



FAMILIES
OF VETERANS GUILD
Owned by Australian War Widows NSW Ltd

SPRING 2025

THE GUILD DIGEST

SPECIAL EDITION WAR WIDOWS DAY 2025



AUSTRALIAN WAR WIDOWS NSW LIMITED

Trading as
FAMILIES OF VETERANS GUILD

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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

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Please call us prior to your visit to ensure
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The Guild Digest has been checked thoroughly
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However, errors may occur which are
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apologise most sincerely.

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FOR YOUR DIARY

Wellbeing activities

Canberra wellbeing walk & lunch
5 December 2025

Sydney Christmas activities & lunch
5 December 2025

Online writing through grief
11 December 2025

Sydney wellbeing walk
12 December 2025

Online vision board session
14 January 2026

Sydney wellbeing walk & lunch
16 January 2026

Canberra wellbeing walk & lunch
23 January 2026

Online writing through grief
29 January 2026

Sydney vision board session
31 January 2026

**Online tension and trauma
releasing exercises workshop**
3, 10, 17 February 2026

Key commemorative dates

**Arrival of First Australian Forces in
Afghanistan (2001)**
3 December 2025

**Last Australian Soldiers Evacuate
Gallipoli (1915)**
20 December 2025

**Conclusion of Operation SLIPPER,
Afghanistan (2014)**
31 December 2025

**Commonwealth of Australia
Proclaimed (1901)**
1 January 2026

Battle of Rafa (1917)
9 January 2026

**Official Cessation of Hostilities in
Vietnam by Australian forces (1973)**
11 January 2026

**Anniversary of Ambush at
Gemench Bridge (1942)**
14 January 2026

**Tet Offensive Commences, Vietnam
(1968)**
30 January 2026

**HMAS Melbourne/HMAS Voyager
Collision (1964)**
10 February 2026

**Radji Beach Massacre, Dutch East
Indies (1942)**
16 February 2026

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HIGHLIGHTS





State President Queen Dunbar (middle) with Board Chair Tricia Hobson (right) and CEO Renee Wilson (left) at the 4th War Widows Day Service.

This Spring, I had the honour of standing beside many of you at the Cenotaph in Sydney for War Widows Day. Whether you joined us in person, attended a local club gathering, or marked the day quietly at home, War Widows Day is your day.

As you know, War Widows Day is held on 19 October, the birthday of our founder, Jessie Vasey CBE OBE. Jessie believed in the power of women supporting women. She believed in visibility, dignity, and connection. Her legacy lives on in every story shared, every sprig of wattle laid, and every moment we come together.

This year's theme, "war widows who have inspired us" invited us to reflect on those who paved the way. At the service, we heard the story of Elizabeth Wright, a widow who cared for her husband for decades after his service. Her daughters spoke with love

and pride, reminding us that the impact of service does not end when service does, it continues through generations.

The Wattle Ceremony this year was especially moving. Watching many of you lay sprigs in honour of one another, escorted by Navy volunteers, was a moment I will never forget. It was a tribute to shared resilience, and a reminder that we are not alone.

After the ceremony, I joined many of you for our Members' lunch. It was a chance to sit together, share a meal, and continue the reflections of the morning in a more personal way. I was moved by the conversations, the laughter between old friends, and the moments of remembrance.

We all had the privilege of listening to our former Presidents speak about the war widows who inspired them. Their stories were familiar: stories of women who

faced unimaginable challenges and yet found ways to support others, build community, and lead with compassion.

To mark War Widows Day this year, our organisation launched the inaugural War Widows Honour Roll: a living record of your stories and a wonderful way to share them with the broader community. It's a place where your stories are preserved, where your families can honour your strength, and where your name becomes part of our history.

If you haven't yet added a tribute, I encourage you to do so. You can share your own story, or the story of a war widow who inspired you. Scan the QR code on page 12 to share your tribute. Every story helps ensure that our sacrifices are never forgotten.

Across the state, many of you gathered in your own communities to mark War Widows Day. These local commemorations are a beautiful reminder of the strength of our community. They show that remembrance lives in connection, in tradition, and in the bonds you've built with one another.

To each of you—thank you. Thank you for your courage, your care, and your contribution. War Widows Day is your day. You are seen. You are heard. You are honoured.

MS QUEEN DUNBAR
President



From left to right: Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC, Board Chair Tricia Hobson, CEO Renee Wilson, Matt Burnell MP and Senator David Shoebridge at the Veteran Families Survey Report Launch event at Parliament House.

War Widows Day was a moving reminder of why our work matters, standing at the Cenotaph, sharing stories, and honouring the women who carry so much for our community. I had the privilege of joining the ceremony and the luncheon, witnessing firsthand the resilience and warmth that define you, our members. It was a day of connection and reflection, and it has shaped my thinking as I share this update on what's happened since.

On 30 October we launched the results of our 2025 Veteran Families Survey at Parliament House, Canberra. I had the privilege of chairing a discussion between politicians, widows and veteran families. The Hon. Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, formally launched the report, supported by the co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Veterans,

Matt Burnell MP and Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC. Fifteen Members of Parliament and Senators joined the conversation and engaged with the findings. The reception was constructive, and our work was acknowledged later that day in the House of Representatives: an important signal that the voices of widows and families are resonating with our elected representatives.

I also want to take this opportunity to update you on our work in supporting the War Widows in South Australia (SA). In September the SA Guild formally and unanimously resolved to wind up their association and transfer their assets to our organisation. Renee and her team are working with the SA organisation during their wind-up period and will start to transition their members to our organisation from December 2025, with a view to extending the war widows program to them from 2026.

As the oldest and largest remaining war widows' organisation in the country, we want to ensure that no war widow is left behind by the closure of their associations, no matter where they live. What we are doing here, honours the legacy of Jessie Vasey and aligns with our mission to support widows where and when they need us.

I also wanted to take a moment to let you know Renee and her team are busy getting ready for the 2026-2027 membership year which will see members be provided with more information about the benefits of membership and be able to choose the options that suit them best. Late last year the Board approved a new membership model for the organisation which will see a new zero cost option introduced in 2026-2027. You can find out more about this on page 28 of this edition of *The Guild Digest*.

As we close out the year, I wish you and your families all the very best for the coming festive season. Please remember the organisation is here to support you. This can be a challenging time for many as much as it can be joyous, please know you are never alone.

