890 | e dc.nsw.and.act@dva.gov.au

EO: Sue Cooney

t (02) 9213 7425 | e dc.nsw.and.act@dva.gov.au





From ACCC website

Current COVID-19 (coronavirus) scams

Scammers are using the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) to take advantage of people across Australia.

About COVID-19 scams

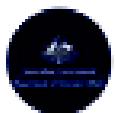
Scamwatch has received over 6,415 scam reports mentioning the coronavirus with more than \$9,800,000 in reported losses since the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus). Common scams include phishing for personal information, online shopping, and superannuation scams.

If you have been scammed or have seen a scam, you can [make a report](#) on the Scamwatch website, and find more information about [where to get help](#).

Scamwatch urges everyone to be cautious and remain alert to coronavirus-related scams. Scammers are hoping that you have let your guard down. Do not provide your personal, banking or superannuation details to strangers who have approached you.

Scammers may pretend to have a connection with you. So it's important to stop and check, even when you are approached by what you think is a trusted organisation.

Visit the [Scamwatch news](#) webpage for general warnings and media releases on COVID-19 scams.



Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs ...



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It's more important than ever to look after your mental health.

If the situation in Afghanistan is affecting you, you are not alone and help is available.

Safe Zone is free, anonymous, confidential and available 24/7 for current and former serving defence personnel.

Calls to Safe Zone are never recorded, and you do not need to identify yourself at any time during the call.

Contact Safe Zone on 1800 142 072.

Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week on 1800 011 046.

Families of serving personnel can also contact the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

Please reach out and check on your mates.



24/7
Mental Health Services

<p>Defence all-hours Support Line 1800 628 036</p>	<p>OPEN <small>Veterans & Families Counselling</small> ARMS 1800 011 046</p>	<p> SAFE ZONE SUPPORT FREE ANONYMOUS COUNSELLING LINE CALL 1800 142 072</p>
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From Australian Services website - Covid-19 Vaccination

<https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/for-you-your-family/howtos/log-in>

As at 31 August 2021

Get free online proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations

Don't be scammed. Getting proof is free once you've had all required doses of a vaccine approved

for use in Australia .

[1]

Your vaccination provider first needs to add your vaccination details to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) so you can get proof. This can take up to 10 days. You can then go online to get either:

- **an immunisation history statement or COVID-19 digital certificate .**

Your immunisation history statement shows all the immunisations you've had that are on the AIR. This includes your COVID-19 vaccinations.

The COVID-19 digital certificate shows only your COVID-19 vaccinations.

You can use your device to show proof. You can also add your COVID-19 digital certificate to either your Apple Wallet or

Google Pay for easy storage. If you're using an iOS device, you can use the Safari or Chrome browsers. If

you're using an Android device, you need to use the Chrome browser.

Next steps

Use our handy tool to help you find out how to get proof of your COVID-19 vaccination . It can help you to set up online accounts if you haven't already.

If you have myGov linked to Medicare, you can sign in and follow the links to access either:

- **your immunisation history statement
COVID-19 digital certificate.**

For the latest COVID-19 updates and advice , go to the Australian Government website <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/for-you-your-family/howtos/frequently-asked-questions>

Hard copy: Australians who cannot access their vaccination certificates online can have their immunisation history printed and mailed to them. Call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 (Monday to Friday 8 am to 5 pm) and ask them to send your immunisation history statement to you. It can take up to 14 days to arrive in the post. You can also contact the Australian Immunisation Register through

[Australian Immunisation Register - Services Australia](#) or email: air@servicesaustralia.gov.au

Competition for veterans and service people highlights the therapeutic nature of art

Dominic Giannini - 25 September 2021

Current and former Australian Defence Force service personnel are being encouraged to enter this year's Napier Waller Art Prize, where entrants can submit any original visual art medium with a theme of their choice.

The competition is now in its fourth year and aims to promote the therapeutic essence that art can have on service personnel, especially those struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental illnesses.

