

# RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



February 2023



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Welcome to the February newsletter that provides information about recent policy-type matters that affect many of us and that highlights some planned events for our Sub-Branch and other ESOs in the ACT.

Firstly, I again thank everyone who helped drive our ship while Kay and I spent time relaxing at sea earlier this month. It's encouraging to see willing people continue to support our activities and do the things that we need to do for our members and others. I particularly thank those of you who attended the February OGM especially as we had to reconvene it when we didn't have a quorum at the first attempt. I think that was only the second time in the past 10-11 years that we had to do that.

Many of you have already noted the first major outcome from the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans' Suicide* has been Government's acceptance of the Commission's recommendation to reform Veteran Entitlement Legislation. While the timeframe for this will limit any significant changes in the short term, it is a major step forward that should bring long term benefits to all veterans and their families. It also demonstrates the Commission's desire to improve the support that is available to the Veteran Community as and when it can present a reasonable case to do so.

On the local front, please note the lunch scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, as this is both an attempt to reinvigorate the Eddison Day Club in a sustainable fashion, and a trial of replacing at least some of our 'OGM Dinners', with a lunch. In both cases, the Board is conscious of our members and of the sorts of activities that offers the best outcomes for them.

Please also note the changes to the ACT Government's policy and advice on the COVID situation as that affects all of us.

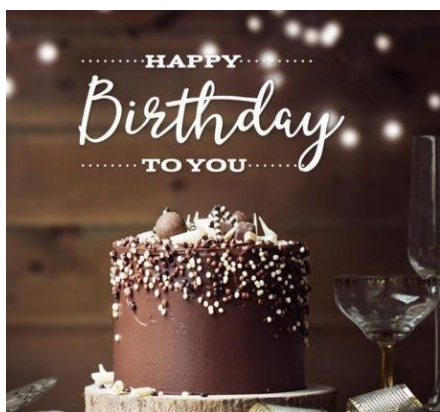
There is a call for volunteers to support a Marist College activity at the Woden Cemetery. Those members who assisted Marist College last year enjoyed their interaction with the students and appreciated this opportunity to engage with some from a younger generation most of whom showed a genuine interest in this commemorative activity.

As we approach Easter and ANZAC Day, please look out for notices of coming events and of requests for volunteers to support various activities including the ANZAC Appeal. Although we are unable to conduct the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony this year, we are preparing for the ANZAC Eve Dinner and the ANZAC Day service at Eddison Park. We will also keep members informed of developments relating to the ANZAC Day services and march at the AWM.

Best wishes to all and don't forget to call the office if you need some advice and/or assistance with anything,

Jim Gilchrist  
President

**On Friday 24 February Coffee Catch up and Birthday Cake for WV RSL Sub-Branch Vice President Welfare Peter Sutton.**



## **EDDISON DAY CLUB LUNCH ON FRIDAY 3 MARCH 2023**

Dear members,

Some members of the Sub-Branch and Eddison Day Club DO NOT have an email address. We send out an email each Friday, called the "Items of Interest". This has been going out each Friday since March 2020 when COVID-19 struck.

The Board of the Woden Valley Sub-Branch has organised a combined luncheon to replace an evening dinner, normally held in late February, with the 19<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Eddison Day Club.

Following the luncheon, we intend to have a show of hands to decide if there is sufficient interest to continue with the Eddison Day Club in its current form, amend it to accommodate the changed environment, and arrive at a day that suits those who wish to return. Our volunteer base has been severely eroded in the last three years, with many not being able to continue. Some will only return at a reduced level, and others are not able to resume at all.

We have received a reasonable response so far, but we would like to have a large turnout. With this in mind, we ask you to contact the Woden Valley Sub-Branch on **6285 1931** or email your details to [admin@rslwoden.org.au](mailto:admin@rslwoden.org.au) to register your intention to attend the luncheon on **Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 12.00pm for 12.30.**

The luncheon will comprise a hot main course and a surprise sweet. We intend to invite Mrs Mary Collier, who is the President of the Canberra Irish Club to cut the birthday cake for the celebration of the 19<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Eddison Day Club.

**The cost of the luncheon is \$15.00 which can be paid by EFTPOS at the Sub-Branch or paid by cash or EFTPOS on the day. We will have an EFTPOS machine there at the Canberra Irish Club and those who wish to can pay cash.**

**Mrs Liz Lumb has agreed to attend and play some music on the keyboard purchased by the Sub-Branch many years ago.**

Please consider coming out to reconnect with friends or to meet new ones.

