



Newsletter of the Toowong RSL Sub-Branch

The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance

Est. 1919



December 2023

Dear Members,

Welcome to yet another captivating edition of the DON R. It brings me immense pleasure to collaborate with Steve Thornton in compiling this newsletter as it reminds me of the remarkable achievements of the Toowong Sub Branch in the second half of 2023.

A special thank you to all the members who participated in the 2022 Member Survey. As evident in this DONR and the preceding edition, we've successfully implemented numerous recommendations, such as member dinners, guest speaker functions, visits, events for children/grandchildren, and coffee mornings.

Both BCC Wards have recently contributed to not only the running of the 2024 ANZAC Dawn Service but also the purchase of a new public address system. Along with a generous donation again by our local state Maiwar MP Michael Berkman, the Toowong Sub Branch has been able to maintain and upgrade our equipment in 2023.

Thank you to the generous donation by Hettich Australia and the support of the Wests Bulldogs Rugby Club for their ongoing support of our Sub Branch.

The events in 2024 will be exciting with the opening of the Friendship Bridge in Amiens, France and the 100th anniversary of the Stone of Remembrance/Cross of Sacrifice at the Toowong Cemetery.

Tim Robb, Secretary

President's Report

I am pleased to report the Sub-Branch ends 2023 after a very successful year.



Peter Gow

The board put in a lot of time and effort to conduct many well received events for which I am told the local and wider community very much appreciates.

A warm welcome to James Mackay as a new addition to the Board. James remains an inspiration especially with his engagement of the local community especially the schools.

Heartfelt gratitude to Dave Donaldson for his contributions during his time on our Board and his continued unwavering dedication, especially in conducting welfare visits to local hospitals on our behalf.

Recognition is also due to the longstanding commitment of Cr Peter Matic and Cr James Mackay. We express gratitude for their personal and financial contributions from the Brisbane City Council.

A warm welcome to Cr Clare Jenkinson and Cr Penny Wolff, who have already actively participated in several of our commemorative events and fundraisers.

I extend my appreciation to all members who played a role in fundraising this year. I hope 2024 brings good health and prosperity to you and your family.

The meetings and significant events conducted by the sub-branch since the last newsletter are:

July	
10 th	Board Meeting
August	
21 st	Board Meeting
23 rd	Dave Donaldson resigns from Board due to work commitments
September	
23 rd	Stage 2 of Lutwyche Cemetery Dedication of 301 plaques by Australian Remembrance Army
25 th	Board Meeting
October	
14 th	RSL Community Family Day
23 rd	Board Meeting
November	
6 th – 10 th	Conducted fundraising activities for Remembrance Day at Toowong Village, Wesley Hospital, St Andrew’s War Memorial Hospital, Regatta Hotel
11 th	Remembrance Day Commemoration Service
11 th	CPL William Darby Headstone Dedication
15 th	Camp Mt Coot-tha sign unveiling
20 th	Board Meeting
20 th	James Mackay confirmed as new Board member
23 rd	Annual Dinner at Figs on Sylvan
December	
18 th	Board Meeting

Stage 2 of Lutwyche Cemetery Dedication of 301 plaques by Australian Remembrance Army

On the 31st September, the sub-branch assisted the Australia Remembrance Army to complete the second phase of the plaques for WW1 veterans at Lutwyche Cemetery.

Congratulations to Katrina Trevethan and Catherine Walker and Toowong RSL members on a very successful and important event.



Chis Mallcott & Peter Gow



Remembrance Day Service

The sub-branch conducted its annual service on the hill with an estimated 150-200 people in attendance which was about par for the course when considering recent years.

It did not seem to make much difference to numbers that it fell on a Saturday.

Congratulations and thanks to Steve Thornton, Tim Robb and Vince Atley for their efforts to ensure it was another successful service.

As in past years, many thanks also go to QUR for supporting us and providing the catafalque party as well as the work detail to deliver chairs set up under our marquees, under direction from CSM WO2 Glenn Swain.

This year, MAJ Michael York delivered the Remembrance Day Address with George Hulse OAM delivering the Reflections on Service and Chaplain MAJ John Ruhle also involved.

We were pleased once again to have the services of bugler Brian Clarke, with Thomas MacDonnell on the bagpipes. All did a magnificent job.

A light lunch was served back at the Wests Rugby Club for members and guests.



More photographs from the service are at the back of the newsletter.

CPL William Piggott Darby Headstone Dedication

On 11th November after the Remembrance Day Service, members of the Toowong RSL, Cr. Clare Jenkinson and members of the Friends of the Toowong Cemetery gathered at the new headstone for CPL Darby a WW1 veteran.

In April 2023, Tony McCoy O'Grady contacted the RSL and asked if Toowong RSL could lay a poppy wreath at his Great Uncles' unmarked grave in Toowong Cemetery. Tony's family members had just learnt that their Great Uncle had been the soldier who was the model for the bronze statute that proudly stands both at the WW1 Memorial in Martin Place, Sydney and in County Dublin, Ireland.

George Hulse (Toowong RSL) and Darcy Maddock (Friends of Toowong Cemetery) undertook some further research to collaborate the claim and based on their work, George recommended to DVA that the Australian Government should fund a headstone recognising the final resting place of CPL Darby. This was accepted and a headstone is now in place.