Former Army Major Matt Jones, who served in East Timor before finding himself homeless in Sydney, won the 2020 prize with his conceptual piece, *Yarn*.

Matt says it takes courage to reveal your vulnerabilities through art, even if that story remains personal.

"It is a vindication of the difficulties I have been through," he says.

"It was worthwhile telling the story, even if I am the only person who knows what that story is."

The blue and yellow yarn in Matt's artwork is centred on the Kilo maritime signal flag, which means 'I wish to communicate with you'.

The artwork is partly comprised a blanket a local knitting group gave him while he was couch surfing, sleeping on trains and bathing at the beach.

Matt says cutting up the blanket and weaving it into the artwork denotes that part of his life is not coming back.

"We tell our stories with what we have, not with what we hope we might have," he says.

"My work is made up of a whole lot of individual pieces of yarn, and there are a whole lot of stories from myself that have gone into it so the threading together of those stories is the therapeutic nature of it."

Australian War Memorial director Matt Anderson says visualising personal feelings and sharing them with other members of the Defence Force, as well as the broader community, can help with the healing process from trauma.

"We are encouraging current and former Australian Defence Force personnel to raise awareness of the therapeutic power of artistic creation, shared experiences and the talent of service personnel," he says.

This year's winner of the Napier Waller Art Prize will receive \$10,000, and the winner of the People's Choice award, voted by the general public, will receive \$5000.

The works will be displayed in an exhibition alongside other highly commended pieces, and will become part of the Australian War Memorial's National Collection.

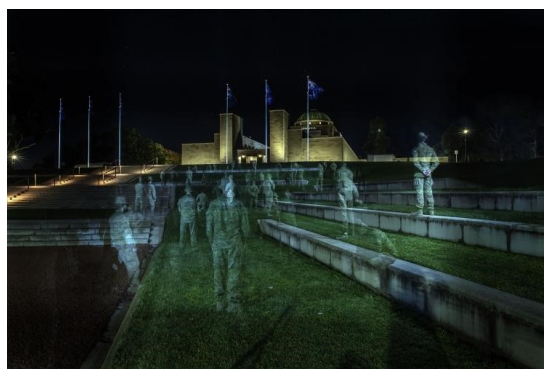
The exhibition of highly commended works will be held in mid-2022, pushed back from this year due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Submissions are now open for the Australian War Memorial's 2022 Napier Waller Art Prize, and close on Sunday, 12 December, 2021.

More information about the prize and previous entries can be found at the [Australian War Memorial](#).



Yarn, by Matt Jones, winner of the 2020 Napier Waller Art Prize. Photo: Australian War Memorial.



Gary Ramage's photograph, *Afghan diggers' ghosts at the AWM*, won the People's Choice award in the 2020 Napier Waller Art Prize. Photo: Australian War Memorial.

Battle of Long Khanh and Nui Le coins

This year, the Royal Australian Mint released two commemorative collectible coins marking the anniversary of the Battles of Long Khanh and Nui Le.

These coins have been very popular and we thought your membership might be interested in purchasing one of these coins before they sell out.

Developed in collaboration with members from the 3rd Battalion, the Battle of Long Khanh coin depicts a scene inspired by the elements of the Battle, featuring a Centurion tank, manned by an Australian soldier, set deep in the Vietnam jungle.

Developed in collaboration with members of the 4th Battalion, the Battle of Nui Le coin also shows a scene inspired by the elements of the Battle. It features the iconic Iroquois helicopter, which was used to evacuate wounded Australian soldiers during the battle, which was part of Operation Ivanhoe.

Both coins retail at \$10 each and can be purchased from the Mint's [eshop](#) or call centre (1300 652 020).

I've included some images of the coins below including the packaging for your reference.

Regards, Nicolle

Royal Australian Mint



Some Zen wisdom, or words to that effect!

