

THE GUILD DIGEST

25th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



AUSTRALIAN WAR WIDOWS NSW LIMITED

Trading as

FAMILIES OF VETERANS GUILD

ABN 24 083 075 914

www.familiesofveterans.org.au

"We all belong to each other. We all need each other. It is in serving each other and in sacrificing for our common good that we are finding our true life."

- King George VI, 1941

Under the patronage of The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales

STATE PRESIDENT
Ms Queen Dunbar

BOARD CHAIR Ms Tricia Hobson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

J Collins AM, S Clark AM, L Bye, Q Dunbar, B Till, T Hobson, L Sullivan, Y Stapleton and BRIG King

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Ms Renee Wilson

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Families of Veterans Guild Australian War Widows NSW Ltd

HEAD OFFICE

Suite 1.01, Level 1, 9 Help Street Chatswood NSW 2067

PO Box 146, Chatswood NSW 2057

CONTACT

guild@fov.org.au

Phone: (02) 9267 6577, 1800 451 615

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Our office is not attended every business day.

Please call us prior to your visit to ensure somone will be here.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$30 due 1 April each year

Donations to Families of Veterans Guild are tax deductible.

DISCLAIMER: The material in this
The Guild Digest has been checked thorougly
and to the best knowledge is correct.
However, errors may occur which are
beyond our control. If this should happen, we
apologise most sincerely.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Events & Key Dates

Legacy Annual Appeals Week 1 to 7 September 2024

R U OK Day

12 September 2024

Intergenerational Art Expression

12 September 2024

Albury Regional Visit

23 September 2024

World Heart Day

29 September 2024

Queanbeyan & ACT Regional Visit

2 October 2024

Intergenerational EcoWalks Tours

4 - 5 October 2024

Sound Healing Chatswood

9 October 2024

World Mental Health Day

10 October 2024

Sound Healing Cronulla

12 October 2024

Veterans Health Week

13 - 20 October 2024

Orange Regional Visit

5 November 2024

Key Commemorative Dates

Merchant Navy Day

3 September 2024

Battle for Australia

4 September 2024

National Peacekeeper's Day

14 September 2024

Battle of Britain Commemoration

15 September 2024

Arrival of INTERFET in East Timor (1999)

20 September 2024

Vietnam Forces Welcome

Home Parade, Sydney (1987)

3 October 2024

War Widows Day

19 October 2024

Charge of Beersheba (1917)

31 October 2024

Kokoda Day

3 November 2024

Great War Armistice signed (1918)

11 November 2024

Remembrance Day

11 November 2024

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OUR COVERS

Front

Dallas Alderson, Di Vogt, Queen Dunbar, Jenny Ware and Lynne Boyd at the 25th Annual General Meeting.





Back





President Queen Dunbar with Jennifer St George, granddaughter of our founder Jessie Vasey OBE CBE, at the Newcastle Regional Visit.

n the 21st of May, I had the honour of attending a luncheon at Chatswood RSL to celebrate our incredible and hardworking volunteers. As part of National Volunteer Week, we invited all our volunteers and Social Club Coordinators to come together so that we can show them our gratitude and appreciation for all that they do for this organisation and for each other. It was a wonderful opportunity to thank them and let them know their efforts and time are truly a gift we hold dear, for without them our organisation simply wouldn't be what it is today.

Our organisation is built on the support of volunteers. This year, our volunteers have held over 630 war widows social club get togethers, with over 1,000 members across New South Wales attending monthly meetings. They have also made nearly 5,500 phone calls through the Friendship Line, 1,200 birthday calls to war widows aged over 90, and handwritten more than 2,100 Christmas cards for members.

We would absolutely welcome you to volunteer with us, so please reach out to the office and have a chat with one of our team members if you would like some additional information.

As well as the Volunteers' Lunch, I also attended a couple of luncheons in regional New South Wales, travelling to Forster-Tuncurry for a special lunch with local both past and present members, as well as members from Port Macquarie and Laurieton social clubs. It was heartwarming to see members getting to know each other and having a chat. The room was filled with warmth, kindness and friendship.

It was much the same when I visited Newcastle for a regional visit. The luncheon was attended by over 50 members and guests, including Jennifer St George – the granddaughter of our founder, Jessie Vasey OBE CBE. Meeting so many members at these luncheons is the best part of my job, and leaves me feeling inspired and enriched.

In other news, I've also attended a number of commemorative services this last quarter. It is always a great honour to represent the organisation at services such as the commemorative service for the Battle of Crete at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Commemoration, the inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Commemoration Service at Martin Place, and the Fromelles Day Commemorative Procession and Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles. I cherish all these opportunities to remember those who have served our nation, and especially those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

It is full steam ahead for the months to come with War Widows Day and Remembrance Day coming up on our events calendar. If I haven't had the chance to meet you yet at one of our functions, I hope to meet you soon. Thank you for everything you do for each other, for without you, we wouldn't be the organisation we are today.

MS QUEEN DUNBAR President



Tricia Hobson (right) delivering a Board Commendation to war widow and Younger Member Social Club Coordinator Di Voqt (Left).

elcome to the Winter edition of The Guild Digest. It has been a significant month for our Board as we farewelled three Board Directors and welcomed our newly elected ones.

On behalf of our organisation, our Board, and all our members, I would like to sincerely congratulate LTGEN Susan Coyle AM, CSC, DSM on her promotion to a three-star General, achieving the rank of LTGEN. This is a very significant personal achievement. Susan has now commenced her new role as the head of Joint Capabilities. As a result, Susan has resigned from our Board due to the significant position she now holds in our Defence Force and the time constraints this



From left to right: Deputy Chair Stuart Clark AM FACID, Board Director Jennifer Collins AM, President Queen Dunbar, Board Director Bree Till, CEO Renee Wilson, former Board Directors LTGEN Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM and Lynne Boyd, and Board Chair Tricia Hobson.

places on her. I would like to thank Susan for her time on our Board. Her knowledge and insight into the Defence Force have been invaluable additions to our Board and instrumental in implementing our strategic direction, vision and mission.

I would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Lynne Boyd, who retired from the Board following her second term. Lynne's vision, experience, and insight have made such a significant impact on the organisation and the Board. Lynne brought to our Board what I like to call 'unfiltered views,' which brought new visions that some of us, coming from a corporate background, might not have had.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr Rachel Martin, who recently resigned from our Board for personal reasons. Rachel's involvement in our organisation has been invaluable as she provided us with the unique outlook of a defence spouse and carer of a veteran. We wish Rachel all the best in her future endeavours.

I also use this opportunity to welcome our newly elected Board Directors:



Lyn Bye is a dedicated leader who truly understands the needs of war widows and veterans' families. As the Coordinator for the Laurieton War Widows Social Club, she handles everything from secretarial duties to organising social outings. Her

husband's service as a Vietnam veteran has given her a deep empathy for the veteran community. Lyn's work as a Torchbearer and Vice President in fundraising for war widows has sharpened her skills in advocacy and community building.



BRIG Jocelyn King CSC, a distinguished career Army officer, brings extensive leadership and strategic expertise to the Board. With service beginning in 1990, she has held key roles, including commanding the Army School of Health and

leading the 2nd Health Brigade. Jocelyn's deep understanding of Defence policy, coupled with her operational experience in Egypt, the Solomon Islands and Afghanistan, makes her a valuable asset.

Yvonne Stapleton is a dedicated and experienced



leader with a commitment to supporting war widows and veterans' families that is deep. As a war widow herself, she understands unique challenges they face. Yvonne is the Secretary of a small Legacy Widows Club, a

representative on the Campbelltown Domestic Violence Committee, and an active member of the Zonta Club of Macarthur for 19 years.

I would like to also congratulate our President, Queen Dunbar, for being re-elected for her second term. Queen has been a dedicated Board member and President for the past three years. She has served on key committees, gaining experience in ethical governance.

The AGM was an excellent day where the members heard from Queen, Renee and myself about the work we have been conducting over the last 12 months and the plans and focus for the coming 12 months. At the AGM I spoke of our achievements since commencing trading under the new brand name which include:

- Attracting new doners from the Australian community.
- Attracting 41 new members in the last 4 months and 78% of whom are war widows.
- Achieving 90% growth in our social and digital media platforms; and
- Telling our story to 1.6 million Australians.

