



THE BOSUN'S CALL

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



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ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY



NAA (ACT) President David Manolas onboard HMAS Canberra for the RAN 125th Anniversary Admiral's Reception - Saturday 21 March 2026

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The Fleet Review marked 125 years since the establishment of Australia's Naval Forces in 1901, a force that has grown from modest beginnings into a modern, technologically advanced navy. The anniversary is not only a celebration of naval tradition but also a tribute to the generations of sailors who have served Australia with distinction in peace and war.



Naval Association of Australia (ACT Section)

Founded 1 July 1944
Patron The Hon Sir William Deane AC KBE

Office Bearers 2026 - 2027

Executive Committee Members

President David Manolas
0427 504 564
stbdstayportgiveway@gmail.com

Vice President Alex McGown
02 6258 6167

Secretary Darren Rush
0435 911 607
darren.rush@navalassoc.org.au

Treasurer Alaric O'Neill

Committee Members

Tiger Lyons
Pauline Gribble
Heather Milward

Welfare Alex McGown
02 6258 6167

Membership Peter Cooke-Russell
0412 757 505
peter.cookerussell@gmail.com

Social Sec Bev Joce

Bosun's Call Darren Rush
wem@navalassoc.org.au



Upcoming Events

- 28 Apr** Anniversary of WRANS
- 12 May** Last Post Ceremony Stoker Nevilee Andrew Kelly
HMAS Sydney (I), Indian Ocean
- 25 May** Last Post Ceremony AB Russell Rockleigh Garner
HMAS Nizam, Australia

Meeting Dates & Locations

Tables are normally booked for drinks and lunch in the host club from 1200 prior to the meeting.

- 2 Apr** Eastlakes Club Gungahlin
Committee Meeting 1100
General Meeting 1330
- 7 May** Eastlakes Club Gungahlin
Committee Meeting 1100
General Meeting 1330
- 4 Jun** Eastlakes Club Gungahlin
Committee Meeting 1100
General Meeting 1330
- 6 Aug** Eastlakes Club Gungahlin
Committee Meeting 1100
General Meeting 1330
- 3 Sep** Eastlakes Club Gungahlin
Committee Meeting 1100
General Meeting 1330
- 1 Oct** Eastlakes Club Gungahlin
Committee Meeting 1100
General Meeting 1330

Social Program

Fish & Chips - held at Snapper & Co.
(Canberra Yacht Club)
Mariner Pl, Yarralumla ACT 2600



- 16 Apr** Fish 'n Chips 1200
Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)
- 21 May** Fish 'n Chips 1200
Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)
- 18 Jun** Fish 'n Chips 1200
Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)
- 2 Jul** Christmas in July 1200
Eastlakes Footy Club Gungahlin
- 16 Jul** Fish 'n Chips 1200
Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)

Bev Joce
Social Secretary

Committee & General Meeting Minutes ACT Section - 5 March 2026

Attendees: Darren Rush, Alaric O'Neill, Peter Cooke-Russell, Dennis Lyons, Pauline Gribble & Heather Milward.

Apologies: David Manolas & Alex McGown.

Committee Meeting opened at 11:35

1. Secretary's Report

Correspondence In
Thankyou card from Merle for her birthday flowers

2. Treasurer's Report

Current finances are stable ("solvent").
Annual financial report to be presented at AGM.
Year-on-year financial position is stable.

4. Membership Report

41 members are financial;
7 remain unfinancial.
Including Club & Honorary Life Members (12) we have a total of 60 Members.
8 honorary members will require approval at the AGM to follow.

Meeting closed at 11:50

General Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Committee (including Alex McGown & David Manolas), Veronica Heard, Bev Joce, Tony Vickers, Joe Slaats, Alan Masters, Harry Beardsley, Glen McNamara.

Visitors: Mary Slaats, Deb McGown, Sue Lyons.

Apologies: Sue Wheeler, Kate Reid-Smith, Graeme Quinn, Ray Horne.

