

Health & Wellbeing Update

(August/September)

Veterans Health Week 2024 – Applications now open

***Veterans' Health Week 2024 will be held from 13-20 October.
This year's theme is Keep Connected.***

Veterans' Health Week (VHW) aims to improve health and wellness outcomes by increasing awareness of wellbeing issues that are commonly experienced by the veteran community, connecting them to health literacy information, programs and supports.

Events held during VHW promote strategies that assist veterans and their families to better manage stress, support positive mental health, and make meaningful connections and contributions to the community.

This year all VHW events are encouraged to focus on Social Connectedness, so start thinking about your event and how you may support this year's theme in fun and creative ways! Possibilities could include social mindfulness activities, physical activities that promote connection, social catchups, or craft sessions, just to name a few.

Applications for funding are now open and will close on 30 August 2024.

Organisations can apply for up to \$1,000 per event to hold fun, engaging and informative events centered on the theme Keep Connected during VHW. Events can be hosted during the month of October.

This year you will be able to submit your VHW application online!

For more information including funding and event guidelines, and the application form, please see www.dva.gov.au/vhw or contact your local Community Support Adviser.

We look forward to seeing your application soon!

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Mental Health Literacy and Suicide Prevention Training Programs

DVA continues to explore new ways to support the veteran community. DVA has engaged Mental Health First Aid Australia (MHFAA) to deliver **Mental Health Literacy and Suicide Prevention Training Programs** to the veteran community.

The training will be available under the banner 'Mental Health Protect.'

This program is open to all members of the veteran community over 18 years of age, including:

- Families, friends, carers, employers, and colleagues of veterans and ADF personnel
- Health care professionals and community members supporting veterans and their families.
- Veterans and current serving members from the Australian Defense Force (ADF)

For more information and to register go to [Mental Health Protect - Mental Health First Aid Australia \(mhfa.com.au\)](https://mhfa.com.au) or if you have a large group that you would like to register contact MHFAA courses@mhfa.com.au.

Please find attached copy of the flyer.



DVA NEWS

Latest News

[Understanding your travel for treatment entitlements | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](https://dva.gov.au)

[Annual increase to travel allowances | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](https://dva.gov.au)

[1 in 3 scams happen by phone | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](https://dva.gov.au)

For more latest news go to [Latest news | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](https://dva.gov.au) you can subscribe to DVA e-news and Vetaffairs.

DVA TV

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

[DVA TV - How to add your Veteran Card to the myGov wallet.](https://dva.gov.au)



The Department of Veterans Affairs' Lived Experience Framework

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) is committed to increasing the meaningful participation of people with lived experience through an enterprise level Lived Experience Framework.

The Framework will:

- impact and influence how DVA engages with lived experience in all business areas
- define the integration of lived experience professionals more broadly in the Department.

Where did this start?

The lived experience voice within the Department of Veterans Affairs has its origins in the Open Arms Division. Vietnam veterans, through their strong mateship, lobbied the Government for a dedicated mental health service for Veterans with the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service (VVCS) established in 1982.

After a two-year pilot program and having changed its name from VVCS to *Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling Service* and expanding its eligibility in 2018, Open Arms inducted 35 Community and Peer Advisors from across Australia with experiences of service, discharge and mental health journeys. This included Family Peers adding their experiences and voices.

In 2023 work was undertaken to consolidate efforts across the Department into a draft *DVA Lived Experience Framework (the Framework)*.

The Framework honoured the origins of lived experience in mental health but moved to include all types of experiences. It has undergone internal consultation and was presented to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

An overview of this can be found at <https://www.dva.gov.au/about/engagement/lived-experience-framework>. *The Framework* is a 'living document' to support future co-design and the changing needs of the community.

So, what does this mean?

The Framework is currently in its implementation phase with the ongoing works in:

- establishment of the DVA Lived Experience Register and engagement platform
- external stakeholder engagement and workshop series to support and build community capacity
- establishment of an internal implementation working group to embed lived experience into everyday business
- standing up an external Lived Experience Advisory Group with expertise from the wider community
- supporting the wider workforce's development to understand lived experience in their everyday business activities.
- scoping and supporting the lived experience workforce development and expansion across all business areas

How do ESOs and Organisation get involved?

The Lived Experience Team ran a 4-week series in April 2024 on lived experience and the work being undertaken. Participants were supportive of its continuation and the Team has now commenced

monthly engagement with Ex-Service Organisations and other organisations that support Veterans and their families in the community.

