



**Disclaimer:**

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In regard to their own particular circumstances, readers should consult the relevant authorities or other advisers with expertise in that field. Neither the P.V.A. of Australia Inc – N.S.W. Branch nor the editor accepts any responsibility for actions taken by readers. The views expressed by authors contained in this Newsletter are not necessarily the views of this Association.



TO

**P.V.A. NSW's CATCH-UP NEWSLETTER –  
MARCH 2025 EDITION**



This *Catch-Up Newsletter* is sent out twice yearly via email to all our listed Branch / Group Contacts. Any member who would like their own copy can email our NSW State Secretary, Kerrie, at [nswsecretary@pva.org.au](mailto:nswsecretary@pva.org.au) and she will arrange for it to be distributed directly to you.

Generally, *Catch up Newsletters* will be emailed in March / April and October each year. Additional email notices will be sent to those on our list when any vital news which has ramifications for our members is available between Newsletter editions.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL



Your 2025 Membership Renewal Form will be included with the next edition of the P.V.A. Magazine in mid-2025. The fees can be paid easily online or by sending in your completed Renewal Form.

Please make sure if paying online you place either your Name or Member Number (as shown on the Address Page form sent out to you with your P.V.A. Magazine). The details of the date to which you are financial are also given on your Address Form.

There is information and a link to the form on our P.V.A. NSW webpage (click on the *Membership* Link on the left-hand side of our Home Page, then scroll down towards the bottom of the section. Click on the link for the renewal form. Alternatively, you can use the link provided here to access the Renewal form:

<https://www.pva.org.au/P%20V%20A%20Membership%20Renewal%20Form%202022%20-%202023.pdf>

## CENTRAL COAST SUB-BRANCH ACTIVIES



In late 2024 two ladies from this group were presented with their 20-Year Member's Certificates: Lorna Jones received her Certificate from President Pamela Gray and Vice President Shirley Ferguson made the presentation to Sharyn Prizeman.



Following her retirement from the role in October, 2024 the former Sub-Branch President / PVA founding Member, Robyn Creswell, was presented with a Meritorious Certificate Award from N.S.W. State P.V.A for her wonderful and long Service over 25 years. The Central Coast Vice President, Shirley, made this presentation. Robyn was also presented – by Fay Carlin – with a Sub-Branch Life Membership and badge in recognition of her services in fund-raising and donations from her weekly yoga classes.

***Congratulations, Robyn, and thank you from us all!***



Central Coast Sub-Branch Secretary, Wendy Byrne, (left) and President, Pamela Gray, at the West Gosford Branch of Grill'd Healthy Burgers recently for their fund-raising activities. Their donation jar of tokens won the January competition and raised \$300.

## SINGLETON BRANCH ACTIVIES

Members of the Singleton PVA Support Group presenting Rotary Upper Hunter delegate Monique Chalker with Hygiene packs for homeless and disadvantaged men and boys. This is one of the projects undertaken by this Branch.