1. Always remember you're unique. Just like everyone else.
2. Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
3. If you think nobody cares whether you're alive or dead, try missing a couple of mortgage payments.
4. Before you criticise someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticise them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.
5. If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
6. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.
7. If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably well worth it.
8. If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
9. Some days you are the dog, some days you are the tree.
10. Good judgment comes from bad experience ... and most of that comes from bad judgment.
11. A closed mouth gathers no foot.
12. There are two excellent theories for arguing with women. Neither one works.
13. Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving
14. Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it
15. We are born naked, wet and hungry, and get slapped on our arse ... then things just keep getting worse!
16. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.





Serving the
Australian Defence Force
since 1940



ON PATROL

September 2021

From the CCOMM's desk...

Dear friends and supporters,

As I write, the news headlines are full of the allied forces' departure from Afghanistan, and the unexpectedly rapid return to control of the Taliban. I am aware of the many emotions and feelings this has ignited, particularly amongst those who served there. I had opportunity to serve, as did a number of our REPs, as the Everyman at Camp Baird and Al Dafrah for some months. I felt an affinity with some of the local people I had the privilege to interact with. I did not however get to go into Afghanistan itself. I can only imagine our ADF personnel and the connection they must have felt, not so much for a "place", but for the local people they got to befriend. It is a sombre moment, wondering how they will get on in the future. How will they hold up under the changed circumstances? Added to that is the inevitable assessment from the media and other commentators as to "what was achieved".

However, to us in Everyman's, that is not the question. As I spoke to many an ADF member at Camp Baird, deploying forward into Afghanistan, I had nothing but admiration for their commitment. Our Defence has always excelled in dangerous war zones, whether at the Western Front 100 years ago, or in Afghanistan in the past 20 years. Both in war fighting, as well as humanitarian effort, the ADF has been second to none in achieving their goals in that immediate circumstance. Our Defence has done what they were asked to do, and made many positive differences in the lives of those they served.

This is why Everyman's is continuing to be proud to serve veterans, serving and retired, and proud to serve our up-coming generation of the ADF. We salute and honour the work the ADF does whether it be in a full-scale war, or on our own soil saving lives in a cyclone, flood, or bushfire, to say nothing of their current supporting role in a variety of capacities in the COVID response. That word of encouragement, around the Brew Truck and that meaningful chat in the Everyman's and Everywoman's Rec centre, will remain the same. We know our Defence will always do their job in a crisis to an exemplary level. In that place, Everyman's will strive with whatever resources we summon, to serve and support them.

To that end, please continue to support us so we can support the ADF. I speak the same of the ADF as I do of every one of our Everyman's/Everywoman's REPs. They continue to serve sacrificially as volunteers to support Defence. At times when natural disasters have struck, our REPs have stood up to assist the ADF and be there to support them. At every opportunity, our REPs are there, offering a brew and a friendly chat, day and night, in all kinds of weather.



CCOMM Ken Matthews

continued on Page 6

Everyman's Welfare Service

a company limited by guarantee

National Headquarters
02 6053 5288
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BANDIANA MILPO VIC 3694
www.everymans.org.au

Facing Uncertainty

We live in uncertain times. We wonder whether Covid has changed us irreversibly or if we might get back to the life we once knew. Many have lost livelihoods through this time and the uncertainty can be crippling. In 1914, the explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton commenced his expedition to Antarctica. However, the expedition soon failed. Shackleton's ship became trapped in the ice, and broke up. By a miracle, they managed to escape to a nearby island in their lifeboats, away from the slowly melting ice shelf where they had been. However, the island was essentially uninhabitable, and they stood no chance of rescue. No one sailed near the pack ice that surrounded them. Shackleton had no choice but to take a lifeboat, and rig it to go for help over the Southern Ocean, the most treacherous on earth. The whaling stations on South Georgia Island were the most reachable and ports. Shackleton was facing a voyage of 720 nautical miles, across mountainous seas. Chances of Shackleton's party having success were slim. However, to get help for his men, he would potentially sacrifice himself, and set out nonetheless.