MS TRICIA HOBSON
Board Chair



Minister Keogh with CEO Renee Wilson at the Veteran Families Survey Report Launch at Parliament House.

Remembrance Day is a solemn reminder of the immense sacrifice made by those who have given their lives in the service of our nation and the families who are left behind. We also remember those with the physical and mental injuries of war and those that support them at home.

As war widows and family members, you know the nature of that sacrifice and impact all too well. As a Government, we know we have a responsibility to support veterans and their families in a way that honours their sacrifice.

We understand that military service is unique in nature and impacts the family of each serving or ex-serving ADF member in different ways. That is why we have put the wellbeing of the entire veteran community, including families, at the centre of our efforts.

In our first term, we released the first Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy and eliminated the backlog of claims at DVA. We fulfilled our election pledge to build a network of Veterans and Families Hubs expressly aimed at

the wellbeing of veterans and their families, and continue to open more Hubs across the nation.

In our second term we have lost no time building on the momentum of our first three years. For example, in September the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission (DVSC) began operation, fulfilling what the Royal Commission's Final Report called its most important recommendation.

For the first time, veterans and their families now have an institution with a specific, singular focus on systemically preventing suicide and promoting wellbeing among current and ex-serving ADF members. The DVSC will oversee sustained reform and implementation of the Royal Commission's findings.

In August, I was delighted to appoint Annabelle Wilson as Australia's new Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner. Annabelle is a highly qualified advocate for the veteran family community, having worked at Legacy Melbourne, she is recognised for her empathy, drive and evidence-driven approach. Annabelle is also the widow of a veteran.

I also was pleased earlier this year to announce almost \$100,000 in funding for the Families of Veterans Guild through our Veteran Wellbeing Grant program to expand the great work you do. This money will be put toward new services in areas of high need like Townsville, Geelong and Adelaide. It will also be used to extend wellbeing activities to war widows and veteran families in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland to maintain social connection and peer support.

This funding is a testament not only to the great work the Guild does today supporting and representing over 2,000 widows and families of veterans all over Australia, but also your history of supporting the changing needs of families for almost 80 years.

In October I was also pleased to launch the Guild's 2025 Veteran Families Survey at an event at Parliament House where MPs heard from a lived experience panel and discussed the report's findings and policy recommendations. I thank the Guild for this important research and recommendations.

Commissioner Wilson and I look forward to working closely with the Guild in 2026 as we continue our work to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission. We know there is much to do and we appreciate the support we get from the Guild as we go about our work.

In the meantime, I wish everyone a restful and Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year.

THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
 Minister for Veterans Affairs
 Minister for Defence Personnel



Minister Harris (middle) with (from left to right) members Wendy McKean, Dianne Vogt, CEO Renee Wilson and member Jenny Ware at the Remembrance Day service in Sydney.

Thank you for the opportunity to connect with the Families of Veterans community and share an update with you on the many activities and events that have recently taken place.

In September, the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship tour travelled to the Republic of Korea and Singapore. Twenty scholars and three teachers visited significant military and cultural sites across the countries including Incheon, Seoul, Gapyeong, Changi and Fort Canning.

When the tour returned, I was pleased to announce Greece and Crete as the locations for the 2026 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship tour. Student applications for the PAMS 2026 tour will open in early 2026 and students can register their interest by visiting www.veterans.nsw.gov.au/pams

Recently the NSW Government presented its whole-of-government response to the Royal

Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which addressed the 15 recommendations that directly involve state and territory governments. The NSW Government recognises the significance of the Royal Commission's work and the importance of a coordinated and compassionate response to the issues it has raised. The response reflects a commitment to improving outcomes for current and former serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families.

War Widows Day was commemorated on Sunday 19 October with a special service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. Now in its fourth year, the annual War Widows Day is an important opportunity for communities across NSW to recognise the sacrifices made by the families of our veterans.

In October, the Anzac Memorial opened a new exhibition *Beyond Service: Veterans' New Journeys*, which showcases the work of 2025

Veteran Artist in Residence, Hugh Semple. The exhibition features paintings and drawings accompanied by written reflections based on interviews with the subjects, inviting viewers to see beyond the uniform and into the humanity of those who have served. The exhibition is open until the end of January and I encourage you to visit if you are in Sydney. More information is available at: www.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/event/beyond-service-veterans-new-journeys

On 11 November, we commemorated Remembrance Day. The day began with poppies being projected onto the shells of the Sydney Opera House before the official NSW Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. Remembrance Day gives us an opportunity each year to pause and reflect to remember all who have served and are currently serving, and their families. As a state and nation, it is important that we continue to come together on the 11th day of the 11th month and pause for one minute, to commemorate the service and sacrifice of our veterans.

I wish you a safe and happy festive season and hope that you are able to spend time with friends and family. I look forward to continuing to support the veteran community and their families and working closely with the war widows of NSW in 2026.

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



From left to right: Kerrie-Anne, Caroline, Gabby, Cherie, Renee, Kelly, Michelle, Dan, Hayley, Jacinta and Lisa.

Meet the team supporting you

As we continue to strengthen our services, we want to introduce the team that now brings together the War Widows, Social Work and Wellbeing Services. This integration means all the services you know and love - social clubs, the Friendship Line, wellbeing activities, and social work support - are delivered by one team, ensuring continuity of care and seamless program delivery.

At the heart of this work is social work practice. Social work is a profession grounded in dignity, respect, human rights, and the belief that every person has the right to feel safe, connected and supported. Guided by the Australia Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and Social Work Practice Standards, our Program and Services team work in ways that are trauma-informed, person-led and culturally responsive. Practically, this means listening deeply, supporting autonomy and walking alongside each person as

an individual in their own right - not doing for, or deciding for, but empowering choice and voice.

About the Program Manager

Lisa Stephenson – Program Manager

Lisa is an experienced social worker with a background spanning child and family support, trauma-informed practice, community development and sector capacity building. Throughout her career, she has led programs and teams that support people through grief, life transitions, and complex care.

In her role at the Families of Veterans Guild, Lisa developed the social work and wellbeing services from the ground up. She leads the integrated team ensuring services are safe, empowering and effective.