*Betty Longue, Lyn Fletcher and Desley Boyce with Monique Chalker.*



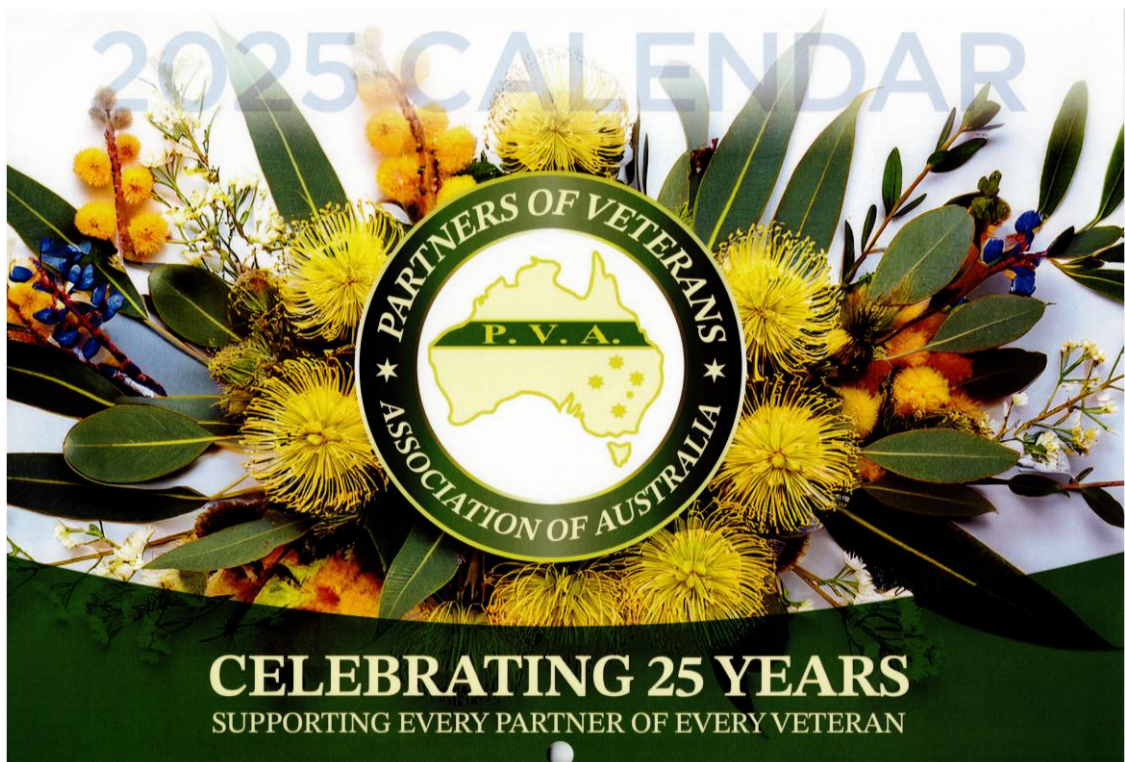


## **P. V. A. FUND RAISING CALENDAR**

In late 2024 we produced our first full-colour P.V.A.-themed Calendar – for 2025. This was produced on behalf of Partners of Veterans Australia primarily as a project of P.V.A. N.S.W., although the calendar is a National production. Copies were distributed to branches / groups in almost every state as a fundraising initiative allowing for sales in time for Christmas. Funds raised from this venture will be used for our ongoing Welfare work – monies are to be retained by the State Branch from which they were raised. The sale price was \$10.00 per calendar (but \$15.00 per calendar if it had to be mailed to cover postage). A few copies are still in stock, so please contact our N.S.W. Secretary, Kerrie, quickly if your group would like to have any additional calendars.

It is envisaged that this will become an annual production, and we welcome any contributions of images/photos which you might think would be suitable for the edition – please email to the N.S.W. Secretary, Kerrie at: [nswsecretary@pva.nsw.or.au](mailto:nswsecretary@pva.nsw.or.au). We hope to have the calendar for 2026 ready for distribution earlier than in 2024 to allow more time for sales. A few suggestions for slight changes to the format/content of the calendar have also been received and these will be incorporated into the design of our next calendar. If you have any thoughts or ideas, please let Kerrie know.

We are very happy to announce that our intended target of 500 calendars sold across Australia in our first venture was not only reached, but exceeded! A wonderful result for our 25-Year Anniversary Calendar.



## **P. V. A. NAME BADGES**

These can be ordered through our Membership Secretary Wanda at: [wanda.ha@bigpond.com](mailto:wanda.ha@bigpond.com). Unfortunately, badge prices have had to increase last year; the new price per personalised name badge including postage to your address is \$20.00.

## UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY / CALENDAR

### North Coast Veteran and Family Hub - Community Consultation – 7 April 2025

**Time:** 12:00pm – 2:00pm  
**Location:** Tweed Heads Civic and Cultural Centre South Sea Islander Room  
Corner Brett Street and Wharf Street Tweed Heads  
**RSVP:** Please RSVP by 1 April 2025 to confirm your attendance.



RSL LifeCare Veteran Services have issued this invitation.

