

Health & Wellbeing Update

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2025

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.

Meet DVA's Chief Psychiatrist

As DVA's inaugural Chief Psychiatrist, Associate Professor Jon Lane provides national leadership in psychiatry, mental health, and clinical governance, ensuring that policy and program delivery are grounded in strong clinical expertise and evidence-based practice.

With a career that bridges both military service and psychiatry, Jon brings a unique understanding of the challenges faced by current and former serving members. His role encompasses shaping policy direction, advising on complex mental health issues, and promoting best-practice care that reflects the lived experience of the veteran community. Beyond policy, the Chief Psychiatrist also plays a vital role in championing innovation, supporting workforce development, and guiding DVA's approach to mental health and wellbeing across all programs.



Image: Jon Lane at the Role 3 Medical Treatment Facility, Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan

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Jon enlisted in the Australian Army in 1989. He completed a psychology degree part-time while working as a soldier before being accepted into Medicine as an Army-sponsored medical student in 2000. During 2007–2010, he worked as a Regimental Medical Officer for the Army, then transferred to the Reserves to undertake his psychiatry training in Hobart. In 2013 Jon deployed to Afghanistan as the first ADF psychiatrist to be embedded with US forces. He continues to serve in the Army Reserve and is the current chair of the Network for the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Military, Veterans and Emergency Services Personnel at the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

Jon's commitment to mental health extends beyond research and clinical practice. He does archery as both a sport and an activity that improves mental wellbeing and was the archery coach for the Australian Invictus Games team from 2017 to 2022.

In the latest edition of Vetaffairs Associate Professor Lane has an insightful article on how implementing the principles of lifestyle psychiatry could improve your daily life. To read the article go to [Vetaffairs Vol. 42 No.2 August 2025](#) or to subscribe to see his regular column [Vetaffairs and e-news subscriptions | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

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](#).

DVA NEWS

Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2030 is a joint initiative between Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). The strategy was launched on 4 September 2025 by the Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Defence Personnel and Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

The strategy prioritises the mental health and wellbeing of our people from recruitment to post-service life through 6 goals:

1. promote and assist wellbeing
2. improve mental health and wellbeing through prevention and early intervention
3. facilitate timely access to quality care and support
4. grow a positive and connected Defence and veteran community
5. prioritise suicide prevention initiatives
6. use high quality evidence and data to drive positive outcomes.

The Strategy, and related action plans on mental health and wellbeing, and another on suicide prevention are available on the [DVA website](#).

Legislation Reform

With the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025* (VETS Act) receiving Royal Assent in February 2025, the Department's focus has turned to the implementation activities that will support the transition to the new system.

Single Review Pathway

While for the most part, the VETS Act does not come into effect until 1 July 2026, harmonisation of external merits reviews of compensation claims (single review pathway) commenced on 21 April 2025. Veterans appealing determinations made under *the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) from 21 April 2025 can now lodge requests for review with the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) instead of the Administrative Review Tribunal as the first order of external merits review.

All applications to the VRB now need to be made directly to the VRB, not through the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This can be done via email to "reviews@vrb.gov.au", online at www.vrb.gov.au, by post to "Veterans' Review Board (VRB), GPO Box 1631, SYDNEY NSW 2001", or in person at a VRB registry.

System Changes

In preparation for 1 July 2026, DVA is undertaking the required system changes to ensure that DVA can process claims under the new arrangements. While the majority of system changes will be deployed just prior to 1 July 2026, DVA has already implemented changes to significantly reduce the amount of manual processing for staff with new systems for transport reimbursements and for processing Special Rate Disability Pension.

Establishment of the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission

On 29 August 2025, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee released the findings of its review of Schedule 9 of the VETS Act, which establishes the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission (DVSC). The Committee made three recommendations, which are being considered by the Government:

1. That Part VIIIIE of the Defence Act 1903 is transitioned into standalone legislation.
2. That Schedule 9 of the VETS Act be amended to include a reference to veterans' families for the purpose of the Defence and Veterans' Services Commissioner's functions.
3. That the functions and powers of the DVSC be reviewed, specifically to consider the amendments proposed by the Interim Head of the DVSC.

The full report can be viewed on the Parliament of Australia website [Senate Committees – Parliament of Australia](https://www.parliament.gov.au/senate-committees).

Advocate and DVA Staff Training

Existing training material for the Advocate Training and Development Program (ATDP) and DVA staff is being updated to ensure future advocates and staff are trained in the single Act system. Material relevant to the Single Review Pathway has already been updated.

Training plans are being developed for existing ATDP affiliated advocates and staff. The first stage will involve the publishing of a series of information videos on legislation reform for self-directed completion. These are being developed in consultation with the Institute of Veterans Advocacy and will be published on the ATDP website. The single review pathway module is already available. The second stage will involve the delivery of formal training.