Lisa works collaboratively across the defence, veteran and civilian systems of care to close service gaps and improve access. While advocating for the needs and rights of war widows at both individual and systems levels, her leadership is grounded in empathy, relationships, and the belief that no widow should ever feel alone or unsupported.

Meet the Team

Gabrielle (Gabby) Steel – Social Worker

Gabby is a qualified social worker with further training in art psychotherapy. She provides emotional and practical support to war widows and veteran families using trauma-informed and person-centered social work practice. She offers case coordination and guidance during times of stress or change. Gabby leads some of our wellbeing activities, including *Writing Through Grief* and creative arts, delivering these across all generations and experiences.

Hayley Lam – Social Worker

Hayley is a qualified social worker and supports members to navigate services and maintain social connection. She assists with accessing My Aged Care and DVA entitlements, coordinates referrals, and advocates for personalised support pathways. Hayley brings experience from a community mental health setting, where she liaised with a range of services and health practitioners to support individuals with diverse needs. Hayley works closely with social clubs and Friendship Line volunteers, supporting them while fostering a safe, welcoming space for peer connection.

Evelyn Andricopoulos – Social Worker

Evelyn is a newly graduated social worker committed to respectful, person-led practice. She will commence with the organisation in December 2025, supporting the coordination of social clubs and the Friendship Line. Evelyn will assist with service navigation and referrals, providing practical and emotional support during life transitions.

Kerrie-Anne Teo – Wellbeing Support Officer

Kerrie coordinates the online and in-person wellbeing activities, and delivers in-person wellbeing activities in Canberra, offering creative and social opportunities for connection and shared experiences. Her lived experience as a defence partner and carer strengthens her role. She also coordinates program logistics, program communication, and online social groups, ensuring members are informed and able to easily engage with activities.

What does this mean for you?

The services delivered specifically to war widows (social clubs, transport assistance, birthday calls and the Friendship Line) continue to be delivered and coordinated as usual.

The integration of the programs and services makes the support provided through the wellbeing activities more accessible across the entire membership base. Bringing together the delivery of the programs and services means they are delivered in a

more consistent manner and provide more options for war widows and veteran families to engage with – including gentle walks, creative arts, therapeutic writing, cooking sessions, and, of course, professional social work support if needed.

This holistic approach ensures the social, emotional and practical needs can be met in one place, while honouring independence, life experience and personal preferences.

Together, the team delivers services that reduce social isolation, build resilience, and strengthen wellbeing.

How to Connect

You are warmly invited to use any of these services. You don't need to know exactly what you're asking for. We are here to talk it through with you. Call: 02 9267 6577 or email: socialwork@fov.org.au or warwidows@fov.org.au

Self-referrals are welcome. There is no wrong door. Your wellbeing matters. We are here to walk alongside you, every step of the way.



Hayley and Gabby with members and Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, when hosting a wellbeing activity at Jazz@TheHouse.

Closing the digital divide: our Digital Literacy Project

EMPOWERING WAR WIDOWS TO STAY CONNECTED WITH THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

We began with a simple idea in The Guild Digest: help war widows feel confident online. Those first articles sparked conversations across social clubs and calls from our Friendship Line. Today, that idea has grown into a project designed to make technology less daunting and more empowering. The Digital Literacy Project is now live. It's practical, easy to follow and built for you.



We've created beginner-friendly guides and short video tutorials covering everyday essentials such as email, Facebook, and EventBrite. Each guide includes simple steps and tips for staying safe online, like using passphrases and spotting scams. These resources are now available on a dedicated webpage on our website.

To make access even easier, we're including printed copies of the first guides with this edition of

The Guild Digest. Each guide has QR codes that link straight to the matching videos. To access the videos, simply scan the code with your phone and watch the step-by-step instructions. No searching, no confusion: just clear help when you need it.

Why this matters

Digital skills help you stay connected with family, join our wellbeing activities, and manage everyday tasks like shopping or banking. For widows and families in regional areas, these skills open doors to connection and activities that were once out of reach.

What's next?

This is stage one. Next, we'll offer in-person sessions at our Chatswood office for those who are looking for some extra support. We'll also keep adding new guides and videos covering topics like Zoom, Canva, Word and Excel, so you can keep learning at your own pace.

We invite you to explore the new resources, try the guides and share them with friends. If you need help, don't hesitate to call us. Our team is here to walk you through the guides.

Together, we're closing the digital divide—one guide, one video, one confident click at a time.

Visit: www.familiesofveterans.org.au/project/digital-literacy-war-widows

Scan to visit the
Digital Literacy
webpage



4TH ANNUAL WAR WIDOWS DAY



The 4th War Widows Day service at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney.



Honouring war widows: *a day to remember those left behind*

On 19 October, we gathered at the Sydney Cenotaph: at the heart of the city and the heart of our community. War Widows Day belongs to war widows. It is a day shaped by their stories and resilience. It is a day our nation pauses and say: ‘we see you, we honour you, and we will not forget.’

This year, the theme “war widows who have inspired us” invited us to reflect on those who paved the way—women who turned their grief into collective strength. The morning began with the arrival of Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, and General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC (Mil) CVO MC (Ret) and Lady Lynne Cosgrove. Their presence, alongside representatives from Defence, Government, and the veteran community, was a public recognition of the sacrifices made by war widows.

We opened with the War Widows’ Motto. The words are familiar, and they matter. They speak of a community that looks after one another and speaks plainly about loss, service, and community.

The Governor’s address brought the focus to war widows and families, about how the impact of service endures at home and across generations. Wreaths were laid. The Wattle Ceremony followed, opened by Sir Peter and Lady Lynne Cosgrove who laid the first wattles. Each sprig of wattle stood for remembrance and gratitude. Escorted by Navy volunteers, widows and their families honoured one another, and in doing so reminded everyone present that the cost of service is borne not only by those in uniform, but also by those who love and support them.

Storytelling was at the centre of this year’s service. The daughters of Elizabeth Wright shared their mother’s story as a war widow: decades of care, steady strength, and pride in family. The story landed because it was real. Many widows present recognised their own journey in it: the daily support, the unspoken worry, the love that endures long after war is over.

4TH ANNUAL WAR WIDOWS DAY



Wing Commander Andrew Burke, representing Chief of Air Force, enjoying meeting our members during the lunch at the Fullerton Hotel on War Widows Day.