These are positive indicators that the branding implementation is having the effect we want it to. There is still a long way to go however, and we will keep monitoring. It is also important that you tell us what you are thinking and let us know how the implementation is going, we are very open to feedback and suggestions, and you can read more about that on page 12.

At the AGM I also spoke about the Board's current focus and priority work for the coming year in the areas of:

- Funding growing and diversifying funding streams
- Partnering and collaboration
- Growth in membership, engagement and reach.

These priorities will form the foundation of a refreshed strategy which will be developed toward the end of our current financial year.

You can read more about the AGM on page 12.

I'll close by reiterating my thanks to our outgoing Directors and to those Directors remaining on the Board, the staff, our volunteers and members. We have achieved so much in the last three years and it is very much a team effort. We can all be very proud of the organisation as it stands today ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

MS TRICIA HOBSON

Board Chair



Board Chair Tricia Hobson at the 25th Annual General Meeting, providing a thank you speech to Board Director Lynne Boyd.



Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh at an Anzac Day service in Villers-Bretonneux, France, this year alongside the Prefect of the Somme, Rollon Mouchel-Blaisot.

n my last column, I said new legislation to simplify and harmonise the existing three-Act veteran compensation and rehabilitation framework would soon be introduced to Parliament.

Following broad consultation with the veteran community, I was proud to introduce the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024 (the VETS Bill) to Parliament on 3 July.

If passed, the VETS Bill will enable veterans and families to get the support they are entitled to more easily. It reflects the Government's commitment to ensure members of the veteran community are well looked after. An important underlying principle of the VETS Bill is that there will be no reduction in payments that veterans or families have previously received, or are currently receiving.

A range of materials have been developed to assist you to understand the VETS Bill and how the changes will impact you. They can be found on the DVA website (dva.gov.au) via the home page.

The legislation is the Government's response to the first recommendation of the 2022 Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The Royal Commission will provide its final report by 9 September 2024. In June 2024, the Royal Commission also delivered a report that tells the stories of those who have shared their lived experiences with the Commission. While the content is confronting, it provides a moving insight into what many Defence personnel and veterans have gone through over many years. Many of you have shared and had to re-live often distressing experiences with the Royal Commission. I thank you for doing so. It took great courage, and the Defence and veteran community will be better for it. Our task is to ensure that those experiences are not repeated.

In light of the Royal Commission's work, DVA is finalising a number of important wellbeing strategies, including the Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2029, and the Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy. I expect both strategies to be released later this year. The latter will guide the support that DVA and Defence provides to veteran families. It has been shaped by consultation that took place in 2022 and 2023 and will align with the findings of the Royal Commission.

I'm sure many of you are preparing to recognise War Widows Day on 19 October. It is important for those who have lost a loved one in war to come together and be recognised for what they have endured and the support they have given. I have asked the Department of Veterans' Affairs to acknowledge War Widows Day via its various communications channels, including its website, social media and of course the Vetaffairs newspaper.

Please know the Government and all Australians are grateful for everything you have been through, and everything you do.

THE HON MATT KEOGH MP

Minister for Veterans Affairs Minister for Defence Personnel

NSW MINISTER FOR VETERANS



Minister Harris and the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Shuichi Tokuda with the PAMS 2024 Scholars and Accompanying Teachers.

hank you for this opportunity to connect with the Families of Veterans Guild and War Widows community to provide an update on behalf of the NSW Government.

July was an important month in the defence landscape with the inaugural Middle East Area of Operations commemoration taking place at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. The Premier and I attended this service alongside many contemporary veterans and their families, to take a moment and thank the veterans of recent conflicts for their service, and to remember those who have given the ultimate sacrifice.

The Premier and I also announced funding from NSW Government for a new war memorial to honour the service and sacrifice of those who served in the Middle East campaigns since 1990. This memorial will pay tribute to all our contemporary veterans and their families. The NSW Office for Veterans Affairs will lead the ongoing consultation process, with completion of the memorial anticipated by the end of 2026.

On 15 August, we also commemorated Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day, the 79th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, as well as Vietnam Veterans Day on 18 August, on the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

In September, the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship will see twenty scholars with a shared passion for history, participate in an intensive study tour to Japan. I recently had the opportunity to meet the students and their parents at the Anzac Memorial and wish them well on their trip. You can learn more about the trip on the Office for Veterans Affairs website www.veterans.nsw.gov.au/pams

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has completed its public hearings and many witnesses have assisted the Commission in their important work and in finalising their recommendations. The final report of the Royal Commission is due by 9 September, and the NSW Government will ensure that its recommendations are incorporated into the next NSW Government Veterans Strategy for 2025-2028.

Applications for the Anzac Community Grants Program will open in September. Grants of up to \$3,000 are available for a range of projects that commemorate and educate New South Wales communities about the service and sacrifices of current and former military servicemen and servicewomen, as well as activities benefiting the NSW veteran community. More information is available at:

www.veterans.nsw.gov.au/acgp

On 19 October, we will commemorate War Widows Day. Every veteran has a family, and families too can be affected by the service of their loved ones. War Widows Day provides the community with a chance to acknowledge the sacrifices made by the families of our veterans.

Lastly, this November the Anzac Memorial is celebrating the 90th anniversary of its opening with special events and an exhibition showcasing 90 artefacts from the Memorial's collection. These items are showcased in the recently launched Ninety Treasures book which is now available for pre-sale.

Each of the items share personal stories of the courage, endurance and sacrifice of generations of Australians whose lives have been affected by war and I encourage you to pre-order a copy here: https://bit.ly/Presale-90-Treasures

I am proud to be involved with the veteran community and I look forward to continuing working closely with the war widows and the families of veterans in NSW.

Yours sincerely,

THE HON DAVID HARRIS MP

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty Minister for Gaming and Racing Minister for Veterans Minister for Medical Research Minister for the Central Coast

Advocacy Update

The Royal Commission Lived Experience Book released

On 20 June 2024, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide handed over its Lived Experience book, Shining a Light - Stories of Trauma, Tragedy & Hope to the Governor General. The book was subsequently released by the Government later in the afternoon and is available online: scan the QR code on this page to download. The book includes reading advice and icons throughout the publication to help readers manage any emotional impacts of reading the book's content.

This significant and courageous publication means that the stories of veterans and their families will live on well after the Commission ends, and this is significant. "The Royal Commission has brought the issues to life in such a meaningful way through lived experience, such that it makes it almost impossible for those who read them not to take any form of accountability, and not to do something about what they read," said Renee Wilson, CEO of the Families of Veterans Guild.

Renee went onto say, "Australia doesn't know enough about the challenges and sacrifices of veterans and their families, and the Royal Commission has helped it understand. Bringing issues within our community out into the open, through publications like this, also helps Australia understand the costs of its peace and security."

Content warning:

Shining A Light: Stories of Trauma & Tragedy, Hope & Healing may be difficult for some to read. Remember you're not alone. There may be many people feeling the same as you, or who have had similar experiences. Please take your time with the book and note that chapters do not need to be read in order. Please ensure you are supported if you chose to read through the stories in this publication

and remind yourself of support numbers such as Lifeline: 13 11 14.



New legislation to simplify and harmonise veteran compensation introduced into Parliament

A significant step toward system reform was made in early July with the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024 introduced into Parliament.

The Bill has now been referred to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, which is to report by 3 October 2024. We have made a submission to this Committee highlighting our views on the Bill. In summary, while we welcome the Bill, it does not change the model of care offered to veteran families, it still uses the 100-year-old model which presumes families do not need help and support until a veteran passes away.

The increased demands on Australian veterans and their families together with the long shadow of subsequent conflicts have seen the needs of families grow. The model of waiting until crisis or a veteran passes away before supporting families isn't sufficient anymore. The truth is families need support much earlier, because veterans are now surviving their service and injuries that in the early to mid 1900s they wouldn't have. They are living longer and more complex lives. The challenges related to caring for

and supporting a veteran during, immediately after and beyond their service are now very visible.

While changing the model of care for families of veterans is a much larger and different body of work, the foundations of this work could be laid in this Bill. Amendments to the Bill can improve conditions for the families of veterans, alleviate some of the burdens that service in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) places on them, and set the conditions for future work to bring families of veterans into the support system before a veteran passes away.