Following an interesting upbringing that included time in US 8th Cavalry Regiment in Cuba, William enlisted in the AIF in Toowoomba on 25th September 1914 and landed at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915 on his 43rd birthday. Identified for his bravery as a stretcher bearer at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, he was recorded in one obituary notice as being 'as familiar to Aussie Diggers as Simpson and his donkey'.

At the same time as the Toowong dedication, at the Armistice Day Remembrance Ceremony in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, Gary Gray, Australian Ambassador to Ireland, laid a wreath commemorating all from Ireland who served in the AIF during WW1.



Cr. Clare Jenkinson, Peter Gow & George Hulse



SED RSL Community Day in Toowong

On Saturday 14th October, SED assisted by Toowong and other sub-branches, held a community day at Toowong Memorial Park.

Although attendance numbers were not quite as many as expected, attendees had a great day.

It is expected this event will be held again in 2024 with some tweaks. Congratulations to Vince Atley who put in a lot of time and effort assisting SED with their event.

Toowong, Forest Lake and Sunnybank sub-branches had marquees at the event.



Camp Coot-tha Place

On the 15th November we held a commemoration service for the new memorial for WW2 Mine Assembly and Torpedo Calibration Depot at Mt Coot-tha.

JC Slaughter Falls during World War II was the home of the US Navy's Mine Assembly Depot #1, which assembled aerial mines for deployment across the South-West Pacific area.

Thanks to George Hulse OAM for his organising of the event and Peter Gow for representing the sub-branch.

A video of the event can be watched in this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQBVagxXW74>



France Trip – April 2024

On 13th July, Secretary Tim wrote to sub-branch members about the opening in Amiens, France on 24th April 2024 of the twin to our Memorial Bridge in ANZAC Park, Toowong.

The Bridge of Friendship between Australia and France is dedicated to every Australian Army engineer unit involved in WWI.

The dedication of the Amiens Memorial Bridge will likely incorporate a dedication ceremony, a short march of Australian and French veterans through Amiens and a dedication ceremony of the Amiens' Gardens of Peace, the French President's initiative.

Members were invited to join George Hulse and our President, Peter Gow along with other board members at this dedication ceremony in France.

At this stage we have the following Toowong RSL members considering attending the Friendship Bridge dedication:

- George and Beverley Hulse
- Peter Gow
- Vince Atley
- Mike & Donna Muirhead
- Tez Anderson & Peta Haynes-Lovell
- Chris & Sarah Harper
- Ross, Sharon, Rhi and Bryan Williamson

Coffee Catchups

Our new initiative for this year has been quite successful with good feedback from members. We have conducted these all on a monthly Sunday morning basis at Chatterbox, Level 1 of Toowong Village. These will continue in 2024.



Guest Speaker Functions

Another initiative we trialled this year was guest speaker nights. We held two this year with our first one with immediate past president George Hulse OAM giving a very interesting presentation of the bridge project in France he is having constructed and which will be officially opened in Amiens on 24 April.

The second guest speaker we incorporated into our annual end of year dinner. MAJGEN Mick Ryan gave a very interesting talk on how he sees a number of international conflicts occurring at present in regard to the Ukraine/Russian war, the Israel/Palestinian conflict, and the ongoing China/Taiwan tensions.

Mike Muirhead's Belated Acting Career Takes Off, Hollywood Beckons

Thanks to Mike Muirhead for volunteering to be a model for the RSL Queensland's latest campaign. Mike spent the day in front of the camera at New Farm doing what Mike does best ... making everyone else feel welcome.



Budding actor Mike on the right

A Thank You to Mike Muirhead

Let's just call this the Mike Muirhead page. Does he ever sleep?

Peter Gow and Vince Atley acknowledged all the enthusiastic contribution that Mike Muirhead has made to the Board over the year.



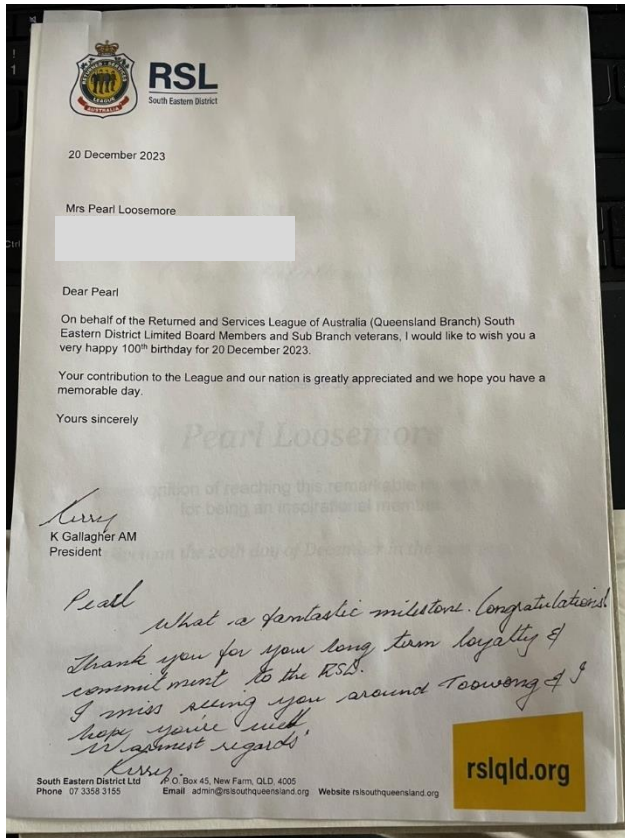
Peter Gow, Mike Muirhead & Vince Atley

Pearl Loosemore 100 years old

Happy birthday to Sub-Branch stalwart Pearl Loosemore who turned 100 this month.

