

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



June 2021



Wednesday 19 May was a day to remember. A lovely day to celebrate Norma Eggleston's 97th birthday. Norma, a WWII Veteran - a searchlighter, joined us in the Corey Room to celebrate her very significant birthday.

Norma was joined by Pauline Gribble, President of the Ex WRANS RAN Women Association, Kerry Macklin, Ex WRAN, Fay Neil volunteer with the Sub-Branch as well staffers Rania and Jill Ex WRAN.

It was a fabulous morning with beautiful food, great fun and laughter as we celebrated the birthday of one of our wonderful Veterans.

Happy Birthday Norma.





**Woden Valley RSL
Sub-Branch
Ordinary General Meeting Dinner
1830 for 1900 29 June 2021
Southern Cross Club Woden**

The Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch is pleased to invite members and their guests to our next OGM Dinner. Dress is smart casual.

Guest Speaker: To be advised shortly.



Where:

Corinna Room 2, Southern Cross Club, Phillip

When:

1830 for 1900, Tuesday 29 June 2021

Cost:

\$40 per head; drinks at own expense

Menu:

MAIN COURSE

- Sourdough bread roll with cultured butter
- Pan-fried chicken breast with thyme-scented carrot puree, confit baby truss tomatoes and thyme jus,
- Served with tossed salad leaves and seasonal vegetables to share

DESSERT

- Mango panna cotta, finger limes, coconut sorbet (NF, DF)
- Freshly brewed Lonsdale Street Roasters coffee and teas

RSVP:

Please register with your payment at the office or by email to events@rslwoden.org.au by 22 June.

Payment:

EFT: (Please don't forget to include your name)

Alc Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch

Bsb 062908 Account 1084 1897

Cheque: Mail to 14/27 Mulley Street HOLDER ACT 2611

Or phone the office to pay by credit card. Please note that the club does not allow refunds after 22 June.



The 20th May Battle of Crete commemoration was recently held at the Australian Hellenic War Memorial. Our member, Les Cook was honoured to represent our troops. He was 17 years old at the time. Now, 80 years later, he recited the Ode and laid a wreath.

Photo above: John Loukadellis, Les Cook, Hon Dame Annette King, Tony Tsourdalakis.



Pictured below is Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) recipient Jack Aaron with Phil Winter AM, CEO of RSL National and John King President of ACT RSL Branch. Not pictured is MSM recipient Ross Thomas whose award was accepted by President of RSL Valley Sub-Branch Jim Gilchrist. At the same ceremony, Jim was awarded Life Membership of the RSL.



From David Smith facebook page:

David Smith MP with extraordinary WWII veteran and RSL Woden Valley member Les Cook at the ANZAC Day national ceremony.



Vale Sidney Norman Penhaligon - A Quiet Achiever

From David Smith MP website



By David Smith MP
26 May 2021

Major (Retired) Sidney Norman Penhaligon, MBE formerly of Bunny Street, Weston and, more recently, Adria Village at Stirling passed away on 5 March 2021.

Sid had an interesting life. He left school at the age of 14 (in the middle of the depression) and worked in a local grocery shop – cycling the 25 kilometer return trip from home to work. In 1941 with Australia at war, Sid, now aged 17 enlisted. The family does not know how this was achieved given the minimum entry age was 20. He met Marie, his wife, in 1943 and they married the next year.

After the war Sid had a number of jobs and completed a two-year course in wool classing. When national service was reintroduced in the early 50's, Sid re-enlisted and went on to have a long career in the army that spanned more than 33 years.

He had numerous postings over the years and had operational service in Japan, Korea and South Vietnam. In 1972 he was granted a commission, as a lieutenant, and in 1978 was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his service as the Administration Officer at the Joint Services Staff College.

Sid was very proud that there had been a Penhaligon involved in every major conflict since the Boer War. And he was thrilled when his grand daughter Deidre joined the Army Reserves.

Discharging from the Army, with the rank of Major, Sid became the Secretary/Manager of the Royal Canberra Golf Club and later worked at Parliament House with the Department of the House of Representatives. During this time he was given the task of planning the move from the then Parliament House into the new Parliament House building, a job Sid described as his most challenging!

Sid had a keen sense of social responsibility and this was reflected in his active involvement with the Masons, the Probuc Club of Weston, the RSL, St Peter's church at Weston, the Artillery Association and various community groups. Over many years, including when Sid was over 80, he was involved with feeding the homeless. He was one of the original foundation members who provided a financial guarantee to enable the building of St Peter's church at Weston.