Additionally, while overall the 'package' of support available to widows remains as is, inequities within the legislation remain, such as the timeframe applicable under the acute support arrangements for the widows of veterans and Gold Card limitations for children of deceased veterans. We have raised this with the committee and you can read our full submission on our website www.familiesofveterans. org.au.



NSW Government announcements on ANZAC Day trading hours and recognition of Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans

In July, we welcomed the announcement of the NSW Government to extend ANZAC Day trading hours restrictions to cover the whole day. In October 2023, we provided members with the opportunity to share their views on the ANZAC Day trading hours laws, with 44 responses received showing how strongly members feel about extending the closing period to encompass the entirety of ANZAC Day. Thanks to all who participated, our Premier, Chris Minns, highlighted to us the importance of your input in this consultation.

We also welcomed in July the \$2 million investment to establish a memorial to honour the service and sacrifice of Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans and their families in the Domain, which also resulted from a consultation we contributed to late last year.

These announcements demonstrate that the voices of families have been heard alongside veterans. They come off the back of two consultation processes we contributed to, raising the voices of families on both matters.

Both the extension in trading hour restrictions and the new memorial serve as an important reminder of the sacrifices that are and have been made in service of the peace, security and freedom we enjoy every day in Australia. They demonstrate the gratitude of the people of NSW to its service personnel and their families.

Gold Card Entitlements: Your feedback matters

We know that the Gold Card is a valuable entitlement for many of you, but we also know that it may not always meet your needs or expectations.

Whether it is the range of products and services available, the quality of care you receive, or the ease of access and communication, we want to hear from you.

Your feedback is crucial for us to work with DVA to ensure that the gold card keeps up with the changing needs of veterans and their families. Please share your experience and suggestions with us by emailing our lead Advocate, Renee Wilson, on:

ceo@fov.org.au. Your input will help us advocate for better outcomes for you and your loved ones.

Representing War Widows & families

Representatives and members regularly attend services to honour our service men and women and their families. We thank all who proudly represented us at these events.

Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, AM, CSC, DSM – Royal Australian Air Force 103rd Birthday

On 27 March, we honoured the legacy of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as it celebrated its 103rd birthday. For over a century, the RAAF has been at the forefront of defending our skies and protecting our nation.

Former Board Director LTGEN Susan Coyle laid a wreath on behalf of our organisation to pay tribute to aviators past and present. Dignitaries included Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazely AC KC, representatives from the RAAF, the NSW Police Force, the City of Sydney Lord Mayor, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, RSL NSW, Sydney Legacy Club, the RAAF Association, and the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs.



Jeff O'Brien, State Secretary RSL NSW, The Hon. Mark Buttigieg, MLC, The Hon. Robyn Preston, Shadow Minister for Veterans, Air Vice-Marshal Glen Braz, Mike Stuart Watt, President DFWA, Ron Glew, President AFA NSW, LTGEN Susan Coyle, and Anthony Seymour, DVA.

Queen Dunbar - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Commemoration Service



Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW during the smoking ceremony. Image courtesy of RSL NSW.

As part of National Reconciliation Week, RSL NSW hosted the 2024 Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service on 31 May. Our President, Queen Dunbar, represented veterans' families, including war widows, to acknowledge the service of Indigenous veterans since the Boer War and those serving in the Australian Defence Force today.

Now in its 18th year, the ceremony continues to unite Australians in remembering and honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans. Held at the Anzac Memorial, the service combined conventional military protocol with an Indigenous ceremonial display, including a traditional smoking ceremony, featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, school students and current and ex-serving ADF members.

Nepean War Widows Social Club – Inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Commemoration, Penrith RSL Sub-Branch

Members of the Nepean War Widows Social Club attended the Inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Commemoration on 11 July, organised by The Sub-Branch of Penrith RSL.

Carol Tyler and Lorraine Stuart laid a wreath on behalf of Nepean Guild Members. After the service attendees adjourned to the RSL for light refreshments and a get together.



Lynne Boyd and Lynne Sullivan - D-Day Commemoration

The Air Force Association NSW hosted a special ceremony at the Anzac Memorial on 6 June to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, which took place on 6 June 1944.

D-Day and the battle of Normandy marked the first step in the liberation of France and Western Europe during the Second World War, laying the foundations for the Allied victory on the Western Front. Australian defence personnel played a crucial role, with approximately 3,200 Australians participating in the D-Day landings and thousands more serving in the broader Normandy campaign.

Our nation's main contribution came from the air, with around 1,000 Australians flying with Royal Australian Air Force squadrons and 1,800 more operating with the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force.



Victoria Benz, Former DVA Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT, Former Board Director Lynne Boyd, Board Director Lynne Sullivan and Giles Hurst, CEO RSL NSW



Chaplain David Hastie, Captain Rebecca Levitt, RAN and Jenny Ware with the HMAS Nirimba Crest.

Jenny Ware – Annual End of an Era Commemoration and Rededication Service at Nirimba Education Precinct

On 22 June, the Nirimba Sub-Section Naval Association of Australia held its Annual End of an Era Commemoration and Rededication Service at the Nirimba **Education Precinct.**

Highlights included speeches from Captain Ralph Derbidge MBE RAN (Rtd), who reminded us that "once a Sailor, always a Sailor," and Captain Rebecca Levitt RAN, who recognised servicewomen. The event featured a religious service led by Chaplain David Hastie, RAN.

The Royal Australian Navy Band Sydney, with vocalist Petty Officer Tracy Kennedy, delivered a moving musical tribute. The ceremony was further honoured by a catafalque party from HMAS Kuttabul.

It was a heartfelt day of remembrance and pride for all who served and continue to serve.

Bree Till - Inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Commemoration

Board Director Bree Till was honoured to represent war widows at the Inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Commemoration Service on 11 July. Bree's son, Junior Legatee Ziggy Till, recited 'This Ode' by Rupert McCall.

A heartfelt thank you to RSL NSW for hosting this significant event, and to RSL President Mick Bainbridge for his powerful words on the enduring support and sacrifice of families. Hundreds gathered in Martin Place to honour the courage, sacrifice and commitment of those who served. RSL NSW is calling for a national commemoration for this generation of veterans, and support for living veterans and their families.



Bree and Ziggy Till, NSW Premier Chris Minns MP and RSL NSW President Mick Bainbridge. Image courtesy of RSL NSW.

25th Annual General Meeting



n 15 August 2024, 58 members, Directors and guests gathered at the Rydges Sydney Central for the 25th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Australian War Widows NSW Ltd.

While no special business was conducted at this year's AGM it was still a special meeting with so many members from across Sydney and NSW joining together to hear the company's results for the 2023/24 financial year. Results like:

- Returning a \$720,000 (rounded) surplus for the year thanks to investment performance.
- Stabilising expenses while increasing output and delivery.
- Growth in membership and a stabilisation of over all member numbers following the steep decline which has been experienced in recent years.
- Structuring of programs and services which have seen more members, war widows and veteran families engaging in services provided by the organisation.
- Engaging 1500 (rounded) war widows in programs and services.
- Engaging 245 veteran families in programs and services.

The AGM also saw the appointment of 4 Directors to the Board following the postal ballot which took place over July/August 2024. With a total of 248 valid votes received, the following Directors were elected to the Board:

- Ms Queen Dunbar
- Ms Lyn Bye
- Ms Yvonne Stapleton
- Brigadier Jocelyn King CSC.









Outgoing Director Lynne Boyd was honoured and recognised with a Life Membership and a Board Commendation recognising her tireless work and commitment to the organisation. Life Memberships were also awarded to:

- Ms Shirley McLaren OAM
- Ms Lovis Goodyear
- Ms Pam Bowmaker.

In recognition of their long service and commitment

to the organisation, and dedication to the war widows community.



additional The Board also awarded two commendations to:

- Ms Di Vogt
- Ms Dallas Alderson.

In recognition of their commitment and service to the members and war widows in their community.



As with all AGMs, time is allocated to members to ask questions of Board and Management. This year questions focused on the implementation of the company's trading name with the CEO addressing two questions that arrived prior to the AGM which were:

- 1. Why are war widows not being referred to at commemorations
- 2. How are war widows represented now there is a new brand?

