



THE BOSUN'S CALL

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (ACT)



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ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY

2026



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE



(L-R) Cheryl Fittock (*National Secretary*), Eileen Calway (*National Treasurer*), Russell Pettis (*Constitution & By-Law Review Chair*), David Manolas (*National VP Blue*), Lorraine Grey (*National VP White*) & Gordon Fuller (*National President*).

Members of the NAA

I am honoured to have been elected to the position of your National President.

I have been a member of the NAA for over forty (40) years and a member of the National Executive for the last eight (8) years. During that time I have seen a move towards a new era in our community as many of our members are aging. This has also seen a number of Sub-sections fold over the last few years mainly because members are not taking on the Executive positions which are so important. These positions are not that onerous so be prepared to stand up and keep your Subsection going.

Seeking new members has, and will always be, an effort that we must all try and improve on. Many younger ex-naval personnel have young families but we need to be able to work to entice them to join. This includes showing all members the utmost respect because disrespect soon loses members.

We have a sub committee working on bringing our Constitution and By-laws up to date so that we can work towards assisting in reducing veteran suicide.

I wish to thank past President David Manolas for the major efforts he has carried out in making sure that the NAA is front and centre with the RAN and now taking on the role of a Vice President. His service to the NAA has been highly commendable.

Gordon Fuller
NAA National President

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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 TBA

Social Sec Bev Joce

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

Upcoming Events

- 22 Jun Last Post Ceremony Able Seaman Gordon Frederick Bone
HMAS Sydney (I), Indian Ocean
- 24 Jun 82nd Anniversary - The Sinking of the Tamahoko Maru
- 25 Jun 76th Anniversary - The Commencement of the Korean War

Meeting Dates & Locations

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

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
5 Nov	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*



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)	
20 Aug	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)	
17 Sep	Christmas in July	1200
	Eastlakes Footy Club Gungahlin	
15 Oct	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)	

Bev Joce
Social Secretary



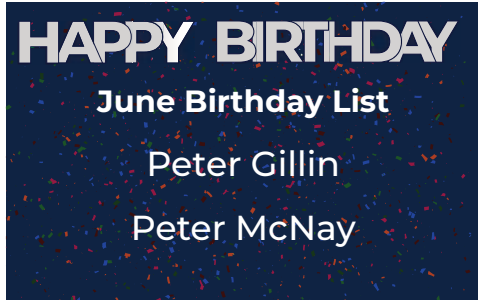
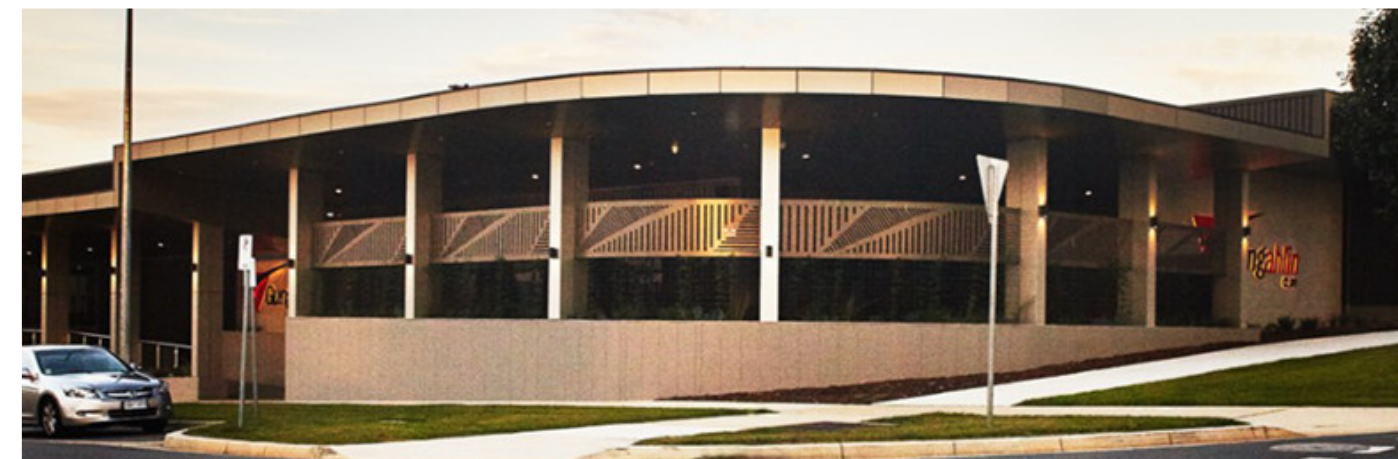
NEW REQUIREMENTS FROM EASTLAKE GUNGAHLIN

As part of the Eastlake Groups Community Contribution program, we provide free in-house room hire to your sporting or community group. Previously the venue has set the room specifically for each community contribution free of charge booking, which incurred extra cost to the business.

Moving forward, the room set up will be the responsibility of the Community Group.