At his funeral, his daughter Michele described her father as a person of energy who had a positive outlook on life. She said that his family, his Christian faith, the Army's cultural and ethical values, were the pivots around which Sid's life revolved. She said 'if you look up a definition of goodness, it is about character, integrity, honesty, generosity, moral courage and the like. My father had all of this and more. He lived his life with love, with dignity, with passion and with pride. He was a proud Australian and the extended Penhaligon family loved, respected and admired him'.

I spoke to the House of Representatives on the 26 May 2021 about Sidney's contribution to nation and our local community.
[Speech to Parliament, Major Sidney Norman Penhaligon, 26 May 2021 - YouTube](#)

Sid Penhaligon has been member of RSL Woden Valley Sub- Branch since 2004.

Latham's 'Vietnam Requiem' a moving triumph

From CityNews Canberra June 5, 2021

<https://citynews.com.au/2021/lathams-vietnam-requiem-a-moving-triumph/>



Soloists, from left, Susannah Lawergren, Rachel Mink and Phan Van Hung. Photo: Peter Hislop.



'60s singing star Little Pattie on stage. Photo: Peter Hislop.

*Music / "Vietnam Requiem", conducted by Christopher Latham. At Llewellyn Hall, ANU, until June 6. Reviewed by **CLINTON WHITE**.*

CHRISTOPHER Latham's "Vietnam Requiem" was a triumph and quite possibly the most moving concert performance this writer has ever attended.

Latham compiled the work from compositions from a range of composers, rather than it being written as a single work by one composer. This might seem strange, but Latham has proven this formula to work successfully; he took a similar approach for his "The Diggers' Requiem" of 2018, which attracted worldwide acclaim.

Latham gathered and conducted huge forces, including some stars of the Vietnam era, for this three-hour epic, divided into two contrasting but complementary "Acts", and embellished it with a comprehensive and beautifully presented program booklet.

With a three-piece contemporary band comprising Bill Risby (piano and keyboards), Ben Hauptmann (guitar) and Warren Trout (drums) with a chamber orchestra mainly of strings, the first act comprised 12 songs inextricably linked to the period of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war.

And to perform those songs was a who's who of the '60s and '70s, including Normie Rowe, Little Pattie, and NZ-born singer Mark Williams, along with John Schumann, of Redgum fame, jazz singer Nina Ferro, and Vietnamese singer Phan Văn Hưng.

Songs such as "He Ain't Heavy, He's my Brother", "I Was Only 19", "Smiley" and "What a Wonderful World" no doubt brought back memories for many.

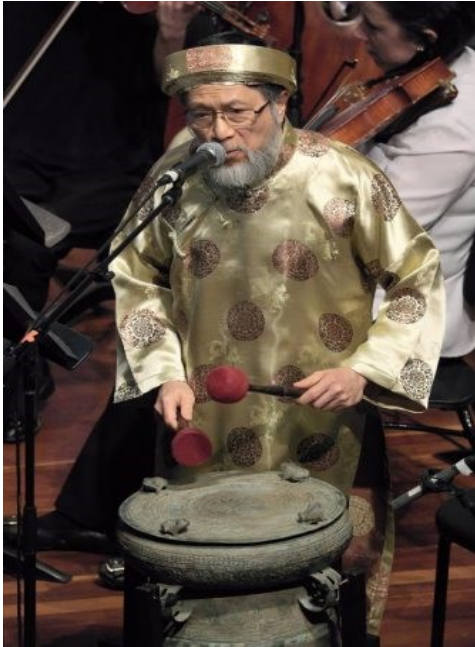
Phan Văn Hưng's story is especially interesting. He and his family escaped Hanoi in 1954, when he was four years old.

By 1982 he was married and came to Australia as a refugee. He became well-known in both Vietnam and Australia for his songs about the harrowing stories of people's suffering in Vietnam.

His two songs, sung in Vietnamese, "The Little Girl and the Pebbles" and "Return to Galang", the English lyrics of which are in the program booklet, were beautiful and poignant. In the case of "Return to Galang", the poignancy was made especially so by a gorgeous accompaniment on cello by CSO principal Patrick Suthers.

The second act comprises an overture and 12 movements, each accompanied on two large overhead screens by thoughtfully presented historical facts and figures as well as images. They were not meant to be presented chronologically, but more to tell the story behind each movement.