In answer to question one, the CEO said:

"As many of you know, traditionally the way organisations are introduced at commemorations is by their organisation name and not in reference to the people they serve or support. changing our trading name, organisations running commemorations have applied their standard practice.

"We are still in the process of implementing our brand name across the areas of our business and making decisions on when and how we are referred to as families of veterans and when the company name, Australian War Widows NSW is used.

"It will take us at least 12 months to fully implement and transition the brand and develop guidelines on its use – during this time we are keen to work with you and ensure that we remain people centric in our implementation. For example, on ANZAC Day this year what we did with our banner was to represent not the organisation name, but who was walking behind the banner, we intend on doing similar with commemorative events.



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"At the next Board meeting, I will be proposing to the Board that for commemorations we ask organisers to call our representative forward by name and reference who the wreath is being laid on behalf of. I will propose that the wreath is laid on behalf of "war widows and the families of veterans."

In answer to the second question, the CEO said:

"The first thing to note is that the company name – Australian War Widows NSW is still the same and appears as part of the brand (our trading name) on our official documentation. Australian War Widows NSW owns the brand 'families of veterans' and it also owns the other variations of this as well to protect the brand.

The trading name — Families of Veterans Guild is the name through which we conduct our day-to-day business e.g. in how we communicate with you, stakeholders and the general public. It will be the name that we use to deliver our programs and services, fundraise and effectively conduct the public business of the organisation.

This is why you have seen it change over on our digital platforms. As part of the changeover though we have specifically created the war widows' program and are starting to develop the promotional material for that. That program uses our logo and the program name.





We can add the words war widows wherever we need to, for example, in our signage at our registered office (Chatswood) both names are represented. In our Board papers and AGM papers both the trading name or brand and the company are represented.

This is a new space for us and we are trying very hard to get it right but we are not perfect. We are partners in this implementation with you and want to ensure that we work with you to get it right."

From the floor, members asked if as a result of the brand change if there was an intention to provide service to veterans. The CEO confirmed that this was not the intention, that the space the organisation occupied was in the area of war widows and veteran families, and that is the area the organisation is working and will continue to work.





Experiences were shared from a member regarding her interactions with the former Governor General at War Widows Day last year and she reflected her gratitude for the event.

The former State President then commented on her concerns about how the brand was being implemented and these were noted by the Chair and CEO. The members present at the meeting were asked to provide feedback on the brand implementation to the Chair and CEO so that they could action the feedback with a view to ensuring war widows were still included as part of the implementation of the brand.

The Chair confirmed the Board is not intending to leave war widows behind in the implementation of the new brand name. She noted the Board and CEO are committed to working through feedback and providing solutions that allow the organisation to honour its legacy and grow. One such solution was already presented to the AGM and involved ensuring that at commemorations the organisation lays wreaths on behalf of war widows and families of veterans. This too would be printed on wreath ribbons. This solution was well received by the AGM.

As both the Chair and CEO reflected to the AGM, implementing a new brand is difficult and the organisation is working hard to get it right, but we need member's feedback to make sure we

are continuing to head in the right direction. Implementing this change is a partnership between all of us. We heard the 400 of you who told us what you were thinking during the consultation period, and the Board was able to align its decision with the views of the majority of members. We want to ensure we continue to do this, which is why your feedback is so important to us.

Feedback on brand implementation can be sent to the Chair or CEO via email at: boardchair@fov.org.au and ceo@fov.org.au. Alternatively written correspondence can be sent to PO Box 146 Chatswood NSW 2057.





War Widows club gatherings

A lot has been happening for our Social Clubs, with new clubs opening and our team reaching out to more war widows to join our regional visits. Our team and Board Directors love the opportunity to meet our members and spend some time to get to know each and everyone of you.

Newcastle Regional Visit

The sun shone brightly over Wallsend Diggers in Newcastle, setting the perfect scene for a day of reconnection and celebration. Among the 50 attendees were President Queen Dunbar, Board Director Lynne Sullivan, and Jennifer St George, granddaughter of Jessie Vassey CBE OBE.

Efforts to reach out to both current and past members in the Newcastle region were met with overwhelming positivity.

Highlights included a Second World War veteran reciting the Ode, and Jennifer St George sharing personal anecdotes. Four lucky door prize winners received club vouchers worth \$50 each. Special recognition was given to the dedicated coordinators for their



tireless efforts. We honoured life members aged 100 to 102 and congratulated those joining next year. The event was a celebration of community, connection and the enduring spirit that binds us all together.

Regional Visit to Forster-Tuncurry



Our War Widows Program Team and President Queen Dunbar visited the Forster-Tuncurry area, reconnecting with local members. The event was a resounding success, filled with chatter and camaraderie. Members shared stories and discussed future plans, fostering a sense of community spirit.

Important updates on volunteering opportunities and upcoming activities were shared. A highlight was Matt, the Duty Manager of Club Forster, surprising guests with \$150 worth of club vouchers for door prizes. Special recognition was given to dedicated coordinators and volunteers. We celebrated our remarkable life members, aged 100 to 104, and welcomed new life members for next year.

Cronulla War Widows Social Club Monthly Meeting

We joined the Cronulla ladies to celebrate Mary Tagg, our newest life member, who turned 100 on 1 April. The event at Cronulla RSL featured stunning beach views. Norma, the Club Coordinator, led the meeting with the National Anthem, the Ode, and the War Widows' Motto. Former Director Lynne Boyd, presented Mary with a framed certificate and pin, and members gave her flowers and a card. The gathering concluded with a birthday cake and warm camaraderie.



The Younger Members Social Club Mothers' Day Lunch

The inaugural War Widows Younger Members (YMs) Social Club Mothers' Day Luncheon was held on Tuesday 7 May at Mazzaro Restaurant, located opposite the Anzac Memorial Hyde Park in Elizabeth Street.

Can you imagine the laughter and noise generated as thirty-one of our members arrived to be greeted by Di Vogt, the YMs Social Club Coordinator, and welcomed and treated like royalty by the owner and staff of Mazzaro's!

The lunch was beautifully presented, refreshments and chatter flowed non-stop and it was agreed by all attending, this is a must for future Mothers' Day celebrations.



It is lovely to see our members, social and guild clubs organising such events and get together. The friendships and support you give one another is a wonderful testament of the importance of peer-to-peer support and connection.

A place to call home for Ryde's War Widows



Recently, the North Ryde War Widows Social Club celebrated the 100th birthdays of Kath Reay and Kennie Dare at the North Ryde RSL Club. Attendees enjoyed the beautiful bushland views and shared a meal to celebrate these milestones.

Board Director Lynne Sullivan, former Board Director Lynne Boyd and member Nola Hill welcomed guests, including North Ryde RSL Sub-Branch President Lieutenant Commander Peter Colthorpe. Peter recited the War Widows' Ode and shared naval stories. The centenarians were honoured with cakes and special medallions, making the day memorable for all.

Christmas in July at Chatswood RSL

On 16 July, we celebrated a special Christmas in July luncheon at Chatswood RSL. This event aimed to reconnect and engage war widows and families from northeast Sydney, bringing together current, new and past members.

Families of Veterans Guild Board Director Lynne Sullivan, President Queen Dunbar and our War Widows Program Team welcomed 50 festive members and guests, including Noelene Touhill, Chatswood Social Club Coordinator, Heather Gilliam, Epping Social Club Coordinator, Shirley McLaren OAM, Northern Beaches Social Club Coordinator and members of the North Ryde Social Club.

Our wonderful volunteers, including Janice Lawless, Joyce Mason, Jackie Clark, Francis Goddard, Fiona Duncan-White and Susie McLachlan, ensured everyone felt the festive joy.



War Widows out & about

Celebrating Volunteer Week with Our Volunteers & Coordinators

For National Volunteer Week, we hosted a lunch at Chatswood RSL to honor our volunteers. President Queen Dunbar, CEO Renee Wilson and our team expressed heartfelt gratitude for the volunteers' invaluable contributions.

The well-attended lunch was filled with laughter and camaraderie. Volunteers enjoyed delicious food and received support and information from the War Widows Program team. They discussed running guild and social clubs, Friendship Line and Birthday Calls.