The board organised flowers to be delivered to Pearl who is now in care. President Peter Gow has arranged to visit Pearl next week and deliver the following certificate from State President Stephen Day and letter of congratulations from SED President Kerry Gallagher.





Atley, Dave Donaldson and Tim Robb who visited veterans in hospital at The Wesley and Mater Private over the last six months. We are obtaining new RSL welfare packs that we can give veterans who are admitted without any toiletries.

Thanks to Keith Lamb for shopping for underwear for a number of veterans and we must acknowledge he is getting better and better with guessing sizing.

Veterans who have also been staying in the RSL's ANZAC House in Toowong also have appreciated the administrative services of the Toowong Sub Branch. Thanks to Peter Gow for certifying a number of veterans documents so they can obtain DVA support.

Sub-Branch Merchandise

We recently released a range of Toowong and RSL Queensland merchandise. If you would like to order a shirt (or two) please contact secretary Tim Robb. Contact details at end of newsletter.



A veteran assisted by a sub-branch visit

Hospital and Home Visits

Toowong Sub Branch continues to develop strong relationships with the Wesley and the St Andrews War Memorial Hospital.



A big thank you from the Southeastern District's (SED) HQ staff to Keith Lamb, Peter Gow, Vince

Remember - if you are doing it tough and require assistance, or just need a friendly ear, please get in contact with us as we are not always aware of members' situations.

Membership

This year we cracked the 100 service member mark. To provide some context, we had 74 service members just four years ago.



We put this down to the sub-branch being more active and the purchasing of our own branded marquees and polo shirts to promote us in the community. A strong social media presence thanks to board member Lily Zhu has undoubtedly also assisted our efforts to grow our numbers.

We currently have 105 Service members and 28 non-Service members (social) being a total of 133 members.

Welcome to the following new members:

- Tess Baker
- Catherine Bansley
- Dr Phillip Bushell-Guthrie
- Hon. Paul de Jersey AC CVO KC
- Chris Harper
- Peta Haynes-Lovell
- Brett McKenzie
- Bradley Newlands
- Arthur O'Brien
- Neville Pearce
- Molly Schulse
- Peter Stevens
- Katrina Trevethan
- Catherin Walker
- John White DSC MiD
- Sharon Williamson
- Tash Winters



Peter Gow & Natasha Winters



Peter Gow, Chris Harper & Chris Mallcott

Finances

One Volunteer is Better Than Ten Pressed Men

Our 2023 social plan included the need for fundraising to help reduce the costs to members.



The Sub Branch conducted Remembrance Day fundraising at both Toowong Village and The Regatta Hotel. A total profit of \$2745 was made.

Thanks goes to these members and volunteers for their time. Apologies for any names missed:

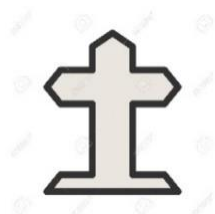
- Peter Gow
- Laurie Smith
- Bill Beach
- Garry Collins
- Vince Atley
- Annette Stuart
- Keith Lamb
- Tim Robb
- Mike Muirhead
- George Hulse
- Maureen Souter
- Brian Venz
- Barry Weller

- Nigel Meadows
- Janelle Voysey
- Bernie Voysey
- Tez Anderson
- Jim Kidd
- Denis Luttrell
- Steve Thornton
- Wayne Fowler
- James Mackay
- Cr Clare Jenkinson



Last Post

We are sad to report we lost the following members since the last newsletter:



- John Briggs
- John Goodell

A reminder that the sub-branch will conduct a poppy service for any person who has served in the Australian Defence Force. They do not have to have been a member of the RSL. They are free of charge.

An RSL representative will:

- deliver a eulogy, detailing the veteran's service
- recite *The Ode*
- sound *The Last Post* and *Rouse*
- provide poppies for mourners to place on the coffin in recognition of service.

Unfortunately, we are often advised of the passing of a member by family sometime after the funeral so please make your family aware of the poppy service if it is something you would like to be part of your service.

RSL Queensland Advocates

RSL Queensland employs about 90 paid and some unpaid advocates to support veterans in Queensland and the Northern Territory. The number of paid advocates is increasing as the accreditation requirements increases.

They operate a triage system to support the more urgent cases first. Currently there is a wait of between 30-90 days to get an interview with an advocate. Outside of that, urgent support for homelessness or financial support, etc. is available.

Open Arms provides mental health support for Navy, Army and Air Force personnel, veterans & their families.

They have a 24hr crisis support line as well as free and confidential counselling to partners and children of those who have served. You can call 24/7 on 1800 011 046. More information at www.openarms.gov.au.

Mates 4 Mates supports their members with psychological, physical and social barriers services. To find out more about joining Mates4Mates, accessing services or supporting our cause, fill out the form or call 1300 4 MATES (62 837) during business hours. More information at www.mates4mates.org.

If you feel the need for an advocate to make an initial contact for advocacy support, contact RSL Queensland in 134 775 and choose option 2 to go through to a staff member. They will interview you and get your details. You will then receive an email to read and agree to the Client Services Agreement.

Once you accept this you will receive a second email to complete your:

- Profile Information,
- Living Conditions, and
- Personal Wellbeing Index

Based on your answers you will get another email with useful links such as Open Arms, Mates for Mates, etc.

