

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



Special edition weekly Lockdown eNews 20 August 21

Dear members,

One week down, two to go! Or least that's what we hope will be the case. I hope you're all organised at home and that most of you will have the support of family and friends by email, telephone or, perhaps, in person. You also have the support of our staff and volunteers that I encourage you to seek as and if you need it. While a degree of resilience will be necessary for all of us, please ensure you don't suffer unnecessarily from loneliness or anything more serious. Please stay in touch with friends and call them when you can. As you've seen already, we have a good system to ensure we maintain essential services to our members and others in the Veteran Community. Stay well and I look forward to getting through this situation together.

Jim Gilchrist



Dear members,

Following the announcement and extension of the ACT COVID lockdown, the Sub-Branch office and VSC were closed on and from Friday 13 August 2021 and will remain closed until and including Thursday 2 September 2021. This could change if the lockdown is further extended.

During the lockdown, Sub-Branch staff and volunteers are working from home to continue to support members and clients during our normal business hours of 0900-1500 hours, Monday to Friday. They can be contacted via their usual telephone numbers and email addresses.

Regards,

Greg



Woden Valley Sub-Branch

Greg Kennett

Secretary

Dear members,

Due to the ACT COVID lockdown, the Sub-Branch OGM scheduled for Tuesday 31 August 2021 is cancelled.

The next OGM is scheduled for Tuesday 28 September 2021.

Regards,

Greg



Woden Valley Sub-Branch

Greg Kennett

Secretary

ACT Government COVID Update - Emergency food relief

Dear members,

Please see the following announcement from the ACT Government:

“The ACT Government has responded quickly to provide emergency food relief for Canberrans most in need during this 7-day lockdown.

The ACT Government has partnered with VolunteeringACT and the State Emergency Service to provide emergency food to those in need.

Any Canberran who is significantly and adversely impacted by this 7-day lockdown and is unable to feed their family is encouraged to call 1800 43 11 33. Callers will be linked with a VolunteeringACT staff member who will place a shopping order on their behalf and members of the SES will then collect the order and deliver it to them.

The SES are unable to enter a person’s home, so the groceries will be left on the doorstep after a knock at the door.

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/community/access-help#Emergency-food-relief>

Jessica Summerrell

Executive Branch Manager, Community & Social Inclusion”

Regards,

Greg

Greg Kennett

Secretary

Woden Valley Sub-Branch

Australian Capital Territory

P: (02) 6285 1931

18 Aug 2021 9:10 AM AEST - MEDIA RELEASE - THE HON ANDREW GEE - Vietnam Veterans Remembered

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

MEDIA RELEASE

17 August 2021

VIETNAM VETERANS REMEMBERED

Wednesday the 18th August is Vietnam Veterans' Day - an opportunity for our country to pause and remember the service and sacrifice of the Australians during the Vietnam War, and to acknowledge the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee said the Vietnam War was the longest conflict Australians were involved in during the 20th Century.

"Over 60,000 Australians served in the Vietnam War, including over 15,000 National Servicemen. Tragically 521 Australians lost their lives and some 3,000 were wounded," Minister Gee said.

"The first Australians to arrive in South Vietnam in 1962 were members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

"Australians would go on to serve in the war until the end of 1972, with Australia's involvement in the war formally ending when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973."

While the 18th August is commemorated each year as Vietnam Veterans' Day, it is also the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, Australia's most costly battle in Vietnam.

On that day in 1966, 17 Australians were killed in action and 25 more were wounded, with one of the wounded succumbing to his injuries nine days later.

On the rubber plantation at the Battle of Long Tan, the waves of attacking Viet Cong Army were met by a combination of infantry and artillery fire and later fire from Armoured Personnel Carriers.

Despite the Australians being outnumbered ten-to-one by the Viet Cong, our troops had a considerable advantage of their own – the fire support of three batteries of 1 Field Regiment sited at Nui Dat, as well as a battery of American medium artillery from 2/35th Artillery Battalion.

The Australians eventually prevailed, but only after fighting in torrential rain for four hours. They were nearly overrun, but were saved by a timely ammunition resupply and reinforcements by an armoured personnel carrier.

"It was an extraordinary feat of arms in which Australians displayed great courage and resilience, but it was very costly," Minister Gee said.

"At places like Binh Ba, Coral-Balmoral and many others, Australians fought and served with distinction, earning the respect of their allies and enemies alike.