Meeting opened at 13:05

Official consent obtained to record proceedings for minutes

1. Recital of the Odes

Naval Ode, Ode to the Naval Veteran, and the Ode of Remembrance.

2. Birthday Congratulations for March

Kate Reid-Smith, Heather Milward, John Small & Jack Aaron.

3. Notable Attendance

Special welcome to John, returning after an absence expressing his continued inclusion in thoughts and prayers.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Reference to minutes of February 2025 (published in March "Bosun's Call" Newsletter).
No questions or issues raised; motion to accept:
Mover: Alaric
Seconder: Harry
Passed by all in favour.

5. President's Report

Update on Peak Body for Veteran Issues:
Sparked by the Royal Commission into ADF deaths and suicides.

Confusion over whose responsibility the peak body is – initially government, then back to ESO community.

Noted appointment of an experienced British consultant (ex-Canadian Defence Forces) by DVA for 6 months to structure the peak body.

President is seeking a meeting with the Repatriation Commissioner to clarify:

Role, composition, function, and positioning of the peak body.

Concerns about transparency and independence.

Intention to disseminate information once gathered.

6. Vice President's Report

Last Post Ceremonies coming up include:
May, June, July & August - please advise if interested in representing.

Offered a book, "Bill the Bastard," on a notable horse, for members' interest.

7. Secretary's Report

Thank You Card Received from Merle Hare for her Birthday Flowers.

8. Treasurer's Report

No significant updates, Section remains solvent.

9. Membership Report

Membership Breakdown:
48 full members (41 Financial & 7 Unfinancial)
8 honorary members
(pending AGM approval for continued status)
1 club member, 3 honorary life members
No associate members

9. General Meeting Reports

Motion to accept reports:
Mover: Joe
Seconder: Tony
Carried.

10. 75th Anniversary of National Service

NAA (ACT) represented by Alaric O'Neill. Positive contact made with other Ex-Service Organisations and Service Representatives. Discussion with Pat McCabe commented that "there are a couple of ESO forums in Canberra where she didn't see representatives of the Navy association".

General discussion debating the advantages vs the disadvantages of bringing back National Service.

Meeting closed at: 13:25

AGM to proceed immediately.
Next Meeting: 2 March 2026.

Meeting opened at 13:35

Official consent obtained to record proceedings for compilation of minutes

1. Minutes of previous AGM

Minutes of previous AGM (80th) provided in Bosons Call and as hard copies.

Review of AGM Minutes (2025)

No questions or issues raised; motion to accept minutes:

Mover: Alaric

Seconder: Alan

Passed by all in favour.

2. President's Report

Harmonisation of the Three Acts

(Veteran Entitlements Schemes):

Expected positive impact, but not perfect.

Belief that DVA minister is actively stewarding the process.

Harmonisation is meant to streamline claims for veterans.

HMAS Canberra Memorial & National Capital Authority Issues:

Change in requirement: payment for professional traffic controllers at HMAS Canberra memorial service.

Past years: fee was not required; last year (2025) NCA paid one-off due to late notice. Association requested a DVA grant to cover future costs (approx. \$1200–\$1500 annually); awaiting response.

Section cannot absorb this cost long-term; funding solution is needed.

3. Vice President's Report

No specific issues raised.

4. Secretary's Report

Main challenges:

Implementation of new traffic management requirements for Canberra memorial.

Efforts ongoing to obtain assistance with ongoing commemoration costs.

Noted ACT section is first to update national membership database accurately.

ACT section registered for 2026 ANZAC March at the Australian War Memorial (now post-renovation); all members urged to participate.

Special thanks to Alaric for preparing the DVA grant submission.

5. Treasurer's Report

For 2025, bank increased by \$140.

Current financial model allows:

Payment for floral tributes, banners, minor commemorative costs.

Not currently seeking DVA grants (no property holdings).

ACT government grants available for IT equipment, but not considered necessary.

Emphasized memorial traffic control as a looming financial risk if not grant-funded.

Books available for review.

