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The Partners of Veterans of Australia – Victoria Branch

Newsletter – October 2025 edition

The 2025 Interim Executive elected at the AGM. There will be a special general meeting on 17 November to further discuss the fate of PVA-Victoria.

President
Sherold Kelleher

Secretary
Joy Herman

Vice President
Cheryl Myers OAM

Treasurer
Robin Turner

Interim President Message

Hi from Bendigo,
I'm happy to take on the role of State President, with the help of members. As we are aware, we are all getting older and as such we have to make adjustments as to what we take on. It may be a little difficult to attend Melbourne, being that I'm 165km from Melbourne, but I will do my best.

Cheers
Sherold Kelleher

Outgoing President's Report

This will be my last report to you as the acting State president of Victoria, this has been both a learning curve for me realising how much I didn't know and how exciting it has been to learn new things.

Over the last 12 months I have been attending the DCF meetings sometimes via Teams and other times in person. I have found these meetings very informative especially around the Royal commission into suicide, I'm just sorry that it's taking so long for the government to get things to happen.

Throughout the year I have attended services at the Shrine of Remembrance, the V-Centre and the Premiers lunch to name a few.

As a National Director with Lyn Smith, we have had several team meetings and we went to Adelaide in May. At this meeting the Directors developed the Associations Strategic Plan for the coming 5 years. This 5year Strategic Plan has taken commitment from All Directors and involved many hours of hard work and a vision for the future for the Association. It is not finished yet, but we again will be working hard to complete this to demonstrate our commitment to the Association.

At this point I would like to thank Joy & Robin for their hard work as Secretary & Treasurer, both jobs take a lot of time & commitment, also I would like to thank Chrissy who stayed on to be our membership officer for this year and of course I want to thank the members and delegates who have come to the meetings and contributed to helping our association.

I will finish off by saying that I hope this isn't the end of the Victorian Branch of P.V.A but it is definitely time for me to stand down as President.

Acting President - Cheryl Myers OAM



National Presidents Report

The past year has been a testament to resilience, adaptation, and innovation amidst an ever-changing landscape, our organisation has risen to meet challenges, seized new opportunities, and charted a course for sustainability and to remain relevant.

Since October 2024 the National Board have held two face to face meeting, one in Canberra and one in Adelaide and five Zoom or Teams meetings and these have grown both in number and in expertise, strengthening our ability to deliver value to our members and be part of the Veteran community and a working ESO. Our mission remains centred on being a community where all partners of past and present members of ADF, their Allies and their families are recognised, and their wellbeing is vital to us.

Over the years we have become a leading voice for spouses in the national conversation. We have gained respect and recognition from Federal government. Securing a seat at government meetings and consultations. The National Directors have had an input on eight government working committees. National President, Bev sits on the ESORT, DVA meetings, National Carers Advisory Council, Carers Working group and focus Veterans group, Peak Body consultation, DVA meetings, and Harmonisation Bill consultation, DVA meetings. National Vice President, Narelle sits on Operation Working Party, DVA meetings. National Secretary Rona sits on the Female Veterans and Family Forum, DVA meetings, NSW Director Luci is a founding member of the new Advocacy committee, DVA meetings and SA Director Pauline sits on the National Aged Care Committee, DVA meetings.

It has been recognised that from these meetings P.V.A. has had an input into the events and conditions that have shaped the work of these committees. Notably the inclusion of fiancé advice support for Veterans in the Harmonisation Bill, having a foundation member on the Advocacy committee, the discussion on the terminology of a War Widow in the Bill, being a voice for Carers of Veterans, and our lived experience input for the formation on Family policy. We demonstrate that our involvement in these community engagements shows our commitment to our members and the Association.

The Directors have also developed the Associations Strategic Plan for the coming 5 years. The development of the next 5year Strategic Plan has taken commitment from All Directors and involved many hours, work hard and a vision for the future for the Association. It is not finished yet, but we again will be working hard to complete this to demonstrate our commitment to the Association.

The National Board committees of the Governance Committee, Communications and the Health Committees work are working to improve our Association with good governance, good communications with each other and promoting our Association and continuing to lobby for better health care for Partners and promoting the Association, by their attendance at State DC Forums and ADF/JTA events.

As we look to the future, we are aware of changes to Government policies will impact Veterans and their families so we must ensure members and Veterans are receiving services they are entitled to and need. Supporting our members is vital and by taking on the advocacy issues we are there to help when required.

Together, we move towards a future of promise, progress, and shared success.

Beverley Benporath
1^{5th} September 2025

Sub branches/Group

For information on all upcoming AGM, meetings, and social events, please contact the sub branches/groups for details.

Bendigo

Meet weekly at various venues.
Ring or email for venue information

Contact: Sherold Kelleher
0417 571 656

Email: dasher_03@optusnet.com.au

Melton

Meet third Tuesday every second month @ 1 pm @ Melton Country Club, 28-30 Reserve Road, Melton

Contact: Chris Burgess
0415 806 866

Email: Christine.1955@live.com

Frankston

Meet second Monday monthly @ 11am @ Frankston RSL, 183 Cranbourne Road, Frankston

Contact: Rhon Tempest
0410 566 709

Email: r.tempest@bigpond.com

OR

Lyn Westhead 0408 122 802
Email: thomas.head1@bigpond.com

Post your photos or messages from your meetings or social events on the Victoria facebook page

Note: You will need permission from those in group photos before you post

Geelong/Lara

Meet the third Monday monthly @ 11:30 am, Geelong RSL, 50 Barwon Heads Rd, Belmont

P.V.A. morning coffee group, first Monday monthly @ 10:30 am at The Edge, Geelong, 6-8 Eastern Beach Rd, Geelong

Contact: Robin Turner
0417 499 599

Email: robin.turner@bigpond.com

Kilmore

Meet the third Thursday of the month in Memorial Hall, Kilmore

Contact: Sue Meldrum
0407 739 706

OR

Gwenda Parker 0402 096 227
Email: johntsue@tpg.com.au

[World Mental Health Day](#)

World Mental Health Day is held every year on 10 October. The objective of the day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilise effort in support of it. We are celebrating our meaningful connections and raising awareness about how connections to supports and services can help us achieve good mental health. To observe World Mental Health Day, you might try some self-care such as meditation, journaling, exercise or rest. Resources and information will be available soon at <https://worldmentalhealthday.com.au/>

The Open Arms website has an audio series available called Open Conversations. It highlights veterans and family members who have accessed support services to improve their lives.