We encourage all members who may have current or future needs to consider an early approach as the DVA assessment process can be drawn out. Your Regimental Number and/or PMKeys number will be required so have it handy.

Even better your DVA White Card is useful as this has your DVA reference number even if you have only the basic services on it.

Welfare Assistance

Occasionally we are contacted by Sub Branch and ex-service men and women to assist with advocacy regarding the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and other agencies. In these cases, we can direct them to the appropriate contact within the RSL.



RSL South Eastern District offers free services for veterans & families:

- Wellbeing support, visits & bereavement assistance
- Medical & allied health referrals
- PTSD & mental health support
- Advocacy & research for compensation & welfare
- Career transition assistance

Located at Greenslopes Private Hospital
Tuesday–Thursday | 10am–2pm or by appointment.

Email: wellbeing@rslsouthqueensland.org
Ph. (07) 3394 7235 www.rslsouthqueensland.org

There are also professional services like Australian Veteran Health Services which is run by Dr Andrew Cronin. 1300 766 206. Services offered included DVA Claims, ADF Transition Medicals & Permanent Impairment Assessments.

DVA Telephone Number

DVA's telephone number is 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) for veterans and their families.

2023-2024 Sub Branch Board

We have a change of board member with the resignation of David Donaldson due to work commitments. We thank Dave for his contributions including assisting in fundraising.

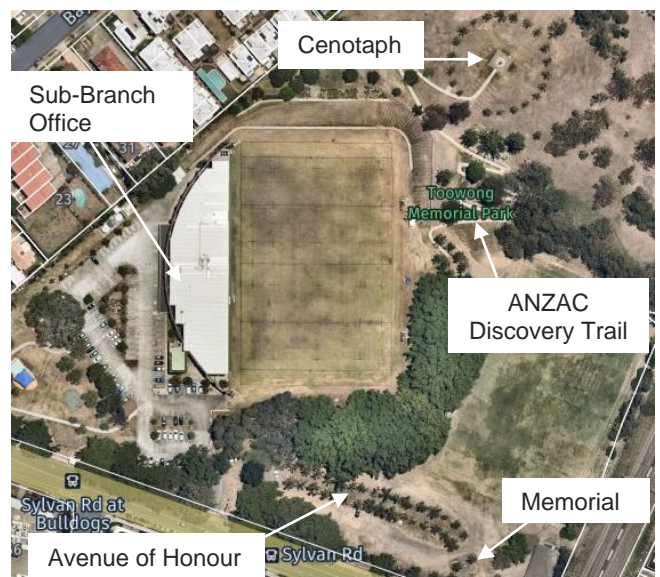
Dave has indicated he is still keen to help out.

Section 28.1 of our Constitution allows for members of the board to appoint another Service or Life Member to fill the vacancy for the balance of the term. The board considered an expression of interest from Service member James Mackay at the board meeting held on 20 November where it was unanimously agreed that James join the board.

- Peter Gow – President
- Ross Williamson RFD – Deputy President
- Chris Mallcott – Vice President
- Tim Robb – Secretary
- Vince Atley – Treasurer
- Keith Lamb
- James Mackay
- Mike Muirhead
- Dr. Stephen Thornton
- Dr. Lily Zhu

The office is in the Western Districts Rugby Football Club (Wests Bulldogs) building in Sylvan Road Toowong.

Office: 7/65 Sylvan Road Toowong
Postal: PO Box 1564 Toowong DC 4066
Phone: 0455 655 766
Email secretary@toowong.rslqld.net.au
Website: www.rsltoowong.org



Toowong Memorial Park

Remembrance Day 2023



President Peter Gow



MAJ Michael York delivering the Remembrance Day Address



Chaplain MAJ John Rhule



George Hulse OAM



Peter Gow



Catafalque Party provided by Queensland University Regiment



Seal Chong Wah representing Elizabeth Watson-Brown MP; Michael Berkman MP; Margaret Forrest representing Senator Paul Scarr; Cr. Clare Jenkinson; Cr. Penny Wolff (out of picture)



Bugler Brian Clarke



Piper Thomas MacDonnell



Nick Dubravcic, President QURA



Leigh Chamberlain, Toowong & District Historical Society



Darcy Maddock, Friends of Toowong Cemetery



Scouts Queensland



Peter Gow, Nick Dubravcic & Tim Robb



James Mackay



John Forrest RFD



Sergeant Darin Carruthers & Peter Gow



Dr. Lily Zhu poem reading





Lily Zhu & Oliver Harper



Cr. Penny Wolff, Cr. Clare Jenkinson & Peter Gow



CSM WO2 Glenn Swain & QUR Catafalque Party

Toowong RSL Sub Branch



Annual Dinner

Figs on Sylvan

65 Sylvan Road Toowong

23rd November 2023 6pm for 6:30pm
\$30.00 per person

***Wear your
Brightest
Outfit***



Denis Luttrell, Brian Venz, Philip Weller & Bruce Woodhouse



Double Trouble - Mike Muirhead & Vince Atley



MAJGEN Mick Ryan, Keith Watts, Ross Williamson, Janelle Voysey, Sharon Williamson & Bernie Voysey



Mike Muirhead, Bernie Voysey, Eleanor Martin, Keith Lamb, Nigel Meadows & Diana Meadows



Tez Anderson, Peta Haynes-Lovell & Graham Heslin



Deb Camden, John White & Steve Thornton



Natasha Winters & Vince Atley



Peter Gow & Vince Atley



Mike Muirhead



Peter Gow with bottle of wine supplied by him for guest speaker MAJGEN Mick Ryan



ACU Veteran and Family Art Program

Art therapy techniques were very popular during World War I and World War II, giving both critically wounded veterans and veterans who suffered from PTSD a way to therapeutically express themselves in their own individual way. And studies have shown these techniques to be extremely valuable.

