Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Victorian Branch Inc.

FSB-VIC

SUMMER 2019 EDITION



"Used my Gold Card for the first time today – thank you".

We should all be very proud of the key role VVAA Vic. played in gaining the Gold Card for the SEATO folk. We never gave up and "fought like hell for the living".
DOT ANGELL - SEATO Team.
SEATO Team

VVAA VIC EDUCATION TEAM (ETEAM)

KEEPING AUSTRALIAN MILITARY HISTORY ALIVE THROUGH

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VVAA Victorian State Branch

Executive

ABN: 34 750 672 219

State President	Bob ELWORTHY AM	Mob: 0402 106 262
State Vice President	Brendan KINCADE OAM	Mob: 0414 948 305
State Secretary	George SKELL	Mob: 0410 275 651
State Assistant Secretary **Membership Officer**	Sue McQUEEN OAM	5444 1871 Mob: 0400 821 457
State Treasurer	Bob GLAUBITZ	Mob: 0412 689 630
State Branch **Welfare Officer**	Kevin HUNTER	Mob: 0408 448 280
State Assistant Treasurer **State Office Manager** **Editor *FSB-VIC***	Maurie BENSON	Mob: 0417 588 886
State Branch **Executive Member**	Lindsay McQUEEN	5444 1871 Mob: 0488 068 880
State Branch **Executive Member**	Martin RUDELBACH	9551 1353 Mob: 0419 906 602
Education Team	Jim DEWAR	Mob: 0417 160 700

VVAA Victorian Branch—State Office

Address:	VVAA Victorian Branch Anzac House L3/4 Collins St MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Phone:	(03) 9655 5588
Fax:	(03) 9655 5582
Secretary:	secretary@vvaavic.org.au
Office:	office@vvaavic.org.au
Newsletter:	editor@vvaavic.org.au
Web Site:	www.vvaavic.org.au
Office Hours:	1000 - 1400 Hrs Monday–Friday (Subject to volunteer availability)

MEMBERSHIP:
International &
Headquarters Branch
C/O CVVSC
PO BOX 820
BENDIGO VIC 3552

Victorian Sub Branch contacts:

Refer to VVAA Vic website above.

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A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



"I used my GOLD Card for the first time today….

Thank you"

This simple acknowledgement from Dr. Dot Angell on behalf of the SEATO nurses vindicated the decades-long campaign by the Branch to achieve recognition of the contribution of the ***SEATO medical and surgical teams*** to the Australian effort in Vietnam, and to secure for them surety of Department of Veterans' Affairs treatment for their medical conditions.

Despite a rapidly increasing number of Vietnam veteran member deaths, the Branch has worked very hard to maintain a solid membership base: it is significant that despite falling membership numbers, new members continue to appear. Some minor changes to our closure plan ***"Under Our Own Control"*** have been made, and it is anticipated that further Sub-Branches will again contemplate their future in the coming year.

The ***"RSL Reform"*** group -steered by a cohort of younger veterans- has continued its campaign "against" the Victorian Branch of the RSL. The VVAA Vic. Branch has remained silent on issues which are strictly RSL focused, however we have responded when the reform group actions or missives impact on the Branch and its membership. In essence, the group is on notice that personal attacks on Vietnam veterans- or other veterans for that matter- will not go unchallenged, and the choice is theirs; they can either have the Branch as a powerful ally or a powerful enemy. The membership will not tolerate activities that cause damage to the health of Vietnam veterans and others, and we will not tolerate misinformation which attempts, for example, to paint the VVAA as uncaring about veteran suicide, simply because we do not support their call for a Royal Commission.

The State Government has provided $1.4M to the Branch over the next 4 years for Vietnam veteran welfare, and we have had successful meetings with the Victorian Minister for Veterans - the son of a deceased Vietnam veteran - and his staff along with members of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Veterans Group, to discuss our funding proposals. To date, $200K has been allocated to provide free visits to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum for State Government Secondary Schools, $50K per annum for ceremonial activities and $25K per annum for State Executive Welfare support activities.

A project proposal (75K funding has been agreed in principal) is being prepared to fund the refurbishment of the Older Veterans Psychiatry Program (OVPP) outdoor area at the Coral/Balmoral Psychological Trauma Recovery Service (PTRS) facility at the Repatriation Hospital Heidelberg. The outdoor area will be used by Vietnam veterans currently attending OVPP group programs, and in time the area will be used by younger veteran cohorts (and perhaps first responders) transitioning from Ward 17 in-patient programs to the OVPP program. The Branch regards this project as being vital to the health and well-being of Vietnam veterans now, and as legacy for younger veterans.

Some of the funding is tied to a Government expressed a desire to have a Vietnam veteran visit and speak at every Government Secondary school in the state as part of the 4 year program. Following Branch advice that this would be very difficult to achieve given manpower constraints, and that despite coaching and scripting, it would not be possible to guarantee a consistent message would be delivered, a different approach was proposed. A subsequent meeting with DPC staff, Victorian Secondary School Curriculum development staff, History Teachers Association of Victoria representatives, Shrine Education Team staff and some current secondary school history teachers was held to explore how best to deliver a Vietnam War history presentation to schools. Development of a package that meets curriculum requirements and provides schools with the resources needed is being developed. The package could, as an example, include among



other things an audio-visual recording of Vietnam veteran stories.

Other initiatives including a welfare and well-being package for Vietnam veteran families, and a travelling roadshow are being considered.

As is the usual custom, the ***Victorian State Council*** travels to country areas, and this year the Council has met at Echuca/Moama and Bendigo, with Ballarat being the last port of call later in October.

One of the great bonuses of taking the State Council to the country is that from time to time other Vietnam veterans or family members wander in for a look at the display and often to seek information about a lost mate. At Echuca/Moama, we were honoured with a visit from Father John Tinkler, Tink" as he is affectionately known by all who served with him and all who know him.

"Tink" was the 1RAR Padre Vietnam 1968-69, and although 82 years of age, he still remains active within the veteran community. Stories of "Tink's" war service are legendary: When asked by a superior officer why he was walking around the TF unarmed, and what he would do if the enemy attacked him "Tink" was reported as saying ***"I would lasso them with my rosary beads and tie the bastards up Sir"***. When finally allowed to go on a Pl patrol, "Tink" was made the signaller so that the Pl Comd could keep him close. When asked to send a SITREP to headquarters, "Tink" took the handset and said loudly ***"Hello God, Hello God, This is Tink over"*** The Pl efforts at stealth and secrecy evaporated as everbody fell about laughing! "Tink" is loved and revered by all who served with him and those of us who know him personally now.