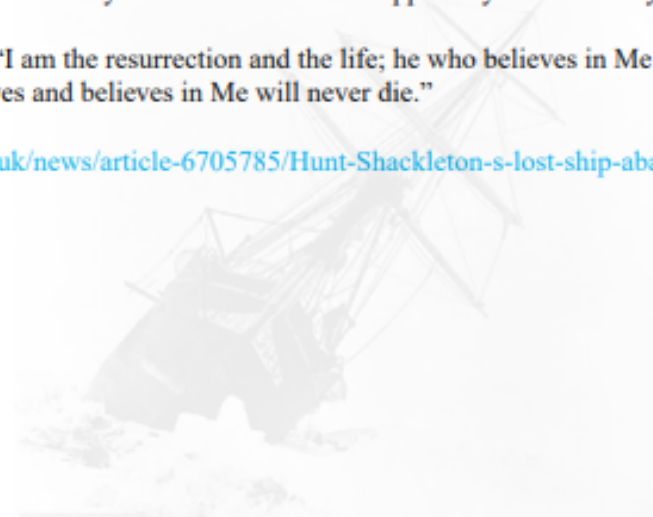
Despite this, his men trusted their skipper. Miraculously they were saved just prior to inevitable starvation. After 3 months, Shackleton finally got through the fog and pack ice. His men could have taken another one of the lifeboats, and tried to make the treacherous journey themselves. Nevertheless, they trusted in their skipper, stayed safe, and were saved.

We might not be facing the same degree of uncertainty as those men. However, our uncertainties do distress us all the same.

We have a Skipper that has promised to come for us if only we will trust Him. God Himself took on human form and dwelt amongst us. He showed us who He really is, and His purpose in saving our troubled and fallen world and us. He saved us, indeed our very souls, when He sacrificed Himself for everybody on a cross. Afterwards, many witnesses saw him alive again. This verified He really is God the Son. Jesus Christ has promised to return one day, and restore His troubled and fallen world. Whatever your uncertainties, you can leave them with the One who is not just a mere mortal like Shackleton, but He who is all-powerful, and offers you eternal life. Will you trust the ultimate Skipper of your soul today?

John 11:25-26 Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6705785/Hunt-Shackleton-s-lost-ship-abandoned-submersible-trapped-ice.ht>



CO-LABOURERS

At Everyman's we realise we can make a small impact on the ADF, but in conjunction with fellow ministries, the results are magnified. We gratefully acknowledge these like-minded ministries with whom we work to serve the ADF:

Chaplains	FOCUS	Military Christian Fellowship (MCF)
Navigators	SASRA	Red Shield Defence Service
Focus on the Family	Solid Rock	The Bible Society
Association for Conferences Teaching and Service (ACTS)		Naval Military and Airforce Bible Society

Anzac Day 2021 Correction

In our June edition of *On Patrol*, we posted this great photo of ACOM Richard Gibson & REP Ben Ridley with a group of young men and boys whom we had incorrectly identified as cadets. They are in fact The Boys' Brigade 1st Moreton Bay Company from Kallangur, led by Capt Russell Vincent.

This is one of the largest groups in Qld, just over 60 boys in total, from 5 to 18 years old.

The Boys' Brigade, founded in 1883, is an international Christian organisation, considered to be the original uniformed youth organisation. Its founder was an Officer in the Rifle Volunteers (Scotland). He combined the structure and discipline of the military with Christian teachings of Sunday School to form The Boys' Brigade. There remains a strong military influence on the organisation, and it remains firmly a Christian organisation focused on advancing Christ's Kingdom among boys.

More information about Boys' Brigade in Queensland can be found at <https://bbqld.org.au/>



The Boys' Brigade 1st Moreton Bay Company from Kallangur, led by Capt Russell Vincent on left and pictured with ACOM Richard Gibson & REP Ben Ridley at right.



ACOM Richard Gibson

Homebush



Just before the current Sydney lockdown, REP Chris Wainwright recently spent 8 days with 600 cadets at the Australian Army Cadet (AAC) annual exercise.