The work's movements were written by the cream of Australian composers – Peter Sculthorpe, Ross Edwards, Graeme Koehne, Andrew Schultz, Elena Kats-Chernin, and Latham himself. Even works by overseas composers were included.



Phan Van Hung. Photo Peter Hislop.



The full “Vietnam Requiem” ensemble on stage at Llewellyn Hall. Photo: Peter Hislop.

There was a stellar cast of soloists, too – Phan Văn Hùng, dressed in a magnificent gold traditional costume and playing a 2000-year-old Vietnamese Đông Sơn bronze drum, didgeridoo virtuoso William Barton, trumpeter Paul Goodchild, guitarists Minh Le Hoang and Slava Grigoryan, sopranos Susannah Lawergren and Rachel Mink, soundscape technician Bob Scott, and harpist Alice Giles. They were supported by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and guest instrumentalists, led by concertmaster Kirsten Williams, as well as members of military bands and several choirs.

In all, more than 200 artists performed the work. So many musicians were on stage that Latham’s conductor’s podium was on its own platform in front of the stage.

Space does not allow discussion of all 13 movements, but a couple particularly are worth mentioning.

The Overture, “The Cold War”, a Latham arrangement of “The Time of War”, by US composer Caleb Burhans, began with single strokes on the Đông Sơn drum, slowly building in volume and intensity, with William Barton joining in on didgeridoo and Slava Grigoryan on guitar. The ancient and the modern coming together in this way created an ethereal, almost mysterious, beginning.

Movement 8, “The Entertainers”, was a Bill Risby arrangement of two songs into a medley, Carole King’s “You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman” and “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay”, by Otis Redding and Steve Cropper.

Nina Ferro sang the medley in honour of Cathy Wayne who was shot and killed by a US marine at the end of her performance at a US Marine NCO’s club on a base near Da Nang (the shooter possibly intended the shot for the CO, but missed). She was the first Australian woman to be killed in Vietnam. She ... was only 19.

Movement 11, “The Boat People”, by Graeme Koehne, brought home the plight, not only of Vietnamese refugees in the ‘70s and ‘80s, but perhaps also suggested a sub-text relevant to today’s refugees.

Movement 12, Latham’s “The Road to Peace”, concluded with a deeply emotional “Last Post” played variously on harp and guitar with the didgeridoo quietly and respectfully providing a foundation, with gentle punctuation from the Đông Sơn drum.

At the conclusion, there was a long silence, seemingly for at least 45 seconds, with no-one in the audience daring even to breathe, and Latham still facing the orchestra.

I wanted the silence to continue. But, from the back of the capacity house came soft, gentle applause. As it built in volume on its way to the front, so did the audience rise to a standing ovation for a truly magnificent performance, put together by Christopher Latham and a vast team of helpers. It thoroughly deserves to be kept “on top of the desk and dog-eared” for performances in the future.

28 May 2021 12:00 PM AEST - Chester Release - Honouring United Nations Peacekeepers

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

HONOURING UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS

TOMORROW on International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers, Australians are encouraged to recognise those who have contributed to global peacekeeping efforts.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said Australia had spent more than 70 years making a significant contribution to worldwide peacekeeping operations.

"Australian men and women, often referred to as the 'Blue Berets', have participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations for more than 70 years, with the aim of making the world a safer and more peaceful place," Mr Chester said.

"The blue beret, worn by those who serve on United Nations peacekeeping missions, has become a symbol of international peacekeeping.

"The first Australian peacekeepers deployed in 1947 and since that time Australian military personnel, police and civilians have been involved in more than 50 multinational peacekeeping operations."

Australian peacekeepers have served on operations around the world, in Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique and elsewhere in Africa, in the Middle East, in Cambodia and East Timor, and in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.

Earlier this year Major General Cheryl Pearce completed her tenure as the Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, where she commanded more than 800 peacekeepers from 15 nations. Today, there are 23 Australians on UN Peacekeeping missions around the world, including in South Sudan, the Middle East and Mali.

"Tragically 16 Australians have died while serving as peacekeepers, on operations around the world. Today we honour their memory and thank all those who have served in UN operations," Mr Chester said.

"I thank all those who have served as peacekeepers. You have made, and continue to make, a valuable contribution to the world."

To learn more about the involvement of Australia in UN peacekeeping operations, visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs [Anzac Portal](#).

MEDIA CONTACTS:
Rachel Tharratt or Cedric Szigeti: 02 6277 7820
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466
Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.