In the lead up to State Council meetings, the Education Team conducts a three day incursion in the area, providing a static display in a high profile location which is open to the community and local schools. The local Sub-Branch has responsibility for spreading the word about the display, and having the presence of the Council and E Team reported in local newspapers, radio and regional television. Invitations to the E Team display and co-located Friday evening meet and greet social function are extended to local state and federal members of parliament, local council and other dignitaries. The E Team vehicle also now displays NVVM advertising, and promotes the NVVM at each of its activities.

The 2020 AGM/State Council meeting will be held at the Repatriation Hospital during which delegates will be given a guided tour of the Coral/Balmoral complex and other veteran related developments. This will provide the first opportunity for many country delegates to see the Repat. first hand.

The Branch remains fully engaged with the Victorian Vietnamese Community and Vietnamese veterans and the E Team has again mounted a comprehensive display at the Vietnamese TET festival. Both the E Team and the Branch continue to provide awards to inspiring young Vietnamese Australians who have achieved academically and have also contributed significantly to the Vietnamese Community fostered Dual Citizenship Program and the community.

Vietnam Veterans Day 2019 was another successful day, with even the Melbourne weather cooperating! The focus of the commemorations, against the backdrop of the 53rd anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, was the 50th anniversaries of the Hat Dich actions (operation Goodwood) and the Battle for Binh Ba. The day was commenced by the usual and now firmly entrenched "Gunfire Breakfast" in the Shrine of Remembrance gardens. This a very popular and important part of the day, attracting as it does significant numbers of veterans who can no longer march but make the effort to attend the breakfast before making their way to their seats for the commemorations, the Victorian Police protective unit members, ADF support staff, cadets and other commemorations participants. Sub-Branches donate generously towards the cost of the gunfire breakfast.



This year the Premier of Victoria-he never misses-headed our VIP guest list and he again spoke passionately about his respect for Vietnam veterans. We were honoured to have a high powered US Delegation as our guests including the US Consul General, two 3 star equivalent US Department of Defense civilians and five other senior ranked US Army officers. The NZ Commissioner was also represented along with Brigadier rank equivalent ADF representatives from the three services and senior Victorian Public Service and ESO heads.

As is now our custom, we have dispensed with a guest speaker and instead use a large screen to project Vietnam War era images, play "Echoes of Conflict"- our unofficial Vietnam War orchestral piece composed by Geelong Sub-Branch member and Vietnam veteran Lachlan Wilson- feature the recollections of Vietnam veterans as well as display the entire commemorative service for attendees, including a flyover of aircraft.

This year, a Centurion tank crew member who was wounded at Hat Dich, and a 1RAR rifleman who helped with the delivery of a baby during the Hat Dich battle were featured. Both presentations held the commemorations attendees spellbound, and the US delegation in particular led spontaneous and prolonged applause when one of the veterans remarked that he believed that we should have been there. Cadets again played a central part, carrying a national flag for each veteran who lost their lives at Hat Dich and Binh Ba; one cadet carried the NZ flag in remembrance of a KIWI infantryman killed at Hat Dich.

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum has entered into a formal contract for the purchase of a large parcel of land opposite the existing museum buildings. This land, which has a frontage onto the main Phillip Island road down which all tourist visitors to the island travel, will eventually house the new state-of-the art museum. It is planned at this stage that the existing facility will become the museum maintenance and restoration building, and opportunities exist to consider leasing some of the land for agricultural purposes thus providing another income stream for the museum.

AVM Alan Reed AO has stood down as museum patron and moves into a new phase of development. AVM Reed flew a USAF Phantom Reconnaissance aircraft (RF-4E) in Vietnam named the 'Carolina Kangaroo". AVM Reed still remains busy in the background, assisting with potential aircraft acquisitions when required. A phantom aircraft has been identified (currently flying or having been very recently retired) with a foreign air force, and negotiations are underway to see if the museum can acquire the aircraft.

The Museum Board is now engaged in the development of the new museum business plan to put to government and others during the next round of fund raising. Visitor numbers continue to grow and the museum now conducts a significant number of activities and shows within the museum which add to attractions and income. Information relating to a new museum patron will be advised soon.

The annual Badge Week was conducted again in the lead-up to Vietnam Veterans Day 2019. A number of Sub-Branches no longer participate in the fund raising given the difficulty in providing volunteer sellers and the future of Badge Week remains high on the Branch agenda. Nonetheless, those Sub-Branches who did participate raised significant welfare funds. Badge Week income since its commencement has contributed well over $250K to welfare funds across the Branch. At Diamond Valley Sub-Branch, honourary membership was bestowed on ***Mr. Tony Comley***, for his extraordinary badge selling efforts on behalf of the Sub-Branch. Mr. Comley is well known for his badge selling on behalf of Victorian ESO's and others and is credited with having raised over $1M for charity. The museum also benefits financially by providing merchandise to the Sub-Branches.

Given the issues that have been floating around in relation to management of ESO funds, it is

pleasing to note that ***Consumer Affairs Victoria*** has done some detailed auditing of Branch financial returns down to Sub-Branch level to test our compliance with regulations, and we have come through in good shape. The sound state of our financial affairs and our confidence in our accounting for, and management of our finances is grounded in the Victorian Veterans Act, and in particular the rules around the use of Patriotic Welfare funds. The Branch also reports annually to the ***Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission*** (ACNC).

As was to be expected, there was considerable membership feedback in relation to the ***Productivity Commission report*** to government, with the vast majority of concerns relating to the future of the DVA Gold Card.

Similarly, there is member isquiet concerning changes to access to ***Exercise Physiology*** programs and the requirement to obtain a referral after 12 sessions of EP in order to continue the program.

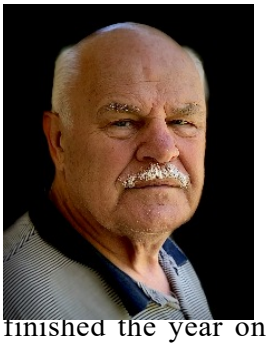
There seems to be a lack of understanding of the ***DVA Gold Card*** and the entitlements of Gold Card holders who are residents in ***Aged Care*** facilities. The Minister for Veterans was advised after the odd report was received that veterans in aged care were having treatments delayed or being taken to general community treatment clinics and the like. It was suggested to the Minister that this matter needs to be raised with the Minister for Aged Care, and that there needs to be cross-portfolio action to ensure that aged care facility intake procedures identify veterans and gold card holders and that aged care staff understand the level of medical and hospital services available to gold card holders.