These are held on the first Tuesday of the month and representatives can register their interest at [EOI DVA Lived Experience Drop In Series](https://forms.office.com/r/m4RKGi2iQU) (<https://forms.office.com/r/m4RKGi2iQU>)

These engagements have sought to provide understanding on lived experience and gain the insight of attendees into:

- a shared understanding of lived experience definitions, principles and practices across the veteran community (inclusive of families, ESOs and other organisations providing services to veterans)
- implementing lived experience within DVA and in their own organisations
- identify opportunities and seeking solutions to challenges
- co-design future lived experience participation across the veteran community with a focus on the DVA Lived Experience Register

For more information and to connect with the Lived Experience Team please email dva.livedexperienceteam@dva.gov.au

CONSULTATION

National Carer Strategy - COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The Department of Social Services (DSS) engaged Deloitte to facilitate meaningful and representative community consultation across Australia to inform and co-develop the National Carer Strategy, with those it is designed to reach.

They need your voice to shape the support offered to carers in Australia! Join us in a consultation to inform the development of the National Carer Strategy.

Throughout these consultations, our aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and experiences of Australia's diverse unpaid family and friend carers. DSS want to explore the current support systems and the outcomes they produce, while identifying the solutions that will benefit you the most.

Consultations will be held nationwide in July, August and September 2024 (noting that additional weekend webinars will be added to the schedule over the coming week).

To see when one of these consultations is in your area, and to register your attendance, scan the QR code in the attached flyer or visit [DSS Engage](#).

We are hoping to capture a diverse range of perspectives and insights into the unpaid caring experience with participation open to current and former carers.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust

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

For more information about eligibility and application process go to [Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](https://avcat.org.au)

Please find attached Flyer.



Veterans' Acute Housing Program - Capital Works and Specialist Services Grants

The Veterans' Acute Housing Program (the Program) will provide funding to eligible organisations to improve housing outcomes for veterans and their families who are experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness.

The Program will provide up to \$30 million in grant funding under two related streams:

\$24 million in capital works funding to expand the availability of crisis and transitional housing under the Veterans' Acute Housing Program – Capital Works Grant (Capital Works Grant); and

\$6 million to fund organisations to deliver specialist support services that address the risk factors for homelessness under the Veterans' Acute Housing Program – Specialist Services Grant (Specialist Services Grant).

Funding for each stream will be awarded via separate open competitive grant application processes. Eligible organisations may apply for one or both streams, noting that they will need to apply separately for each stream.

To view the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and other materials, visit [GrantConnect](#). Applications close 9.00pm AEST Friday 13 September 2024.

Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program

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

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

There are 2 categories of grants available under the program:



1. Community Grants (STS-CG)

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

2. Major Grants (STS-MG)

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

For more information go to [Current Grant Opportunity View - STS: GrantConnect \(grants.gov.au\)](#)

Applications Close: 9:00 pm AEST on 3 October 2024.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Rehabilitation Program service delivery enhancements are complete

The DVA [Rehabilitation Program](#) aims to support eligible veterans to build skills to maximise their wellbeing, by providing assistance with skill and capacity development in multiple areas (medical management, vocational, and psychosocial rehabilitation) that may be impacting on ability to achieve rehabilitation goals.

We recently shared details about a new operational model we've been implementing to improve the way providers deliver our Rehabilitation Program. Over the last three months we have been busy transitioning existing rehabilitation clients across to the new program model. That transition is now complete.

Some of the things that are a little different include:

- We have engaged 15 nationally capable rehabilitation service providers, meaning that clients can stay with the same provider, even if they relocate - reducing their need to 'retell' their story to a new service provider. Having fewer providers who have wider scope means service delivery will be consistent across program providers.
- We have made it simpler for our providers to deliver services, giving providers more autonomy so they have the power to make decisions within certain guidelines, delivering the support veterans need - faster.
- We have updated and simplified the documents our rehabilitation providers use.
- We have enhanced our capabilities to monitor provider performance - to ensure better outcomes for our clients.
- We have also made it easier for program participants to tell us about their program and provider experiences by simplifying our Rehabilitation Client Satisfaction Survey. Client feedback helps us to continually evaluate our program, monitor the performance of our providers, and ensures the program best meets veterans' needs.

We want to thank our rehabilitation clients and providers for helping us manage this transition with minimal disruption to current rehabilitation plans and activities.