Building on previous consultation sessions, this meeting will focus specifically on the development of a dedicated Veteran and Family Hub for this region. Hear about the latest updates on the Hub's progress and learn how it will support veterans and their families across the North Coast.

This Hub will offer a place designed with and for the veteran community where support, connection, and wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do. Your feedback and involvement are vital in helping shape a Hub that genuinely reflects the needs of veterans and their families. By sharing your insights, you'll play an important role in bringing this vision to life.

**To Register:** [North Coast CC VFH Event RSVP 7 April 2025](#)

If you cannot attend in person, we will also conduct this meeting on Microsoft Teams: the link and login details will be published on the North Coast Veteran and Family Hub page: <https://mktg.rsllifecare.org.au/link/id/zzzz67d91ab1b6fef198Pzzzz64f53f04f0134761/page.html>

### Hunter Valley Hub – East Maitland – 31 March 2025

**Time:** 12:00pm - 2:00pm  
**Location:** East Maitland War Memorial Hall  
225 Newcastle Street, East Maitland

This meeting will focus specifically on the development of a dedicated Veteran and Family Hub for this region. You'll hear the latest updates on the Hub's progress and learn how it will support veterans and their families across this area.

Your feedback and involvement are vital in helping shape a Hub that genuinely reflects the needs of veterans and their families. By sharing your insights, you'll play an important role in bringing this vision to life.

**To Register:** [Hunter Veteran & Family Hub Community Consultation - RSL LifeCare](#)

**You can also join the meeting online at:** [Join the meeting now](#)

*Meeting ID:* 444 928 020 182

*Passcode:* w7Wo77hp

### Other Veteran Wellbeing Community Consultation Session Locations

Community Consultation Sessions are being held around Australia on the establishment of a new agency focused on veteran wellbeing – a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The consultation will be led by an experienced facilitator and hosted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The sessions are an opportunity for the veteran community to help shape the new agency, which will be established with the needs of veterans and families at its core. Sessions will be held over the coming months and will be used to gather the diverse perspectives of the veteran community on what the new agency should do, and how it should undertake its responsibilities in supporting the transition of veterans to a rich and rewarding civilian life, as well as supporting the overall wellbeing of veterans and families. They are in-person and numbers are limited. Registration is required for attendance; specific event locations will be provided following registration. Light refreshments will be available at each session.

**Darwin** 31 March and 1 April **Register [here](#)** Registrations close at 5 pm on 27/3/25



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Do you have any planned upcoming events for your Sub-branch / Group? If so, what are they? Upcoming events may be advertised in a variety of ways: in this Newsletter, on our Facebook page, on our website or in our **P.V.A. News Magazine**, which is sent out in July and December each year. Just let us know what you would like included in our various communication options. We are always happy to receive reports and / or photos from any events or gatherings your group may have enjoyed – these can be included in upcoming editions of this Newsletter or our P.V.A. Magazine if you wish.

## INCREASE IN DVA PENSION PAYMENTS



The Department of Veterans' Affairs pension payment rates next increase was due to be implemented on 20 March 2025 for recipients of Pensions paid by that Department. As pension rates are calculated on a daily basis, the pension paid on the first payday after the increase date will be paid partly at the old rate and partly at the new rate. The first full payment at the new rates of pension should have been made on the following payday.

For full payment amount details, income/asset limits and allowances please visit: [Summary of pension rates, limits and allowances | Department of Veterans' Affairs.](#)

*(Please note that these rates are subject to change and it is essential that you stay informed about any further updates from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.) For more information on the new pension rates, call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).*

## USEFUL INFORMATION . . .



It may be useful to know that this product – Voltaren Emulgel – can be obtained via a script from your doctor if you require it. This will save you money on the purchase cost as an 'over the counter' product. It can be difficult to know what medications can be supplied on a PBS script, rather than having to be purchased 'over the counter'.

