

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



October 2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members,

Welcome to the October Newsletter that will be the second last for 2023. How time flies!

After another month of hard work, I start this message by again thanking all the volunteers and staff who continue to contribute so much to our members and others in the Veteran Community in the ACT and region.

In addition to the messages and notices included in this edition, please note the happy snaps of the OGM that we held in *The Corey Room* last Tuesday. I offer my special thanks to the 20 people who attended and contributed to the discussion in this meeting, particularly as it provided another opportunity to discuss our present state and our plans for future. To iterate key aspects of that meeting, I note that, other than an urgent need to reinforce our volunteer workforce, we are in a sound position in all respects. However, if we are to continue to maintain the extent and level of support we provide to the broader Veteran Community, we will also need to source significant and sustainable financial support from external sources. These funds will be critical to maintaining our footprint in the Grant Cameron Community Centre; paying the staff who are essential to the smooth operation of key functional areas; and paying the overheads associated with the conduct of our operations.

Key aspects of the plans to assure a sustainable future, include the submission this week of an application for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with the Tax Office; liaising with external veteran-centric organisations regarding the support we can offer their staff, while encouraging them to offer their assistance to us; speaking with the ACT Government regarding rent relief at the Grant Cameron Community Centre; implementing innovative means to reinforce our compensation advocates; liaising with RSL LifeCare Veterans Services as they work with RSL NSW Branch to develop the Queanbeyan Veterans and Families Hub; and continuing to encourage non-member clients to join the Sub-Branch and volunteer as they are able and available to do so.

We are also looking for volunteers to join the Board and/or to assist with specific tasks that arise throughout the year. If you have the time, we will find you a job.

I remind all members of the Christmas Party on 06 Dec. This is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the end of the year and to thank key people for their support and to introduce potential new members to the Sub-Branch.

Similarly, if you are likely to have some time next week, please call the office to help with the Remembrance Day Appeal.

In closing, I remind everyone to be kind to yourselves and your friends; if you need some help, please call the office.

Best wishes to all,

Jim Gilchrist

President



RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch
is pleased to invite members and their guests
to the
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Wednesday 6 December

12:00noon for 12:30pm

Orion Room Canberra Southern Cross Club Phillip

\$45 per person

Menu (alternate service):

MAIN

**Duo of roast turkey with herb stuffing and honey glazed ham,
potato gratin, roast vegetables, red currant jus (GF)**

**Mustard crusted lamb rump, sweet potato fondant, baby carrots,
roast asparagus, Madeira jus (GF)**

DESSERT

Traditional Christmas pudding, brandy custard, vanilla bean ice cream

Mini pavlova, fresh fruit, passionfruit puree, Chantilly cream (GF)

The charge includes soft drinks, selected wines and beers.

Spirits at own expense.

Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements

Please RSVP by 3pm 17 November 2023

Phone 62851931 or email admin@rslwoden.org.au

Direct Credit (Don't forget to include your name in transfer)

A/C name: Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch

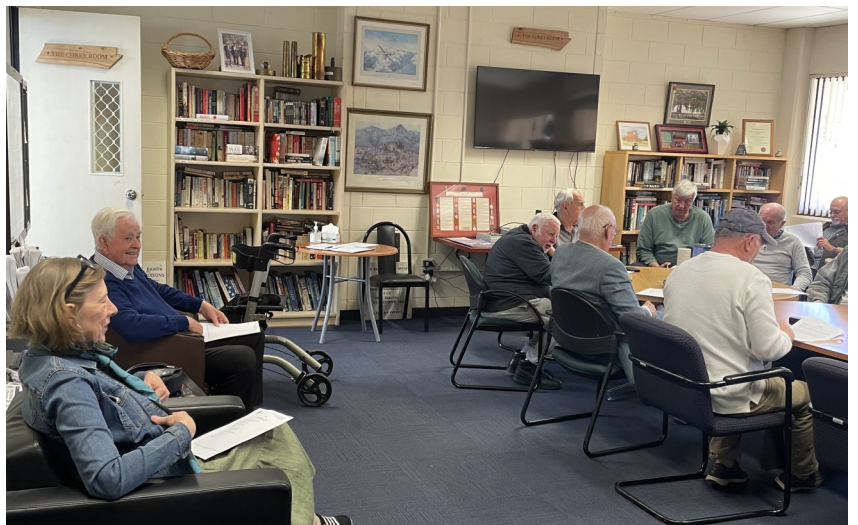
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Sorry, no refunds are possible after cob 21 November 2023.