After the ceremony, we moved to the Fullerton Hotel for lunch: a time to sit together, share a meal, and continue the morning's reflections. The room held conversation, laughter, and moments of remembrance without fanfare. Former Presidents spoke in a panel about the war widows who inspired them, reminding us that leadership in our community grows from compassion, service, and the habit of showing up for one another.

Community was at the heart the day. It was in the conversations, the shared silences, and the way war widows stood together. Many widows spoke to a day that was solemn and meaningful, a day where

they felt supported and able to speak about the loved one they miss. Several widows noted the presence of younger widows and children, highlighting our organisation's and members' capacity to build spaces where people can feel welcome and included at any stage of their lives.

We also saw the quieter acts that keep the day authentic: a hand offered to help someone reach the lectern for the Ode; a volunteer finding a seat for a new member and staying to talk; transport arranged so those with mobility limitations could join us; staff and peers checking in without fuss. These are not headline moments; they are the fabric of our community.

Across New South Wales and beyond, regional clubs and communities gathered to mark War Widows Day in their own meaningful ways. From Ballina to Tamworth, Queanbeyan to Camden Haven, many widows came together—sometimes in small groups, sometimes in larger gatherings—to honour the courage, resilience, and sacrifice that binds them together. These events, whether a luncheon at the local RSL or a morning tea at a community hub, highlight the importance of coming together, reminding us that War Widows Day is not defined by numbers, but by the act of marking the day, sharing stories, and standing alongside one another. Those gatherings highlight

that every widow is part of a community that sees and honours them.

This year we launched the War Widows Honour Roll, a living record of the stories that have shaped Australia. It is a place where families can honour the contributions of war widows in their families or communities, and where every entry ensures that no widow is forgotten. We invite all to add a tribute when the time is right. Every story matters and every story belongs in our War Widows Honour Roll. Send us stories and pictures via email to communications@fov.org.au or by post at any time.

War Widows Day sits on Jessie Vasey's birthday for a reason. Jessie took grief and turned it into work that helped others. She demanded visibility, dignity, and connection. We honour her with the work we do: recording stories, holding space that feels safe, and keeping recognition public so Australia never forgets its war widows.

War Widows Day is not about the end of a story. It is about the journey: it is a day to remember, to connect, and to look ahead.

Scan to add a
tribute to the War
Widows Honour
Roll



or visit: [familiesofveterans.org.au/
war-widows-honour-roll](https://familiesofveterans.org.au/war-widows-honour-roll)

Captions: **Top:** Members enjoying the company of Sir Peter and Lady Lynne Cosgrove at the lunch.

Middle: War Widows Day Service in Wollongong.

Bottom: Members getting together to mark War Widows Day in Tamworth.



4TH ANNUAL WAR WIDOWS DAY



*"It was a beautiful
commemoration and a good
turnout."*

- Daughter of a War Widow



*"The ceremony was so moving and
incredibly special."*

- War Widow





*"War Widows Day
was wonderful."
- War Widow*



*"Well done on running a slick ceremony and
wonderful lunch commemorating War Widows Day."
- Attendee*



4TH ANNUAL WAR WIDOWS DAY



*"Thank you for delivering
another successful War
Widows Day"*
- War Widow



*"The day was full of joy, laughter
and tears."*
- War Widow





*"What a wonderful day
celebrating war widows."
- War Widow*



*"The whole day was very special and moving."
- Daughter of a War Widow*



4TH ANNUAL WAR WIDOWS DAY



*"The service was solemn
and meaningful."
- War Widow*





"Everything was perfect."
- War Widow





Three of Elizabeth Wright's daughters, Edwina Wright, Katherine Kachor and Margaret Morgan reading the tribute to their mother at this year's War Widows Day Service at the Cenotaph, Sydney.

My mother, a war widow the story of Elizabeth Wright

At this year's War Widows Day service, the story of Elizabeth Wright was shared by three of her daughters: Katherine Kachor, Edwina Wright, and Margaret Morgan. Their reading, led by Katherine Kachor, formed a moving part of the ceremony, inviting us to listen to the lived experience of a woman who spent her life caring for a veteran, building a family, and supporting her community.

War Widows Day is dedicated to recognising the courage and contribution of Australia's war widows. This year's theme focused on the importance of sharing stories: making space for voices that have too often gone unheard. By telling Elizabeth's story, her daughters helped us understand the lasting effects of war and service on families, and the value of passing these stories on.

Elizabeth Wright's life was shaped by service and sacrifice. In sharing her experience, her daughters reminded us why we gather: to honour the women whose lives have shaped our community, and to ensure their stories are heard and remembered.

“ My mother, Elizabeth Wright.
My mother, carer of a veteran.
My mother, a widow of war.

Mum joined the Guild in 2005 after the passing of our father, Reg. Mum never really ‘got over’ dad’s passing, for almost 20 years she was often overcome with emotion and grief when she spoke of him. Mum would often say, “He was a wonderful man, everyone loved him.”

Mum would often reflect saying that Dad had seen a different life, referring to his war service. Dad served in the Air Force as a Spitfire pilot throughout the Second World War.

She’d help us picture this life “Imagine his nerves for five-and-a-half years. He could have been shot down any minute, any mission, and he would have been watching others not come back. He went away at 19, a young boy, and came back a grey-haired man.”

Mum cared for Dad for the final 20 years of his life, but in truth, she cared for him for much longer than that – really for their entire marriage.

After the chaos and catastrophe of war, Dad revelled in peace and quiet.

Dad never spoke much about the war. Mum once



Elizabeth Wright (right) with her friend Margaret Waterman (left).

said, “some men will tell you the whole thing. But he would never, ever say anything.”

After marrying Dad, Mum never worked again. She would have loved to return to nursing, but Dad worried too much about her if she wasn’t home.

She did not speak to anyone about how Dad struggled after the war. She supported him silently and stoically. To her he remained her beautiful man.

She would often say she was very proud of our family. A family they built together, hope and love in the aftermath of war. Having loved, supported and cared for Dad almost her entire adult life, Mum often thought about those widows and families of veterans who continue to live the life she had wondering how they were coping with the aftermath of their service. Mum didn’t think enough was being done for these women and families. Mum passed away in June this year aged 104.