Even GPs seem to be quite unfamiliar with what is available. The following website may assist you in researching whether your own medication requirements fall into this category:

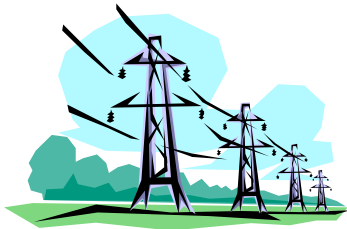
<https://www.pbs.gov.au/browse/medicine-listing>.

## P. V. A. NEWS MAGAZINE

Please note that the closing date for any items which you might wish to have included in our next edition of our National Magazine is **15 May 2025**. Please ensure that you have submitted any articles, photos etc well before this time. Your contributions can be emailed to the P.V.A. News Editor, Narelle Bromhead, at: [editor@pvanews.org.au](mailto:editor@pvanews.org.au).



## ENERGY BILL RELIEF FUND



The Australian Federal Government has undertaken to continue electricity bill relief of \$300.00 to eligible households holding current Concession Cards, in 2024/25. The next payment due will be made in the sum of \$75.00 on 30 April 2025.

Relief payments will automatically be applied to you if you already get an existing energy concession on your electricity bill – you should have already seen the previous payments appear on your recent energy accounts!

### How and When Payments Will Be Made:

For most households relief payments are applied directly to your electricity account. Each household can only receive one payment, even if there's more than one eligible person living there. The total relief payment will be paid in instalments, as detailed above. If you have an eligible Concession Card or payment but are not currently receiving an existing energy concession, you may need to contact either the Department of Veterans' Affairs or Services Australia (depending upon who pays your entitlement) to find out what you need to do. You may also need to contact your Electricity Service Provider.

*You may also have heard 'promises' of further electricity bill relief to be offered after the upcoming election – we will provide further details when this information has been confirmed.*

### How to Check if Bill Relief Has Been Paid:

Item	Description	Unit Price	Quantity	Amount
Service	Example of service in industry	25.00	4.00	100.00
Product	Example of product in industry	500.00	1.00	500.00
Discount	Example of discount in industry	-100.00	1.00	-100.00

NOTES: Provide a concise, professional description of the services, product, and discount listed above.

To check if your supplier has applied your bill relief payment, check the copy of your latest bill. You can also view your bill online if you have registered for this in relation to your energy supply. Remember, the first instalment should have been applied by the end of August 2024 and should be noted on the first account after that. Further instalments should have been included at 3-monthly intervals.

## DVA DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NSW / ACT UPDATES

### Anzac Day 2025 – Overseas Services

Anzac Day services in Turkey and France will be held on the 110th anniversary of the start of the Gallipoli campaign and will recognise all who have served our nation in conflicts and peacekeeping operations. The Dawn Service in Türkiye will be held at the Anzac Commemorative Site Gallipoli, followed by a mid-morning Australian Memorial service at Lone Pine.



The Anzac Day Dawn Service in France will take place at the Australian National Memorial near Villers-Bretonneux, followed by a service at the Digger Memorial, just outside the town of Bullecourt.

Australians planning to honour the fallen at the 2025 Anzac Day Dawn Services in Türkiye or France are able to register for their free attendance passes at: <https://commemorations.teg.com.au>.



## Cyclone Alfred



As you will be aware, *Cyclone Alfred* recently impacted our nation, bringing severe weather conditions and causing widespread damage. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) was heavily involved in rescue operations, providing critical support in affected regions. It was very sad that some of our ADF members were injured during these operations. DVA expressed heartfelt gratitude for the courage of those who risked their safety to protect our fellow citizens, and wish everyone who has been injured a very speed recovery.

We would remind our veteran community of the resources available for those impacted by both physical and mental health challenges. If you or someone you know needs guidance or support, please don't hesitate to contact the relevant veteran support networks or get in touch with us.

## Veterans' Acute Housing Program

Thirteen grants have been awarded to 10 ex-service organisations and veteran-aware Community Housing Providers under the Veterans' Acute Housing Program. The successful organisations are sharing in \$30 million in grant funding under two streams:



\$24 million in capital works funding to expand the availability of crisis and transitional housing (Capital Works Grant)

\$6 million to deliver specialist services that address the risk factors for homelessness for veterans (Specialist Services Grant).