RSL WV Sub-Branch Ordinary General Meeting on Tuesday 31 October 2023





1 November 2023

Veterans to receive better access to a GP

The Albanese Government is committed to ensuring the veteran community is provided with the best possible services and supports.

With increasing costs of living and rising costs for business, the veteran community has told us they are finding it harder to find GPs who will treat them without out of pocket costs.

That changes today.

From today it will be easier to access a GP for more than 276,000 Australian veterans.

In line with the tripling of the bill billing incentive, the Albanese Government is investing \$33.3 million to triple the Veteran Access Payment (VAP) for certain GP services.

The VAP is an incentive payment GP's receive, in addition to the Medicare rebate, when treating veterans who hold a DVA Gold or White Card.

The tripling of this payment will help to ensure GPs continue to service veterans with no out of pocket costs.

These changes will see payment for a GP consultation of up to 20 minutes (Level B) increase by more than \$16 in metropolitan areas and more than \$31 in the most remote areas of Australia.

Payments apply to general face-to-face and telehealth GP consultations, including home visits for people who are homebound, and consultations in residential aged-care facilities.

In an effort to further reduce the burden on medical practitioners, a review is currently underway to simplify and consolidate the Department of Veterans' Affairs forms that medical professionals are required to complete.

The first package of the 19 most frequently used forms has been consolidated down to 7, while a process is underway to significantly reduce the remaining 54 forms by mid-2024.

MEDIA CONTACT: STEPHANIE MATHEWS - 0407 034 485

Who will benefit?

This measure will incentivise GPs to treat the more than 276,000 veterans and eligible dependents who hold Veteran White or Gold Cards.

From 1 November 2023, GPs who treat Veteran Card holders will receive increased VAP fees: Modified Monash	VAP as at 1 July 2023 (pre 1 Nov indexation)	VAP as at 1 November 2023
1 – metropolitan areas	\$8.05	\$24.25
2 – regional centres	\$12.20	\$36.90
3-4 large and medium rural towns	\$12.95	\$39.20
5 – small rural towns	\$13.80	\$41.65
6 – remote communities	\$14.55	\$43.95
7 – very remote communities	\$15.45	\$46.65

Notes: Indexation of 0.5 percent applied on 1 November ahead of VAP increase.

RSL AUSTRALIA WELCOMES GP'S VETERAN ACCESS PAYMENT INCREASE



MEDIA RELEASE

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has applauded today's lifting of the Veteran Access Payment for certain general practitioner services and says the incentive should improve access to medical services for many veterans.

The Government's initiative to triple the bulk billing incentive payment for GPs was announced in this year's Budget, with the extra payments to begin on 1 November 2023.

The payment, in addition to the Medicare rebate, is available for veterans who hold a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Gold or White Card and applies for a range of consultations and treatments.

President Greg Melick said the RSL welcomed the introduction of this measure, which would increase veterans' access to health care.

"It is an important advance, but much more is still to be done to improve the health and wellbeing of more than 580,000 veterans and their families.

"For example, the current Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide is painting a disturbing picture of the health challenges facing our defence and veteran community, particularly in the area of mental health," Greg Melick said.

"We are continuing to work with the Federal Government to ensure the full implementation of all recommendations of the Royal Commission and the establishment of a permanent implementation body.

"This will require a significant and ongoing funding commitment."

Greg Melick said the RSL had made a detailed [pre-budget submission](#) this year to secure funding to address the inequities and barriers that continue to be experienced by the veteran community.

"The tripling of the Veteran Access Payment is an important advance, as has been the increased DVA staffing, which has reduced the number of unprocessed claims and substantially reduced processing times for payments to medical practitioners.

"The RSL's submission also called for the [extension of non-liability healthcare to all reservists](#), further initiatives to reduce administration for healthcare providers treating veterans, the [harmonisation of funeral benefits for veterans](#), [funding to enhance our Advocacy Training and Development Program](#) and as well as a commitment to implement demand-driven funding to support veterans' welfare, rather than having to fight for funding each budget year.