Bob Elworthy AM
VVAA Victorian Branch President

VUNG TAU BACK BEACH TODAY - A LITTLE DIFFERENT TO 1 ALSG OF THE 1960s AND 70s.



A WORD FROM YOUR SECRETARY



What an interesting year 2019 has been with the year full of highs and lows.

ATDP – ATDP is now into it's 4th year. It started a little sluggishly at the beginning of 2019 but finished the year on an encouraging note with some 900+ *(Advocates Compensation and Wellbeing)* gaining accreditation Australia wide. In our region, Victoria has 158 Accredited Advocates.

A reminder to our Welfare centers, the National President advises authorization of VVAA sponsored advocates expires at the end of this year 2019 so we will need to get a move on to ensure all our advocates are duly authorized and covered under VITA.

VVAA Review - A review of VVAA National Administrative Instructions is underway with a National Policy Sub-Committee to be formed to review these.

The future of VVAA – The future of VVAA was raised again at the National Council meeting held in October; it was decided to continue on as usual.

There was a similar theme at our very own State Council meeting held at Ballarat on 26 October 2019, ***'A review of 2019, how have we been travelling? how we can set ourselves up in 2020? A question, ARE WE GETTING COMPLACENT?'***

The History of VVAA - A thesis on the history of VVAA is being compiled by Kel Robertson who was invited to attend the National meeting where he sat watching the proceedings with interest. Kel will be in Victoria next year to do some more research and will be wanting to talk with some key people, people who are in the know and who can relate accurate details of, in particular, the split in the early years that led to the breakaway and formation VVFA.

The Legacy of Vietnam Veterans - We have been approached by the Vietnam Veterans Federation *(VVFA)* to support an additional information page for adding to what's already there at the Australian War Memorial (AWM)

Ongoing Topics - Research into the Australian War Memorial in Phuc Tuy Province continues, as is the review into the Terms of Reference for future ESORT meetings, the DFRDB enquiry continues and the 12 session Allied Health physiology cycle has been sorted. In place now, once the 12 sessions have been completed the Physiologist will report to DVA then apply for the next 12 sessions eliminating the need for the veteran to consult with his GP for a referral.

Austin Health Ward 17 - VVAA Victoria has undertaken to completely renovate one of the recreational areas, part of Ward 17 at Austin Health. OVPP project as it is referred to *(Older Veterans Psychiatry Program)* has been long overdue with the area having fallen into terminal disrepair and in need of a complete overhaul. The project is progressing well with completion expected to be in time for an official opening by the Minister for Veterans sometimes during the week of Vietnam Veterans Day 2020.

Victorian Government Funding - VVAA Victoria is pleased to having secured a $1m Victorian State Government Grant for a variety of projects. The first tranche of $50,000 for Commemorations in 2020 has been received and another $200,000 for the ***'Schools Free Museum Visit'*** to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum has also been received. Although we were expecting school participation to commence in 2020 it was very pleasing to see several schools take up the offer early and visit the museum in October/November this year. We expect 2020 to be a good year for the Museum with these school visits generating much needed income especially as this project kicks in. The life of this project is over 4 years expiring in 2023 or whenever the funding runs out.

Veteran Welfare Packages - Plans are underway to issue ***Welfare Packages***, comprising information pamphlets and documents with as much information as possible to assist veterans and their families in their well being, more importantly matters like, funeral and burial arrangements, wills, power of attorney etc relating to both before and after the passing of a member.

Other little sundry items may also be included as part of the package. These will be sent to all

members of VVAA Victoria and any previous members with known addresses dating back to 2015 that are still in our database.

The preparation of these packages will be contracted out with distribution expected in the latter part of 2020.

Ward 17 Visit - Accompanied by VVAA Vic State Treasurer Bob Glaubitz I visited the facility on the 12th November 2019, met with Rob Winther & Jeff Freeman who took us on a guided tour of the Austin Repat Centre. Strolling through the Memorial Gardens the feeling of calmness was immediate. The Chapel, the Museum, the multitude of Mosaics, wall hangings, paintings and memorabilia demonstrated the long history of service and tradition the Repatriation Hospital has provided over the years. The Coral/Balmoral building which houses Ward 17 was very impressive as were the gymnasium and pool. The many support & rest rooms and rest areas scattered throughout the complex together with the well laid out rooms, 20 in total, offer sanctuary and much needed privacy to the veterans.

It was easy to understand why veterans hold this facility in such high regard. The feeling of calm was evident wherever we went, helped along in no small way by the patience of the staff and carers. It is an excellent facility well deserving of it's reputation and it's service to veterans and first responders young and old.

RSL Reform Team – This group first reared it's ugly head around June 2019. The toxic nature of their demands and their stand over tactics of those that stand in the way of their agenda is well documented. Although their concerns are fundamentally an RSL matter it is, when they cross over and include Vietnam Veterans in their fight we get involved.

In the early days of their campaign, while attempting a takeover the Tramways/East Melbourne RSL the manner in which they went about it was just not on. The threats, bullying and intimidation of the President resulted in his nervous breakdown requiring hospitalisation and his subsequent resignation as President. Their attempt of a takeover was unsuccessful. A similar incident at the Camberwell RSL where the President and his family were subject to the same level of threats and intimidation resulting in that President withdrawing his nomination for a Committee position with RSL Victoria, they just can't help themselves and have no care as to who they hurt.

Surprisingly one of the main members of the Reform Team also works with Beyond Blue and it would be interesting to hear from him, how he reconciles his position in the Suicide/Mental health field, with the bullying tactics they so quickly resort to. We'll just have to wait and see.

To finish 2019 let me thank all the Sub-Branches Executive and members alike for the support you have extended me. 2019 has been a highly successful and productive year for us and we can look forward to 2020 being an even better year.

To you all and on behalf of myself & my family, thank you and I look forward to seeing you all next year.

George Skell

To each and everyone have

A very Joyful and Peaceful Christmas

And

A Happy New Year 2020



State Office will close on Friday 13th December 2019 for the Christmas New Year break and reopen Monday 13th January 2020.