Peter Sutton

## The Reinvigoration of the Eddison Day Club

The Eddison Day Club is one of over 70 Day Clubs that were initially formed in 1977 on the initiative of the Department of Veterans' Affairs as a way of having veterans, their partners and other older members of the general community to meet others to share ideas, do light exercise, be educated and informed, have morning tea, a light lunch before returning home. Our Club met for the first time on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2004 at the Canberra Irish Club in Weston. Our Club was promoted to the Board of the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch by Mr Ian Gollings who was the initial coordinator. There has been a succession of coordinators over the years as well as other volunteers who were once able to coordinate raffles, arrange transport for those who can no longer drive, leading exercise, prepare quizzes etc.

The Eddison Day Club has been fortunate to be able to have available a multitude of guest speakers, entertainers and musicians come to our club. Previously we were able to attract between 40 and 55 persons each week This had to cease on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 due to COVID-19 which forced the Canberra Irish Club to close until being able to open once again in July of that year. Further lockdowns occurred in the latter months. During 2021 and 2022, there were many attempts to restart the attendance at the day Club, but have so far failed to regain the attendance required to attract both members and guest speakers or entertainers.

To this end the Board of the Woden Valley Sub-Branch and others have agreed to combine the usual Ordinary General Meeting Dinner planned for late February and the 19<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Eddison Day Club. The kitchen of the Canberra Irish Club is currently undergoing renovations and is not expected to open again until late January or early February.

Plans are well advanced for a lunch on **3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**, where members of the Eddison Day Club and Sub-Branch members will hold a combined lunch. The cost of this lunch is expected to be no more than \$20.00 per head. There will be a two-course meal as well as some light entertainment and a raffle. The main purpose is to talk and have fun.

Following the meal, we intend to gauge the interest of those attending in having the Eddison Day Club meeting on a regular basis – maybe not meeting initially each week, and maybe not on a Friday as was usual in previous years. New members will be required from all.

The Eddison Day Club is a vital activity of the Woden Valley Sub-Branch and is the only one in the Canberra district. Due to COVID-19 and the aging of veterans, out of the 70 Day Clubs in 2020, only 40 have survived. The Day Clubs are an outlet for our older, and sometimes isolated members of the community to get together.

One thing under consideration is to have residents of local Aged Care Facilities attend the Day Club. The facilities will provide transport and support workers. Our volunteer base has been vastly depleted over the last few years. We will need to recruit some new volunteers to assist with several positions to have the Day Club proceed efficiently.

**Save the date of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 to attend the luncheon of the combined membership of the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch and the 19<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Eddison Day Club.**

**1200 for 1230 at the Canberra Irish Club.**

# RSL AUSTRALIA WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED REFORM OF VETERAN ENTITLEMENT LEGISLATION



16 Feb

## **MEDIA RELEASE:**

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSLA) has hailed the Federal Government's intention announced today, to simplify legislation governing Veterans' compensation, rehabilitation, and other entitlements as long overdue.

The RSL has been calling for many years for the consolidation of the current legislation comprising three Acts into a single piece of legislation to simplify claims for veterans and their families.

RSLA President Greg Melick said the Government's commitment to now reform the legislation was welcomed.

"The Government's commitment to consult with the veteran community which is also welcomed, must be extensive, collaborative, and continual," he said.

"The new Act should introduce a cohesive approach to veterans' entitlements, with the end goal being a reduction in the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) claims backlog to ensure veterans and their families are not left waiting for entitlements designed to support their health and wellbeing."

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide found the existing three pieces of legislation, dating from 1917, were so complex and adversely impacted on the mental health of veterans and their families. The more than a century old legislation has never been fully reformed, but updated and amended which has only added to its complexity.

Greg Melick said legislative reform was a key interim recommendation of the ongoing Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

"The RSL commends the work of the Royal Commission in recommending this reform. All the previous inquiries have done likewise with insufficient action, and the Federal Government is to be commended for honouring its commitment to now implement this reform."

Greg Melick reiterated the RSL's call for the Federal Government to use the forthcoming Budget to provide demand-driven funding for the implementation of all the Royal Commission's recommendations to materially improve the lives of Australia's veterans and their families.

"The RSL stands ready to support and inform this important work, both directly to Government and through the Royal Commission process," he said.