CEO Renee Wilson delivered a moving speech, thanking volunteers and highlighting their impact. She extended gratitude to all volunteers, emphasising their crucial role in supporting war widows in NSW. Their dedication and selflessness have made a significant difference, impacting over 2,000 war widows across NSW.



Outing in Ulladulla



Our dedicated war widow and Regional Club Coordinator Carol Barnes organised a delightful outing for her group to Ulladulla TAFE College.

The young hospitality trainees warmly welcomed them, serving a delicious two-course meal with drinks, tea, and coffee, all for just \$24 a head. The food was exquisite, and the service impeccable. Carol and her group had a wonderful time, enjoying both the meal and the company.

The Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of NSW

Each year, war widow Di Green organises a special tour for the War Widows Younger Members War Widows Social Club to view the Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of NSW. On a sunny Saturday 29 June, the group gathered to admire the winning artworks.

Patricia, their knowledgeable guide, shared fascinating insights into each piece. After the tour, they enjoyed a light lunch at The Gallery Café, arranged by Di. The lunch was filled with laughter and lively conversation.

The day was a perfect blend of art appreciation and camaraderie, leaving everyone looking forward to next year's outing.



Keeping war widows connected

Lyn Bye, Laurieton Social Club Coordinator

n 11 April this year, 10 war widows from Laurieton, on New South Wales' mid-north coast, headed to Wauchope for a day out and a bite to eat.

The first stop was at Vicker's Fudge shop, where the ladies enjoyed buying lollies, chocolates and fudge.

Our Laurieton War Widows Social Club Coordinator and new Board Director Lyn Bye organised the outing. On the second Thursday of every month, the social club goes somewhere special for lunch.

"We like to mix up where we go," said Lyn, who has been a war widow for more than 15 years. "We choose places the ladies have never been before."

After filling their bags with goodies from the fudge shop, the ladies then travelled to a local café for lunch. Lyn said they enjoyed ordering something different from the menu from what they would usually eat.

After lunch, their final stop was at an op shop in Wauchope, which is run by Port Macquarie Legacy.

"It was very difficult to get them back on the bus," said Lyn. "They really enjoyed the op shop, I think it brought back a lot of memories for them."

Our Laurieton War Widows Social Club has around 18 members, ranging in age from 65 to 100. Their husbands served in the Vietnam War, Second World War and there is even a war widow, Marj Cameron, whose husband served in the First World War.

"It is a lovely mix of women," said Lyn. "There is a lot of talking when we are together."

On the first Wednesday of every month, at 10.30 in the morning, the social club meets at the Laurieton United Services Club.

"We start by reciting the Guild motto, then we read the minutes from last month's meeting, and then I'll read any correspondence from head office."

"Then as a group we will discuss what is happening, such as discussing events we have been invited to, then we have a social welfare section, and then finish off with June's jokes – June is one of our members and she shares some very funny jokes." Then they head to the bistro for lunch and a good old chat. Among the ladies, there are strong friendships.

When Lyn took over the role of Social Club Coordinator some 18 months ago, she was given an old newspaper article written about the social club. Shirley McLaren OAM, who was the club's Coordinator back then and who is now Coordinator for the Northern Beaches in Sydney, was on the picture alongside other war widows Lorna McCormick, Marj Cameron and Joan Begg.

It is the older war widows, like Shirley, Lorna, Marj and Joan, who inspire Lyn to do the role of Social Club Coordinator. While she jokingly says that being the Social Club Coordinator is like being the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Welfare Officer and the Event Coordinator, she also says that she enjoys everything about the role.

"I love being in contact with a lovely group of ladies and helping wherever I can," said Lyn.

"I'll do whatever I can so they are not so isolated and lonely. I like to check up on the ones in hospital, the ones who are unwell and the ones who haven't come to a meeting – just to make sure they are okay."

"The older generation of war widows have done and continue to do an incredible job to keep the organisation going, it is now our turn - the younger generation - to help them."

It only takes two members to start a social club and our War Widows Program Team is here to support anyone who would like to start a social club in areas where there aren't any yet. They are a wonderful way to get members together and remain connected, and such as Lyn's story, it can be a wonderful and fulfilling experience to coordinate a social club. For any enquiry about our social clubs, call us on 02 9267 6577.

Wellbeing Program update

Our wellbeing events are all about creating a place for war widows and veteran families to connect, build a network, form friendships and share insights and powerful stories.

Veterans' families meet in Cronulla for a sound healing experience

We had a wonderful time in Cronulla in June connecting with veterans' families and sharing in a unique sound healing experience. This intimate event allowed everyone to relax and bond in a friendly environment. The session, facilitated by UNSW-approved music tutor and certified yoga instructor Bianca Teremi from the Heart & Soul Yoga studio in Cronulla, offered a unique experience of calming sounds, including crystal singing bowls to encourage a deep state of relaxation.

After the relaxation of the sound healing, we enjoyed a laid-back picnic at Cronulla beach, where spouses connected around their shared experiences and shared valuable insights and information.



Community Art Day





We hosted two inspirational days at our Chatswood head office, where war widows, their families and families of current and former serving defence members, came together to connect through art. It was wonderful to see different generations get together and create meaningful and beautiful works.

In our focus on creating an inclusive space for all families connected to defence, this event was a testament to how inclusive our community truly is. Different generations of war widows, children of veterans, partners of veterans and grandchildren of

veterans connected through a common project.

No one understands better than the person who has walked, or who is walking, the same path. We will be hosting more events like this as they are crucial for our community to come together.

Healing through sound in the city

We wrapped up our art day in July with a wonderful sound healing session, a perfect way to promote relaxation and stress reduction, also facilitated by Bianca from Heart & Soul Yoga studio. Families of all generations gathered for the experience.

Attendees have shared their positive experiences: "I have never been good at meditating, but this sound healing session dropped me into a deep state of relaxation without even trying! I felt so calm afterward as if I awoke from a deep restorative sleep. I cannot wait to do it again."



Announcing our 2024 WILD Scholarship recipients

This year, thanks to a generous private donor, we proudly provided two fully funded scholarships for the award-winning Women in Leadership Development (WILD) program by People Measures, valued at over \$6,000 each. The WILD program is designed to empower women from various sectors by enhancing their leadership skills, resilience, and ability to lead with purpose.

Congratulations!



Mary Kingsford (war widow): "Thank you Families of Veterans Guild for the opportunity to attend the Women in Leadership Development (WILD) program of 2024. I am continually evolving in both personal and professional development and through this scholarship opportunity my growth will continue to expand throughout the course across to positive contributions in future roles."



Belinda Herbert (veteran spouse): "I am beyond excited to accept this offer and I thank you for the amazing opportunity. I cannot wait to get started on this rediscovery of myself and my leadership potential and I'm incredibly grateful to be selected."

Although all scholarships have currently been awarded, we encourage you to register your interest for future opportunities. Together, we can continue to support and uplift our veteran families. To register your interest, please email us at wellbeing@fov.org.au.

Find your support and your community – join our Wellbeing Newsletter!

Are you the family member of a veteran and looking for a supportive community? Our wellbeing events offer a comfortable setting where you can meet peers, find support and connect through relaxing experiences.

It's vital to carve out time for yourself in your busy life, and our events provide the perfect opportunity. Plus ones are always welcome, as the impact of defence service extends beyond just the member and their direct family. Scan the QR code to join our Wellbeing Newsletter and stay informed about upcoming events.



Wisdom of our War Widows

Meg Green AM, former state and national President of Australian War Widows

few months after her husband passed away, it was time for Meg Green AM to renew her membership at North Ryde RSL. As she came across the section of paperwork that asked if she was single, married, de-facto or widowed, she hesitated before ticking married. She wasn't yet ready to tick the widowed box.

"It took a lot for me to admit that I was widowed," said Meg, who was in her late 50s when her husband, Gordon, passed away. "It was not a term I wanted to embrace."

While Meg didn't want to embrace the term 'widow', she did embrace our organisation. After becoming a member in late 2008, she went on to serve six years as a Board Member, and then another six years as National President. During her tenure as National President, she also served one year as State President.

"I can't help myself," said Meg. "I always like to get involved."