- **VVAA Vic enquiries can be directed to State Secretary George Skell 0410 275 651.**
- **Counselling call Open Arms 1800 011 046**

ETEAM VAN GETS A NEW IMAGE







The VVAA Victorian Branch State Conference was held in Ballarat on Saturday 26th October 2019 and provided an opportunity for the VVAA Vic Education Team (Eteam) to put on a presentation of Vietnam historic items and share Vietnam history with Ballarat locals, including school children.

The presentation was held at the Ballarat Trades Hall and we thank Trades Hall management for their generosity and assistance in ensuring that once again the ETeam was able to further the Vietnam "story" as told by Vietnam Veterans.

The VVAA Vic Eteam has a full yearly program presenting to schools throughout Victoria. They work in conjunction with the History Teachers Association of Victoria (HTAV) and present to thousands of students throughout the year.



Brendam Kincade OAM, Jim Dewar and Rob Edgell with Brett Edgington, Secretary of Ballarat Trades Hall.



Rob Edgell (L) and Bob Elworthy AM (R) present Certificate of Appreciation to Brett Edgington, Secretary of Ballarat Trades Hall.





A GUN SERGEANTS RECOLLECTIONS OF

LONG TAN

- from the gun end.

by

Jim King

At approximately 1330 hrs on the 18th August 1966, 105 Field Battery returned to their base camp from an alternative position within the task force area where they had been supporting an operation further north .The previous night at about OIOO hrs, 1ATF was mortared and 105 BTY was involved in counter battery fire against the enemy for the remainder of the night. The gunners were looking forward to getting established in the main gun position so rest periods could be organised. This was not to occur .

At about 153O hrs we had just finished the normal routines such as bringing the guns back into action and replenishing the ammunition which had been fired the previous night when we heard the Kiwi Bty open up. We guessed from the rate of tire they were on to something and when "Fire mission Regiment" came over the Tarinov system we knew it was bigger than normal.

During the next three hours the battle raged and the gunners faced numerous problems on the gun line, problems which would be a real test of character and professionalism. The first of these problems was torrential rain, the like of which we had never encountered before. It was soon after the engagement commenced that the sky just opened up and it poured rain with lightning flashing everywhere A bolt of lightning cut the lines to a Tannoy system (where orders are passed from the Command Post to the guns), this resulted in orders having to be shouted in relays to the gun platforms until the damage was repaired. Another bolt of lightning struck lines which caused the switch board operator to be thrown across the exchange and a member of a gun detachment was similarly stunned by yet another lightning bolt. The combination of rain and lightning caused 105 Bty's Tannoy system to short circuit which resulted in an open line from the Command Post to the guns The gun detachments could hear what was going on "up front" via an Angra 39 in the Command Post. I remember somebody saying "drop 50' and someone else saying that the rounds would be on their heads if this occurred.

There were some choice words being said over the radio when I suddenly realised just how close we were firing in front of our own troops. With that in mind I remember telling my detachment to make sure their laying and corrections were "spot on" as this was really close.

For the rest of the battle, accuracy was paramount in our minds. The second problem we faced was with gun aiming points (GAP's) and sights, made worse with the continuing rain. The rain was so heavy that all guns lost their GAP's during the battle. This problem was compounded by a smoky haze caused by the cordite fumes not dispersing from the gun position. To keep firing my gun we finished up using a bicycle torch attached to a star picket as a GAP. I know the other guns used the same or similar GAP's. In the II months 105 Bty had been in Vietnam the guns had continual problems with condensation fogging up their sights. Each gun had three sights, one in use, one as a spare while the other sight was in a local pattern humidity box to dry out.

During the battle all sights were used on the gun position including the spare sights, normally kept in the 'Q" store. Small petrol stoves were used in metal ammunition boxes where the sights were placed to help dry them out quickly. To compound the problem further the battery had received new Canadian sights two months before the battle which required different 'drills" to the Italian sights we also used. Both types were in use during the battle and it was only through the experience and skill of the gunners that no mistakes were made. Our third problem was ammunition. The ammunition issued by the US Army was unreliable. If firing different "lot numbers" at the same time, the fall of shot could have a depth in excess of 400 metres.

105 Bty had adopted the policy of having two different types of ammunition, "close target" where the one batch of a lot number was used by all guns when firing in support of our own troops and "H and I" which were small batches of lot numbers and different weighted projectiles, used to harass "Charlie" by firing at irregular intervals to keep him

wondering where the next round was going to fall.

It was fortunate we had adhered to our routine of maintaining our stocks of ammunition on the gun line. We had replenished the ammunition used the previous night and each gun had 100 rounds of 'close target" ammunition when "fire mission Regiment" was called.

It was soon realised that with the number of 'ten rounds fire for effect' and the periods of "continuous fire' which went for 10 to 12 minutes at a time, we would soon run out of ammunition. This was reported to the Command Post and a massive ammunition resupply from the ammunition dump to the guns was put into effect. Cooks, clerks, medics, Q staff, RAEME and members of 131 Div Locating Bty assisted in reapplying the gun line.

Normally 105mm ammunition has the fuse attached when received. At that time the largest lot number which could be used for close target ammunition at the ammunition dump was 'plugged'. That is, ammunition without a fuse. This situation meant that the ammunition had to be unboxed, the projectiles removed from their canisters and have the plugs removed. At the same time, boxes of fuses had to be opened and the fuses screwed into the cavity of the projectile left by the removal of the plug.

The "helpers' excelled themselves ensuring this was done as quickly as possible under the guidance of the BSM

Other volunteers were loaded with as many rounds as they could carry and raced to the guns in the teeming rain hoping to god they were not going to be struck by a bolt of lightning or slip in the red mud. Some members had to run 80 - 100 metres to reach different guns This was a feat in itself. At no time during the three hours did a gun have to stop firing because of a shortage of ammunition. Our ammunition supply was boosted by a Chinook arriving at approximately 0200 hrs with a slung load which had to be manhandled from the helipad to the ammunition dump.

Fourthly, we had to contend with toxic gas. Although we had torrential rain there was no wind and the gases from the cordite took its toll on some members on the gun line. A clerk assisting in an ammunition bunker on one gun was overcome by the fumes and passed out. A gun sergeant had to hand over to his bombardier and others were just plain sick. The cordite fumes not dispersing developed a smoky haze around the gun position which made it difficult to breath and as already stated, made it hard for the gun layers to find their gun aiming points.

