



THE BOSUN'S CALL

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



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ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY

ADULT VOLUNTEERS LEAD AND INSPIRE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY CADETS



In support of the volunteer officers and instructors of ADF cadets, Defence has implemented a 5 per cent increase to the Cadet Volunteer Payment (CVP).

The CVP reimburses cadet staff for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses associated with volunteering their time to participate in the ADF cadets. This increase is the first rise to the volunteer honorarium since its introduction in 2019.

Deputy Head of the Reserve and Cadet Support Division CDRE Grant O'Loughlan said the change was an important step in recognising the essential contribution of adult volunteer staff across the Navy, Army and Air Force cadet programs.

"Volunteers are the backbone of the ADF cadet organisations," CDRE O'Loughlan said.

"They give their time, their expertise and their leadership to help shape confident, resilient young people. This increase is a tangible acknowledgement of the responsibilities they carry and the personal time they sacrifice.

"We know many of our cadet staff contribute volunteer hours to ADF cadets in addition to their civilian jobs. Recognising their contribution is essential to retaining the skilled adults who make these programs possible."

The current adult volunteer cohort includes around 4900 officers and instructors, who support more than 33,000 young Australians nationwide.

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Supported by the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Navy Cadets (ANC) is a leading provider of youth development, open to young Australians between the ages of 13 and 18 of all genders and abilities.

With a focus on the maritime domain, cadets participate in numerous exciting and rewarding activities, on both land and the water, with the key objectives of building self-confidence and developing teamwork and leadership skills.

SCRAP THE BLOODY VETERAN CAP



The proposed \$5,000 allied health cap will hurt veterans with complex healthcare needs.



Treatment should be based on clinical need.



Help us stop it.



SIGN THE PETITION



lambienetwork.com.au/pages/scrap-the-cap

Scan here

★ STAND WITH VETERANS. SHARE IT. SIGN IT. ★



THE OFFICE OF SENATOR JACQUI LAMBIE
SENATOR FOR TASMANIA

13 August 2026

Dear Veterans, Advocates and Supporters,

RE: Scrap the Bloody Veteran Cap

I am writing to ask for your support in standing up for Australian veterans and helping us **SCRAP THE BLOODY VETERAN CAP**.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is proposing to introduce an annual \$5,000 cap on allied health services for Veteran Card holders from 1 July 2027. Let's call this what it is: a bean-counting exercise that will hit the veterans with the most serious and complex healthcare needs the hardest.

Around 25,000 veterans are expected to reach that cap before the end of the year. That could leave them worrying about whether they can continue seeing their physiotherapist, psychologist, podiatrist, occupational therapist or other allied health provider.

Since this announcement was made, my office has been contacted by veterans, families, advocates and members of the broader veteran community who are deeply concerned about what this cap will mean.

Many veterans are already exhausted from having to repeatedly explain their injuries, justify their treatment and fight through a system that too often makes them prove repeatedly that they need help.

The uncertainty surrounding this cap is only adding to that distress. Advocates and veterans have told me it risks compounding existing trauma by forcing people to once again worry about whether their treatment will be approved, interrupted or taken away.

That is not good enough.

Veterans should not receive healthcare according to an arbitrary dollar figure dreamed up in Canberra.

Their treatment should be **based on clinical need**.

They have already paid the price through their service. They should not be forced to fight the government for the healthcare they were promised when they came home.

That is why I have launched a petition to the Australian Senate calling on the government to:

- reject the proposed \$5,000 annual cap;
- guarantee access to clinically necessary treatment;
- oppose new administrative barriers that delay or restrict healthcare; and
- ensure the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide remain at the centre of veterans' health policy.

I am asking RSL sub-branches, ex-service organisations, veteran advocates, support services and members of the broader veteran community to help us get this petition in front of as many Australians as possible.

You can help by:

- emailing the petition to your members and supporters;
- sharing it through your social media pages;
- including it in your newsletter or website;
- displaying the campaign flyers and QR code at your premises; and
- encouraging veterans, families and supporters to add their names.

We have attached campaign flyers that can be printed and displayed. *(Editor's Note - see flyer on the opposite page)*

If your organisation would prefer printed copies, please contact my office and we will be happy to post a supply out to you. We want to make this as easy as possible because the last thing veteran organisations need is more paperwork dumped in their lap.

