WA BRANCH OF THE PARTNERS OF VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.- NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2026



President's Report

Hello from the West,

WA PVA will be having a slow build-up to the festive season this year after a blockbuster 6 months, including hosting the P.V.A. National Board here in Perth followed by our Annual Busselton Retreat, both in May.
In July we hosted a very successful Information Forum Day, which was very well attended. The topics were informative and interesting, and we ended the event with our chair/floor (for the brave) yoga.
August saw our final Honouring the Hidden Service event in Perth with a wonderful Morning Tea for all members in Kings Park.
September saw many of our members travelling down to Bunbury for the day to attend our General Meeting and AGM. This was a wonderful day and it was beautifully hosted by our lovely Bunbury ladies.
In October, 13 WA members/family travelled to Canberra for the official HTHS Events at the Australian War Memorial. This was an amazing event in honour of all of us, the Partners of Veterans!
Coming up we have:

- **Back to the Bush Veterans Reunion in Bruce Rock** will be commemorating their 25th Anniversary from October 28 to November 4 2026. WA PVA members will be attending several official events and also holding a stall on the "Market Day". Camping is available for those wishing to attend.
- **WA PVA Groups** will all continue to catch up each month, as well as holding their various Christmas celebrations in their areas.
- **WA PVA Annual Birthday/Christmas Luncheon** for all members will be held at the Grosvenor Hotel in Perth on the 17th December.
- **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year** to all as we then embark on another very busy and exciting year ahead in 2027. W.A. PVA continues to support all of our spouses; we send our thoughts and best wishes to our members who may be experiencing hard times right now.

Fiona Sassenfeld JP
President
Western Australia Branch of Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc
(WA PVA)

State Management Committee Meetings: These are held the first Monday of each month, and your committee has already been busy at work with organising events for the year ahead in 2027.
P.V.A. National Board Meeting: - was held in Canberra from 14th – 17th October, allowing the National Board time to work on issues for P.V.A. and with the AGM being held on Thursday 15th October.

Commemorations Services –

ANZAC Day 25th April 2026
ANZAC Day is an important day for many Australians when we remember the service of our Navy, Army and Airforce people both past and now. It's a day we remember and thank everyone who has helped keep our country safe. It's a day we remember that we have to look after everyone who lives in our community. It's a day we talk about the spirit and courage and mateship of our service men and women who went to war to let us live the way we do today. The day commemorates the soldiers who served and died at Gallipoli in World War One. Fiona, along with other W.A. PVA representatives, laid wreaths at Kings Park, Bunbury, Fremantle and North Beach services.

Indigenous 27th May 2026 at Kings Park
This service recognises the contribution our Indigenous service personnel had made to the many conflicts of war Australia has been involved. W.A. PVA will attended and laid a wreath.

Korean 27th July 2026 at Kings Park
WA PVA attended and laid a wreath at this annual service held here in Perth at the Korean memorial. The service was well attended by the Veteran community.

Commemoration of Women in the Armed Forces of Australia
Fiona attended and laid a wreath on behalf of WA PVA. Many women braved the extremely cold and wet weather so that their inspiring stories could be heard.

Vietnam Veterans Day
This year was the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. The keynote address from 2nd Lt John O'Halloran (Ret) spoke to the bravery of his young men in battle and included many funny anecdotes about these young men ensuring their lives will never be forgotten. This was well attended by our WA PVA Members, with a wreath being laid by Fiona, and our National President Bev, who laid a wreath on behalf of National P.V.A.

Honouring Their Hidden Service at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra
Seven of our WA PVA members, along with some of their family members, made the trip to Canberra and represented W.A. at the official Honouring the Hidden Service Commemorative Wreath Laying Ceremony, in honour of "the Partners" of our Veterans. Alethea Gilmore laid a wreath on behalf a W.A., and Bev Benporath laid a wreath on behalf of National P.V.A. This was a very moving ceremony.

WA PVA HONOURING THE HIDDEN SERVICE:

Event 1: Government House Morning Tea

Hosted by Governor Chris Dawson and Mrs. Dawson, with our National Patron, Lady Lynne Cosgrove in attendance. Members attended a beautiful Morning Tea in the beautiful Government House, Perth and where they also had the opportunity to meet personally with Lady Lynne Cosgrove as well as all the National Board members