## **RESOURCES:**

For more information on the consultation process visit: [www.dva.gov.au/legislationconsultation2023](http://www.dva.gov.au/legislationconsultation2023)

For information on the RSL's recent pre-budget Submission to the government, calling for legislation reform visit: [www.rslaustralia.org/latest-news](http://www.rslaustralia.org/latest-news)

For Information on the RSL's Submissions made to the Royal Commission visit: [www.rslaustralia.org/royal-commission](http://www.rslaustralia.org/royal-commission)

# Marist College Canberra - Footsteps Day Information - Defence Service Day 22/3/23

Dear members,

Marist College Canberra has again invited the Sub-Branch to participate in its Footsteps Day program at the Ex-Service section of the Woden Cemetery on Wednesday 22 March 2023. Last year several of our members participated and overall considered it a worthwhile activity. For those who participated last year, your comments have been passed on to Marist College.

Attached is the Footsteps Day program. Note that our involvement is proposed for the Sessions 1 and 2, and Sessions 3 and 4 which are between 0930-1145 hours and 1245-1440 hours, respectively. Members who wish to participate can choose to do so for all or any of those sessions. I would be grateful if those members who intend to participate could advise me accordingly by no later than Friday 3 March 2023.

The following paragraphs are extracted from the Marist College email to me, for your additional information:

*Marist College Canberra will be hosting another Footsteps day (Year 9 College program) devoted to giving students a detailed understanding about our Defence Forces and the sacrifices that our veterans have made.*

*Similar to last year we would love to invite members of the Woden Valley RSL to attend as guides at the Defence section of the Woden Cemetery, which would include:*

- *Paying our respects at the Defence Service section, including a short 20min ceremony*
- *Students learning about the story of Corporal Ernest Corey*
- *Discussing with students what 'Defence service' is by a veteran (Woden RSL volunteer) who is on-site, spending time with our Year 9 students at the cemetery*

*Finally, the students placing small Australian flags at each grave, to recognise that individuals service to Australia.*

*Whilst this is earlier than Anzac day, it is necessary to complete this on Wednesday 22 March due to the impending school holidays. The flags will be regathered later in the week and will be relaid by volunteer Marist College staff before Anzac Day, to protect them from the weather (and the Cockatoos).*

*Please note that there are 8 Houses (divided into 4 groups) that attend four separate sites over the course of the day on a rotational basis.*

Kind regards,

Greg



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## Footsteps: Defence Service Day Itinerary 22/3/23

	Session 1 9:30am -10:15am (45 minutes)	Session 2 11am – 11:45am (45 minutes)	Lunch	Session 3 12:45pm -1:30pm (45 minutes)	Session 4 2pm – 2:40pm (40 minutes)	
<b>Grp 1</b>  Conway & Darlo	<b>Soldier On Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Guest speaker</li> <li>• Question time</li> </ul>	<b>First World War presentation by Historical Society (Theatrette)</b>	12:15pm- 12:45pm	<b>Woden Cemetery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Flag planting</li> <li>• Personal reflection</li> </ul>	<b>War Memorial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside guide of memorials and Lone Pine</li> </ul>	
<b>Grp 2</b>  Lavalla & Haydon	<b>War Memorial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside guide of memorials and Lone Pine</li> </ul>	<b>Soldier On Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Guest speaker</li> <li>• Question time</li> </ul>		<b>12:15pm- 12:45pm</b>	<b>First World War presentation by Historical Society (Theatrette)</b>	<b>Woden Cemetery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Flag planting</li> <li>• Personal reflection</li> </ul>
<b>Grp 3</b>  Crispin & Patrick	<b>Woden Cemetery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Flag planting</li> <li>• Personal reflection</li> </ul>	<b>War Memorial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside guide of memorials and Lone Pine</li> </ul>		<b>12:15pm- 12:45pm</b>	<b>Soldier On Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Guest speaker</li> <li>• Question time</li> </ul>	<b>First World War presentation by Historical Society (Theatrette)</b>
<b>Grp 4</b>  Mark & McMn	<b>First World War presentation by Historical Society (Theatrette)</b>	<b>Woden Cemetery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Flag planting</li> <li>• Personal reflection</li> </ul>		<b>12:15pm- 12:45pm</b>	<b>War Memorial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside guide of memorials and Lone Pine</li> </ul>	<b>Soldier On Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Guest speaker</li> <li>• Question time</li> </ul>

# Changes to COVID-19 testing arrangements in the ACT

Information about changes to ACT Government COVID-19 testing arrangements for people living in Canberra and the surrounding region.

These changes come into effect with the ending of the ACT's COVID-19 Management Declaration Framework on **28 February 2023**.

Under the Declaration, the only remaining public health direction – which requires people who test positive using RAT to report their result to ACT Health – will also end.

Canberrans are strongly encouraged to continue reporting their positive RAT results using the form which remains on the [ACT COVID-19 website](#).