The petition can be signed here:

<https://lambienetwork.com.au/pages/scrap-the-cap>
(Editor's Note - or scanning the QR Code on the opposite page)

Please share that link as widely as possible.

This is not about politics. It is about whether Australia keeps its word to the people who put on the uniform and served our country.

We cannot spend billions sending Australians into harm's way and then start pinching pennies when they need treatment for the damage done during their service.

That is bloody disgraceful and I will not sit quietly while it happens.

Please stand with our veterans, share the petition and help us send Canberra a message it cannot ignore: **SCRAP THE BLOODY VETERAN CAP**.

Thank you for your support.
Yours sincerely,

Senator Jacqui Lambie
Senator for Tasmania

HMAS Vampire (D11):

The RAN's Last Great Gun-Armed Destroyer



Moored today at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney, HMAS *Vampire* (D11) is Australia's largest preserved museum vessel - and a monument to the final generation of traditional gun-armed destroyers that served the Royal Australian Navy before the missile age.

Built for the Cold War

HMAS *Vampire* was the third and last of three Daring-class destroyers built for the RAN, part of a wider class of eleven ships shared with the Royal Navy. Laid down at Cockatoo Island Dockyard in Sydney on 1 July 1953, she was one of the first all-welded ships built in Australia, with a lightweight aluminium-alloy superstructure that helped the class reach speeds over 30 knots despite carrying six 4.5-inch guns in three twin turrets, torpedo tubes, and an array of anti-aircraft weapons. She was launched on 27 October 1956 and commissioned into the RAN on 23 June 1959, inheriting the name - and six battle honours- from the earlier HMAS *Vampire* (D68), the V-class destroyer sunk off Ceylon in 1942.

Decades of Service Across the Pacific

Through the 1960s and 1970s, HMAS *Vampire* was a fixture of Australia's regional naval presence. She served multiple deployments with the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve and took part in the Indonesia/Malaysia Confrontation, earning the battle honour "Malaysia 1964-66." During the Vietnam War she repeatedly escorted the troopship HMAS *Sydney* on its runs carrying Australian soldiers to and from the conflict. In 1977, she was given the honour of escorting the Royal Yacht *Britannia* during Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Australia.



By 1980, with guided-missile frigates taking over frontline duties, HMAS *Vampire* was reclassified as a training ship, spending her last years running cadets and sailors through exercises around New Zealand, Fiji, Singapore and Australian waters.

Retirement and Preservation

HMAS *Vampire* left active service on 25 June 1986 and was formally decommissioned on 13 August 1986, closing out 27 years in commission and roughly 808,000 nautical miles steamed - enough to circle the globe more than 37 times. She was handed to the Australian National Maritime Museum, initially on loan from 1990 before passing into full museum ownership in 1997.

Preserved largely as she was on the day she paid off, HMAS *Vampire* now sits alongside the museum's other historic vessels in Darling Harbour, open for the public to walk her decks - one of the last intact examples anywhere of a classic postwar gun destroyer, and a direct link to nearly seven decades of Australian naval history carried under a single, storied name.



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

DVA News - 27 August 2026

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SESSIONS FOR THE WA GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE REDEVELOPMENT

The Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) is inviting veterans, families, ex-service organisations, stakeholders and members of the community to attend consultation sessions on the redevelopment of the Western Australian Garden of Remembrance and Dutch Annex.

The redevelopment project aims to create a commemorative space that remains respectful, reflective and welcoming for future generations, while continuing to honour those commemorated at the site.

Community consultation sessions will be held in Perth on **9 and 10 September 2026**, providing attendees with an update on the project and an opportunity to view and discuss the initial design concepts.

The following sessions will be held at Anzac House, Level 1, Matthew Holyday and Victoria Cross Rooms, 28 St Georges Terrace, in Perth WA:

- **9 September 2026: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm**
-
- **9 September 2026: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**
-
- **10 September 2026: 9:30 am to 11:30 am.**

To register your attendance and for further information, please email OAWGEngagement@dva.gov.au by 4 September 2026. Alternatively, call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).

You can also follow project updates on the Office of Australian War Graves Current Projects and Announcements webpage.