The Capital Works Grant will increase the supply and ongoing availability of sustainably managed crisis and transitional housing that meets the needs of veterans and families, including in regional areas of Australia. The Specialist Services Grant will extend the capacity of organisations to deliver case management and wraparound support to link veterans and their families to a range of specialist services to address the risk factors of homelessness

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A CARER

Understanding the role of a carer



Being a carer involves much more than occasional support. It involves providing ongoing assistance to someone who can no longer manage certain tasks independently.

If you are providing ongoing support to a loved one – whether a spouse, parent, friend or relative – you may be a carer, even if you don't think you are. Many people gradually take on caregiving responsibilities without even realising it. Helping someone live with a disability, chronic illness or mental health or degenerative condition means you are fulfilling a caring role. Recognising yourself as a carer is the first step in accessing important resources and support available for your wellbeing.

For carers of veterans or war widows, there may also be additional responsibilities associated with managing mental or physical health challenges that arise from defence service. The care you provide could be full-time or just a few hours each day, but it's the regular and consistent nature of your involvement that defines you as a carer.

It is essential for carers to look after themselves in order to support others; in order to care for others you must first care for yourself. This can be by means of social / emotional support or financial assistance where your caring role prevents you from working or earning an income.

If you think you might be a carer, take a moment to reflect on the support you provide and consider how identifying as a carer could benefit you and your loved one. Whether it's accessing resources, connecting with a support network or simply recognising the significance of your role, taking this step can make a meaningful difference to your wellbeing. Don't hesitate to reach out to us to learn more about the help available because caring for yourself is just as important as caring for others.

Information about financial assistance available for carers can be obtained from Centrelink at: [Carer Allowance - Services Australia](#).

## POSITIONS VACANT – WELLBEING ADVOCATES & SUPPORT OFFICERS



Due to a recent decrease in the number of Wellbeing Advocates and Support Officers working with our Association we are now limited in the amount of Welfare assistance we are able to offer our Members. Any member who may wish to volunteer their time so that we can continue giving the qualified support that our Membership deserves can do so by offering support in either of these roles. If you are interested in allocating one or two hours a week/fortnight/month to assist with the wellbeing of partners and their families, please contact: [nswpresident@pva.org.au](mailto:nswpresident@pva.org.au).

### *Role of a Wellbeing Advocate*

As a Wellbeing Advocate (WA) you are accredited through the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP). While providing services, assistance and support to clients Advocates are provided with Public Liability Insurance coverage by the Partners of Veterans Assoc. Inc. (PVA) through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc (VITA) once you pass the course and throughout your tenure in the position. Currently, there are over 35 organisations that are members of VITA.

Regular courses are available through ATDP to assist you in establishing what you will need to know in order to fulfill your Wellbeing Advocacy role.

### *The Role of a Wellbeing Support Officer*

Whilst the Advocacy Training & Development Program (ATDP) does not provide formal training for Wellbeing Support Officers (WSOs) as is the case for Wellbeing and Compensation Advocates, PVA NSW will ensure that you are provided with some initial skills, mentoring support.

A WSO is unaccredited and whilst working for the veteran community under the auspice of PVA is covered by the Volunteers Insurance under the PVA National Insurance.

As a WSO your role is to assist the Wellbeing Advocate which generally means that you are required to undertake straightforward tasks, work under routine direction against established priorities and procedures while exercising some autonomy.

WSOs may be required to undertake procedural, clerical, administrative support and operational tasks and provide basic assistance and support to Advocates for Partners, Veterans and their Families.