Which is why the ACU Veteran and Family Art Program has been created. It aims to promote healthy social engagement within the veteran community through structured sessions focusing on various art forms.

The program utilises art as a form of expression in a non-clinical setting to create positive engagement for veterans and veteran families alike, finding common ground through unique experiences gained in military service. This environment will be a space where participants can express themselves through non-verbal cognitive means.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program runs from 11 – 15 December 2023 on the ACU Brisbane Campus.

Sessions are structured like a conference or seminar with participants registering and attending those sessions that interest them. Days are separated into morning and afternoon sessions, giving participants the chance to choose their own activity based on interest and availability.

The week will feature the more popular visual arts units at ACU, with sessions devoted to drawing, painting, printmaking, photography and ceramics. Each three-hour session will introduce students to the relevant activity, with practical catch-up sessions on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for students to revisit any of the disciplines explored up to that point. The Friday afternoon session will allow students to finalise any work and to set up an exhibition from the week in the ACU student gallery.

The units above are easily adapted into a short course format and are very flexible in terms of delivery. All materials will be supplied to the students, apart from the photography component where students will use their own smartphone cameras.



Key information

What: ACU Veteran and Family Art Program

When: 11 – 15 December 2023

Where: Room 208.G.05, ACU Brisbane Campus, 1100 Nudgee Road, Banyo Qld 4014

Who: Available to veterans and families of veterans

Register your interest by emailing studentveteranservices@acu.edu.au including your chosen session/s, name, and contact information. Spaces are limited so get in soon.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9am – 12pm	Introduction/ drawing	Drawing/ painting	Ceramics (making and glazing)	Printmaking	Project completion
	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1 – 4pm	Ceramics	Painting	Ceramics/ drawing/ painting	Whole day Print making	Practical session/ exhibition in student gallery

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Disclaimer (December 2023): Information correct at time of printing. The university reserves the right to amend, cancel or otherwise modify the content without notice.

Free 12 Month Health and Fitness Program

- Returned Veterans, Peacekeepers & ADF Firefighter Scheme -

Registrations open

Run on behalf of the DVA by Corporate Health Management, the program aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through practical exercise support and 12 months of telephonic health coaching and advice on healthy lifestyle choices provided by one of our team of highly qualified allied health professionals.

The Heart Health Program is flexible and able to accommodate participants living in metropolitan areas, rural or remote areas, those still working or retired, studying or with other time constraints.



Am I eligible?

Started over 20 years ago for those returned from Vietnam, the Heart Health Program is free and open to all veterans with operational service, peacekeepers and those covered under the ADF firefighters scheme who have not previously participated in the Heart Health Program before.

To check your eligibility visit

<http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility>



How it works: Individual Heart Health Program

Each participant receives 12 months of healthy lifestyle coaching from a highly qualified and dedicated allied health professional via fortnightly health coaching calls with information and advice tailored to each individuals health and fitness goals.

The health coach will use their extensive knowledge along with health surveys and food diaries to guide you through the program.

The program covers a range of topics including:

- Setting healthy goals
- Nutrition and diet advice
- Advice on lowering alcohol consumption
- Developing better sleep patterns
- Stress management
- Managing diabetes
- Taking care of your body
- Managing your weight
- Maintaining a healthy heart

Program Exercise Resource – Exercise how you like to

The program can provide an exercise resource to help participants to exercise the way they like to or provide an opportunity to try something that's different than the usual.

Resources can take the form of:

- Assistance with the cost of a gym or pool membership or
- Provide a piece of exercise equipment for use at home or
- Provide assistance with accessing new exercise or training gear



Registering Your Interest

Registering your interest or checking eligibility is easy.

Visit <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility> and follow the steps.

Call the program phone number **1300 246 262** at any time to speak to one of our team.

Heart Health Team - DVA Heart Health Program

Program proudly delivered on behalf of the DVA by:

CHM Corporate Health Management Pty Ltd

Toorak Place, 521 - 529 Toorak Road, Toorak VIC 3142

Direct: 1300 246 262

Email: hearthealth@chm.com.au

Web: <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au>

Health & Wellbeing Update

(December 2023/January 2024)

IN THIS EDITION

- Veteran Wellbeing Grants
- Veterans' Health Week 2023 Report
- DVA TV & MyService
- Not-for-Profit News
- Training Opportunities
- Grants
- Health & Wellbeing
- Community Events
- State News



Veteran Wellbeing Grants

The Australian Government has announced a total of up to \$3.777 million (GST exclusive) for the VWG Program for the 2024–25 financial year.

Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) provide funding for ex-service organisations (ESOs) to undertake projects and activities that sustain or enhance health and social wellbeing, build community capacity, potentially expand on existing projects and raise awareness of important issues faced by the veteran community.

Applications will be considered under two grant categories:

- Stream A Small Grants (up to a maximum of \$50,000 per grant)
- Stream B Large Grants (from \$50,001 to a maximum of \$150,000 per grant).