BUDGET 2021

MAY 11 2021 - 8:05PM

Budget 2021: Veterans given extra mental health support, Veterans Affairs Department to grow by 450 staff

Sarah Basford Canales

Latest News

Minister for Veteran Affairs Darren Chester. Picture: Elesa Kurtz

A major cash injection will be given to support veterans in this year's federal budget with department staff set to grow by a quarter and millions given to support and well-being programs.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs will receive an additional \$302.8 million over the next four years from July to help process rehabilitation and compensation claims with more than a third of that amount dedicated to improving the agency's data and technological capabilities.

A total of more than \$150 million in funding will also be given to health services and mental health support, including and support for the families of veterans.

It comes as a new royal commission into veteran suicide was announced following criticism the government had been failing to support veterans once they had left the military.

Veterans' Affairs Minister Darren Chester said on Tuesday the inquiry would help to identify the causes and prevent further harm.

"The Royal Commission will provide an important opportunity for healing and to rebuild trust, unite our veteran community, and restore hope," Mr Chester said.

"Sadly, too many veterans have lost their lives to suicide ... however, we must continue the work that we're doing already, work that is already saving lives."

Compensation applications submitted to the Veterans' Affairs Department have also doubled in recent years, causing a growing backlog of claims and resulting in lengthy wait times.

Mr Chester said he acknowledged the frustration veterans and their families and said the extra money and resources would help to reduce the time frame.

"As I have spoken to veterans and families around the country, one of their biggest concerns has been claim waiting times and as a government we are committed to addressing this issue," Mr Chester said.

"This will support the health and well being of veterans and their families as claims are processed more quickly and efficiently."

The average staffing level at the Veterans' Affairs Department will also be increased by more than 400 spots to 2062 employees.

The staffing cap policy, first introduced by former prime minister Tony Abbott, restricts agencies from exceeding staff levels past those held in 2006-7. Labour hire staff are instead used to temporarily cover workload increases.

The Community and Public Sector Union has long criticised the department over its strong dependency on contracted staff. An analysis by The Canberra Times in January revealed 42 per cent of department staff were not APS employees.

In a Senate estimates appearance in March, Veterans' Affairs secretary Liz Cosson admitted the department's reliance on labour hire to fill in the gap was not sustainable.

The government also committed an additional \$32.1 million to be put toward Anzac Day commemoration services and the ongoing maintenance of Australian war graves.

24 May 2021 4:10 PM AEST - Chester Release - How a dog can change a life

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 24 May 2021

HOW A DOG CAN CHANGE A LIFE

KODA, the first psychiatric assistance dog trained and delivered by Dogs for Life in Victoria, is helping turn her veteran's life around.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the Government's Psychiatric Assistance Dog Program was changing the lives of veterans across Australia and having locally trained psychiatric assistance dogs in Victoria was a big win for veterans and their families.

"We continue to receive positive feedback on how this program is changing lives and making a difference for our veterans managing PTSD by providing comfort and reassurance," Mr Chester said.

"Since its launch in September 2019, the program has seen 29 dogs placed with veterans, with another 109 currently in training. We have received more than 270 applications from veterans to be part of the program and will continue to match dogs with their handlers as soon as they become available."

Working with specially trained dogs to assist veterans meet their daily challenges, Dogs for Life is one of the four contracted dog providers under the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Psychiatric Assistance Dog Program.

"She [Koda] draws my focus to her, relieving me of anxiety. She has opened up pathways to conversations I feel I've never had before. It's quite a life-changing experience for me," Koda's veteran handler said.

Mr Chester said the highly trained dogs like Koda offer companionship, support and comfort, performing tasks to support their handler's clinical recovery.

"It's heart-warming to hear this feedback from our veterans about the difference their dogs are making," Mr Chester said.

"This is just one of the ways we are putting veterans and their families first, and I look forward to seeing more eligible veterans matched with their dogs."

DVA has also partnered with La Trobe University and Dogs for Life since 2018, matching 16 veterans with assistance dogs through a research trial.

"The Psychiatric Assistance Dog Program has been in place for 18 months, but we have been working with La Trobe University and Dogs for Life for longer on this important trial," Mr Chester said.

"The trial helped inform how we set up our program, and it continues to ensure we have our focus right.

"Dogs for Life is giving us both practical and long-term insights into how valuable these dogs are to veterans with PTSD."

To be eligible for the program, veterans must have a Veteran Gold or White Card, have a current diagnosis of PTSD from a psychiatrist and be engaged in treatment with their mental health professional for a minimum of three months.