He did brew runs to 20 Platoons, with conversations over a hot tea and coffee enjoyed by all and Bibles and Daily Breads moving off the truck just as fast!

Chris had planned to take his caravan with a few creature comforts, out to the camp area, only to have it written off, while parked in the street, just before the camp began. With little time to make alternate arrangements, he booked into Lone Pine Barracks at Singleton, which was in the general vicinity of the camp. Before long he was approached to do some Brew Runs to some infantry corps soldiers, who were also on exercise. It's been a busy time for Chris, but he has thrived on the opportunity he has had with the young cadets and infantry soldiers alike. This contribution to the welfare of the AAC was very well received and appreciated.

Ex Diamond Walk, Shoalwater



Everyman's Brewtruck in the dust of a passing tank



REPs Ben Ridley & Leane Dabitz, ACOM Richard Gibson (far right)

Following a year in and out of lockdown with the trainees on Simpson Barracks, it was a welcome opportunity to hit the road Qld-bound to join REP Ben Ridley and ACOM Richard Gibson for Diamond Walk, a 7th Brigade exercise conducted at Shoalwater Bay.

It didn't take long after arriving in Rockhampton, to find I hadn't really left Melbourne behind, when several recent graduates from Simpson's School of Signals, now with 7th Combat Signals Regiment, turned up for breakfast! (see picture of REP Leane Dabitz with Sig Ryan and Sig Hess below) With bacon, eggs, and pancakes on the menu, we drew the attention of a few regulars who would stop by our camp each morning for a feed and a chat.

Over long days, our trucks covered many kilometres to reach soldiers keen for some hot food and drinks and a well-deserved rest in between their arduous tasks. At night, we would wind down by sharing the days' events and enjoying Ben and Richard's musical talent, cranking out worship on the guitar. These times of fellowship were invaluable with each other, and many good conversations happened in the field. Each day presented opportunities to share our faith testimonies as we spent time with the soldiers, often seeing them on more than one occasion.

And very importantly, we still managed to treat Richard to a 60th birthday celebration... EWS style!



REP Leane Dabitz with Sig Ryan & Sig Hess



Celebrating Richard's 60th birthday - REP Ben Ridley, ACOM Richard Gibson and REP Leane Dabitz

EWS LOCATIONS

- RAAF Base, AMBERLEY, QLD
- Kokoda Barracks, CANUNGRA, QLD
- Gallipoli Barracks, ENOGGERA, QLD
- Victoria Barracks, PETRIE TERRACE, QLD
- HMAS Kuttabul, HOMEBUSH, NSW
- RMC DUNTROON, ACT
- 17 Brigade, RANDWICK, NSW
- Blamey Barracks, KAPOOKA, NSW
- Gaza Ridge Barracks, BANDIANA, VIC
- Latchford Barracks, BONEGILLA, VIC
- Navy Accommodation, STRATHFIELD, NSW
- Simpsons Barracks, MACLEOD, VIC

REP Ben Ridley

I consider it a huge blessing and an honour for every opportunity to get out in the field alongside the men and women of the ADF and allies, especially considering the recent lockdowns. Although being restricted in many ways, we have still managed to deploy on exercises in recent times. These times in the bush give us the best opportunities to build relationships, much more than when we are around the barracks.

For the South-East Queensland team, it is usually ACOM Richard Gibson and myself working together in the field, however, we were blessed on a recent 7th Brigade exercise to be joined by Rep Leane Dabitz, who drove all the way from Melbourne to join us in Shoalwater Bay! Having a third person to carry the burden made a huge difference. It also meant some great times of fellowship and ministry, with each of us having a different ability and gifting to connect with the troops. Also, having an Everywoman serving alongside us gave us a different dynamic than having just us blokes! We had a lot of good feedback from the units we served, right to the highest levels, with Commanding Officers thanking us for our efforts to keep the morale high of those in their command. Another rather unique opportunity came recently for Rep Mason Eagleton and I when we had the privilege of getting up close to the Army's new 'Boxer' Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles.