The objectives of the program are to:

- maintain and improve the independence and quality of life for members of the veteran community by providing funding for activities and projects that sustain or enhance health and social wellbeing
- deliver activities and projects to the veteran community that build community capacity for the future that is not already provided by Commonwealth or state funding
- expand on existing activities and projects offered to veterans in new regions within Australia or in the development of new activities and projects that will be offered in more than one location
- raise awareness of the important issues faced by the veteran community.

Applications Close: 9:00 pm AEDT on 23 January 2024.

Find out more on [GrantConnect](#).

Veterans' Health Week 2023

DVA would like to thank everyone who hosted, supported or participated in any of the 660 events and activities during this year's Veterans' Health Week!

Each of the events for Veterans' Health Week 2023, which ran from 8-15 October 2023, was hosted by an ex-service organisation or community group for the benefit of local veterans and families.

Veterans' Health Week events are made possible by funding and support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Hosting or participating in a Veterans' Health Week event is a fantastic way to support the veteran community, working to improve health outcomes by increasing awareness of health and wellbeing issues that are commonly experienced by the veteran community; connecting them to information, programs and supports, and community.

This year's theme - Mental Wellness Matters – inspired many to create opportunities to promote good health and wellbeing in the everyday life of veterans and families, and shone a spotlight on the importance of mental health. Improving the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and families, and reducing the risk of suicide, is a key priority for the Australian Government.

VHW events and activities included yoga, golf, walking and running clubs, water sports, coffee catch ups and more.

We extend our thanks to all those in the veteran community who hosted and participated in this year's array of wonderful and engaging activities.



DVA NEWS



DVA TV

DVA TV is dedicated to providing information about the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the services and support we provide to Australia's veteran and defence community. Recent videos - now available for viewing.

- [How to book transport online with MyService](#)
- [How to claim travel expenses with MyService](#)
- [We will remember them, we do remember them.](#)

Help Using MyService

The Department has created a [series of guides you can download](#) to assist you to:

- Set up a MyService account
- Claim travel expenses for medical reasons
- Book transport for medical appointments
- Request a review of a decision
- Update your accommodation costs
- Update your correspondence preference
- Apply for incapacity payments
- Update your incapacity claim
- Complete your incapacity annual review
- Manage your Acute Support Package

Download them [here](#).



Registrations Open For 2024 Anzac Day Services Overseas

In Australia, New Zealand, and indeed across the globe, as the dawn breaks on Anzac Day, we come together, solemnly, silently, and respectfully.

We gather to remember the sacrifices of so many ordinary Australians, caught up in extraordinary events throughout our history.

Australians are now invited to register their attendance at the 2024 Anzac Day Dawn Services in France and Türkiye to commemorate our Anzacs, and all those who have served our nation in conflict and peacekeeping operations in the years since.

The Gallipoli Anzac Day Dawn Service will take place at the Anzac Commemorative Site on the Gallipoli peninsula. This will be followed by the Australian Memorial service at Lone Pine, the site of one of the fiercest battles that the Australians fought during the First World War.

The Dawn Service in France will be hosted at the Australian National Memorial near Villers-Bretonneux, followed by a service at the Digger Memorial, just outside the town of Bullecourt.

Those planning to attend these overseas Dawn Services can now register for their free attendance passes online at <https://commemorations.teg.com.au/>. Registration is essential.

[Register Now](#)

Veteran Card Holders Can Now Register For MyMedicare

Longer telehealth consultations and a formalised relationship with your general practice or GP are just some of the benefits veterans can access when registering in MyMedicare.

The Australian Government is committed to delivering improved health and wellbeing outcomes for veterans and their families. The Government has recently introduced MyMedicare, a voluntary patient registration model to help improve the continuity of quality primary health care for all Australians, including veterans.

Voluntary patient registration in MyMedicare is now open.

For more information about click on the link to this article on DVA News [Veteran Card holders can now register for MyMedicare | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

CONSULTATION

Help Shape the Future of the Not-For-Profit Sector

The Not-for-Profit (NFP) Sector Development Blueprint (the NFP Blueprint) issues paper is now available on the [DSS Engage](#) website for feedback.

The NFP Blueprint issues paper will start a conversation to inform the development of a sector-led Blueprint, a roadmap, advising the government what is needed for a sustainable NFP and charities sector. This is the sector's opportunity to tell the government what they need to create a better future for:

- the Australian NFP and charities sector
- those who benefit and rely on it.

Development of a NFP Blueprint was announced by the Australian Government in the 2022-23 October Budget. The Blueprint Expert Reference Group (BERG), a group of sector representatives, was established to deliver the sector-led Blueprint.

Your input, ideas and views will help create a more vibrant and thriving NFP and charities sector. The BERG wants your suggestions for sector-led workable and effective reform options. This opportunity will allow you to identify:

- changes that are needed immediately
- changes that can be implemented over a longer period.

To share your views and help support long-term change for the NFP and charities sector, visit the [DSS Engage website](#). Submissions close on 20 December 2023.

More information

Read more about the NFP Blueprint on the DSS page: [The Blueprint Expert Reference Group \(BERG\)](#).

You can also register your interest in attending an online forum to discuss priorities for the Blueprint on the [DSS Engage](#) website.

Training Opportunity: Be Connected

Visit the **Be Connected** website to access training courses on a variety of topics relating to the digital environment. Learn new digital skills and encourage others to participate safely online.

Find free online courses and resources on everything from how to use your smartphone or tablet to cyber safety tips. [Be Connected | Free Online Course | Be Connected \(esafety.gov.au\)](#)

GRANTS AND FUNDING

Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program



The Australian Government is inviting eligible organisations to apply for grant funding under the Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program.