"These measures were [missing from the Budget](#), and we will continue to advocate for their implementation.

"Our veterans are skilled and capable people who make significant contributions to the Australian community post-service. Investing in services, support systems and wellbeing programs to strengthen their health and welfare remains a core focus for the RSL," Greg Melick said.

HOW YOU CAN COMMEMORATE THIS REMEMBRANCE DAY



Friday 11th November is Remembrance Day. It is a day of unity and reflection when Australians pause to remember and honour our veterans who have given their lives in service.

Whether you choose to wear a poppy, attend a service, or take a quiet moment of reflection, there are many ways you can commemorate:

1) Wear a poppy in the lead up to Remembrance Day and on Remembrance Day itself

Look out for the RSL Volunteers or buy online at:

<https://commemorative-badges.myshopify.com/>

2) Attend a Commemorative Service

Visit the [Remember to Remember website](#) or contact your local RSL Sub Branch for a service near you. The National Commemorative Service hosted at the Australian War Memorial will be live broadcast via ABC TV, ABC Radio, the ABC listen app and [ABC iview](#).

This year, with the support of RSL Australia, and Legacy Australia, Defence Families of Australia will once again run the 'RememBEARance' campaign which encourages those attending a service to consider laying a small bear alongside their wreath to recognise the role and sacrifices made by our defence families.

3) Pause for a minute of silence at 11 a.m.

Wherever you may be at 11 a.m. on Saturday the 11th of November, pause and reflect to pay tribute to our fallen service men and women. Set a reminder in your calendar or phone, switch your phone to 'do not disturb', and pause for just a minute in memory of the fallen. It's a simple action that means so much.

4) Read or recite the famous poem "In Flanders Fields"

Written by Major John McCrae in 1915 this poem and the poppies it references have become an enduring symbol of Remembrance Day and the human cost of war. The tradition of wearing a poppy on the 11th of November was inspired by [this poem](#).

5) Share a personal story on social media of who you will remember this Remembrance Day using the hashtags #RemembranceDay #LestWeForget #remembertoremember

6) Make your own poppy wreath with your family, friends or colleagues to display on your letterbox, fence, window, school or workplace. [Watch the tutorial](#).

For more information and resources on how you can commemorate this Remembrance Day visit: remembertoremember.com.au



REMEMBER to remember

🌸 11 November at 11am 🌸

<https://remembertoremember.com.au/>



<https://poppyappeal.com.au/>



Together We Remember.

Your donation provides life-changing support to veterans and their families.

Donate Now



<https://poppyappeal.com.au/>

From AWM website:

Remembrance Day

On 11 November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent after four years of continuous warfare. With their armies retreating and close to collapse, German leaders signed an Armistice, bringing to an end the First World War.

As a mark of respect to those who have died and suffered, Australians are encouraged to pause at 11 am to observe one minute's silence and remember those who died or suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A03267

Accession Number: A03267

An unidentified cinematographer capturing the last shots to be fired before the armistice on 11 November 1918.

2023 Remembrance Day National Ceremony

The Australian War Memorial will commemorate Remembrance Day 2023 with the National Ceremony on Saturday, 11 November.

Commences: 10.45 am AEDT

Location: Captain Reg Saunders Courtyard and Sculpture Garden

General attendance at the National Ceremony is welcome and tickets are not required. Large screens will be positioned within the grounds, adjacent to the ceremony, for members of the public to view proceedings.

The National Ceremony will also be broadcast live from the Australian War Memorial on ABC TV and ABC iView.

Click on the link below for more information. For further enquiries please email ceremony@awm.gov.au or call (02) 6206 9813 to leave a message.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/remembrance-day>

Energy Bill Relief for Households

“Energy rebate to provide bill relief

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments are working together to provide targeted and temporary electricity bill relief to eligible households.

You can get bill relief if you are the primary electricity account holder or, for some energy providers, another named account holder on your electricity account. You must also hold a Pensioner Concession Card, a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card or a Veteran Gold Card.

