



**The Hon De-Anne Kelly BE MP**  
Federal Member for Dawson  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

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## BUDGET RENEWS REGIONAL COMMITMENT TO VETERANS

The Australian Government has renewed funding for services to members of the veteran and defence force communities who live in rural and remote areas of Australia.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, De-Anne Kelly, said the 2005-06 Federal Budget included \$2.1 million over four years to continue the use of contracted agencies to provide services to veterans throughout regional Australia.

"Since 1999, the Government has supported business partnerships with other Commonwealth, State and local government agencies to provide veterans in regional Australia with local access to information from the Department of Veterans' Affairs," Mrs Kelly said.

"With one-third of the veteran community living outside major metropolitan areas, these agencies have been instrumental in assisting country veterans to access the services they need."

The Minister said there were currently 135 agencies contracted to provide services to veterans.

"These are places veterans, war widows and defence force families can visit to find out more about the range of services available through DVA and lodge claims to receive compensation, income support or health benefits.

"The agency services were reviewed in the lead up to the Budget and I can report the centres received overwhelming support from the veterans who use them.

"This measure will ensure that regional veterans continue to receive quality service that gets them the care and support to which they are entitled," Mrs Kelly said.

The Minister said the Government had also given approval for the Department to proceed with a new IT framework to further improve the use of new technologies to support services to veterans.

The new application development framework will allow DVA to integrate existing systems with new software developed to implement Government initiatives.

"This will ensure that DVA's systems are reliable and cost effective and enable the Department to extend the provision of services over the Internet, further improving service delivery to the veteran and defence force communities," Mrs Kelly said.

*Budget 2005-2006*  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

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**Rural and remote service delivery arrangements –  
programme continuation**

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What funding is the Government committing to the initiative?

- ▶ The Government has committed \$2.1 million over the next four years to continue agency arrangements for the provision of veterans' information services in rural and remote locations around Australia.

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What have we done in the past?

- ▶ Since 1999 the Government has established service delivery agency arrangements between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and other Commonwealth, State and local organisations at 135 rural and remote locations.

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What is new?

- ▶ The Government has renewed its commitment to veterans living in regional areas.

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How will the initiative benefit veterans?

- ▶ Face-to-face services will continue to be available to members of the veteran and defence force communities living in regional areas through DVA's network of local agency arrangements.

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Who will benefit from the initiative?

- ▶ Approximately one-third of veterans live outside major metropolitan centres. These veterans and family members who deal with DVA on their behalf will benefit from this measure.
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