# GROUP PROGRAM SCHEDULE

## JANUARY – JULY 2025

### GREATER NEW SOUTH WALES NEWCASTLE & LISMORE

#### RELAXATION AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

##### LISMORE

Monday 3 March | 9:00 – 5:00pm

1 day

##### CENTRAL COAST – WYONG

Monday 5 May | 9:00am – 5:00pm

1 day

##### NEWCASTLE

Monday 23 June | 9:00am – 5:00 pm

1 day

#### MANAGING PAIN

##### CENTRAL COAST - WYONG

Thursday 13 & Friday 14 March | 9:00am – 5:00pm

2 days

#### STEPPING OUT

##### NEWCASTLE

Thursday 3 & Friday 4 July | 9:00am – 5:00pm

2 days

#### MANAGING PAIN (ONLINE)

12:30pm – 2:00pm

2 x 90 minute online sessions

Tuesday 25 & Thursday 27 February

Wednesday 2 & Friday 4 April

Monday 16 & Wednesday 18 June

#### SHORT ONLINE INTRODUCTORY GROUP PROGRAMS

##### NATIONAL (Australia-wide)

- Sleeping Better
- Managing Pain
- Doing Anger Differently
- Understanding Anxiety
- Recovery from Trauma

To register your interest and for the most up-to-date information visit the website

<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/programs-workshops/upcoming>

or scan the QR code



# GREATER NEW SOUTH WALES SYDNEY & NOWRA

## RELAXATION AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

### NOWRA

Monday 3 March | 9:00 – 5:00pm

1 day

## UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

### NOWRA

Monday 26 & Tuesday 27 May | 9:00am – 5:00pm

2 days

## STEPPING OUT

### SYDNEY - LIVERPOOL

Monday 3 & Tuesday 6 May | 9:00am – 5:00pm

2 days

## BEATING THE BLUES

### NOWRA

Thursday 12 & Friday 13 June | 9:00am – 5:00pm

2 days

## MANAGING PAIN (ONLINE)

12:30pm – 2:00pm

2 x 90 minute online sessions

Tuesday 25 & Thursday 27 February

Wednesday 2 & Friday 4 April

Monday 16 & Wednesday 18 June

## SHORT ONLINE INTRODUCTORY GROUP PROGRAMS

### NATIONAL (Australia-wide)

- Sleeping Better
- Managing Pain
- Doing Anger Differently
- Understanding Anxiety
- Recovery from Trauma

To register your interest and for the most up-to-date information visit the website

<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/programs-workshops/upcoming>

or scan the QR code



*(see next page for details of each Program)*

### **BEATING THE BLUES**

This skills-based program can help you understand the situations and thinking patterns that can contribute to depression, and learn strategies and techniques to help manage symptoms.

### **DOING ANGER DIFFERENTLY**

This program will help you develop a better understanding of anger, recognise the impact that anger can have on you and your relationships and make practical changes.

### **MANAGING PAIN**

An educational and skills-based program which assists participants to develop an understanding of pain and focus on strategies to improve their experience of pain.

### **STEPPING OUT**

Designed to increase awareness of important personal and social adjustment factors and to support ADF members and partners as they are transitioning, or who have transitioned, from the military to civilian life. There are no time limits for attending.

### **SLEEPING BETTER**

Sleeping Better is an educational and skills-based group program to help manage disturbed sleep.

### **PARENTING PROGRAMS**

Parenting programs are tailored to the needs of attending veteran families, to help build strong and positive relationships between parents and their families.

### **BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **(COUPLES ONLY)**

Building Better Relationships can help you and your partner rediscover what's important in your relationship, and help strengthen and rebuild your relationship.

### **UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY**

This program will help you better understand anxiety, and the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour when you are experiencing anxiety.

### **RECOVERY FROM TRAUMA**

This program will help you understand the possible impact of trauma, and teach you strategies and skills to help you to manage its impact on you and your family.

### **RELAXATION & STRESS MANAGEMENT**

This program provides skills and tools to help you identify and manage stress, and develop relaxation and mindfulness skills that can assist in everyday life.

### **MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY AND SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING**

Delivered by Mental Health First Aid Australia and LivingWorks Australia for DVA. Register directly at:

<https://www.mhfa.com.au/mental-health-protect/>

For the most up-to-date information on Open Arms' group programs visit our website: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/treatment-programs-and-workshops> or scan the QR Code:

