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# VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

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## Minister's Message



As the holiday season envelops us in the warmth of tradition and the spirit of joy, I want to take a moment to express profound gratitude to our Veteran community. Your unwavering commitment, sacrifices, and valour have woven a tapestry of freedom that we cherish at this very special time.

Amidst the carols and festive cheer, let us remember and honour your service, for it is the cornerstone of our nation's freedom. Your courage has gifted us this precious time to celebrate this season with our loved ones.

As you gather with family and friends, may the camaraderie of the holidays bring you joy, and may the memories of your service be embraced with gratitude. This Christmas, you are not just in our thoughts; you are in the beating heart of our nation's appreciation.

Wishing you a Christmas filled with warmth, peace, and the knowledge that your sacrifices are eternally cherished.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

Lest we forget.  
Hon Guy Barnett MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

## Veteran Education and Training Centre, Lake Sorell

In November 2023, the Australian Government announced that it will provide \$290,000 under its *Veteran Wellbeing Grants One-Off Program* towards the planned Veteran Multipurpose Education and Training Facility at Dago Point, Lake Sorell.



This funding, combined with the Tasmanian Government's previous allocation of \$100,000, will enable the facility to be completed, and it is expected to be ready for use in the second half of 2024.

The facility follows recent support from the Tasmanian Government to upgrade an old Inland Fisheries shack on the same site to provide accommodation for veterans, and the adjacent Vietnam Veterans' Bush Retreat which was established in 1990.

## Tasmanian Government's Teddy Sheean VC Memorial Grant Program outcomes

On 18 November 2023, the outcome of the Teddy Sheean VC Memorial Grants 2023-24 Round 1 was announced.

Ten organisations around the State will share in a total of \$50,000.

The Grants Program provides funds to Tasmanian ex-service organisations and clubs for minor capital works and equipment purchases and welfare initiatives for veterans.

Funds are also available to a range of organisations for the repair and maintenance of war memorials, and for the construction of new memorials in Tasmania.

The second round of the 2023-24 Grants Program is expected to open in mid-January and close in early March 2024.

A list of the successful recipients is available [here](#).



## Tasmanian Government's Veteran Wellbeing Voucher Program

The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian veterans. As part of that commitment, the Veteran Wellbeing Voucher Program is open for its second full year in 2023-24.

The free Program is open to eligible Tasmanian veterans (those who have previously served in the Australian Defence Force including Reservists) who can apply for a voucher of up to \$100 to put towards the cost of registration or membership fees at participating gyms and sporting clubs.

Gyms and sports clubs also benefit by an opportunity to grow their membership and are reimbursed for each voucher they accept. The program is open to gyms and clubs throughout Tasmania.

All Tasmanians should have the opportunity to live active, healthy lives. This targeted program helps veterans enjoy the benefits of participating in a sporting club or gym.



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more >>

## Australian Government's Veteran Wellbeing Grants and Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants programs now open

### Veteran Wellbeing Grants

Ex-service organisations (ESOs) and the community groups they support can now apply for funding opportunities under the [Veteran Wellbeing Grants](#) (VWG) program.

The VWG program funds sustainable community-based projects and activities provided by eligible ESOs to benefit the health and wellbeing of veterans and families.

The 2023–2024 round has \$3.777 million in Government funding available for projects and activities that aim to:

- improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and families
- increase awareness of issues specific to the veteran community
- provide safe and accessible environments that promote social connection
- positively engage or benefit younger veterans.

Applications close on 23 January 2024.

### Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants

[Saluting Their Service](#) is designed to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel in wars, conflicts and peace operations, and their families.

Eligible applicants may apply under two categories:

[Community Grants](#), up to a maximum of \$10,000, are available for community-based commemorative projects and activities.

[Major Grants](#), up to a maximum of \$150,000, are available for major commemorative projects and activities that



are significant from a national, state, territory and/or regional perspective.

Applications close on 6 February 2024.

## Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide - update

On 7 December 2023, the Royal Commission announced that it has been granted a three-month extension by the Australian Government to complete its inquiries.

Commissioners Nick Kaldas (chair), Peggy Brown and James Douglas wrote to Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus in October to raise concerns the current timeframe continues to impact the ability of the Royal Commission to deliver a final report and recommendations to bring about long-lasting improvements for the wellbeing of our Defence and veteran communities.

The Royal Commission was due to present its final report and recommendations to the Governor-General by 17 June next year; however, the Commissioners stated that timeline was impacting key areas of work.

The Royal Commission's final report must now be delivered by 9 September 2024.

The final hearing block will commence in Sydney in March 2024. Submissions have now closed.

### **Proposed new entity to support the support the wellbeing of Defence members and veterans**

A consultation process is now open to inform a proposed new entity to follow the Royal Commission.

The new entity would monitor the implementation of our final recommendations for meaningful and long-lasting cultural and systemic change whilst contributing to policies and programs that support defence and veteran wellbeing. You can read more about the proposed new entity in the consultation paper [Proposed new entity to support the wellbeing of Defence members and veterans](#).

Organisations that support or represent the serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force community and their families are encouraged to have a say on what the new entity could be and what it could achieve.

Feedback closes at 5:00 pm AEDT Wednesday, 20 December 2023. Late feedback will not be accepted.

## Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Benefits Program

Veteran Card holders and spouses can access DVA's Veteran Benefits Program, delivered by Australian Partners of Defence (APOD), to shop for discounts on gifts, goods and services this Christmas.

Even for the most festive at heart, we know the holiday season can be an expensive and stressful time of year.

APOD offers an extensive range of products and services from affiliated businesses at rates discounted for veteran families. Offers include discounted fuel, which might be handy for those family trips over the holidays, and savings on your groceries or car hire whilst travelling. There's also a large range of veteran-owned

businesses that you can support through APOD.

Use the new APOD App to shop for fuel and other discounts while on the go, or just to access your digital Veteran Card.

Visit <https://apod.com.au/> or download the APOD App on your Apple or Android device.

*[information from DVA website accessed 12 December 2023]*

## Subscribe to Grant Alerts

Searching for grants can be time-consuming and overwhelming.

Grant Alerts provide information on a range of grants available to community organisations and local government. To subscribe, email [grants@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:grants@dpac.tas.gov.au)

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