Reporting positive RAT results helps ACT Health to direct people to information about supports and healthcare. It also helps us to monitor and respond to the ongoing impacts of the virus on the community. The information helps to inform Territory health policy, as well as the nature of services and assistance provided to the community and health-related facilities.

ACT Health is reminding Canberrans that, if symptomatic, testing for COVID-19 continues to be an important COVID Smart behaviour. COVID-19 remains a serious illness, particularly for those people at risk of severe disease.

## Where you can get a free rapid antigen test (RAT)

From 1 March 2023, the ACT Government is expanding its free RAT program so that all Canberrans continue to have access to free COVID-19 testing.

Canberrans can collect free RATs from certain ACT Government locations, including:

Libraries ACT locations (excluding Heritage Library) – where you can collect up to 3 free RATs per person, per visit. There are nine locations across the ACT, so there's somewhere you can pick up a free RAT close to home. For information on your nearest branch, visit [www.library.act.gov.au](http://www.library.act.gov.au) or call 6205 9000.

Access Canberra service centres – where customers can collect a RAT after transactions.

RATs are already available at Canberra Health Services facilities, including hospitals, Walk-in Centres and health centres, where visitors are encouraged to do a RAT before entering.

For the safety of staff and visitors, please do not visit or try to collect RATs from any of these locations if you're unwell and have COVID-19 symptoms. Plan ahead and have some RATs at home or ask someone else to collect some for you.

Community groups can also contact Community Services Directorate to arrange a bulk order for RATs, if needed. Arrangement can be made by emailing [socialrecovery@act.gov.au](mailto:socialrecovery@act.gov.au)

RATs are also widely available for purchase across Canberra, including at pharmacies, supermarkets, and other retail stores.

Most Canberrans, including children supervised by an adult, can use a RAT in the comfort of their own home and get results within minutes. Once you know if you have COVID-19 you can take appropriate steps to look after yourself, manage your infection and protect others.

Some people may be recommended to do a PCR test by their GP or treating health professional (including those who are unable to use a RAT).



## Accessing PCR testing

The ACT Government's COVID-19 testing centre at Garran will permanently close at the end of the day on 28 February 2023.

Despite its closure, the ACT Government continues to ensure equitable and timely access to PCR testing for Canberrans who need a PCR test.

From 1 March 2023, there will be changes in the way COVID-19 testing can be accessed in the ACT. These changes are being made so that healthcare remains accessible to everyone as we move away from emergency settings.

Testing for COVID-19 using PCR may be preferable for:

people who are at higher risk of a severe COVID-19 illness. PCR testing may provide a positive result earlier in their illness which can be important for those who are eligible for antiviral medications.

other people who are recommended to have a PCR test by their GP or treating doctor (including those who are unable to use a RAT).

Individuals who may benefit from a COVID-19 PCR test and who are concession card holders can access PCR testing without a pathology form. This includes the following concession cards:

Pensioner concession card

Commonwealth seniors' health care card

Health care card (including Low-income health care card)

Department of Veterans' Affairs gold, white or orange cards

ACT Government Service Access Card

Pathology collection centres are spread across the ACT so that people who need to get a COVID-19 PCR will be able to access one close to home. A list of participating collection centres and access information will be on the [ACT COVID-19 website](#).

People who may need additional support or can't attend a collection centre to get PCR testing can contact ACT Pathology and let them know about the support or assistance they need.

Like any other type of pathology testing, PCR tests remain available to all Canberrans who have a pathology referral form from your primary care provider.

ACT Health continues to encourage people to have a discussion with their medical professional about what COVID-19 testing and treatment they may need before they become unwell, especially if they are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness.

These new testing arrangements reflect the ACT Government's commitment to ensuring ongoing access and service delivery for COVID-19 related illness, with a focus on supporting priority groups who are at greater risk – much like other notifiable respiratory diseases.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the public health response. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of the Chief Health Officer's at [ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au)

Kind regards

Office for Seniors and Veterans

**War Widows Family Day on Saturday 4 March 23 at Robert Poate Centre, Bellenden Street, Crace ACT.**

**Please register your interest and find further details on the registration link in the flyer.**



**REGISTER NOW**



**SATURDAY 4TH MARCH**

**ROBERT POATE CENTRE, BELLENDEN STREET CRACE ACT**



featuring free activities for the kids,  
free ice cream for all ages





**COFFEE CATCH UP  
EVERY FRIDAY 10-12**



Members and guests are welcome to join us for a chat and enjoy freshly brewed coffee & cake with former service mates. Every Friday from 10 to 12 in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.

**Please note that the Eddison Day Club is currently meeting on only a very casual basis for lunch at midday Fridays.**



**Contact Us**

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

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