Mum was a woman of immense understanding, empathy and compassion. War is brutal and its impacts everlasting.

Mum carried the weight of war long after it ended, and her story deserves to be shared, acknowledged, and remembered.

Today we remember our Mum.

An Australian War Widow.”



Katherine Kachor, Edwina Wright and Margaret Morgan after the War Widows Day service.

War Widows Day Address

At this year's War Widows Day service, our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, delivered the War Widows Day Address. The Governor's words acknowledged the significance of the day, the history of remembrance at the Cenotaph, and the ongoing contribution of war widows and families.

Her Excellency's speech stands as a tribute to the women and families whose lives have shaped Australia. By sharing these stories, we honour their service and ensure their experiences remain part of Australia's history. The following is the Governor's address, as delivered at the service.



Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW delivering the War Widows Day Address at this year's service.



‘Bujari gamarruwa Diyn Babana
Gamarada Gadigal Ngura’

I acknowledge the Gadigal,
the Traditional Owners of this
land on which we gather today. I pay
my respects to Elders past, present,
and emerging, and to Indigenous
veterans and family members of
veterans around our nation.

‘Place’ has a central role in the
Australian story. The history of
this Cenotaph, as a place for public
commemoration, tells us why it is
significant that we gather here today.

In the pre-dawn hours of Anzac Day
1927, a group of veterans walking by
a partially built Cenotaph in Martin
Place found an elderly woman
leaning down to place flowers. Her
grief etched by a surrounding arc
of electric light, they joined her
to pay their respects. The woman
was, perhaps, a widow; almost
undoubtedly a mother, and quite
possibly both.

That encounter led to Anzac Day’s
Dawn Service. On Anzac Day the
following year, the commemorative
service here began at 4.30am and
attracted around 100 people. In the
silence of their reflection, each family
member placed a wreath and took
strength from each other.

Two years later, the finished Cenotaph,
complete with statues, was unveiled
by the then Premier Sir Thomas
Rainsford Bavin, to a crowd of several
thousand people. The Sydney Morning
Herald reported the Premier’s words,
saying: “The Cenotaph (expresses) in
a permanent and material form the

admiration of the people of this state
for the brave deeds of our soldiers
and sailors, our imperishable gratitude
for their sacrifice, and our deep and
abiding sympathy for the relatives of
the fallen.”

The epithets: ‘Courage’, ‘Endurance’,
‘Service’, ‘Comradeship’ and
‘Sacrifice’ are not only the
prerogative of the fallen. But, too
often, as you know too well, it takes
a long time for this to be understood,
acknowledged and recognised.

Recognition finally came in 2022,
when the then Premier, Dominic
Perrottet, announced that War
Widows Day would “acknowledge
the contribution and personal
sacrifice made by more than 15,000
surviving widows and widowers of
[servicemen and women] across New
South Wales.” As expressed by State
President Queen Dunbar to the war
widows present on the occasion of
that inaugural day in 2022: “you may
not have worn the uniform ... [or]
been recognised with medals and
monuments, but you have stood for
over 100 years, stoically and silently
... keeping the faith back home.”

This year, the newly named Families
of Veterans Guild has asked us to
consider “war widows of the past
who have inspired us.”

With today marking her birthday,
Mrs Jessie Vasey immediately comes
to mind, the founder of the War
Widows’ Guild of Australia.

At the end of the Second World
War, newly widowed, Jessie was
determined to do something
about the isolation and hardship

faced by so many families like her
own. Creating a space for grief,
connection, and advocacy allowed
private sorrow to be accompanied by
collective strength.

With many widows facing financial
burdens and stigma, the Guild
secured pensions, housing, and
recognition for widows with state
branches across Australia.

In NSW today, there are almost
10,000 war widows.

On this day, the 4th official War
Widows Day – I say, the 4th ‘official’
War Widows Day as every day is War
Widows Day - widows and families
gather to lay sprigs of wattle in
remembrance, a poignant symbol
linking the past to the present.

The emblem of the flowers that
were pressed and sent to loved
ones who lay wounded on foreign
fields is beautifully represented in
the design of the wattle pin. It is a
symbol of pride, of honour, and of
remembrance for those whose lives
have been shaped by loss, as well
as by strength, resilience, courage,
endurance, camaraderie, service - to
their families, the community, and
thus to all of us - and sacrifice.

Our community stands in solidarity
with you, recognising and honouring
your sacrifices. This living legacy,
embodied within the stories of
the War Widows Honour Roll, is
an essential part of Australia’s
continuing history and story
of service. We recognise and
acknowledge your service.

Lest we forget.”



2025 Veteran Families *Survey results*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our first National Veteran Families Survey. Many of you took part, including a strong cohort of war widows, and your experiences are reflected in the findings. This survey was created because, for too long, the voices and needs of veteran families have not been fully understood or recognised. The survey, commissioned by us, and conducted by YouGov, sought to profile the circumstances, challenges, and needs of Australian veteran families, including war widows. It aimed to fill gaps in recent data, quantify challenges, assess support service effectiveness, and inform advocacy and service design.

What the survey shows

Across veteran families, including war widows, the picture is clear. More than half reported mental health challenges in the past year and almost half struggled to access healthcare. Only a third agree that mental health services are tailored to veteran families.

Financial strain is widespread, with 52% concerned about their current situation and one in three households experiencing unemployment or underemployment. Children are carrying a heavy load too, with 70% experiencing personal challenges and 61% facing school related issues. Despite these pressures, resilience is strong: 59% would still recommend an ADF career. That pride matters, and it shows why family focused support must be strengthened.

What the survey tells us about war widows

War widows are part of the veteran system of care and generally have established pathways to services and access to healthcare. However, the survey confirms that support is present but that gaps persist.

In the past 12 months, 37% of war widows experienced unemployment or underemployment. 51% reported difficulty accessing general healthcare. 39% are concerned about their family finances. 40% faced difficulty accessing mental healthcare, including 14% on a regular basis. 60% reported that they or their families experienced mental health challenges.

For widows with children and those without, financial concern levels were similar. These results tell us plainly: while support exists, it is not consistently accessible or sufficient. More work still needs to be done to close those gaps.