Meg Green AM (left) and Jennifer Collins AM (right) at the ANZAC Field of Remembrance in 2024.



Meg Green AM (middle) with Board Director Bree Till (left) and CEO Renee Wilson (right)

Meg also likes what the organisation embodies. Meg said the story of our organisation is a story of self-empowerment, a story of friendship and a story of strength. It is the story of the government that didn't sufficiently provide for war widows after the Second World War, so war widows helped each other to learn new skills and provide for themselves.

"It's a worthwhile organisation," said Meg. "War widows are a group of ladies who are resilient, caring, understanding, compassionate and committed to the support of other women in similar circumstances – it doesn't matter the age or circumstances."

It is also important to share the load of the grief that is experienced following the loss of a loved one. As Meg explained, grief can sometimes blindside you, even if it has been many years since your partner passed away.

"Grief takes time. It can take years to feel okay. Even years later, you can still have days where you're thinking 'what am I doing here?', and that's okay," said Meg.

"If you're having a bad day, other widows understand, and you can choose to tell them about it or not – it's acceptable, it's okay, and they are supportive."

She has now been a member of the organisation for more than 15 years and in that time she has learned many lessons from other war widows. The greatest lesson they've taught her is that life goes on. They've also taught her the importance of friendship.

"Friendship is very important," said Meg. "It is really, really important that women have female friends because it is those women who will be supportive when things happen. It's important to foster those friendships."

It is also important to foster friendships in the veteran community. Meg's husband served in the Vietnam War with 1 Field Squadron and then had a long career as a police officer.

Meg and Gordon met about six months after he returned from Vietnam. While she never knew him before he went to war, those that did say he came home a different person.

"He was a very kind and gentle person," said Meg. "But underneath he had PTSD; both his sisters said he'd changed from before he went to Vietnam."

Meg explained how Gordon never slept well, and when he was sleeping you would never rouse him by touching him; you would only call out to him because he would get startled.

But she doesn't need to explain that to other war widows, because among them there is a common

"Invest in friendships with other women; your family will survive if you're missing for half-an-hour to have coffee with a friend."



Meg Green AM (left) with the late Diana Bland, former President, celebrating the 70th Birthday of the Northern Beaches Social Club in 2023.

understanding of service and the issues that arise.

"I have two sisters and I can always talk to them but it's different. I have groups of friends, from nursing and school and war widows, and their understanding of my situation is different," said Meg. "This community understands you without you having to say anything. You can talk about things if you want, but you don't have to – that friendship, that understanding is important."

Friendship becomes particularly important when you're widowed. Suddenly, you may no longer get invited to social events attended by couples. Your group of friends can change and get smaller. But Meg says it's equally important for younger women to invest in friendships too.

She acknowledges it can be hard to find the time to invest in friendships as you juggle young children, household duties and work commitments. But she says it is important you make time to build friendships, because those are the people who will be there for you when you need them.

"When you're young and you have kids and a husband, you lose your oomph to maintain friendships. But if you've lost all those friendships, it's harder later in life when you need them," said Meg.

As Meg said, "Invest in friendships with other women; your family will survive if you're missing for half an hour to have coffee with a friend."

INTRODUCTION TO SCAMS

This information is based on The Little Black Book of Scams created by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). If you would like a copy, please call us on 02 9267 6577 to request yours.

What is a scam?

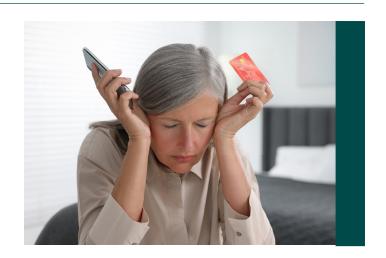
A scam is a dishonest scheme designed to cheat people out of their money or personal information. Scammers use various tricks to deceive their victims, often pretending to be someone they are not. Scams can take many forms, including fake emails, phone calls or even face-to-face interactions. The goal is always the same: to steal your money or personal information.

Why scams target the elderly

Elderly individuals are often targeted by scammers because they may be more trusting and less familiar with modern technology. Scammers exploit these vulnerabilities to steal money or personal information. Older adults might also be more isolated, making them more susceptible to scams that promise companionship or assistance.

Common Warning Signs of Scams

- 1. Unsolicited Contact: Receiving unexpected calls, emails or messages. Scammers often reach out without any prior contact.
- 2. Too Good to Be True: Offers that seem too good to be true, such as winning a lottery you never entered. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- 3. Pressure Tactics: Scammers often pressure you to act quickly. They might say you need to make a decision immediately.
- Requests for Personal Information: Asking for sensitive information like bank details or passwords. Legitimate organisations will never ask for this information over the phone or email.



How to Protect Yourself

- Be Skeptical: Always question unexpected contacts. If someone reaches out to you unexpectedly, be cautious.
- 2. Verify Identities: Confirm the identity of the person contacting you. Ask for their name, organisation and contact information.
- 3. Protect Personal Information: Never share personal details with strangers. Keep your personal information private.
- 4. Use Strong Passwords: Ensure your online accounts are secure with strong passwords. Use a combination of letters, numbers and symbols.

Types of Scams

While this article focuses on an introduction to scams, it's important to be aware of the different types of scams that exist. Here are a few common ones:

- Phishing Scams: These scams involve fake emails or websites that look like they come from legitimate organisations. They aim to steal your personal information.
- 2. Phone Scams: Scammers might call you pretending to be from a government agency or a well-known company. They might ask for personal information or money.
- 3. Investment Scams: These scams promise high returns with little risk. They often involve fake investment opportunities.

4. Charity Scams: Scammers might pretend to be from a charity and ask for donations. Always verify the legitimacy of a charity before donating.

Real-Life Examples

Understanding real-life examples can help you recognise scams. Here are a few scenarios:

1. The Fake Bank Call:

You receive a call from someone claiming to be from your bank. They say there's an issue with your account and ask for your account number and password. This is a scam. Banks will never ask for this information over the phone.

2. The Lottery Win:

You receive an email saying you've won a lottery you never entered. To claim your prize, you need to provide personal information or pay a fee. This is a scam. You can't win a lottery you didn't enter.

3. The Tech Support Scam:

You receive a call from someone claiming to be from a well-known tech company. They say there's a problem with your computer and ask for remote access. This is a scam. Legitimate tech companies don't make unsolicited calls.

Where to Find Help

If you think you have been scammed or need more information, there are several resources available to assist you:

- ACCC Scamwatch: Visit the Scamwatch website for information on the latest scams and how to report them. https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/ or call 1300 795 995
- National Anti-Scam Centre (NASC): Contact the NASC for guidance and support. https://www.accc.gov.au/national-anti-scam-centre
- Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC): For cyberrelated scams, visit the ACSC website or call 1300 CYBER1 (1300 292 371).
- IDCARE: Australia's national identity and cyber

support service. Visit IDCARE's website or call 1800 595 160 for personalized support.

• Local Police: Report scams to your local police station, especially if you have lost money or personal information.

Staying Informed

Staying informed is one of the best ways to protect yourself from scams. Here are a few tips:

- 1. Stay Updated: Keep up with the latest scam alerts from the ACCC and other trusted sources.
- 2. Educate Yourself: Learn about the different types of scams and how they work.
- 3. Share Information: Talk to friends and family about scams. The more people know, the better protected they will be.

Conclusion

Understanding scams and how to protect yourself is crucial. Stay informed and vigilant to avoid falling victim to scammers. Remember, if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Always verify the identity of anyone who contacts you unexpectedly and never share personal information with strangers.

By following these guidelines and staying informed, you can protect yourself from scams and help others do the same. If you need more information or assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to the ACCC or call us on 02 9267 6577 to request a copy of The Little Black Book of Scams.

Scan this QR code to learn more about identifying and avoiding scams



Nurturing yourself while caring for a loved one

A practical guide to self-care and preventing burnout

aring for a loved one can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be physically, emotionally and mentally draining. It's important to prioritise your own wellbeing when supporting someone else, whether it's an ill or injured veteran, young children or ageing parents.

War widow Di Vogt's husband, Michael, was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND) in November 2012 and passed away on 19 December 2013, shortly after his 64th birthday.