Veterans currently accessing treatment for PTSD may wish to speak to their mental health professional to see if a psychiatric assistance dog would be a suitable adjunct to treatment. For more information about DVA's Psychiatric Assistance Dog Program visit the DVA website.

Attachments

Image Caption: (L) Dogs for Life trained DVA Psychiatric Assistance Dog, Koda. (R) Koda with her veteran handler during a training session

ENDS



MEDIA CONTACTS:
Rachel Tharratt or Cedric Szigeti: 02 6277 7820
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466
Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.

**RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch
and
Veterans Support Centre**

**Invite all volunteers to
an Information Session**

**A Presentation from The Stroke Foundation
on Strokes and their effects**

Speaker's Name: Heather Hart

Light Lunch will be provided.

**To Be Conducted in Training Room 36.
Second floor, Grant Cameron Community Centre
27 Mulley St HOLDER**

On Wednesday 30th June 2021 10.00 am - 12.00 pm



Please RSVP by 25 June 2021 for catering purposes.

To rania.kalimeris@rslwoden.org.au

02 6288 7470

Mobile: 0478 630 038



Dear veteran community members,

A note to provide a brief update on recent activities in DVA.

COVID check-in app in use in DVA

During the COVID pandemic, DVA adjusted our VAN services to be available via phone, online and in-person by appointment only so that we could continue to provide services to veterans and their families while adhering to health advice and restrictions. As of 3 May 2021, our VAN offices have been open for in-person services without an appointment.

So that we can continue to provide a safe environment for veterans, families and our staff, **DVA has introduced the use of electronic check-in** in all our locations. For NSW, that is provided by the 'Service NSW' app and in ACT, the 'Check in CBR' app. Both are available to download from Google and Apple app stores, and are the same applications used for checking into other business across the state/territory.

Anyone visiting DVA offices are asked to check-in for the period of their visit. For those who are unable to check-in using the app, DVA staff will manually record details to assist with contact tracing should it be required. This is generally name, mobile phone number and the time of the visit.

Mefloquine health assessment program

DVA is working with BUPA Australia to provide health assessments for veterans who are concerned about potential health effects of antimalarial medications.

BUPA was engaged in December 2019 to deliver a national program to veterans who are concerned about having taken antimalarial medications and who wish to have a comprehensive health assessment and develop a health support recommendation report, including recommended clinical and diagnostic testing and appropriate treatment pathways for coordination by the veteran's General Practitioner (GP).

From 1 June 2021, a GP in the East Hills area (postcode 2213) will **begin conducting health assessments** for interested veterans. To book an appointment, interested veterans can contact during business hours Monday to Friday:

DVA on 1800 MEFLOQUINE ([1800 633 567](tel:1800633567))

BUPA on 1800 692 798

Additional information on the program is available on the [DVA website](#).

Vinnies CEO Sleepout

This year, I'm participating in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout. On 17 June, I am spending one of the longest, coldest winter nights on the streets to help **raise money for people experiencing homelessness**. Homelessness can affect anyone, including veterans - and has devastating consequences for individuals and families.

If you can, please consider supporting this worthy cause: <https://www.ceosleepout.org.au/fundraisers/victoriabenz/new-south-wales>. Every little bit helps, and donations will go towards counselling, education, health and employment services to help people to lift themselves out of the cycle of poverty.

Please share the above information with your members and colleagues, and I welcome any questions or comments.

Regards,

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

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to advise that an update to the Government response to the recommendations in the Productivity Commission report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, has been posted on DVA's website at <https://www.dva.gov.au/about-us/overview/reporting/reviews-and-reports/productivity-commission-inquiry-system-compensation>

The update includes a short statement of the Government's current position and a table showing status and next steps for each of the 69 recommendations.