Lastly, we had to contend with the problem of fatigue. A gun detachment comprises seven men, yet in all my time in Vietnam I cannot recall having a full detachment on my gun. General duties, strong points, standing patrols, escort duties etc had to be manned.

During the Battle of Long Tan, the Standing Patrol (section strength) had to move out, normally under the control of a Gun Sgt. The Strong Points also had to be manned which further reduced the numbers on the gun line.

Considering most of the members on the gun line had been awake since the mortar attack on the night of 16/17 August, by 0700 hrs the morning of the 19th, most were suffering extreme fatigue.

The ammunition expended during the three hour period was 3198 rounds of 105mm and 242 rounds of 155mm fired by the medium guns. The task of carrying as many rounds as possible to the guns which were dispersed over 100 metres from the ammunition dump in the pouring rain, the resupply by Chinook at 0200 hrs having to be unboxed and stacked, guns being brought back to full ammunition entitlement once again, tidying up the gun positions and removal of spent cartridges and cordite bags, left us, to put it quite bluntly, buggered.

A few days later, when D Coy 6 RAR returned to Nui Dat, Bob Buick, the P1 Sgt of II Pl came over to our gun position and put his hand out to shake mine and said "Thanks mate ".

To me, that said it all. I was proud to be a gunner.

A great story Jim, thanks for sharing it with us and after 27 years may I also extend a heartfelt "thanks."

Graham Smith

NORTH WEST MELBOURNE

Sincevbthe start of this year we have had 3 bus trips - Euroa, Phillip Island National Vietnam Veterans Museum and Canberra.

Some may say what the hell is at Euroa? Well it is the area from which 3 of our Victoria Cross recepients came from. Fred Tubb, Alex Burton and Leslie Maygar. If you google Euroa Memorial Park you will finf more information.

On leaving Euroa we went to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Walk at Seymour, where 99% of our names are on the wall. So, if you know someone who served there is a good chance their name is on the Wall. Mine is under A G Clayton, not Tom as that is a nickname.

Phillip Island National Vietnam Veterans Museum is well worth a visit.As well as the artifacts of Vietnam it has a brilliant sight and sound show (take tissues!).

In Canberra we were met by AWM Director Dr Brendan Nelson who had a talk with us before I was given the honour of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and reciting the Ode.

That was on 1st October followed on 3rd October were we were part of the Last Post Ceremony - both very emotional occasions.

We did both old and new Parliament House tours.













DIAMOND VALLEY

We have continued our monthly one-day bus trips to a variety of destinations including Shepparton, Crown Casino, Mystery Bus Trip, Bendigo and Portarlington by coach and ferry; the ladies enjoyed several functions including a Saturday shopping tour while the guys had a good day out at the annual Whistlestop, this year visiting Sunbury.

Other activities during the year included an evening out for dinner at a Vietnamese restaurant in South Morang and as guests of Darebin RSL for their Christmas In July/November that they put on for us.

Our weekly Friday Meetings continue to be strong with attendances usually around the 40-45 mark but occasionally we have a bumper crowd of around 50 – meetings are mainly at Greensborough RSL but also visiting other local RSL's – Epping, Montmorency-Eltham and Watsonia.

The major event for the year was our 20th Anniversary with a formal luncheon at Watsonia RSL on 14th July.

The luncheon was likely the largest gathering of the sub branch since inception and equally likely, probably will not be bettered. Given that, apart from our two long-time supportive guests - Jenny Macklin and Colin Brooks with partners - the crowd of almost 120 was entirely our members and their partners…it was a very special afternoon.

In a carnival atmosphere, the members wined and dined in the marvelous settings at Watsonia RSL and without exception the function was given the thumbs up by those present. With a minimum intrusion of speeches and presentations, the room enjoyed each other's company, fine food and refreshments with a slide presentation running in the background of pics from our past 20 years and including comparison today and yesterday pics of our members from 50 years ago. In a very relaxed atmosphere and with the serving of the courses over the afternoon, there was plenty of time for reminiscing and remembering friends no longer with us - the four hours of the function seemed to just whiz by.

The day was an over-whelming great success and the chat noise in the room was testimony of the comradeship and closeness of our members.

A special commemorative tie has been presented to all current members of the sub branch whether attending the luncheon or not.

August was once again a busy month, we started with a Vietnam Veterans Tribute Football match hosted by Lower Plenty Football Club and it was great to receive this type of commemoration put on by the Club and not run by us, this has become an annual affair since 2016.

Our annual Chapel Service at Simpson Barracks was also a highlight where we honored those who served in Vietnam and then enjoyed refreshments at the Sergeants Mess.

The Community Service at Greensborough War Memorial Park on 17th August was once again a huge success, with a crowd near 400; this is supported by a very good community presence of politicians, mayors and the schools in the Diamond Valley Area. The E Team also attended, and we thank them for that.

We had a very good turnout at the Shrine on the 18th and once again DViets will claim the honour of most in attendance, regardless of what the other subbies say.

We will wind up the year with our Christmas Luncheon on the 8th December at Greensborough Bowling Club with about 80 scheduled to come, Santa will be there doling out a present for the ladies.

A very Merry Christmas to all Sub Branches and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Peter Blackman
President, Diamond Valley





MELBOURNE WEST

Melbourne West Sub-Branch continues to grow, reaching 150, which is very pleasing to the Executive and Committee in that their efforts have been rewarded.

We are financially and administratively well placed to remain a viable Sub-Branch of the Victorian Branch of VVAA and we look forward to the coming years.

Our main activity is our weekly BBQ style get-together at the Hoppers Crossing Community Centre and this year it has been well supported. We also gather at Werribee RSL on the last



Friday of each month for their Service Luncheon, with our last exceeding 50 members in attendance.

Badge Week for Melbourne West, while not as high as previous years financially, proved to again be well worth the effort of our volunteer collectors. We raised $6347.00, of which 50% represented donations from the generous public. This boost to our Welfare funds places us in a better position to support our membership, however this is not possible without our volunteer collectors, both veterans and associate members.

Our Committee again opted for a local service on VV Day, with the venue this year being Altona RSL. As most of our membership live in either Wyndham or Hobsons Bay Shires, to have a localised service was deemed the best way we could serve our aging members.