The OAWG acknowledges the importance of this site to many families and the Western Australian community and apologises for any inconvenience caused by the works.



Employers get a taste of Reserve life

by Paul Thomson

August 27, 2026

Nearly 40 representatives from businesses across Australia gained a firsthand insight into the Australian Defence Force Reserves through BossX 2026.

The immersive three-day activity was conducted across Sydney from July 27 to 29, providing civilian employers of reservists and other industry stakeholders with a unique opportunity to experience the environments, capabilities and training reservists undertake during their ADF service.

Participants had a behind-the-scenes look at some of Defence's key establishments, including Victoria Barracks Sydney, RAAF Base Richmond, Holsworthy Barracks, Garden Island and HMAS Penguin.

Throughout the activity, employers were exposed to Defence capabilities spanning the five domains: air, cyber, land, maritime and space.

Participants toured operational facilities, received briefings from Defence leaders, observed demonstrations and engaged directly with ADF personnel.

The program helped participants gain a deeper understanding of the critical role reservists play as part of Defence's integrated force and demonstrated how reservists contribute specialist skills, experience and expertise across the full breadth of Defence operations.

A key theme of BossX 2026 was the unique value reservists bring to Defence through their civilian careers.

Presentations and engagements throughout the activity highlighted how reservists apply contemporary professional expertise from industries such as technology, health, engineering and the commercial space sector to enhance Defence capability.



Employers of ADF reservists receive a brief about the bridge area of HMAS Adelaide from Navy personnel during BossX. Photo: Michelle Green

'By supporting reservists, civilian employers not only enable Defence capability but also benefit from skilled employees who return to the workplace with enhanced leadership, teamwork and adaptability.'

Wing Commander Stuart Waldon from ADF Cyber Command spoke to participants about how Defence's ties to industry and employers are important in developing strong cyber capabilities.

"ADF reservists are a valuable part of Defence's cyber workforce because they can supplement enduring capability with specialist skills, surge capacity and contemporary experience," Wing Commander Waldon said.

"Partnerships with industry strengthen this model by supporting collaboration, knowledge sharing and a broader national approach to cyber defence."

BossX is one of ADF Reserves and Employer Support's flagship engagement activities, providing valuable insight into the mutually beneficial relationship between Defence and industry, and demonstrating how reserve service strengthens both the ADF and Australia's workforce.

Deputy Head of the Reserve and Cadet Support Division Commodore Grant O'Loughlan concluded the activity with a keynote address thanking civilian employers of reservists for their contributions to enabling a capable and ready reserve force.

"Defence is grateful for their commitment and remains focused on strengthening partnerships with businesses that enable their employees to serve," Commodore O'Loughlan said.

"By supporting reservists, civilian employers not only enable Defence capability but also benefit from skilled employees who return to the workplace with enhanced leadership, teamwork and adaptability."

To learn more about the benefits and support available for hiring reservists, visit ADF Reserves and Employer Support.

27 August 2026

ADM
AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MAGAZINE
SERVING THE BUSINESS OF DEFENCE

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NAVY COMMISSIONS TWO NEW PATROL BOATS

The Royal Australian Navy has welcomed HMAS Cape Spencer and HMAS Cape Hawke into service, in a commissioning ceremony at HMAS Cairns.

The 58.1m long Evolved Cape class patrol boats will strengthen the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) ability to protect Australia's maritime approaches and contribute to maritime security.

Commander Surface Force, Commodore Antony Pisani, said the dual commissioning ceremony marked an important milestone in Navy's ongoing growth and modernisation.

"Today's commissioning formally welcomes HMAS Cape Spencer and HMAS Cape Hawke into service and represents another important step in growing and modernising Navy's fleet to meet Australia's future maritime security requirements," Commodore Pisani said.

"The ceremony today recognises the commitment and professionalism of the sailors who will take these ships to sea and deliver outcomes for their country.

"Every new ship brought into service contributes to a more lethal and resilient Navy, ensuring we are ready to respond to emerging challenges across our maritime domain."

Evolved Cape Class patrol boats support Australia's maritime security objectives through border protection, maritime constabulary operations, law enforcement support, and international engagement activities.

With a range of more than 4,000 nautical miles, these new boats will provide increased endurance and improved accommodation, enabling crews to remain at sea longer.

First commanding officer of HMAS Cape Spencer, Lieutenant Commander Marita Knack, reinforced the significance of the occasion.

"The commissioning of HMAS Cape Spencer marks the beginning of the ship's service to Australia and is a significant occasion for not only every member of the crew but all who supported this journey," Lieutenant Commander Knack said.

Commanding officer HMAS Cape Hawke, Lieutenant Commander Harrison Ingham continued this sentiment and said it was a proud day for his ship's company.

"This is a big moment for our commissioning crew who are ready to contribute to the important work Navy undertakes every day in protecting Australia's interests," Lieutenant Commander Ingham said.

A commissioning ceremony is one of Navy's oldest traditions and signifies a ship's transition into active service as part of the RAN Fleet.

HMA Ships Cape Spencer and Cape Hawke will join the six commissioned Evolved Cape Class Patrol Boats already in service: Cape Schanck, Cape Solander, Cape Pillar, Cape Naturaliste, Cape Woolamai, and Cape Capricorn.

All vessels are named after prominent capes around Australia's coastline.



The Royal Australian Navy has welcomed HMAS Cape Spencer and HMAS Cape Hawke into service, in a commissioning ceremony at HMAS Cairns.



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

DVA Contact Numbers

Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: 1300 550 017

Provider enquiries: 1800 550 457

Transport bookings: 1800 550 455

Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre (VAPAC): 1800 552 580

Hearing or speech impairment assistance

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS):

Talk To You (TTY) users phone 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 838 372

Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 838 372

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1800 838 372

Information on health services may be obtained from DVA. The contact numbers for health care pro-viders requiring further information or prior financial authorisation for all States and Territories are listed below:

TELEPHONE: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

INTERNATIONAL CALLERS: +61 2 6289 1133

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Health Approvals & Home Care Section

GPO Box 9998

BRISBANE QLD 4001

DVA WEBSITE: <http://www.dva.gov.au/providers/allied-healthprofessionals>

DVA EMAIL: For prior financial authorisation: health.approval@dva.gov.au

The appropriate prior approval request form can be found at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/servicesrequiring-prior-approval>

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

For information about claims for payment visit: www.dva.gov.au/providers/how-claim

CLAIM ENQUIRIES: 1300 550 017 (Option 2 Allied Health)

Claims will take a variety of times to complete based on whether or not the claim is prioritised for allocation to a decision maker and the complexity of the claim itself. For example, if the service of the individual crosses two or more Acts or contains a lot of health conditions and injuries or both. This results in some claims being decided faster than the average time, while some claims take longer.

For any condition, to make the claiming process smoother, follow these 3 steps:

- Step 1: Get your medical practitioner to con-firm your diagnosis.
- Step 2: Supply the documents you need to;
- Step 3: Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.

CLAIMS PROGRESS

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) continues to process outstanding claims as quickly as possible, to deliver much needed help to veterans and families sooner.

As part of our commitment to routinely, publicly, and meaningfully reporting on claims processing progress, each month DVA releases updated data via the claims processing page.

A snapshot of May 2026:

DVA received 8,979 claims in May bringing the total for the financial year to date (FYTD) to 98,799 claims – 7.3 per cent higher than the same period last year.

DVA made 7,042 determinations and has finalised 85,573 claims in the FYTD, 8.6% per cent less than the equivalent period last year. 70,344 claims were with an officer for processing, and 31,316 claims were yet to be allocated for processing.

The average time taken to process a MRCA IL claim was 361 days in the 2025-26 FYTD (1 July 2025 to 31 May 2026), compared to 311 days in the corresponding 2024-25 FYTD.

OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families Counselling

Open Arms provides mental health and wellbeing support to anyone who has served at least one day of continuous fulltime service in the ADF and their immediate families.

1800 011 046



**SAFE ZONE
SUPPORT**

Free and anonymous counselling line for all current and ex-serving ADF personnel, veterans and their families. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1800 142 072

DEFENCE FAMILY HELPLINE

Available 24/7 or online at www.defence.gov.au/members-families/defence-helpline.asp. Staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

1800 628 036

DEFENCE ALL HOURS SUPPORT LINE

24/7 confidential telephone service for Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families to facilitate access to ADF or civilian mental health services.

1800 628 036