Our recommendations to Government

To move from evidence to action, we have put forward five recommendations to Government which include:

1. Establish a Ministerial advisory body focused solely on Defence and veteran families.
2. Appoint an Assistant Minister to modernise family policy across Defence and Veterans' Affairs.
3. Investigate expanding the Veteran White Card for mental health to spouses, children and parents.
4. Implement Royal Commission Recommendation 75: commission and publish an independent review of Open Arms, including scope, clinical standards, workforce, and delivery model.
5. Fund community based programs that directly address grief and loss, career and income limitations, access barriers, care responsibilities, mental health, and social connection.



View **the**
report here



Report launch at Parliament House

Our Report, *2025 Veteran Families Survey, understanding the experiences of Australian veteran families*, was officially launched at Parliament House by The Hon. Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, supported by the co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Veterans, Matt Burnell MP and Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC. 15 Members of Parliament and Senators joined the conversation and engaged with the findings.

The launch featured a lived experience panel of veteran families, including widows, which brought the data to life. Encouragingly, the Minister reflected on the quality of the report, the panel and the recommendations made by the Guild. We are now working on a plan to gain support for the implementation of these recommendations.

The launch event was also so well received by Members of Parliament that it got a special mention in the House of Representatives later that day, putting our work, your voices and the issues affecting war widows and veteran families on the national agenda. You can watch Matt Burnell MP make his speech by scanning the QR code on this page.

Thank you again to every member who contributed. Your participation ensures that the 2025 Veteran Families Survey: Understanding the experiences of Australian veteran families Report is not just statistic, but an account of real families and war widows whose experiences must shape policy and services. We heard you. We will keep working until support is accessible, timely and fit for purpose for every war widow and veteran family.

View the report by scanning the QR code on page 25.

Watch the
mention here



Matt Burnell MP showing the report during his speech in the House of Representatives on the day of the launch.



Roundtable discussion at Parliament House involving widows, families, experts and 15 Members of Parliament and Senators.



From left to right: Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC, Board Chair Tricia Hobson, CEO Renee Wilson, Matt Burnell MP and Senator David Shoebridge.

Restoring fairness *for war widows*

Join our latest advocacy campaign

This month we are launching an important advocacy campaign to restore fairness for war widows across New South Wales (NSW). Many of you may be aware that, due to Section 134 of the NSW Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, thousands of war widows have lost access to Local Council rate concessions after the loss of their veteran spouse—even though many previously received this support as a household. This change has created inequality among widows and affects over 3,000 women in NSW.

Our recent Veteran Families Survey revealed that 37% of war widows experienced underemployment or unemployment in the past year, and 39% are concerned about their financial situation. The removal of concessions, especially on Council rates, increases financial pressures for those whose income earning capacity is limited.

What are we asking for? We are calling on the NSW Government to amend Section 134 and remove the income and assets test for war widows. This simple change would reinstate concessions for those who need them most and honour the service and sacrifice of our veteran families.

How can you help?

- Write to your local NSW Member of Parliament.
- Share your personal story—if you feel comfortable—to help Members of Parliament understand the real impact of this issue.
- Encourage other widows and supporters to get involved.
- Ask your Local Council to support this reform.

Together, we can make a difference. Please let us know if you send a letter or would like support in sharing your story. This will help us track the campaign and report back to you on our progress.

Find out
more here



The work continues

As always, thank you to everyone who has responded to the survey, shared their story, written to us, or responded to one of our requests for feedback. Your lived experience is what shapes our advocacy—and gives it power.

Each of these efforts reflects the real lives, needs and sacrifices of war widows and veteran families. If you would like to share your lived experience with us, please email ceo@fov.org.au or call (02) 9267 6577.

New membership *options*

Available from 2026

Our organisation is a community where war widows and families of veterans come together, find camaraderie, support, and a shared sense of purpose. We are a people centric organisation and our membership model ought to be as well. We are augmenting our membership model to ensure all widows and families of veterans have a place to belong.

Belonging and community have been core tenants of the Guild for decades. This sense of belonging is created through offering membership to the organisation. As a charity, the Guild cannot and does not restrict its services to financial members, it must also service the community it is created to support through a core service offering. Core services include social work, welfare and case management, and wellbeing services.

It is important to us that we know more about those we are servicing through our core services which is why we are introducing a free option called 'Community Member' into our membership model. Community Members will enjoy access to core services, peer support, newsletters, and invitations to events. Guild Members (financial members) will receive all core benefits, plus exclusive privileges such as voting rights, advocacy opportunities, and special publications.

To be eligible for either membership option, the person needs to be the family member of a veteran (including widowed and ex-partners) or otherwise meet criteria in clause 4 of our Company Constitution.

All existing members of the organisation who are WWI or WWII widows and volunteers will be provided with Guild Membership free of charge. All Life Members, likewise, are provided with Guild Membership.

On the next page (29) you will find a comparison of the differences between the two membership options.

What is happening?

The Guild is introducing two membership options from the 2026–2027 financial year:

Community Member (Free): Access to core services, newsletters and activities.

Guild Member (Paid): \$30/year or \$85/3 years. Includes additional services, voting rights, printed Digest and increased engagement (see page 29).

Do I need to do anything now?

No. if you are a current financial member the Guild membership will automatically apply to you. If you are a non-financial member, the community membership will automatically apply to you. When it comes time for renewal, new forms will clearly outline the options available to you.

Are there any changes to the costs of membership?

No, existing costs remain as is, \$30 per year or \$85 for three years.

Will I lose anything if others choose the free option?

It depends on what you are currently accessing through your paid membership. Please see the comparison table on page 29 for a comparison of benefits.

Is there any change to eligibility for membership?

No. Eligibility for membership remains the same, as outlined in clause 4 of the Company Constitution.

When does the new model start?

Preparation begins late 2025. Rollout occurs from the membership renewal period in 2026 (February – April 2026). New categories of membership will apply from the 2026–2027 financial year onwards.

Prefer a chat? Give us a call to discuss what impact this new option will have on your membership (if any). We're here to support you every step of the way. Call us on (02) 9267 6577.