6. Membership Report

Membership trends:

Current age brackets show members predominantly above 70 years old.

Noted lack of young recruits; flagged as a significant ongoing challenge.

Acknowledged Darren Rush for stepping in on the Bosons Call newsletter following computer issues.

4. Social Report

2025 raffles raised ~\$430, all used for Christmas raffle prizes (leftover prize re-donated).

Regular social outing: Snappers lunch, third Thursday each month; invites open.

Evening/night events discontinued due to declining interest and age of members; focus remains on lunchtime gatherings.

No questions or issues raised; motion to accept reports:

Mover: Harry

Seconder: Glenn

Passed by all in favour.

6. General Business

Honorary Memberships for 2026

Patron:

Sir William Dean

(status unknown)

Honorary Members:

Admiral Johnson

(current CDF; position changing mid-2026)

Vice Admiral Hammond

(current CN; position also changing mid-year)

Captain Corderer, USN

(US Defence Attaché)

Captain O'Hara

(CO, HMAS Harman)

Lieutenant Colonel Ollie Gray

(British Defence Attaché; departing mid-year)

Commander Collinson

(New Zealand Defence Attaché)

Mr. Anderson

(Director, Australian War Memorial)

Merle Hare

Discussion on adding Canadian Defence Attaché (no name presently); consensus to include in principle.

Succession plan:

Honorary memberships to pass automatically to incoming CDF/CN when positions change.

Motion to accept list approved.

7. Donations to Charities

No donations made in the past year; members reminded proposals can be raised at any meeting.

Motion to maintain current approach passed.

6. Election of Committee (2026-2027)

All executive and committee positions declared vacant.

Returning Officer: Alan.

Nominations matched available positions; No elections required.

Elected Executives:

President: David Manolas

proposed by Darren Rush

seconded by Peter Cooke-Russell

Vice President: Alex McGown

proposed by Dennis Lines

seconded by Alaric O'Neill

Secretary: Darren Rush

proposed by Dennis Lyons

seconded by Alaric O'Neill

Treasurer: Alaric O'Neill

proposed by Dennis Lyons

seconded by Darren Rush

Committee: Peter Cooke-Russell

Dennis Lyons

Bev Joseph

Pauline Gribble

Heather Millerwood

All appointments confirmed unopposed.

President expressed appreciation for committee and executive support, emphasizing robustness of committee discussions and inclusive decision-making.

Meeting closed at 14:04

OCIUS TO PROVIDE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY WITH BLUEBOTTLE USV FLEET

By Max Blenkin - 11 March 2026

Re-published from the Australian Defence Magazine with permission

The Navy is set to acquire 40 more Ocius Bluebottle uncrewed surface vessels (USVs), making a total 55 and giving Australia one of the world's largest fleets of uncrewed naval vessels.

Under a deal announced today, the government will invest \$126 million over five years to expand the Bluebottle fleet.

Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy said Bluebottle was a formidable asset, designed to deliver intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance over Australia's vast oceans areas of interest.

Since July 2024, Ocius has operated its Bluebottle vessels 24/7 from a facility on base at HMAS Coonawarra in Darwin supporting Operation Resolute.

"We are also exploring the potential for them to deploy drones and to have armed packages to provide kinetic solutions," he told reporters in Canberra.

"The beauty of this asset is that it can be launched from a boat ramp. Any boat ramp in the north of Australia could be a potential launching pad for these Bluebottles.

"And this is Aussie innovation in action. This is a product that is built in Sydney. This will add 50 jobs to Ocius bringing their workforce up to 200. It will add jobs throughout Australia."

Minister Conroy said sighting a bluebottle jellyfish at the beach was a warning to get out of the water.

"I want potential adversaries to realise when they see one of these, it's a signal to get out of our ocean," he said.

The Navy has developed a good understanding of Bluebottle capabilities.

Bluebottle is a seven-metre wind, wave and solar powered long endurance USV, able to conduct discrete ocean surveillance, gather oceanographic data and even sense for submarines. Each can remain on station for extended periods.

Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Mark Hammond said this was another significant step in the Navy's transition from a force of crewed platforms to a hybrid force of crewed and uncrewed platforms

He said watching over Australia's vast exclusive economic zone – 538 square kilometres for every member of the Navy - was a significant surveillance challenge.

"The addition of 40 more ISR platforms that can work in concert with our patrol boat force, with our maritime patrol aircraft and with our exquisite crewed platforms gives us significant advantage," he said.

"It is also very durable. These things have remained on station as cyclones have rolled through and remained operational.

"This does represent the culmination point of a significant amount of testing and trials. We are not done with testing. There is more potential in this platform which we will explore in the future."

Ocius chief executive Robert Dane said this was one of the largest acquisition contracts for this type of USV in the world.

"It marks a significant transition from Navy's testing and evaluating of this equipment though to actually investing in the capability and procurement," he said.

Dane said Bluebottle could stay at sea for months at a time. Its silence made it ideal for acoustic surveillance.

"These Bluebottles acting in concert with other crewed and uncrewed assets can give information to captain and admirals that they wouldn't otherwise have," he said.

"Twenty-eight years ago we won a solar boat race out there on Lake Burley Griffin. Since then we have built a company which currently has 140 people ...and we are selling these to New Zealand and the USA."

"This has been a 10-year collaboration with the Australian Navy to take a good idea and bring it up to being a good defence capability."

With a load capacity of up to 300 kilograms, Bluebottle can carry a diverse range of payloads.

The Minister said one was a thin line towed array sonar, able to sense above and below the surface. Vice Admiral Hammond said a number of different payloads were under development.

"We have done concept demonstrators though for teaming with uncrewed air vehicles to extend the horizon from an ISR perspective," he said.



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

**ANZAC DAY
KITBAG NOW
AVAILABLE**

12 March 2026

As Anzac Day approaches, many will be considering ways to personally commemorate all those who have and continue to serve our country in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

Our Anzac Day Kitbag and commemorative package is available to support you in commemorating Anzac Day.

Whether you're reflecting in private or planning a local service in your community, our kitbag contains a range of resources you can customise to suit your needs. This includes a recommended order of service with flag protocols, sample speeches, the Ode of Remembrance and music suggestions. These free resources are available for download from the Anzac Portal.

To support Anzac Day commemorative efforts, we have posted a commemorative pack of posters and educational resources to more than 22,000 ex-service organisations, schools, aged care facilities and community groups to help ensure Australians never forget the extraordinary sacrifices of our service men and women.

The commemorative pack includes the 2026 Anzac Day poster, which honours the important role of current-serving members and veterans of the Australian Defence Force. The poster features a member of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) with his children after an Anzac Day dawn service in Sydney. The poster acknowledges that for every person who has served, there are families, friends and loved ones who have supported them and endured their own sacrifices.

The pack also contains a second commemorative poster to acknowledge the service and sacrifices of First Nations Australians who served during the Korean War, with more than 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men serving between 1950 and 1953.

The commemorative pack includes new education resources, including interactive activities, classroom-ready lessons and worksheets to support teachers and their students learning about service and Australia's military history.

Digital copies of the commemorative pack are accessible on the [Anzac Portal](https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au).

For a physical copy of the posters, please email education@dva.gov.au.





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

As at 31 October 2025, DVA had 89,597 claims on hand, comprised of 22,820 unallocated claims and 66,777 claims being processed.

In the financial year to date (FYTD) (1 July 2025 to 31 October 2025):

DVA received 39,032 claims

DVA made 36,099 determinations

For all claims on hand including older claims being processed the average TTTP for MRCA IL was 333 days, up from 304 days in the previous FYTD. The median TTTP was 271 days.

There have already been some significant improvements in processing timeframes for new IL claims received and determined within the last 12 months.

For claims received within the last 12 months, the average TTTP for MRCA IL was 110 days. The median TTTP was 96 days.

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