The program is designed to provide funding for projects that promote appreciation and understanding of the experiences of service and the roles that those who served have played, and to preserve, add to the sum knowledge on, or provide access to information about Australia's wartime heritage.

There are 2 categories of grants available under the program:

1. Community Grants (STS-CG)

Grants to a maximum of \$10,000 are available for local, community-based projects and activities.

2. Major Grants (STS-MG)

Grants between \$10,001 and \$150,000 are available for major commemorative projects and activities that are significant from a national, state, territory and/or regional perspective.

Applications Close: 9:00 pm AEDT on 6 February 2024

HEALTH & WELLBEING

AIHW Publishes Report Looking at the Social Connectedness of Australia's Veterans

A new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report was released in November, measuring the social connectedness and feeling of belonging and connecting with others amongst our veteran community.

The Veteran Social Connectedness report profiles veterans and presents key insights into their social connectedness, including comparisons to the wider Australian population.

For more information about click on the link to article in DVA News [AIHW publishes report looking at the Social Connectedness of Australia's Veterans | \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

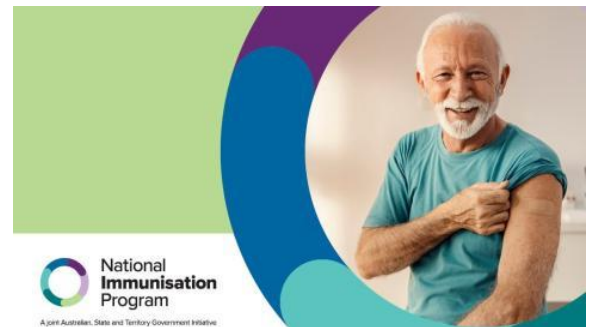
Shingles Vaccine Now Free for nearly 5 million Australians

From 1 November, older Australians will have free access to the best protection against shingles through one of the most comprehensive and widely available vaccination programs in the world.

The Australian Government is committing \$826.8 million to provide almost five million people who are at risk of severe disease from shingles with a free Shingrix® vaccine under the National Immunisation Program.

This includes people aged 65 years and over, First Nations people 50 years and over, and people 18 years and over with severely weakened immune systems at high risk of herpes zoster infection.

For more information about click on the link to article in DVA News [Shingles vaccine now free for nearly 5 million Australians | \(dva.gov.au\)](#) or visit the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care [website](#) or talk to your doctor.



INVICTUS AUSTRALIA- Adaptive Sport Program

Expressions of Interest are now open for the next iteration of the Adaptive Sport Program, for competitors and coaches, run in partnership between Invictus Australia and the Australian Defence Force.

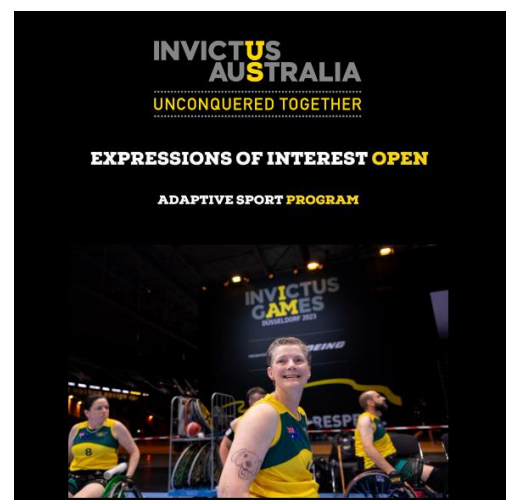
Whether you're a current or former serving member of the Defence community, the multi-sport program caters to those who are wounded, injured, or facing health challenges, as a way to support recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Applications close 15th December, 2023.

This inclusive initiative spans international events, setting the stage for incredible opportunities. Plus, the Adaptive Sports Program is the platform through which competitors for events like the Invictus Games and Warrior Games are selected.

If you're eager to seize these opportunities, apply today.

To learn more about the [Adaptive Sport Program process and to submit an EOI click here.](#)



In addition to the Adaptive Sport Program, Invictus Australia has a team of frontline staff known as Regional Veteran Engagement Managers, who work with their National Sporting Partners to deliver community sport and initiate opportunities for veterans and their families to build mental, social and physical wellbeing. This may be through participation, volunteering, refereeing or competition. These staff members are part of the veteran community, either former-serving personnel, family or community members, and are locals living in each region.

To learn more about what is happening in your state go to [local engagement](#) on the Invictus website.

'Tis the Season to be asking RUOK?

Christmas and the holiday season can be a difficult time for some people who struggle to navigate the celebrations and festivities going on around them. They might be dealing with the strain of financial pressure, work demands, recent events, grief, or a challenging family situation.

If there's someone who's finding this time of year tough you can make a difference by checking in and having meaningful conversations with the people in your world.

The RUOK? campaign inspires and empowers everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and start a conversation with those in their world who may be struggling with life.

You don't need to be an expert to reach out - just a good friend and a great listener.

Use these four steps and have a conversation that could change a life:

1. Ask R U OK?
2. Listen
3. Encourage action
4. Check in

For more information go to: [A conversation could change a life | R U OK?](#)



COMMUNITY DATES and DAYS

5th December [International Volunteer Day](#)

Volunteering Australia proudly supports International Volunteer Day (IVD) on 5 December 2023, to raise awareness of the important role volunteers play in responding to challenges facing the world.