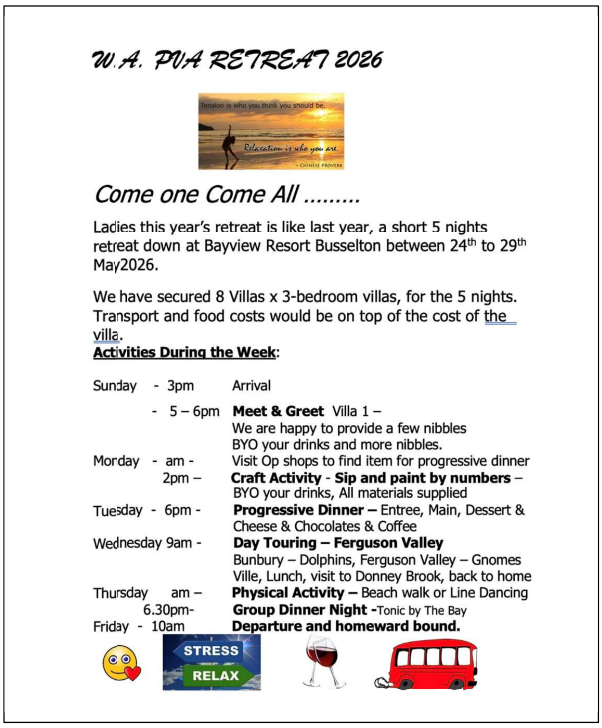




Event 2: WA PVA Busselton Retreat 2026

As usual, an amazing week away, with lots of fun and laughter. While some ladies enjoyed retail therapy through the week others joined in the craft afternoon and took home a master art piece completed at the sip and paint afternoon. On the wet, cold and windy Tuesday night 29 of us trampled our way around the 8 villas to enjoy more laughter, sipping, talking, eating and singing our way through the 4-course progressive dinner. The day touring through the Ferguson Valley was very relaxing and a lot of fun. The week then finished with an enjoyable meal at Tonic by the Bay, when we once again all ventured out on another wet and cold night to join in the fun. Not only a meal but a quiz night and the dancing.

Without any hesitation, everyone voted to hold our Retreat again next year – same time, same place - All Booked! See you there!



W.A. PVA RETREAT 2026

Come one Come All .....

Ladies this year's retreat is like last year, a short 5 nights retreat down at Bayview Resort Busselton between 24th to 29th May2026.

We have secured 8 Villas x 3-bedroom villas, for the 5 nights. Transport and food costs would be on top of the cost of the villa.

Activities During the Week:

Sunday	- 3pm	Arrival
	- 5 – 6pm	**Meet & Greet** Villa 1 – We are happy to provide a few nibbles BYO your drinks and more nibbles.
Morday	- am -	Visit Op shops to find item for progressive dinner
	2pm –	**Craft Activity - Sip and paint by numbers** – BYO your drinks, All materials supplied
Tuesday	- 6pm -	**Progressive Dinner –** Entree, Main, Dessert & Cheese & Chocolates & Coffee
Wednesday	9am -	**Day Touring – Ferguson Valley** Bunbury – Dolphins, Ferguson Valley – Gnomes Ville, Lunch, visit to Donney Brook, back to home
Thursday	am –	**Physical Activity –** Beach walk or Line Dancing
	6.30pm-	**Group Dinner Night -**Tonic by The Bay
Friday	- 10am	**Departure and homeward bound.**







Event 3: WA PVA Information Forum Day 2026

Another great Information Forum, coordinated by Bev Benporath. This was very well attended and the feedback was extremely positive, with everyone taking away some great information on the day. This year Bev tried a new format in doing a Round Robin where smaller groups moved around to all of the different speakers. This worked great in that everyone interacted more with each of the presenters. Morning Tea and Lunch were both very well received by all. We then finished the day in the afternoon on a much lighter note (and with much laughter), as we all **attempted** to do chair yoga – or floor yoga for those that were perhaps a bit fitter and able to get on and off the floor.

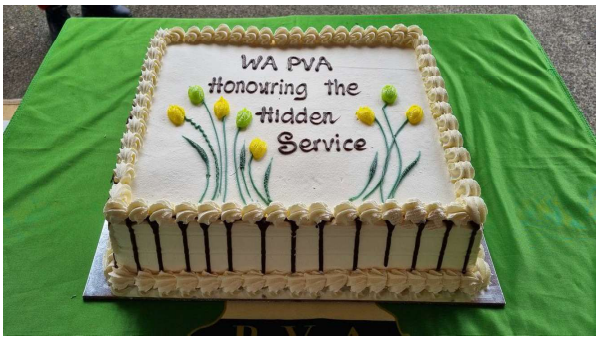




Event 4: Members' Morning Tea in Kings Park

The 31st August 2026 saw a beautiful day in Kings Park where we held a special Morning Tea "Honouring the Hidden Service". We were blessed with a beautiful sunny morning, a delightful selection of homemade treats to be enjoyed with a Cuppa and lots of chatter and catching up with friends. We were delighted to welcome 4 Ladies from our newest Cockburn Group, and also Louisa and Sean from Open arms who joined us for our special morning tea. It was a great chance to catch up with some Ladies who have been with P.V.A from the beginning along with all our Ladies from the various city Groups. It was an ideal time to get some lovely photos of Ladies who attended, Cockburn Ladies, Original Members and the State Management Committee. Two Rosemary bushes were presented to Gae Donaldson and Laurel Stevenson who recently lost their Husbands. To finish off our special morning tea, Fiona our State president and Bev our National President were asked to cut the cake that had been made for the Morning Tea. Many thanks to Debbie who organised the cake for this event.













- ## Health & Wellbeing Matters:

Hillarys Group recently organised a Presentation from Stroke Safe, followed by a lovely morning tea. Although we all hope to never need this information, raising awareness of this could just help prevent a stroke to someone close to us. Thank you to War Widows who kindly allowed us to use their premises at Menora.



- ## WA PVA General Meeting & AGM:

WA members recently travelled down to Bunbury for our September General Meeting and AGM. Thank you to the Bunbury ladies for your amazing country hospitality. We were greeted on arrival with a lovely morning tea and then followed with a lovely lunch after the Meetings. Congratulations to Alethea Gilmore on receiving Life Membership, to Evette House for receiving a Meritorious Certificate for her contribution to WA PVA & P.V.A. Congratulations also to those members who received their 10 or 20 year certificates. With this year being an election year, the following nominations were elected:

President: Fiona Sassenfeld
Vice President: Alethea Gilmore
Secretary: Pauline Black
Treasurer: Debbie Smith
Committee Members: Kerry Anderson, Bev Benporath, Margaret Donnan, Jill McPhee and Maureen Pitchers,







- ## ADF Transition Forum

  PVA once again attended a successful Transition Forum WA, which was held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on the 25th August 2026, where we had the opportunity to speak with many transitioning Defense Force personnel and their partners.

- ## Honouring the Hidden Service – Friday 16th October 2026

  What an amazing day! Fourteen people travelled from WA to Canberra to attend these very special Events at the Australian War Memorial. We started the day with the Commemorative Wreath Laying Ceremony – this was a very appropriate and moving ceremony. This was then followed by the Day Symposium which was very interesting and informative, and was also at times very moving as we listened to the stories from some of our speakers. In the evening it was then time for the Gala Dinner, which was centered around the F-111 in the War Memorial Atrium. This was an amazing venue and you really needed to be there to fully appreciate the amazing atmosphere in the most spectacular of surroundings. There were many highlights throughout the evening, with one of them being the presentation of awards that were presented by our National President, Bev Benporath. Two of our WA members – Lesley Westlake and Debbie Smith, were each presented with an 'Unsung Hero Award' for their dedicated service and commitment to Partners of Veterans in both Western Australia and Nationally. Thank you to our National President, Bev and also to our WA Board Directors, Alethea Gilmore and Debbie Smith for all the work and commitment that went into not only this very special day, but also for organizing several Honouring the Hidden Service Events in WA throughout 2026 – the year of Honouring the Hidden Service, with the 'Hidden Service' being 'us' – the Partners of Veterans.











- # Support Groups

Bunbury Support Group - Meetings have become a more casual meeting with lots more chatter over coffee/tea which is quite enjoyable. Ongoing meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Bunbury Dome and with newcomers always welcomed. As this year rolls on towards its conclusion, we Bunbury Ladies look forward to joining with our fellow WA PVA members in supporting each other, and strengthening our friendships when we are able to get together from time to time.

Cockburn Group – My name is Lyn Higbid, and I am the Group Leader for Cockburn, the newest group in WA PVA. Cockburn Group is based at the Cockburn RSL Sub Branch in Hamilton Hill and meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 12noon to 3pm. We are made up of 12 ladies so far. We are taking baby steps to start with. We held our inaugural meeting on 21st July with a coffee and information afternoon and our discussions are ongoing into the type of activities we would like to do in 2027. On behalf of the Cockburn Group, I would like to thank you all for making us feel so welcome.

Hillarys Group – Continues to meet on the 4th Thursday of each month at Flinderz Café in Hillarys, with occasionally going on an outing elsewhere. We recently organised an awareness presentation by the Stroke Foundation to talk to our members. With Christmas fast approaching, we are looking forward to a lovely Christmas Lunch at the Marmion Angling & Aquatic Club. We always welcome members from the other WA groups or anyone visiting from interstate. Please feel free to join us for a coffee or lunch if you are in the area.

South West Support Group – It has been a busy time for the Southwest Group as this year each month is being hosted by a different Southwest member, and the group has been out and about their region enjoying lunches, coffees, ten pin bowling, a guest speaker and more yummy lunches. Southwest group is also this year participating in the Bendigo Bank Volunteer Raffle with all funds benefiting WA PVA.

Midland Hills Support Group - Still meeting for lunch on the 1st Wednesday of each month. The numbers are low at present as some Members are away and a couple of members have relocated.