Your household can only get one bill relief rebate, even if there is more than one eligible person living there. You can only get this bill relief for your principal place of residence. How much you get depends on where you live, with between \$175 and \$500 available to targeted households and \$325 to \$650 available to small businesses.

If you are eligible, are not named on the bill and you pay for electricity, contact your electricity provider to discuss your options.

If you live in Queensland or Western Australia, you do not need to take any action because these state governments are including this energy bill relief in their state rebate programs, which are being given to all households.

If you currently receive energy concessions, in most cases the electricity provider will automatically apply the bill relief to your electricity account and you do not need to do anything. This will reduce the amount you owe on your next bill. How and when this happens depends on where you live as each state and territory may do things a little differently.

If you don't receive energy concessions, please go to energy.gov.au/bill-relief to find a link to your state or territory with instructions about what to do. This could be to contact your energy provider or your state/territory government with your concession card type and the DVA file number on it. Give them consent to check your card online for payment of the rebate.

If you get your electricity from your strata or landlord in a caravan park, apartment building, retirement home or village and your household is eligible for the bill relief, you will not automatically receive the rebate. However, you will be able to access a direct payment through your state or territory government.

Please check www.energy.gov.au/bill-relief for the latest information.”

The rebate can be obtained by going through MyGov (if you have it) or by calling your energy provider in your State or Territory. There are different payment methods for this rebate for each State and Territory.

The information for your State can be found at –

[Energy bill relief for households - ACT | energy.gov.au](http://Energy%20bill%20relief%20for%20households%20-%20ACT%20|%20energy.gov.au)

Should you require any further information please call your local energy provider.

**Spotted in Chapman by the BIRDMAN, Andrew Properjohn -
camouflaged tawny frogmouth breeding pair.**



100th Birthday of RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch Member Alan Reeve North

Article from Canberra Daily 24 October 2023, by Jessica Cordwell



Alan Reeve North celebrates his 100th birthday with family and friends in Canberra on Saturday 28 October. Photo: Kerrie Brewer.



A birthday card from royalty. Photo: Kerrie Brewer.

A soldier, minister, public servant, author, family man and upstanding member of the community, Alan Reeve North has spent his 100 years on earth leading a life well lived. He celebrates a century on Saturday 28 October.

Already receiving letters from the King, Governor-General and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, a momentous birthday deserves to be celebrated – and Alan has two parties planned.

The first happens on the big day at the Yacht Club with family flying from Melbourne, Brisbane and more to celebrate together. Then friends and neighbours from the southside retirement village Alan has called home for the past eight years will celebrate with a morning tea on Tuesday 31 October.

Living independently at the retirement village, Alan's family says his mind is as sharp as ever and his interest in the world has not waned. This is part of Alan's secret to long life; a little bit of genes and a never-ending curiosity about the world around us.

"When you stop growing, you're not learning, you're not progressing. I think growth is the big word for continuing living," says Alan.

The second youngest of eight children, Alan was born and grew up in Northgate, Queensland. Alan's mother was a homemaker, remembered for her amazing cooking, and his father was the local shopkeeper selling groceries, haberdashery and hardware. Alan says he sold everything because he was the only store around.

"We always had our own cow, so we always had milk and cream and butter, always had our chooks, we called them fowls – chickens, ducks. We grew our own vegetables, had our own little orchard, in some ways, we were quite self-sufficient," he says.

The family had a horse and cart, but the children travelled to school by train each day, hopping on for three stops. After school and on the weekends, Alan filled his days riding bikes with his friends, attending church with the family and playing sport.

"I did play cricket, a lot of cricket. One of my innings I made 147 not out, I was always an opening batsman. When I made over 100, I carried my bat from the beginning to the end, not out. They couldn't get me out ... I was hoping to play for Queensland, but the war came and that was an end to that."

Early adulthood was disturbed by the Second World War when all 18-year-old men had to enlist in the army, and Alan signed up to serve his country. The troop train took the young soldiers to Cairns before they were sent to Dutch New Guinea, now known as Papua, a province of Indonesia.

"The big population in Merauke were crocodiles; crocodiles were there by the hundreds. If we went on any of the rivers, we had to be very aware, as we were moving up the river there would be crocodiles entering the water every 12 feet apart," he says.