In conjunction with Altona RSL management, we started the day with a solemn service at the front of the Altona RSL next to their Long Tan Cross replica. We had about 50 at the service, notably the Mayor of Hobsons Bay City, Councillor Jon Marsden who laid a wreath on behalf of the constituents of Hobsons Bay



City. Afterwards we moved into the club for a little socialising before we sat down to a very nice lunch in their auditorium, where a good day was had by all.

Since the last Newsletter, we visited two local schools for interviews with students studying Australian History. This has been ongoing for many years with our Sub-Branch and feedback from teachers and students is that face-to-face interviews with some of our veterans is of great benefit in understanding the various aspects of the Vietnam War. It is also beneficial for our veterans who enjoy the interaction.

On the social side, we undertook a bus trip to the Armoured Corps Museum at Puckapunyal, followed by lunch at the Seymour Railway Hotel. We then visited the Veterans Walk and took a walk around the wall, catching up with some mates, too many of whom are no longer with us. A very moving experience for all.

Our Social Committee organised another trip in late October, which took us down the Bellarine Peninsular for a visit to the Queenscliff Museum and lunch at Port Arlington Golf Club. On the way home we stopped in at Van



Loon's Nursery, rather than the usual stop at a Winery. Another enjoyable outing for our membership.

As part of DVA's Veterans Health Week, we held an event at the Community Centre, Hoppers Crossing. We had 50 persons attend, started off by two representatives from the National Aging Research Institute (NARI) and the head of the organisation, Professor Pazit Levinger addressing the gathering on why exercise helps with one's wellbeing and mental state, more so as we age. This was followed by a 30

minute exercise session on the equipment provided by Wyndham Council for their Seniors Exercise Park which adjourns the Centre.

We were then addressed by a dietician from IPC Health, and although many people had heard similar before, this 50 minute presentation was both informative and light hearted, and enjoyed by all.

To round out the day, we sat down to a spit roast Luncheon of meats, salads and fruit, all washed down with fresh juices, water, tea or coffee.

Our final event for 2019 will be our Christmas Party at the Hoppers Club on 11th Dec and to date we have 80 plus attending so it should wind up an all-round good year for Melbourne West.

I take this opportunity of wishing all members of VVAA a Very Happy Christmas and may 2021 be





KEEPING UP STANDARDS

While the Murray Border Sub Branch has gone into "retirement", that is not the case with former Sub Branch President Gary Treeve.

Forever alert to Veteran issues, Gary noticed that the the Avenue of Honour signs on the Kiewa Valley Hwy just outside the Bandiana Army Barracks were in need of a re-paint so he decided to apply for a Commemorative Grant, He approached the Vietnam Associated Veterans Club in Wodonga and asked if he could use their bank, ABN details etc to apply for the Grant; they were very cooperative.
After some run around by Vic Roads to get approval to allow a local sign writer to paint the signs, he finally submitted the application in February and after nearly 8 months all approved and signs repainted.

Well done that man.



At this time of year as we are enjoying the Festive Season with families and friends there are some of our Vet mates doing it tough. Give a mate a call for Christmas - it is sure to be appreciated and doesn't cost a lot.

Commemorative Service at St Paul's Cathedral on 2 October 2019

On Wednesday 2 October at 2.00pm, close to 30 Vietnam Veterans, partners and supporters gathered in the vicinity of the Vietnam Commemorative plaque in St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. The gathering was to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Hat Dich (Operation Goodwood) and the Battle of Binh Ba, the 9th Anniversary of the dedication of the plaque and the 57th Anniversary of the deployment of Australian service personnel to Vietnam.

The service also gave us the opportunity for our own personal reflection on the time that we spent as a part of the Australian Vietnam Forces.

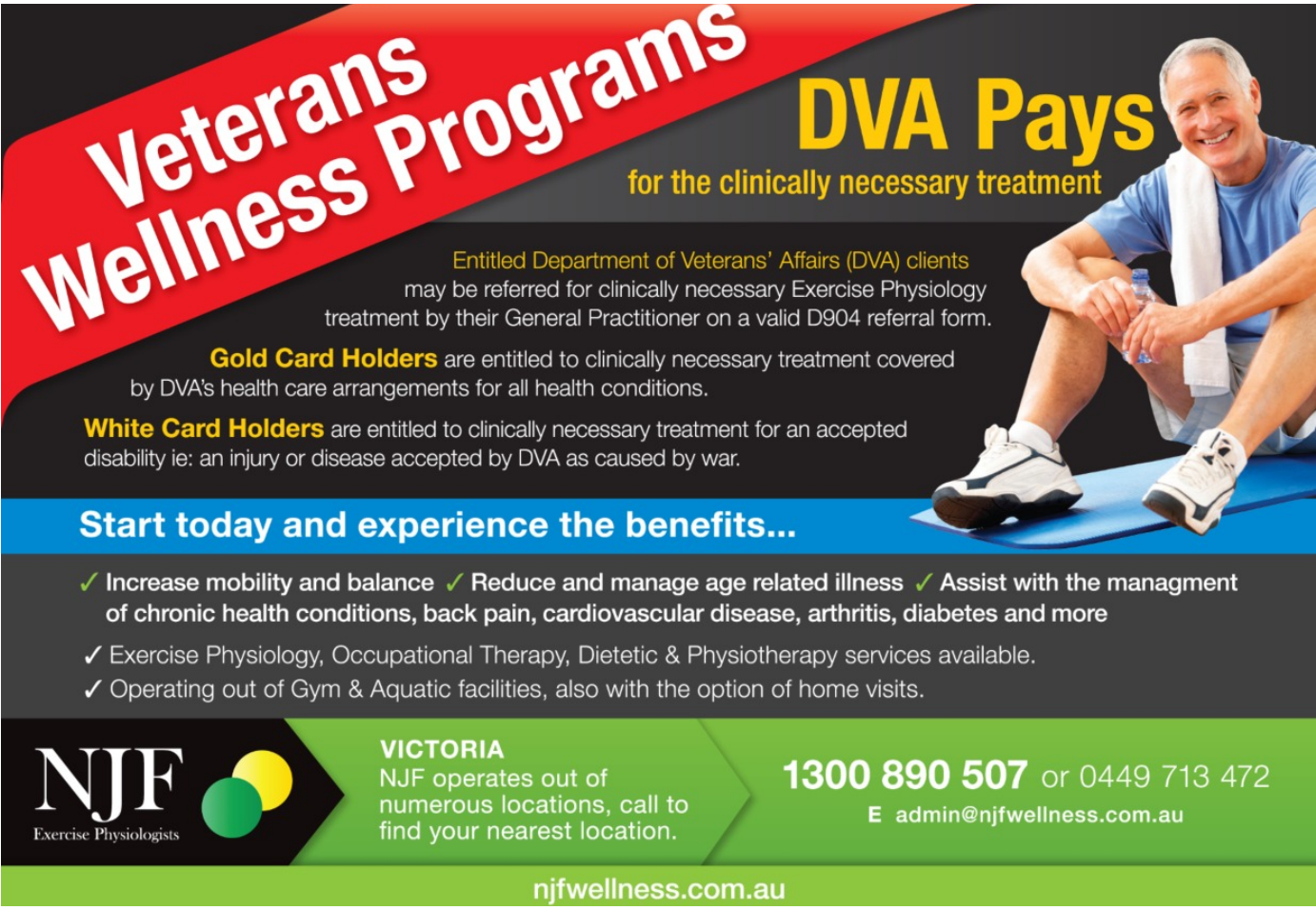
The Canon Pastor and acting Precentor, the Rev'd Canon Christopher Carolane conducted the service and also gave an excellent reflection, which showed considerable empathy to us as Vietnam Veterans.