We served 2/14th Light Horse Regiment, during their first ever live fire shoot at the range (see photos). What a thrill!



REPs Ben Ridley & Mason Eagleton



*Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles operated by 214th Light Horse Regiment with EWS
Brewtruck bottom RHS*



REP Mason Eagleton

EveryVet's

On the EveryVet's front, I am excited to be joined in EveryVet's by my friend, and brother in Christ – Petri Koskelainen and his wife Katja, whom my wife Claudia and I have served alongside with various projects.

Petri is also looking to become an accredited part-time Rep to work out of Canungra. EveryVet's had a Buntings BBQ to raise funding for a multipurpose trailer to be used for 'Backyard Blitz' style activities (see www.everyvets.org.au for more details). Claudia and I have continued to host a weekly 'EveryVet's Connect' group at our home on Tuesday evenings. Because we live on the southside of Brisbane, and we have veterans who live on the northside, I decided to begin a second group on Monday evenings, meeting in the homes of some of our veterans who live that side of town. The EveryVet's work is needed now more than ever. With Afghanistan recently falling back into the hands of the Taliban, I know many of my mates that I served within my time in the Army are doing it tough, and it seems to many like all our work over 20 years has been for nothing. Now is the time that Everyman's Veterans League can be there for those who are suffering. My 'silver lining' take-away from the situation is, from a personal point of view, that Afghanistan was where I returned to the Lord after having walked away from him some 7 years prior.

From an eternal point of view, our efforts in Afghanistan allowed Christian missionaries to share the gospel to the Afghan people, and many have come to know Christ through their faithful obedience to the gospel. This will have lasting effects for those souls forever. Despite the many challenges we face in this world, we still fight the good fight, seeking to reach the lost for our King. May God bless you all.

Everyman's in Lockdown

A big shout out to **REP Chris Wainwright**, who is locked down in Sydney and confined to one hour of exercise each day, within 5km of his home. Unable to get to the Homebush Precinct, where he usually works, Chris has been busy with a mailbox drop in his neighbourhood, where a large number of military personnel (mostly Navy) live. Chris leaves his card and a short note asking if those living in the household are OK. He's been getting a great response to this initiative, and his local community really appreciate that he is reaching out to them.

Meanwhile **REP Leane Dabitz** is in her 6th lockdown in Melbourne! She certainly gets points for perseverance! Her work with the trainees at Simpson Barracks has been so appreciated by the line of command down there, that she has been asked and authorised to continue coming in to keep the Rec Centre open, travelling home just after curfew begins each night.

At HQ, we feel really blessed to have moved all our work onto the cloud just before the first lockdown last year. This means we can all work safely from home, without having to negotiate border crossings and permits. We miss the contact we would normally have with the soldiers that come into the Rec Centre to have some time out from their busy training schedule. It also means we cannot access any phone messages or pick up mail. Please be patient with us if it seems we are not getting back to you. We'll be in touch just as soon as we can.

Meanwhile at Kapooka, life goes on uninterrupted for **REP Warren Clarke**, albeit within the confines of the NSW Regional restrictions and with the support **ACOMM George Thomas**. There is a constant flow of recruits coming in for their basic training, and Warren works hard to keep the Rec Centre open a couple of nights each week and taking the Brew Truck to the Firing Range and the Challenge, where he always gets a warm welcome.

NEW PHONE NUMBER FOR HEADQUARTERS

02 6053 5288

from Page 1

I think of words from the Bible from John 15:13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. As the ADF will continue to do this for their friends, and those they serve, we ask that your thoughts and prayers may be with them and also with our Everyman's REPs as we continue our support for them as we have since 1940.

CCOMM Ken Matthews

More ways to give.....It's now possible to set up regular (or one-off) Direct Giving from your own bank account straight into ours! The details you need are:

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Account : 197255
Title: Everymans Welfare Service
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