Membership options comparison table

Member Benefit	Community Member	Guild Member
Cost	\$0	\$30 - 1 year; or \$85 - 3 years
War Widows Social Clubs	✓	✓
War Widows Friendship Line	✓	✓
Social Work Service	✓	✓
Rise Together Initiative	✓	✓
Webinars	✓	✓
Online Resource Hub	✓	✓
Monthly Newsletters	✓	✓
Wellbeing Activities (in person)	✓	✓
Wellbeing Activities (online)	Limited	✓
War Widows Transport Assistance		✓
Digital Literacy Program		✓
Quarterly Journal		✓
Free access to organisation luncheons		✓
Eligible for Life Membership		✓
AGM Invitations and votes		✓
Can nominate Board Directors		✓
Eligible for consideration as organisational representative		✓
Participation in Governance and Strategic Direction of organisation		✓

Representing war widows & families

Remembrance Day 2025

Remembrance Day is a time to honour the courage and sacrifice of those who served to protect Australia's freedoms and values. It is also a moment for families to pause together, honour the cost carried through generations, and reflect on the lives forever changed by service.

Through November, and on Remembrance Day itself, communities gathered at services and ceremonies to reflect, lay wreaths, and wear their poppies to remember the service and sacrifice of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation.



The Guild was represented at commemorations across New South Wales, with tributes laid on behalf of war widows, defence and veteran families, ensuring that families had the opportunity to contribute in remembering their loved ones. Many widows and families attended commemorations, and this article captures some of the occasions where members, staff and Board Directors joined in remembrance.

On 9 November, President Queen Dunbar attended the NAJEX Remembrance Day Commemoration at the Sydney Jewish Museum, hosted by the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men & Women. It was a moving ceremony shared with parliamentary colleagues, local Mayors and Councillors, ADF personnel, faith leaders and members of the Jewish community. Queen laid a wreath on behalf of war widows and veteran families and delivered an address sharing her personal experience as a war widow and the work of our organisation in supporting war widows and veteran families.

Also on 9 November, member Dianne Vogt represented the Guild at the St Andrew's Cathedral Remembrance Sunday Service, commemorating 107 years since the signing of Armistice. The service included a procession of flags and the laying of wreaths, with Di laying a wreath during the ceremony. The cathedral service included hymns and prayers, providing a reflective moment.

Our CEO Renee Wilson was honoured to attend the Remembrance Sunday Service at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, as the only organisational representative to lay a wreath on behalf of war widows and veteran families. The service took place in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, the Governor-General of Australia, the Governor of New South Wales, and senior members of the veteran and defence community. Later that day, Renee had the opportunity to meet Princess Anne at the ceremonial parade to mark the Royal Australian Corps of Signals Centenary. Renee's husband, Gary, was a signaller in the Corps and was wounded during the Afghanistan War.





On 11 November, Remembrance Day, CEO Renee Wilson joined war widows at the NSW Government's Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. This official service brought together government representatives, veterans, and community members to pause and reflect at 11:00am on the 11th day of the 11th month. Renee laid a wreath on behalf of war widows and veteran families.

In Chatswood, Board Director Michelle Carr represented the Guild at the Chatswood RSL Remembrance Day Commemorative Service in the Garden of Remembrance, hosted by the Chatswood-Willoughby ANZAC Dawn Service & Commemoration Committee. Michelle laid a wreath during the ceremony, ensuring the presence of war widows and families was acknowledged.



At the Mounties Remembrance Day Service in Mount Pritchard, members Judy Cole and Veronica Ven der Padt attended on behalf of the Guild. Judy laid a wreath on behalf of war widows and veteran families.

Many widows and members in the Central Coast area gathered to honour those who served at The Entrance & Long Jetty RSL Remembrance Day Service, with member Joyce Mason laying a wreath on behalf of war widows.



Member Merle Kelly attended the Wodonga RSL Remembrance Day Service at Woodland Grove, laying a wreath on behalf of war widows and veteran families. During the service, members of the public were also invited to lay a wreath in remembrance.

Thank you to all of you who represented war widows and veteran families this Remembrance Day.

Left page, top: Members Lynne Boyd, Denise Williams Margaret Navas, Dianne Vogt and Jenny Ware at the Holsworthy High School Remembrance Day Service.

Left page, bottom: CEO Renee Wilson meeting Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

Right page, top: Renee Wilson with members Shirley Kellock, Wendy McKean, Jenny Ware and Dianne Vogt at the Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph in Sydney.

Second: Board Director Michelle Carr (middle) with Willoughby City Council Mayor Tanya Taylor (left) and Local State Member Tim James MP (right).

Third: Members Judy Cole and Veronica Ven der Padt at the Mounties Remembrance Day Service in Mount Pritchard.

Bottom: Members Janice Lawless, Joyce Mason, Margaret Beach, Fran Brock and Shen Zappia at The Entrance & Long Jetty Remembrance Day Service.



VALE

🌹 Annie Johnson BURRANEER	🌹 Margaret Towers FREDERICKTON	🌹 Rita Harrison LEETON
🌹 Beryl O'Rourke KILLARNEY VALE	🌹 Margaret Goldrick WEST	🌹 Robyn Bottin CAMPBELLTOWN
🌹 Blanche Brentnall DALMENY	🌹 PENNANT HILLS	🌹 Ruth Payne CONCORD
🌹 Deborah Murphy FORBES	🌹 Marie McCowan FLETCHER	🌹 Suemi Boyd WARREN
🌹 Doreen Wills BALLINA	🌹 Marie Tristram MARRICKVILLE S.	🌹 Valda Merchant WAGGA WAGGA
🌹 Dorothy Martin KANDOS	🌹 Marjorie Perry CARRINGTON	🌹 Valerie Thompson
🌹 Dorothy Duncan KOGARAH	🌹 Mary Wykes GROSE VALE	🌹 WOOLLOOWARE
🌹 Elizabeth Hasler BOTANY	🌹 Maureen Cooke PORT	🌹 Valerie Coogan NEWPORT BEACH
🌹 Erika Hackett ULLADULLA	🌹 MACQUARIE	🌹 Valerie Starkey HAMMONDVILLE
🌹 Ettie Gray MACQUARIE FIELDS	🌹 Mavis Hunter YARRAHAPINNI	🌹 Winifred Mulligan RAMSGATE
🌹 Gladys Richardson FORSTER	🌹 Merle Cumming CAVES BEACH	
🌹 Helen Knight ORANGE	🌹 Monica Yerales KANWAL	
🌹 Helen Phillips CASTLE HILL	🌹 Norma Glenn HAWKS NEST	
🌹 Jane Craig BATHURST	🌹 Patricia Buchanan LAURIETON	
🌹 Joyce Van Leeuwen YASS	🌹 Patricia Curtin JERILDERIE	
🌹 Joyce Gwyn WYOMING	🌹 Patricia Durbidge RAYMOND	
🌹 Margaret Edgar GWYNNEVILLE	🌹 TERRACE	
🌹 Margaret Elliott NEW LAMBTON	🌹 Pauline Gibson STRATHFIELD	

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



Welcome to our new members!