We were fortunate to have Norm Harris from Outer Eastern Metro Sub-branch of VVAA present with us to play the Last Post and Rouse following the Ode. It was wonderful to again have Norm as a part of the service.

Among the attendees were VVAA members, partners, RSL members and those from other ESO's. Included in these were George Skell, VVAA Vic State Secretary, Rieny Nieuwenhof, President Geelong and District Sub-branch VVAA and John Saunders, Secretary of Clayton RSL.

A big thank you goes to all those who were in attendance, especially to State Secretary George. We look forward to an even bigger commemoration next year when we commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the dedication of the plaque.

Nigel Wilson
Life Member
GDVVAA





A great addition to YOUR museum; a timeline of why we went, what we did and when, and when we came home. YOUR museum keeps getting bigger and better, take pride in it. Just look at the awards and recognition achieved.

Did you know that you can be a member for 50 cents a week and have a say in the way YOUR museum operates? Phone (03) 5956 6400 to find out how.

Remembrance Day 2019 was the day Normie Rowe and Marcie Jones rocked the NVVM.

A packed audience of approx 200 “old farts” welcomed and applauded Normie and Marcie as they gave 4 hours of fantastic entertainment.

The boy from 3 Cav was certainly at home as he took us down memory lane with many of the old standards and some of more recent times.



national vietnam veterans museum

Our Pick-a-Picket campaign is for the installation of a picket fence to surround the Grumman Tracker at the front of the Museum. As you would know, we are a not-for-profit organisation however increased size means increased overheads - and there is still much to be developed. $25 per picket.

Now that the museum has entered the Museum Accreditation Program of Museums Australia, donations such as yours are more important than ever.

Download Donation Form

Please email completed forms to office@vietnamvetsmuseum.org



national vietnam veterans museum

MUSEUM PICKET FENCE PROJECT
Pick-a-Picket

Our Pick-a-Picket campaign is for the installation of a picket fence to surround the Grumman Tracker at the front of the Museum. As you would know, we are a not-for-profit organisation however increased size means increased overheads - and there is still much to be developed.

Now that the museum has entered the Museum Accreditation Program of Museums Australia, donations such as yours are more important than ever.
All Pickets will bear the name nominated at the time of purchase.
A tax-deductible receipt will be issued for each donation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode _____

Phone No.: _____

Email address: _____

Please place the following on a: ☐ Single Picket ($25.00)

Our Code: DNPAP ***** Maximum 22 Characters (a space is counted as a character)*****

---✂---✂---✂---✂---✂---✂ **Shred**

Card ____ ____ ____ ____ Exp __/__ CVC ___

Or EFT BSB 633 000 ACC 149738577

PICK-A-PICKET

1. **Complete Donation Form.**

2. **Email to:**

office@vietnamvetsmuseum .org



NAVIGATING PROSTATE CANCER

Participants needed to help assess online tool for prostate cancer

Men recently diagnosed with low risk prostate cancer are needed to take part in a study assessing a new online tool designed to help navigate their treatment.

Low-risk prostate cancer often grows very slowly or not at all, yet men faced with this diagnosis report more difficulty making a treatment decision than any other cancer clinical group.

This is largely due to the variety of management options including Active Surveillance (close monitoring versus active treatment such as radiotherapy or surgery.

Consultant Urologist Declan Murphy said it can be somewhat challenging for men to consider which option is best for them when confronted with a cancer diagnosis.

“We like patients to feel well informed about their options and ensure men are armed with the best knowledge,” A/Prof. Murphy says.

“Comparing management options and watching the Navigate videos from men who have been in the same position can be very reassuring and really aid the decision making process.”

The Navigate website has been developed by a team of experts and men with first-hand experience of prostate cancer. Men and their partners can access the decision-making exercise to help them arrive at a treatment decision. Included are over 40 videos of men, partners, oncologists, urologists and specialist prostate nurses to provide a range of perspectives and personal experiences.

The Navigate team, led by Professor Penelope Schofield, is now recruiting participants from around Australia for a randomised study to collect data on the potential benefits of the website.

Like the flip of a coin, some participants will be given access to the Navigate tool while others will receive the best conventional support currently available.

This Swinburne University funded project is recruiting both online and from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Cabrini Health, Austin Health, Alfred Health and Western Health.

Men and their partners can register their interest to participate at **www.navigateprostate.com.au** * *[* if provided one, insert your unique googl.gl URL hyperlink behind display name shown here so we can track website referrals.]*

For more information, please contact Project Manager Natalie Richards on 03 8559 7453 or email navigate@petermac.org

VETRIDE STILL GOING STRONG



Having reached the point where we no longer needed to operate under the welcome auspices of the Victorian Branch of the VVAA; VetRide has now established itself through incorporation, as an organisation in its own right.

The inaugural AGM of the newly formed VetRide Incorporated was held in late 2018 and the eleven members of the elected committee includes a broad mix of personnel, including members who are still working and two who are currently serving.

Since its inception in 2011, we have continued to conduct an annual event, that varies between a distance or return to base multi day ride. The 50th anniversary of Long Tan ride to Canberra in 2016 was the last distance ride we undertook, thanks to the availability of funding provided from the VVAA, as part of the State Government's support for the anniversary.