Email rehabilitation@dva.gov.au or call us on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) if you need more information.



Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (formerly VVCS) is Australia’s leading provider of high-quality mental health assessment and clinical counselling services for Australian veterans and their families. Open Arms offers a range of free group programs to assist the serving and ex-serving community, as well as their families live their best life.

Group programs calendar for July to December 2024 are now available. Go to [Programs | Open Arms](#) to register for any of the program.

Programs include beating the blues, building better relationships, doing anger differently, understanding anxiety, managing pain, stepping out, recovery from trauma, relaxation and stress management. For information, support and bookings go to [Get support | Open Arms](#) or phone 1800 011 046.



1800 011 046
OpenArms.gov.au



COMMUNITY DATES and DAYS

AUGUST

<u>International Assistance Dog Week</u>	4 th – 10 th
<u>Homelessness Week</u>	6 th – 13 th
<u>National Stroke Week</u>	5 th
<u>Dental Health Week</u>	7 th – 13 th
<u>International Youth Day</u>	12 th
<u>World Humanitarian Day</u>	19 th
<u>Daffodil Day</u>	31 st

SEPTEMBER

<u>Prostate Cancer Awareness Month</u>	
<u>Women's Health Week</u>	2 nd – 6 th
<u>World Suicide Prevention Day</u>	10 th
<u>RUOK? Day</u>	11 th
<u>World First Aid Day</u>	14 th
<u>Dementia Action Week</u>	16 th – 22 nd

National Carers Week

An annual event recognising the significant role that Carers have in our community, [National Carers Week](#) which runs from **Sunday 13th to Saturday 19th October 2024**, is an opportunity to raise community awareness of carers and their diverse caring roles.

At least 2.65 million Australians provide care and support to a family member or friend, with activities that may include, dressing, showering, arranging doctors' appointments or managing medications. Anyone can be a carer, but many people don't identify as one.

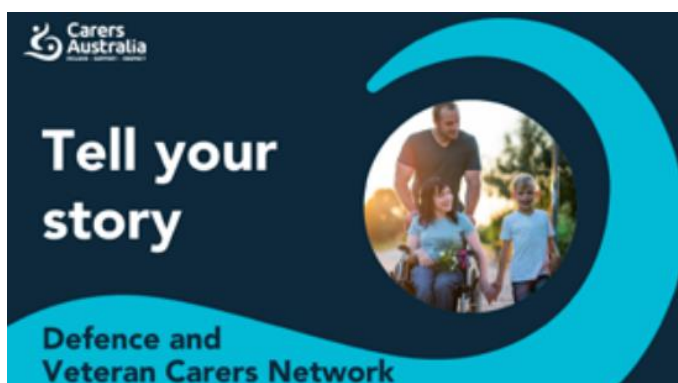


To assist the diverse community of carers, there are many resources and support groups that can be found online, including -

[Carer Gateway](#) provides a range of supports and services to carers around Australia, including information and advice, peer support, free counselling, coaching and training.

[Carers Australia](#) has a range of resources available on their website which will help you learn more about the NDIS and general carer wellbeing.

If you are a carer under the age of 25, you can find a range of supports and services, including the Young Carer Bursary program, on the [Young Carer Network](#).



[Defence and Veteran Carers Network](#) is a hub, supported by Carers Australia, and funded by the [Department of Defence's Family Support Funding Program](#), aims to provide information and support to current and former ADF members and their families. There is also an opportunity to share your story to highlight the voices of this cohort and raise awareness of the unique challenges faced through the "Share Your Story" link on the page.

For state specific information, please click on the button below –



Veteran Games 2024

Sat 17th Aug 2024, 9:00 am - Sun 18th Aug 2024, 5:00 pm AEST

2201 Nerang Murwillumbah Rd, Numinbah Valley QLD

Get ready for an action-packed weekend like no other at the Veteran Games!

Join us on August 17 & 18 for an adrenaline-fuelled extravaganza where Australian Veterans showcase their incredible resilience, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in a one-of-a-kind team competition!

Teams of 10 will gear up for the ultimate challenges - there's an Obstacle Course, Tug-of-War Competition and other surprise events all inspired by real-life military missions and combat scenarios.

Our venue isn't just about heart-pounding competition; it's like a mini festival! With the food & beverage village, you can keep the little ones entertained with kids' activities & obstacle courses and explore the vendor village showcasing amazing brands and businesses supporting our Veteran Community.

For more information go to [Home - Veteran Games](#)