IVD is a day to celebrate and promote volunteering. There are millions of volunteers in Australia and the contributions that they make to communities around the country are enormous. IVD is an opportunity to acknowledge, thank and shine a light on the important work of volunteers.



25th December – Christmas Day

26th December – Boxing Day

1st January – New Year's Day

24th January - [International Day of Education](#)

26th January – Australia Day

QUEENSLAND NEWS

Veteran artists' exhibition tours Queensland

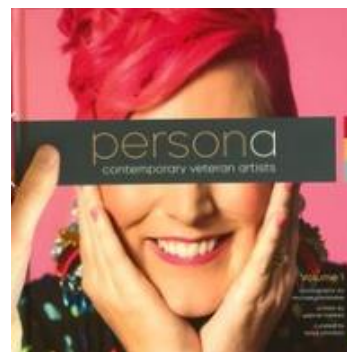
Persona is a commemorative photographic portrait project raising awareness of the cultural and creative engagements of Australian contemporary veteran artists.

The project took shape in 2017 following a chance meeting between ANVAM founder, Tanja Johnston, and professional photographer, Michael Christofas. Tanja and Michael's conversation sparked the project, which showcases portraits of veteran artists within their creative spaces. Michael's striking photographs of veteran creatives are enriched by individual artist narratives, written by Gabriel Holmes. These photographs and stories challenge veteran stereotypes and advocate for the important role of arts within the veteran community.

In 2020, ANVAM was awarded a [DVA Saluting Their Service Grant](#), enabling the project to be presented across three complementary formats: a touring exhibition, online showcase and hardcover publication. Together, these components represent a cultural record and legacy document showcasing the diversity and richness of Australia's contemporary veteran arts community.

The exhibition has been displayed in many locations, including the Queens Hall of the Victorian Parliament House, Bright Regional Art Gallery and Cultural Centre, the ANZAC Square Memorial Galleries in Brisbane and Parliament House, Canberra.

A particular highlight was the launch of the hardcover publication *Persona: Contemporary Veteran Artists: Volume 1*, by ANVAM's patrons, Their Excellencies, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Mrs Linda Hurley, at Admiralty House in February 2023.



Persona's Queensland Tour, proudly supported by the Queensland Government, began at The Oasis Townsville from 10 to 27 October and was well received.

Upcoming tour dates include:

- Tanks Arts Centre, Cairns, 10 November – 10 December 2023 (launch on 10 November, 4pm-6pm)
- Queensland Maritime Museum, Brisbane, 2 February – 3 March 2024 (launch on 3 February, 4pm-10pm)

Find more information on the [Persona website](#).

New Caboolture Hub - a win for veterans and families in Southeast Queensland

Tailored services and support is now available to veterans and families across Southeast Queensland, with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Matt Keogh, officially opening a Veteran's and Families' Hub in Caboolture.

The new hub means veterans and families living on the Sunshine Coast, across the City of Moreton Bay and those residing in Brisbane North have access to employment, housing, transition, advocacy, mental health and wellbeing support, along with counselling and opportunities to enhance their social connections.

The new hub is operated by Lives Lived Well and is open to all current and former serving Australian Defence Force members, including reservists, and their families.

Lives Lived Well has partnered with a number of ex-service organisations and key agencies to ensure they are providing wrap around support for veterans and their families.

Veterans and families who live in Southeast Queensland are encouraged to drop by for a cuppa and a chat. The hub is located at 12 King St, Caboolture, QLD, 4510.

Support is also available over the phone or online, simply call 1300 727 957 or send the team an email at vwc@liveslivedwell.org.au

The launch of the Caboolture Veterans' and Families' Hub is part of the Government's \$46.7 million commitment to deliver eight new Veterans' and Families' Hubs across the country.

For more information about the Veterans' and Families' Hubs, visit www.dva.gov.au/vfhubs

ACU Veteran and Family Art Program

The art program focuses on empowering participants through structured sessions, introducing a variety of art forms to express themselves. This is a non-clinical program, giving participants a space to express themselves through non-verbal cognitive means.

The program runs over the week 11 – 15 December at the ACU Brisbane Campus. Sessions start at 0900 and run through to 1600 with lunch provided. The program is completely free and open to all current/ex-serving personnel and their families. For more information please find attached flyer.

Bribie Island – National Servicemen’s Dedication Ceremony

On the 20th of October, the Bribie Island National Servicemen’s Organisation held a well-attended dedication ceremony at their new Memorial Park next to the Bribie Island RSL. Commemorating the service of 287,000 young Australians who were required to undertake compulsory military training from 1951 to 1972, the service was attended by local members, distinguished guests, the Bribie Island community, [the Pipes & Drums - National Servicemen’s Memorial Band](#), members of local ESOs, veterans and family groups, and children from the local school.

A large sandstone plinth (pictured) with an accompanying plaque was installed and a memorial park, carefully created by volunteers, with funding from their successful Saluting their Service grant application. The current round for the grant closes on the 6th of February 2024 with more information found [here](#).



RSL Be:Well

RSL Queensland recently expanded its online learning portfolio for veterans, launching RSL Be:Well – a free program designed to help veterans improve their health and wellbeing.

RSL Be:Well educates users on common veteran health challenges – including nutrition, finding meaningful civilian work, and managing negative emotions – and provides simple, online self-paced resources to proactively manage each challenge.

Backed by research from Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation, the program is specifically developed to address veterans’ physical, mental, emotional and social needs.

Try it out today. Visit the [RSL Queensland website](#) to learn more.