"It's vitally important we remember all of the men and women who served our country during the Vietnam conflict, and thank our veterans for answering the call when Australia asked them to go. We must never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"Unfortunately, many diggers were met with hostility upon their return home and were not given the respect or gratitude they deserved.

"We need to acknowledge that the wounds inflicted on many of our Vietnam veterans by some of their fellow Australians when they got back took a heavy toll. Families were too often left to pick up the pieces.

"My uncle served in Vietnam as a Nasho and I understand very clearly the selfless service and sacrifice of that extraordinary generation of Australians.

"I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing contribution of Vietnam veterans to the broader community along with the very important role they play as part of our wider ex-service community, including their work in helping to establish the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service, now known as Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling.

"Open Arms was founded thanks to the lobbying and support of Vietnam veterans, and the service has in turn helped thousands of veterans and their families."

The Long Tan Bursary was also established thanks to the support of Vietnam veterans. The Bursary provides education support for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans, supporting them to acquire qualifications in their chosen careers.

Applications for the Long Tan Bursary open on Wednesday 18 August for eligible children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans. Each year 37 bursaries are awarded, worth up to \$12,000 each. For more information on the scheme and how to apply, visit the [Department of Veterans' Affairs website](#).

For more information on Vietnam Veterans' Day, and the Battle of Long Tan, visit the Department's [Anzac Portal](#).

MEDIA CONTACT
Minister Gee office: 0459 966 944

A Message from the Governor-General to Australia's veterans

“Dear all

Today is Vietnam Veterans’ Day and the Governor-General has asked me to share his message to all veterans – of Vietnam and more recent conflicts - that he would have delivered at the national memorial had COVID-19 restrictions not intervened.

Should you wish to share the message amongst your own members and supporters it is available to: [download](#), to share on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), and on [YouTube](#).

In his speech His Excellency says:

“Fifty years ago the majority of our Vietnam veterans had returned to Australia ... some uncertain of what they had achieved ... of how they should feel about their service ... whether they were part of the Anzac legacy and whether anyone cared about what they had done and what they suffered in the service of our nation.

“I want to give a message to them – and to all Veterans of the ADF including those who served more recently in Afghanistan who may be wondering the same things – a message that they should have been told at the time.

“You should be proud of your service.

“You fought for reasons that your Government determined to be important to Australia and you fought for your mates – our nation won’t forget your service.

“You inherited the Anzac legacy, built upon it and handed it to the next generation. And for that, we are grateful.

“We do care. You are not alone and we will support you.”

The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley are thinking of our veterans and all Australians who may be struggling to cope with recent events. Your organisations play a vital role in supporting individuals and families – a role made even more challenging by the pandemic. The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley look forward to catching up (virtually or in person) in the near future. Either I or a colleague, Tim Grainger, will be in contact over the coming weeks to explore engagement opportunities.

Yours sincerely

Rob



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Australian Honours: [Nominate](#) a worthy Australian.

The Office acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

The following line is a video of the address the Governor -General would have delivered at the Vietnam Veterans’ Day ceremony on Wednesday: [Dropbox - 20210817 GG video message - Vietnam Remembrance Day 50th Anniversary - Simplify your life](#)

19 Aug 2021 9:00 AM AEST - MEDIA RELEASE - MINISTER GEE - EX SERVICE ORGANISATIONS CONVENE SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN VETERANS

The Hon Andrew Gee MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel
Federal Member for Calare
MEDIA RELEASE

18 August 2021

Ex-Service Organisations convene support for Afghan Veterans

Ex-service organisations from across the nation have met with the Australian Government today to throw their support behind efforts underway to assist veterans and families impacted by the situation in Afghanistan.

The Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans' Affairs convened the extraordinary meeting of the Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) Roundtable, bringing together key players in the Defence and veteran community, to coordinate veteran mental health outreach and support.

"We have a network of incredible veteran and community groups across the nation who are, everyday delivering much needed services and support," Minister Gee said.

"I hosted a meeting this morning with our ESOs to join forces to support the veterans who served in Afghanistan and other conflicts, and also their families.

"Community and ex-service organisations play a critical role in the support of the veteran community and today they reiterated their commitment working with the Australian Government to deliver a united effort at this difficult time," Minister Gee said.

Organisations in attendance included the Air Force Association, Australian War Widows, Defence Families Australia, Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association, Defence Reserves Association, Legacy Australia, Partners of Veterans Association of Australia, Returned and Services League of Australia, TPI Federation Australia, Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia.