Further information on legislation reform is available on the DVA website www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform.

COMMEMORATIONS

Anzac Portal

The [Anzac Portal](#) has a range of information and resources available including information about state and local services, the National Service in Canberra, posters, teaching resources, and scripts for public announcements.

Recently services were held for the 75th Anniversary of Australian Service in Korea and Malaya. Both were broadcast by the ABC and are available for viewing via [iView](#).

Remembrance Day Kitbag

Host resources for a Remembrance Day service. The kitbag includes a suggested order of service with flag protocols, music, sample speeches, the Ode of Remembrance and craft activities for children. We've included ideas on personal ways you can commemorate at home. Print the kitbag sheets or adapt them to your needs. [Remembrance Day Kitbag for hosting an event - Anzac Portal](#)



GRANTS AND FUNDING

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 and can details are at the [AVCAT website](#).

RECOGNITION

Prime Minister's National Veteran Employment Awards

Finalists have been announced for the 2025 Prime Minister's National Veteran Employment Awards, visit the [Veteran Employment Program website](#) to learn more. There are 9 different award categories recognising the achievements of Australian organisations that make significant contributions to the employment of veterans and partners, as well as celebrating the achievements of individual veteran and partner employees and entrepreneurs.

The 2025 Awards theme is 'Celebrating our growing community' where we will not only celebrate the achievements of veterans, partners and employers, but also highlight the collective impact of the veteran employment community. The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in Canberra in November.

Congratulations to all the finalists – it is fabulous to see the great initiatives taking place across the country!

Health Awareness Events Calendar – Oct/Nov/Dec

- 1 Oct – International Day of Older Persons
- 10 Oct – [World Mental Health Day](#)
- 19 Nov – [International Men's Day](#)
- 5 Dec – [International Volunteers Day](#)

International Men's Day

International Men's Day is held on **19 November** each year. In Australia, this event is promoted by the **Australian Men's Health Forum (AMHF)** this year's theme is Supporting Men and Boys website, go to [International Men's Day](#) where you can access articles, resources and events.

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!



Chat to your members, peers, local community about what's important to your group and why not organise an event/activity this November in recognition of International Men's Day. A great opportunity to catch up with friends and check-in with one another.

Healthy Male is a national organisation that provides easy access to the latest scientific and medical research on male health. Their aim is to make this information available to everybody, regardless of gender, age, education, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity. To do this, they collaborate with Australia's leading researchers, specialists, clinicians and educators to develop information that fills the gaps in men's health. Healthy Male is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

Healthy Male provides a monthly e-newsletter which features articles on men's health and information on available resources - subscribe [here](#).



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](#).

Bins4Blokes

Recently one of our Men's Health Peer Education (MHPE) Volunteers, Mr. Alan White, became an Ambassador for Bins4Blokes.

The Bins4Blokes campaign involves installing a continence product bin into a male toilet cubicle and Continence Health Australia (CHA) are looking for people to promote the installation of bins by reaching out to their council to encourage them to install a continence bin in RSLs, male public toilets, sporting venues, bowls clubs etc. On the back of Prostate Cancer month in September (with incontinence being a major side effect from Prostate surgery), now would be a great time to support this campaign!

Incontinence can happen at any age, *did you know that: 71% of people living with incontinence are 65 years and younger.* To learn more about supporting men and boys to live confidently with incontinence see the attached flyer.

Heroes and Horses Australia



Applications are now open for the next Heroes and Horses program which will run in March/April 2026. This is a 41-day program designed to assist male combat veterans in regaining inner strength and purpose. Fully funded, including flights to and from NSW, no experience with horses is required. For all details, including the application process please visit the [Heroes and Horses Australia website](#).

National Parks Pass

The NSW Government now offers free vehicle access passes to national parks in the state for all Commonwealth Veteran Card holders. This includes gold, white and orange card holders from all states and territories. You can find information at the [NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service webpage](#).

TASMANIA NEWS

Upcoming Events & Programs in Tasmania

Kookaburra Kids are seeking volunteers in Tasmania to help support their casual program team. Commitments range from a few hours to a whole weekend. This is a great way to get involved in the community and support young people. For more information contact volunteer@kookaburrakids.org.au

Tasmanian Health Service has a range of training, events, and assistance available. These include heart support, coffee catchups, wellbeing for men, wheelchair sports, retreats, and health literacy workshops. Contact Jennelle and Michelle via healthpromotion.nw@ths.tas.gov.au

BuddyUp Australia runs a range of outdoors, fitness and social connection activities for current and former military, first responders and their families. You can search for activities in your area at the [BuddyUp website](#).

If you have any upcoming events, please do not hesitate to reach out. We would be happy to see how we can support by providing information or connecting you with relevant DVA resources.

Kind regards,

CSA.TAS@dva.gov.au