The riders have since been challenged through taking on the hills around the Bass Coast in Gippsland South and with an increase in the presence of younger veterans and those currently serving in mind, we have invited riders to join us from Soldier On, *Ride2Recovery* and RSL Active. The boost in numbers saw 80 riders undertake a day ride last November to commemorate the Centenary of the signing of the Armistice. The 100k :100 years '*Ride of the Century*' included a stop at the Shrine.

We have also entered combined teams in events run by Bicycle Network, Victoria, including the 9 day 'Great Victorian Bike Ride'. We will reprise last year's participation in the 100k Frankston return leg of the 'Around the Bay' ride on Sunday 6 October and our annual event will be held over four days based at Warburton. Check in is on Remembrance Day, so even if you don't ride, come along and join in after hours, at the Warburton Holiday Park (half owned by a Vietnam veteran).

Comradeship between past and present service personnel is at the heart of what VetRide is about.

and we continue to make changes that focus upon the improvement of that connection.

Dealing with the increasing number of new norms is particularly challenging to older veterans, but then not that long-ago veterans of the Vietnam era were voicing their new ideas to those who had established reliance upon what they had learnt.

Although riding a bike is able to be undertaken solo, VetRide operates as a group activity, undertaken by riders of all ages and experience; and as such its continuing success is built upon understanding and compromise. It works.

Peter Liefman



Riders at the Shrine.





At Frankstaon during "Around the Bay" 2018.



ADFA cadets from Defence Cycling Club and Bruce .

ALZHEIMERS V ANOSOGNOSIA

In the following analysis a French Professor at the Institute of Memory and Alzheimer's Disease (IMMA) at La Pitié-Salpêtrière - Paris Hospitals addresses the subject in a rather reassuring way:
"***If anyone is aware of his memory problems, he does not have Alzheimer's.***"
1. I forget the names of families ...
2. I do not remember where I put some things ...

It often happens in people 60 years and older that they complain that they lack memory."The information is always in the brain, it is the "processor" that is lacking". This is "Anosognosia" or temporary forgetfulness.

Half of people 60 and older have some symptoms that are due to age rather than disease. The most common cases are:
- forgetting the name of a person,
- going to a room in the house and not remembering why we were going there
- a blank memory for a movie title or actor, an actress,
- a waste of time searching where we left our glasses or keys ...

After 60 years most people have such a difficulty, which indicates that it is not a disease but rather a characteristic due to the passage of years. Many people are concerned about these oversights, hence the importance of the following statement:

"Those who are conscious of being forgetful have no serious problem of memory.
"Those who suffer from a memory illness or Alzheimer's, are not aware of
what is happening."

Professor Bruno Dubois, Director of IMMA, reassures the majority of people concerned about their oversights:

"The more we complain about memory loss, the less likely we are to suffer from memory sickness."
Now for a little neurological test. Only use your eyes!
1- Find the C in the table below!

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2- If you have already found the C,
Then find the 6 in the table below.

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3- Now find the N in the table below.
Attention, it's a little more difficult!

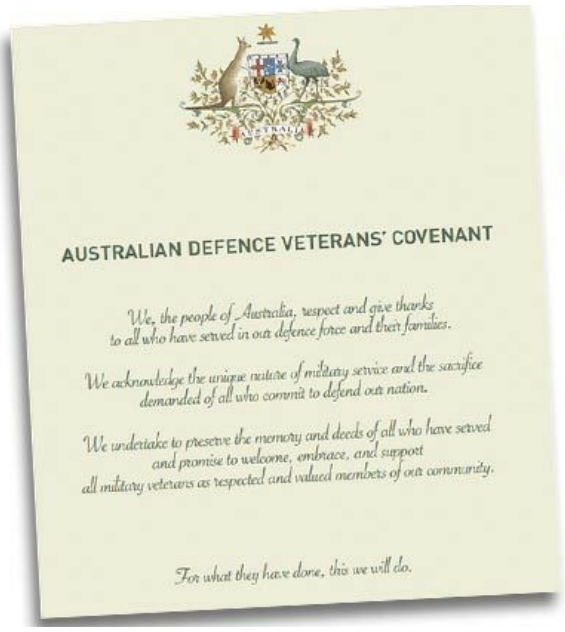
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If you pass these three tests without problem:
- you can cancel your annual visit to the neurologist.
- your brain is in perfect shape!
- you are far from having any relationship with Alzheimer's.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Don't blame me, I'm only the messenger, and don't complain if Dr Google tells you something different. Good luck with ???????.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE VETERAN'S COVENANT





Legislation to enact the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant was passed by parliament on 22 October 2019 and has been forwarded through appropriate channels for Royal Assent.

Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019 will establish the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, which provides a formal way for all Australians to show their appreciation to our current and former Australian Defence Force personnel, and to the families who have supported them.

Upon Royal Assent in coming weeks, the Bill will become a separate Act to provide symbolic recognition for all veterans.

It does not change current entitlements.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said the covenant, veteran card and veteran lapel pin would allow the community — including employers, businesses, community groups, veteran or sporting organisations and the general public — the opportunity to recognise the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served our nation.

"The legislation also includes a statement requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to adopt a beneficial approach when interpreting legislation and apply a fair, just and consistent approach to veterans' claims," Mr Chester said.

"Arrangements are also being finalised for businesses across Australia to recognise the unique nature of military service by providing benefits through the veteran card, and I encourage any business that would like to learn more about how it can participate to contact the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

"We are committed to putting veterans and their families first and this legislation is part of our ongoing efforts to transform the culture of DVA."

The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant is part of a wider recognition package, and enables the oath and lapel pin to be provided to veterans and eligible reservists.

The package also includes the veteran card — a redesign of the existing DVA health cards, which is open to new applicants and will be provided to existing card holders over the coming months.

Mr Chester said those who had already applied for the lapel pin and oath would begin receiving their covenant packs soon and he urged those who have not applied for the covenant to do so online using MyService.

More information on the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, including how individuals can apply and how businesses and community organisations can register their support, can be found on the DVA website.



A service founded by Vietnam Veterans

Beating the blues

Building better relationships

Doing anger differently

Managing pain

Mental Health First Aid

Operation Life: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

Operation Life: Suicide alertness for everyone (safe TALK)

Recovery from trauma

Residential lifestyle management program

Sleeping better

Stepping Out

To REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM
or
If you need NEED ASSISTANCE

Call *OPEN ARMS*

Ph: 1800 011 046