☀️ Anne Marea Hall GILGANDRA	☀️ Georgia Hill JERRABOMBERRA	☀️ Jennifer Starling YASS
☀️ Evelynnn McComb BANGOR	☀️ Gloria Dawn Sharp LAURIETON	☀️ Lily Koo-Brown KURNELL
☀️ Fiona Thomas ST MARYS	☀️ Jack Findlay POTTS POINT	

Members who recently turned 100 - Happy Birthday!

🌸 Betty Finucane WILLOUGHBY	🌸 Erin Longbottom COOGEE	🌸 Margaret Jackson CESSNOCK
🌸 Clarice Connor HEATHCOTE	🌸 Florence Curley MILPERRA	🌸 Marie Whalen CHIPPENDALE
🌸 Dorothy McCabe GOULBURN	🌸 Gladys Donovan PEARL BEACH	🌸 Shirley Harris KIRRAWEE
🌸 Dulcie Grose NORTH ROCKS	🌸 Iris Murphy NIKENBAH	🌸 Viola Worth RUSSELL VALE
🌸 Ellen Partridge NAMBUCCA HEADS	🌸 Jean Stansfield PORT MACQUARIE	🌸 Wilma Miller BEXLEY
🌸 Enid Goodsir CHELTENHAM	🌸 Joan Killingsworth HORNSBY	🌸 Winifred Beck EVANS HEAD

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 scanning this QR code or call us on 02 9267 6577 to receive it by post.

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



Celebrating some very special 100th birthdays!

As recent editions of The Guild Digest did not include 100th birthday highlights, this issue celebrates members who have reached this extraordinary milestone since February. Congratulations to all who have turned 100: what an achievement! We are delighted to share some of the photos sent in by families and friends. Warmest congratulations to each of you.



Jean Gale



Ila Harvey



Joyce Waters



Betty Bull



Shirley Harris

Marjorie Cameron OAM

On 12 February, we joined the Laurieton community in celebrating Marjorie Cameron's 100th birthday. She marked the occasion with a family gathering on her birthday and a larger celebration at Laurieton United Services Club on 15 February, surrounded by extended family and seven grandchildren.

Marjorie's life has been devoted to caring for others through her nursing career and decades of volunteer work. She remains active in her community, living independently and walking daily. Her humour and generosity continue to inspire those around her.



Marjorie Cameron OAM

Digital Literacy: guides and videos to help you stay connected

Do you want to feel more confident using email, booking events online, or keeping in touch through Facebook?

Our Resource Hub now has simple guides and short videos designed for beginners. Each guide walks you through the basics step by step, and the videos show you exactly what to do on screen.

Topics include setting up an email account, using Eventbrite for bookings, and joining Facebook groups safely. These resources are free and created with older members in mind.

Included in this edition of *The Guild Digest* are seven printed guides for you to use or share with others in your community.

Explore the Digital Literacy page at www.familiesofveterans.org.au/digital-literacy-war-widows/ or call us on (02) 9267 6577.

Getting to your social club — transport options

If travelling to meetings or outings has become difficult, there are options to help.

Our War Widow Transport Program can reduce costs and make trips more manageable.

We can provide information on eligibility and help you apply. This service is designed to keep you active in your community and attending the events you enjoy.

Call us on (02) 9267 6577 for details or email us at warwidows@fov.org.au.

In-home help through DVA's Home Care

For widows with a DVA Gold Card, you may qualify for Veterans' Home Care (VHC).

This program helps widows and veterans stay independent at home by providing domestic assistance, personal care, respite for carers, and minor home and garden maintenance.

Services are tailored to needs and can make daily life easier and safer. To apply, contact the VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450. They will guide you through eligibility and arrange an assessment. For more details, visit dva.gov.au and search "Veterans' Home Care" or scan the QR code below.



Friendship Line — a warm monthly check-in

Feeling isolated or missing regular conversation? Our Friendship Line is here to help widows build friendships and improve wellbeing through peer connection with regular calls from a peer volunteer who understands their experience.

Calls are monthly and are a chance to share stories, stay informed, and feel part of the community.

If you're a widow and would like someone to talk to, this service is for you. To join or refer a friend, phone our office on (02) 9267 6577. Staying connected matters, let us help you make it easier.

Wellbeing Tip: move together for connection

Gentle movement can lift your mood and help you feel connected. Why not join a gentle walk with your club or take part in one of our wellbeing walks? These activities are social, safe, and tailored for older members.

If you want to strengthen your wellbeing, find wellbeing tips in our Resource Hub. Start small: even ten minutes of light activity with friends can make a difference. For ideas, visit familiesofveterans.org.au/resource-hub or call us to receive printed wellbeing tips.

Add a story to the War Widows Honour Roll

The War Widows Honour Roll is a national tribute that preserves the stories of women whose lives were forever changed by defence service. It is a living record, created so their resilience and sacrifice are never forgotten. By recognising war widows, we honour a legacy carried for generations and ensure these women are seen, valued, and remembered. Visit familiesofveterans.org.au/war-widows-honour-roll to share a tribute to a war widow.

Our latest guide to empower you: a guide to carer gateway

Caring for a loved one can be rewarding, but also overwhelming. The Carer Gateway Guide explains the free services available to support war widows, veteran carers, and their families. From counselling and peer groups, to respite care, financial assistance, and practical help at home, Carer Gateway is here to make the caring journey a little easier. This guide shows how to access tailored supports, including programs for young carers and emergency respite, so families never feel alone.

Find it in our Resource Hub on familiesofveterans.org.au/resource-hub or scan the QR code to download the guide.



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 assault, family and domestic violence counselling service*)
- **Defence Member and Family Support Helpline** – 1800 624 608



"We felt respected, admired and important"