Regards,

Victoria

Victoria Benz

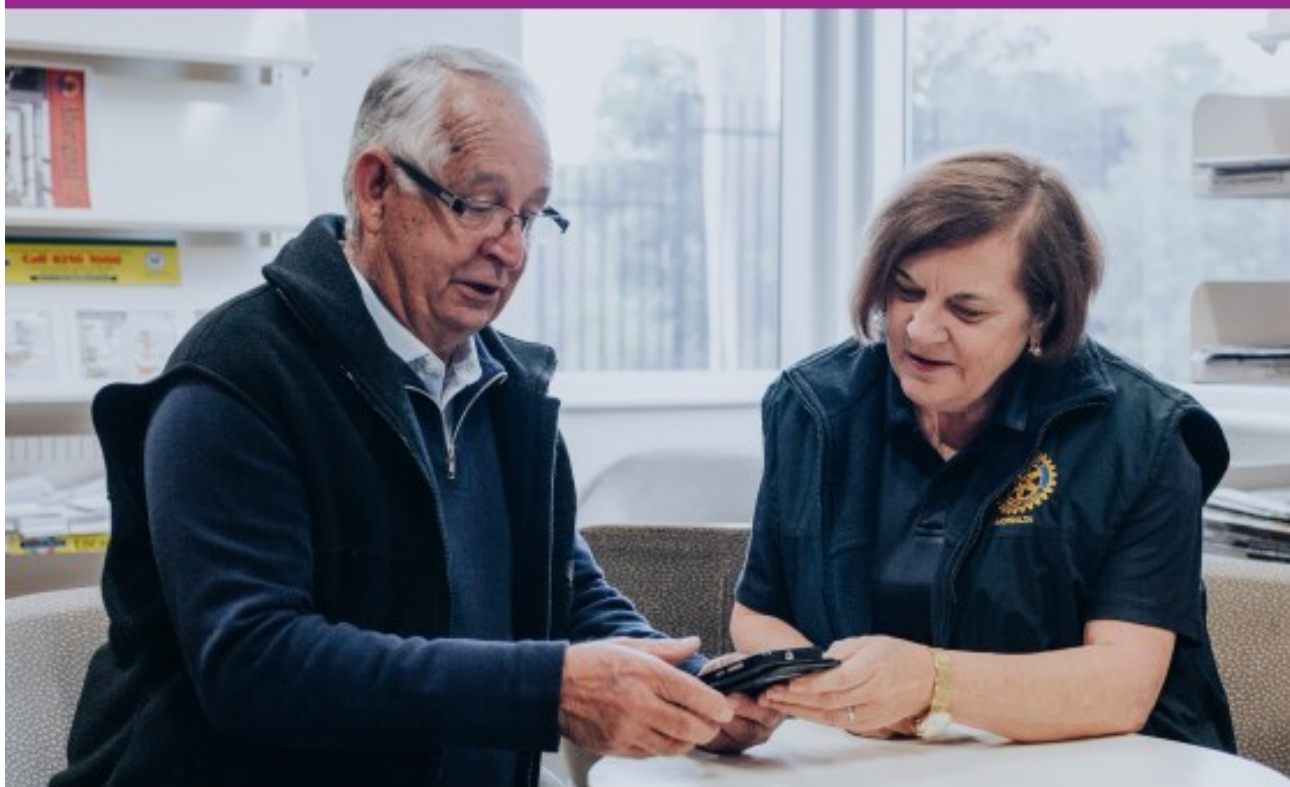
Deputy Commissioner, NSW & ACT

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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e Victoria.benz@dva.gov.au

Want to learn more about your smartphone or tablet?



RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch
can assist with your IT questions,
get you started, even loan you a device
call the office on 6285 1931 to make a booking
It's free, fun and informative
Get connected now



Australian Government

Be Connected
Every Australian online.

Network Partners

RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch has joined the national network of community organisations helping older Australians thrive in a digital world. We know it's not easy keeping up with new devices, new services, and new applications.

As a Be Connected Network Partner, we are able to access resources, grants and collaborative opportunities to help improve your digital skills.



So far, around 30 Sub-Branch members have benefitted from attending classes led by member and tutor Scott Powers, assisted by Marion Kossatz.

You are invited to attend these classes, held fortnightly from noon to 2pm in our new training room at the Sub-Branch. Bring your own device if you have one, or borrow one of ours. Call the office on 62851931 to enrol.



**Be Connected -
IT sessions with
knowledgeable
volunteer tutor,
Scott Powers.**

Don't forget our Coffee Catch Up is open again from 10-12 every Friday in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.



Members and guests are welcome to join us for a chat and enjoy freshly brewed coffee with former service mates.

**◆ Eddison Day Club meetings
with Peter Sutton**

**Active again from
15 January 2021**

**Carers Friendship Groups are
back in business**

**For details call Rania Kalimeris
6285 1931**

Did you know?

**E-News and *The Serviceman*
are also readily available to
read on our website
www.rslwoden.org.au**



Contact Us

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

**RSL Woden Valley
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Visit us on the web at
www.rslwoden.org.au

Or drop in for a coffee
Fridays from 10.00am

Our office hours are
9am-3pm Mon-Fri