In this article, Di shares her reflections and wisdom learned from her experience as a veteran's caregiver, and talks about the importance of looking after yourself as you care for others.

"[After Michael was diagnosed,] we joined MNDNSW, who provided guidance and support for the whole family. They strongly emphasised the importance of a carer looking after themselves, not unlike the aeroplane example: in emergencies, put your oxygen mask on before you assist others.

"This reasoning is simple: to care for others, you must first care for yourself. Burnout is easier to minimise if self-nurturing is in place. I found it important and had to learn to allow other people to help. Once I realised others genuinely wanted to assist and really wished they could, I understood I was being selfish by not allowing this to happen. This realisation gave me great joy as it allowed those who loved us to spend time with Michael."

When talking about her experience, Di recognised that at the time, she did not identify as a carer: "I don't recall ever identifying as a carer during Michael's journey with MND. It was just what I did; not dissimilar to being a mother with a young baby: the newborn baby's needs come first, so that's how I approached looking after Michael. It was a labour of love. I would have done anything to make Michael's journey more comfortable.

"Even though it wasn't all beer and skittles, and taking care of myself didn't change the outcome, it enabled me to continue looking after Michael at home for as long as I could."

If you are taking care of someone, you may experience caregiver burnout. This is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that can affect your health and wellbeing. To prevent or cope with caregiver burnout, here are some practical tips you can follow:

- **Prioritise self-care**: Make it a non-negotiable part of your routine. Schedule regular breaks to relax, breathe deeply, or enjoy a hobby.
- Set boundaries: Clearly separate caregiving from personal time. Communicate your limits and ask for help when needed.
- **Seek support**: Build a network of friends, family, or support groups for emotional and practical assistance. Talking to others in similar situations can be comforting.
- Take care of your physical health: Eat nutritious meals, stay hydrated, exercise and get enough sleep. Physical wellbeing boosts mental and emotional resilience.
- Practice stress-reducing techniques: Incorporate deep breathing, meditation, yoga or mindfulness into your routine to reduce anxiety and promote
- Maintain hobbies and interests: Engage in activities you love to recharge and prevent burnout.
- Stay connected: Nurture relationships outside caregiving for emotional support and normalcy.
- Monitor your mental health: Seek professional help if you experience depression, anxiety or burnout. Counselling can provide valuable support.
- Practice self-compassion: Acknowledge your efforts and allow yourself breaks. Prioritising your wellbeing helps you continue as a caregiver.

Remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup. Prioritising self-care is essential for you and your loved ones.

Thank you to our donors

We are delighted to announce that during June, our community rallied together to raise an additional \$2,500 for our Crisis Support Fund.

This achievement would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our donors, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for supporting this vital initiative.

Since April, donations have been directed towards our Crisis Support Fund, a cornerstone of our Social Work and Wellbeing Program. This fund plays a

crucial role in providing short-term interventions aimed at alleviating or preventing crises among our veterans families. These interventions cover essential needs such as food and housing, respite care and health support.

Thank you to all our donors for your ongoing support and generosity.

Remember, donations are tax deductible. To find out more, call us on 02 9267 6577.

Winter recipe



Lemon Chicken & Potato Tray

INGREDIENTS

450g chicken thighs (off the bone) 500g potatoes cut in wedges 1 lemon half thinly sliced & half juiced olive oil spray 1 tsp dried oregano salt & pepper, to taste 1 bunch of broccolini (160g) trimmed 1 tsp olive oil 1 tsp wholegrain mustard

Preparation time: 10 minutes Cooking time: 35 minutes Picture & recipe: Centr.com

METHOD

Preheat oven to 220°C/fan-forced 200°C.

Place chicken, potato and lemon slices in a large baking dish or tray.

3.

Spray lightly with oil, scatter over oregano, season with salt and pepper and toss well to combine.

Spread chicken and potatoes out in a single layer and roast for 20 minutes.

Add broccolini to the dish and continue to cook another 10-15 minutes or until potatoes are golden and broccolini is tender-crisp.

Meanwhile, whisk oil, mustard and lemon juice together and season with salt and pepper.

Divide chicken, potato, broccolini and lemon slices between serving plates.

Whisk pan juices with the dressing to serve.

MEMBER NOTICES

VALE

- Alva Airey MALABAR
 - Audrey Barrett SHORTLAND
- **Banche Brandt OATLEY**
- Barbara Rayner FORSTER
- Bernadette Abbott WOOLOOWARE
- Beryl Woodgate BLAKEHURST
 - Beryl Bird WOLLONGBAR
- Bervl Neal COOMA
- Bessie Brennan COOGEE
- Bettina Price DARLINGHURST
- Betty Allerton LINDFIELD
- **Betty Daniell MANLY**
- Betty Prichard PORT MACQUARIE
 - Betty Ennis BOAMBEE EAST
 - Betty Macdonald GLENFIELD
 - Bev Henderson NORAVILLE
 - **Bev Simpson DALEYS POINT**
- -Colleen Makim INVERELL
- Coralie Crown WOLLSTONECRAFT
- Dawn Smith ARMIDALE
- Desiree Hodgson PORT MACQUARIE
- Diane McCarron WADALBA
- **Doreen Franke TORONTO**
- **Doreen Thomson CURRARONG**
 - Doris Chapman PORT MACQUARIE
 - Dorothy King GLADESVILLE
- **Dorothy Benson BANKSTOWN**
- Edith Etheridge VALLA BEACH
- VILLAGE

- Edna MacFarlane INGLEBURN
- Elfreda McMullen CONCORD
- Elizabeth Davids WOOMBAH
- Elsie Cuthbert NORTH RYDE
- **Enid Driver GORDON**
- **Enid Bull CAMDEN**
- **Evelyn Burford MEREWETHER**
- Gail Colahan BURLEIGH HEADS
- Gladys Prothero PAGEWOOD
- Gloria Banwell NARRAWEENA
- Gloria Lenon KINGSWOOD
- Gweneth Beard CONISTON
- Isabel Cahill THURGOONA
- Jennifer Munson GREENWAY
- Jessie Symon NUMBUGGA
- Joan Staples TRANMERE
- Joan Higgins GIRRAWEEN
- Josie McRobert WAHROONGA
- Joy Cross QUEANBEYAN
- Joy Hall GREENACRE
- Joyce Lee POINT CLARE
- June Hay-Hendry REVESBY
- Kaye Williams BANORA POINT
- Lexie Pryor WARIALDA
- Lil Morton BROOKVALE
- Maisie Gorton COFFS HARBOUR
- Marcia Chivas MANLY VALE
- Margaret Cannon NTH RICHMOND
- Marie Jones GORDON

- Marjorie Haggarty EASTWOOD
- Mary Koutalis HARRIS PARK
- Mary Austin COFFS HARBOUR
- Mavis Williamson WYONGAH
- Mona Taylor SILVERWATER Nancy Simshauser DUBBO
- Nola Evans BAULKHAM HILLS
- Norma Williams PRESTONS
- Norma Powell KIRRAWEE
- Norma Moore MARAYONG
- Norma Mills UMINA
- Patricia Barratt BOONAH
- Pauline Marr TENNYSON POINT
- Pauline Varcoe GOULBURN
- Phillys Fox CARINGBAH
- Ruby Hunt HAY
- Ruth Sutton TURRAMURRA
- Ruth Wall NARRABEEN
- Sheila Riley KINCUMBER
- Sheila Henderson CASTLE HILL
- Shirley Flanagan HILLSTON
- Valerie Copping PEAKHURST
- Wilga King KILLARNEY VALE

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of these members \(\bigvere

What is grief and how to support grief?

Grief is a normal emotional response to the loss of someone or something important to us. Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different behaviours and feelings, affecting people in various ways.

There is no 'one way' to grieve.

Grief is a common life experience for those connected to defence service and is not always due to bereavement. This free guide is designed to help you navigate the complex and confusing landscape of grief and loss.

Feel free to share this guide with family and friends.

You can download our Grief and Loss Guide by scaning this QR code or call us on 02 9267 6577 to receive it by post.





WHAT IS GRIEF?

What does it feel like?