"Mosquitos were an issue because most of us came down with malaria until a medication was discovered, Atebrin. Atebrin was not a cure for malaria so while we didn't get malaria in New Guinea, we did after the war."

Returning home, Alan married the girl he met through a church social at 17. The pair went on to have four children while he also began settling into a career in banking. With the memories of the war still in his mind, Alan wanted to do something that he thought would help other people.

“The only avenue which seemed to be open then was the church, so I did some study and then I became a Presbyterian minister at a few places in Queensland ... I only stayed in the church for about five years then went back to banking,” he says.

Family was a vital part of Alan’s life as a child. He and his siblings were close then as they started marrying and having families they moved further apart. However, they spoke often and had family reunions at least once a year.

“When I was young, there was always a piano and we always gathered around the piano to sing every night. There was a lot of family contact, contact with family and much more contact with your cousins and aunts and uncles,” he says.

Moving to Canberra, Alan changed career paths and joined the public service in the nation’s capital.

“It was 1972 and Gough Whitlam had the motto ‘It’s time’, so, strangely enough I had been working in the national bank for 25 years and I thought ‘Oh, it’s time for me to make a change,’” he smiles.

As Whitlam became Prime Minister, Alan took up a role in the Department of Foreign Affairs, then went on to roles in the Australian Development Assistance Bureau and the Public Service Board.

Retirement

Inspired by the famous *The Power of Positive Thinking* self-help manual by Norman Vincent Peale, Alan is passionate about helping others, often citing words of its powers to others.

“Do all the good you can by all the means you can in all the places you can at all the times you can to as many people as you can as long as ever can ... The theme is do all the good you can for as long as ever you can,” he says.

Implementing this philosophy, Alan spent a lot of time volunteering in retirement, and played an instrumental part of the development of the Canberra City Uniting Church on Northbourne Avenue. He also held roles as the president of the Citizens Advice Bureau, vice president of the third Canberra Garden Club, secretary of the Deakin Probus Club, and auditor for National Seniors and Canberra Spinners and Weavers.

In retirement, Alan also started writing books, finishing his first book on family history in 1995. He has written a book on his grandfather, Thomas Mathewson, who is also the grandfather of photography in Queensland. More history has been captured in the two historical war books he later penned.

It was during the research for his first book that Alan had to learn computing. Being a touch typist since high school, he had no problems writing them out and the internet opened a world of research and learning opportunities.

“When I was doing book writing, I needed to discover information back in the 1850s, so I spent a lot of time at the National Library. When I was doing the military history book, I spent a lot of time at the War Memorial and the National Archives. I became well known to the staff at all those places,” smiles Alan.

The internet also allowed him to reconnect and stay in touch with family and friends.

“It certainly was good further education because I could write so much. I wrote lots of letters to family and friends – having access to a computer was certainly of great benefit,” he says.

Now with limited vision, Alan can no longer write any more books. He says as we get toward the end of life it slows down; with impairments like mobility and hearing loss the pace becomes limited.

Alan doesn’t let physical limitations hold him back socially; he uses Siri to make phone calls and every morning he can be seen in the cafeteria catching up with the ladies of the retirement village.

“We get on quite well together. One of the ladies, I hurt my back and she took me in a wheelchair to see the doctor. She pushed me to the taxi then we got a wheelchair taxi back,” he smiles.

Alan says his biggest regret wasn’t travelling enough; for example, he never made it to Europe where he wanted to see the lands of his forebears in England and Scotland. He went overseas with the army and then to Indonesia again when his son was teaching English.

“We thought ‘Oh, if we go to Indonesia, we’ll have to speak the language because Indonesians then didn’t speak English’. We joined a year 11 class for a year, we went to Stirling College to learn Indonesian, so when we arrived in Indonesia, we could understand the language. But the people we met didn’t want to speak Indonesian, they wanted to speak English,” smiles Alan.



**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.

The Eddison Day Club will continue to meet for a lunch each Friday at noon until we can once again meet at a reinvigorated Day Club.

Come and join us for lunch at Canberra Irish Club 6 Parkinson St, Weston ACT 2611



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information
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Office hours are
9am-3pm Mon-Fri

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