"Over the last 20 years, Australia has been a steadfast contributor to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. Now the Defence and veteran community need to know that we are steadfast in our commitment to their wellbeing at home.

"Earlier this week I directed the Department of Veterans' Affairs to phone the families of ADF members who lost their lives in Afghanistan, as well as veterans that the department is aware of who could suffer adversely as a result of what is currently happening in Afghanistan, and let them know that support is available if it's needed.

"I encourage anyone in need of help to access the services that are available to them and their families.

"I would also encourage Australians to pick up the phone to say g'day to any veterans you may know. Now more than ever it's vitally important to stay connected. A friendly voice can make all the difference to a mate who may be in need."

Support services:

- **Open Arms** – Veterans & Families Counselling service is available 24/7 on [1800 011 046](tel:1800011046)
- **Safe Zone Support** on [1800 142 072](tel:1800142072) is a free and anonymous counselling line for current serving ADF personnel, veterans and their families available 24/7
- **Defence Family Helpline** available for ADF members and their families, available 24/7 – dial [1800 624 608](tel:1800624608)



MEDIA RELEASE

August 19, 2021

For immediate release

RSL Says Veterans Must Be Praised For Afghanistan Service

Australia's peak veterans' organisation, the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL), says Australian military personnel must be praised for their service in Afghanistan.

RSL National President Greg Melick said Australia's military personnel did a magnificent job in war-torn Afghanistan. They were respected by our allies and feared by our foes.

"In withdrawing, Australia had no choice but to follow the lead of the United States. We could not go it alone and it would be foolhardy to stay in the country when the US and the major allies had withdrawn. It is premature, counter-productive and heartless to say our people died and/or suffered in vain, particularly as the living conditions of many Afghans were improved over the past 20 years.

"This includes education facilities and services, treatment of women and improved infrastructure and we can only hope that the repressive past policies of the Taliban will be moderated."

Greg Melick said Australia had a moral obligation to extract and accept as many of those and their families who had assisted Australian Defence forces and Embassy officials during the deployment in Afghanistan.

"It must do this as soon as and safely as possible. These people provided invaluable service to Australians posted to Afghanistan and we have an obligation to help them," he said.

"The Government must also improve its communication processes and better inform the public about what it is doing and has done in the past, to extricate those who assisted us.

"As well, all of us must locate and reach out to those who may be affected, and support services must be sufficient to enable timely intervention.

"Many of our service personnel who served in Afghanistan and other Middle East theatres will be deeply impacted by the latest events on the ground there and we need to understand and appreciate the effect on our veterans of those operations.

"The RSL is providing its support and are asking all Australians to recognise the contribution of our veterans and show their understanding, care, and support for the service they provided."

Greg Melick said he had made similar comments yesterday at a roundtable meeting of ex-service organisations with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Andrew Gee MP.

ENDS

ACT COVID-19 restrictions update



Dear All,

With the recent announcement of an extended COVID-19 lockdown across the ACT, we wanted to provide you with an update about our services.

Australia Post is an essential service and as such our operations continue despite COVID-19 restrictions. This means that:

- Post Offices remain open across the state

Processing and delivery of letters and parcels continues

The lockdown is however impacting some of our delivery operations including air freight. Our delivery network has also been affected by increased online shopping activity, resulting in parcel volumes similar to the Christmas period.

Our posties and delivery drivers will continue to deliver as quickly and safely as they can, but please understand delivery delays may be experienced.

We have a range of health and safety measures in place to help protect you, our people and the community. These include perspex screens, hand sanitiser and social distancing in all Post Offices, along with extra cleaning in high touch areas. We've also applied additional measures throughout our processing centres and delivery network.

To help us all stay COVID safe, we're asking you to follow these guidelines when visiting a Post Office or receiving a delivery:

When visiting a Post Office

- Please keep 1.5 metres from staff and other customers.
- Sanitise your hands and wear a mask where required.

Stay home if you're showing symptoms.

When receiving a delivery

- Please keep 1.5 metres from our posties and drivers.
- If you're experiencing symptoms, please let your postie or driver know.
- Wear a mask where required and practice good hygiene.

To ensure we avoid unnecessary contact, there's currently no requirement for you to sign for deliveries. If the sender has requested a signature, we'll confirm delivery by recording the name of the person receiving the item. Visit our website to learn more about [COVID-19 health and safety](#).

We are thinking of you in this difficult time and thank you for your ongoing support and patience.

Stay safe,

From your Australia Post team