[COMMUNITY CONNECTION](#)

Veterans' and Families' Hubs DVA is involved in the consultation and funding of Veterans' and Families' Hubs across the country. The hubs provide a space for veterans' services and advocacy organisations to co-exist and provide integrated support to current and ex-service personnel and families. Hubs provide access to local veteran services, which may include health and mental health services, wellbeing support, advocacy, employment and housing advice, and social connection. The new hub servicing the Northern Adelaide region has recently opened and others are in various stages of implementation. There are addresses and contact details for all Veterans' and Families' Hubs at this webpage: Veterans' and Families' Hubs.

[Anzac Day Schools' Awards](#)

Victoria winners of 2025 ANZAC Day School awards were Mount Beauty Secondary College and Camberwell Girls Grammar (Secondary). The theme was 'Remembering Gallipoli'.

The 2026 ANZAC Day Schools' Awards are now open and will close on 28 May 2026. The theme is 'Women in Service'. Schools are encouraged to reflect on the extraordinary ways Australian women served our country.

For more information, please look on the ANZAC portal website <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au>

[Improvements to the veterans' compensation system](#)

Changes will come into effect on 1 July 2026. There will be no change to payments currently being received, including income support payments such as energy supplement, service pension and income support supplement.

Keep in touch via www.dva.gov.au.

[Long Tan Bursary](#)

The Long Tan Bursary helps eligible children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans pay for their tertiary education. Each year 37 bursaries are awarded to successful applicants across Australia. Each bursary is worth up to \$12,000 over 3 years of continuous full-time study. The Long Tan Bursary scheme is named after the Battle of Long Tan, the best-known battle fought by Australians during the Vietnam War. Applications close on 31 October 2025. Further details are at the AVCAT website.

International Men's Day

The purpose of International Men's Day is to:

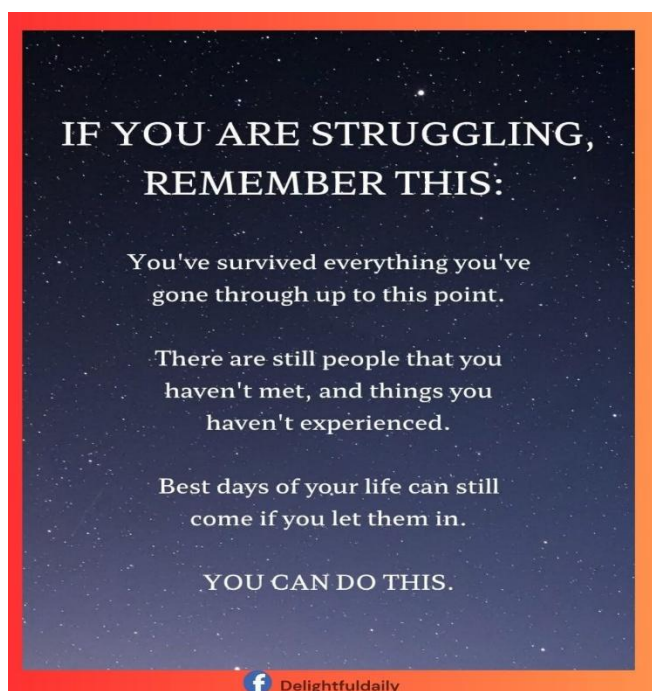
- Highlight some of the social issues that men and boys face
- Make a difference for the men and boys in your community
- Celebrate men and boys in all their diversity
- Have some serious fun in the process!

Partners Guides: Whether it's a medical condition or an unhealthy habit – when something affects your partner's wellbeing, it can impact you. The Healthy Male's Partners Guides cover all the information you need to understand common conditions, spot symptoms and encourage treatment, while taking care of yourself too. To increase your confidence in supporting your partner and you visit Partner's guides: How your partner's health can impact you.

Community Support News

As we fly into the last quarter of the year, and with daylight saving just around the corner, I know you are going to get even busier. You may be planning for Remembrance Day, doing social activities, acknowledging all your volunteers or even working on your plans for 2026, before you hopefully will get to enjoy a well deserved break. As we say every year, the year is going so quickly, but I want to take some time to reflect on some of the delightful opportunities I have had to connect with so many of you. We may have met in person at a networking event, expo, presentation, meeting, open day, or workshop; I also treasure the emails and phone calls where you tell me about some of the exciting and wonderful things you are doing in your community. Highlighted in the update are some wonderful opportunities that are coming up. [Tour de V Centre 2025](#), [2nd Veterans, First Responders and Families Expo Ballarat](#), and the [Kokoda Memorial Challenge and Challenge Finale family celebration day in Lara](#). I encourage you to share these opportunities with your networks.

Warm regards,
Karen Rowlinson
CSA.VIC@dva.gov.au



P.V.A. 2026 CALENDAR



Available Soon

The theme for 2026 is Health and Wellbeing. April has an ANZAC colouring-in page for a bit of fun. Consider this calendar as a Christmas gift or stocking filler; all proceeds support PVA Victoria.

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](#)