Intense sadness, shock, numbness, anger, Ioneliness, guilt, pain, relief, confusion, overwhelm – it can feel like a mixture of all of Overwhelm – It can feel like a mixture on an or these feelings, sometimes independent of each other, sometimes more than one at the same time. It can feel very draining, to the point where simple tasks feel very difficult, like showering, brushing your teeth or leaving the bourse.

How long does it last?

How long is a piece of string? The intensity of the grief related feelings may come and go over time depending on what is happening around you. Eventually the intensity will ease and the space and time between episodes of intense feelings will grow longer

When should I seek help?

It is important that you connect with a health professional; your GP, counsellor or psychologist, particularly after a significant psychologist, particularly after a significant loss to they can monitor you and help you manage how you are feeling and the intensit of the waves. It is particularly important to speak to your health professional if the grief you are experiencing is affecting your appetite, your sleep or you are having thoughts of harming yourself.

You, your friends, your GP or health profession

Who can help me?

and specialist services like Open Arms, Lifeline, Grief line and Families of Veterans Guild. Importantly, you are not alone. You are never alone.

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What types of loss do the Families of Veterans experience? Loss of life
 Loss of health (physical and mental health)

Loss of physical presence (deployment)

Loss of presence
 Loss of career
 Loss of financial stability
 Loss of community
 Loss of social support
 Loss of relationship

Navigating Grief and Loss Please scan the code below to view a recent webinar we hosted on navigating grief and loss

What do children experience?

Strong feelings. Feelings that are as strong and intense as what adults feel but without the skills to regulate or sooth. Feelings that can be confusing and can be expressed in challenging behaviour. The Kids Helpline has compiled some very good resources to help children through orief and they can be



grief and they can be found at kidshelpline.com.au

This document was prepared with resources available at www.healthdirect.gov.au/grief-loss

War widows who recently turned 100

- Beryl Dahlenburg BLACK MOUNTAIN
- Ruby Colenutt GOROKAN
- Iris Fletcher PORT MACQUARIE
- Jessie Baker GREENWICH
- Joan Crane KELLYVILLE
- Kath Reay RYDE
- Kennie Dare LANE COVE
- Linda Sherrah LAKE HAVEN
- Lucy Layzell MEREWETHER HEIGHTS
- Norma Richmond CASTLE HILL
- Thelma Richardson TUNCURRY

Happy Birthday!



Welcome to our new members!

- Bonnie Kaminski ST CLAIR
- Doreen Jenkinson-Bourke FORSTER
- Fay Davies HEATHCOTE
- Fiona Nicholls TINDAL
- Jenny Osiek AVALON BEACH
- Julie Jones NARRANDERA
- Kay Hibbard WHALAN
- Kay Meredith CAMPBELLTOWN
- Kobi Ellem HARRISON
- Leeah Emmett PETERSHAM
- Leonis Bellingham CAMBRIDGE GARDENS
- Maureen Burdeu ALBURY
- Maureen Macaskill THURGOONA
- Naomi Dunkley GREEN HILLS
- Natalie Kither FULHAM GARDENS
- Noela Shinners COORANBONG
- Pat Twaddle ORANGE
- Rosemary Ruhl BANGALEE

We can't wait to get to know you!



Celebrating some very special birthdays!

Right: Celebrating her 100th birthday was Moruya Social Club's "Role Model" Phyl Strahan.

Among the congratulations Phyl received were messages from King Charles III, His Excellency the Hon. David Hurley, Governor General of Australia, The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon. Matt Keogh MP, Minister of Veteran's Affairs and Defence who wrote a wonderful letter and many more.

We all wish Phyl good health and many more birthdays to come.







Left: Recently, the North Ryde War Widows Social Club celebrated the 100th birthdays of two of their members, Kath Reay and Kennie Dare. Attendees enjoyed the beautiful bushland views at The North Ryde RSL club and shared a meal connecting with friends to celebrate these milestone birthdays.

The 100 years young birthday ladies were toasted, enjoying their two birthday cakes amongst friends.

Mental Health First Aid

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has recently partnered with Mental Health First Aid, launching free training to support veteran mental health.

The Standard Mental Health First Aid course for the veteran community aims to equip you with the tools and knowledge to support those experiencing mental health problems or crises.

For those undertaking the course, you will learn about common mental health signs and symptoms as well as how to recognise and respond to an emerging or worsening mental health problem. For more information please visit:

www.mhfa.com.au/mental-health-protect

Open Arms

Open Arms is a national counselling and support service for the veteran and defence communities.

If you are a war widow, Open Arms can help you with your challenges and grief. They offer free and confidential counselling by qualified clinicians, group programs and workshops with other war widows, support for your family, and referrals to other services and resources.

You can also access self-help tools and resources on their website, such as podcasts, webinars and factsheets.

Open Arms is here to help you cope and thrive.

You can contact Open Arms anytime on 1800 011 046 or visit: www.openarms.gov.au.

Time is almost up for the Kokoda Track's 'Poppy Project'

The Kokoda Track needs our help for their 'Poppy Project'. In a stirring tribute to our veterans and their families, the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway and Families of Veterans Guild is embarking on a heartwarming initiative: The Crochet Poppy Project.

This remarkable endeavour involves the creation of a grand installation comprised of knit and crochet poppies. Poppies served as a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by military personnel during both World Wars, and their symbolic significance continues to resonate today.

The Crochet Poppy Project is more than just an art installation: it is a testament to the enduring spirit of community and collaboration. Each poppy lovingly crafted by our members will stand as a symbol of gratitude and respect for the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families.

Led by Board Director Jennifer Collins AM, and in partnership with the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway and our dedicated club coordinators, this project invites members with a passion for crochet or knitting to join in this meaningful endeavour. Over 3,000 poppies are to be produced by October 2024 to create a wall of poppies at the Kokoda Track Memorial walkway on Kokoda Day, 3 November 2024.

Whether you are a seasoned crochet enthusiast or new to the craft, we welcome you to be a part of this inspiring initiative.

If you are interested, please contact Kelly at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway on 02 9166 0890 and she will send you a pattern, the wool and a reply envelope to return your finished poppies.

We look forward to this unique tribute for our veterans and their families.





Do you know about our Social Work and Wellbeing Program?

We are excited to introduce you to our new program, designed to support you and your loved ones as you navigate the challenges of military service, transition, injury, illness or loss. We know how hard it can be to feel invisible, overwhelmed or isolated in the veteran system, and we want you to know that you are not alone.

Our program is trauma-informed, person-centred and holistic. It offers you a range of services, including case coordination and service navigation, emotional and social support, education and information, social connection and peer support, and mindfulness and self-care. Our team of qualified and experienced social workers will work with you to tailor a plan that meets your needs and goals.

if you are interested in finding out more about how our programs can support you, contact us today and find out how to access our program. Visit our website www.familiesofveterans.org.au or call us on (02) 9267 6577.

AVCAT scholarship applications

AVCAT supports the children and grandchildren of Australian veterans with the cost of tertiary education. They provide scholarships that help pay for textbooks and expenses and help ease the cost of living.

Applications will open on 18 August 2024 and will close on 31 October 2024.

For more information, about when and how to apply, visit www.avcat.org.au.

Assistance with Community Transport

No longer driving and having trouble managing public transport?

Contact My Aged Care: https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/ or phone: 1800 200 422

When you call, you will be asked a few questions then you will be able to complete an assessment over the phone or in person at your home.

My Aged Care is your portal to services to help you stay safely in your own home or call us for assistance on (02) 9267 6577 and ask for Jo.

If you, or someone you know, is having a tough time and needs support, information, or guidance, please reach out to our office or one of these many phone services available.

- **1800 ELDERHelp** 1800 353 374 (national free call phone number that automatically redirects callers seeking information and advice on elder abuse with existing phone line service in their jurisdiction)
- Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling 1800 011 046
- All-hours Support Line 1800 628 036 (Australian Department of Defence)
- **Lifeline Australia** 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support line)
- **Suicide Call Back Service** 1300 659 467 (24 hour counselling for suicide prevention and mental health support)
- **1800RESPECT** 1800 737 732 (24 hour sexual assult, family and domestic violence counselling service)
- **Defence Member and Family Support Helpline** 1800 624 608



2024 CEREMONY

SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2024

10.30AM

The Cenotaph Martin Place, Sydney