Room Setup: Community groups will need to arrange their own set up of the room. As such, we request that either the organiser or a designated person/s arrive to your booked room at the access time, before your function starts, to set up the room to your specific requirements. You will be given access to the room with enough time to complete your set up before your event begins. If you require a specific set up to be done by venue staff, this will incur a room hire fee. Chairs will be stacked in 5, and tables will be located to one side of the room. We ask that you put these items back to where you found them, to the best of your ability. Please note that for catered functions such as presentation nights etc and the room will be set by venue staff.

Free of Charge (FOC) - Attendance Form: This will need to be signed on every visit. By signing the form, it is a record that your group was present at the booked time, and that you were given free room hire/av equipment.



DON'T BE LEFT WITH THE BILL FOR AN UNSOLICITED MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

DVA will only pay for medical assessments when they've been formally requested and approved by DVA. Approval is confirmed through a Transaction Reference Number (TRN), which is issued to an appropriate provider before an appointment can take place.

Medical assessments and subsequent reports arranged without a TRN are not approved by DVA. We refer to these as unsolicited medical assessments and/or reports. Expenses related to these remain the responsibility of the veteran. You can still arrange an assessment without a TRN, however it will not be covered by DVA unless it has been requested and approved.

Medical assessments require a TRN and are not part of the [Medical Expenses Privately Incurred \(MEPI\)](#) arrangement. Under MEPI, medical expenses can only be reimbursed for treatment.

If you are considering lodging a claim, to help your claim progress smoothly, all relevant medical evidence should be submitted when you lodge your claim, or as early as possible during the claim process. This helps DVA understand what information is already available and whether any further assessments are needed. All evidence submitted to support a claim will be considered as part of the claim investigation.

If you are unsure whether your assessment has been approved or whether additional information is required, please contact the Claims Support Officer (CSO) or the Delegate who is managing your claim. This is an essential step before booking an appointment with your GP if you don't want to be left with the bill for an unsolicited medical assessment

DVA sends the medical assessment forms and the TRN, used for invoicing, directly to the veteran's treating medical practitioner. When this happens, notification is provided to the veteran and the nominated representative where required. DVA will only pay invoices for additional assessments that have been requested and approved by DVA before the appointment and where all other requirements have been met.

DVA is aware there is some misinformation circulating about when DVA will cover the cost of medical assessments. Be cautious of advice or offers suggesting your assessment will be paid for without prior approval, as this is not the case.

More information is available on the DVA website, visit [What to expect after you have submitted a compensation claim | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE OFFICER IN THIS PHOTO?

I received a phone call this week from a member of the public who had purchased a book from a second hand book store. Inside the book was this photo of a Naval Officer. They have reached out to the Naval Association in the hope that the photo can be reunited with the appropriate family.

If you are able to identify the person in this photo, please send me an email (via wem@navalassoc.org.au) so that we can help get this photo home.

Darren Rush
Bosun's Call Editor

Committee Meeting Minutes ACT Section - 7 May 2026

Attendees: David Manolas, Alaric O'Neill, Dennis Lyons & Pauline Gribble.

Apologies: Darren Rush & Alex McGown.

Committee Meeting opened at 11:00

1. The president informed the committee that a meeting has been scheduled for Monday 11 May with Peter Cooke-Russell's children and William Cole Funerals to decide on Peter's funeral arrangements. He added that he will speak more in General Business about the funeral.

2. The president also informed the committee that the National NAA will be holding a National Council Meeting on Wednesday 20 May 2026 and an Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2026, both to be held at the Pavilion On Northbourne Hotel. All members are invited to attend.

3. At the National NAA AGM, it will be moved:

i. by the National Executive that the minutes of the National Council AGM held on 29 May 2025 be confirmed. *The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.*

ii. by the National Executive that the 2026 budget be adopted and approval of Audits for the Financial Year 2025 be approved. *The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.*

iii. that the National Sub Committee reports as presented and/or tabled be accepted. *The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.*

iv. by the National Executive and seconded by WA that should a Club Membership fee be charged as the NAA insures Club Members and each Section is charged for them in the invoices that are received for insurance. Most Sub-sections that have Club members provide subsidies for functions held within those Sub-sections. It is considered only fair that the Club members pay something towards their membership. It is noted that under the new membership Database, Club members are now included or must be included. The reasons for this are that this is required for insurance purposes and Sections will be charged accordingly. *The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.*

v. by the National Executive that subscriptions increase by 2.5% to assist with printing of the White Ensign magazine as follows:

\$41.00 Full Membership

National Council	\$20.00
Section	\$10.00
Sub-section	\$11.00

\$62 Parntership (couple) Full Membership

National Council	\$32.00
Section	\$15.00
Sub-section	\$15.00

the Joining Fee remain at \$5.00 per applicant.

The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.

iv. by the National Executive that the National AGM delegates to the National Executive the authority to:

a. run the day to day administration of the Naval Association of Australia in between meetings of the National Council, and

b. be subject to the Financial Delegations as reviewed at this AGM "The NAA Delegation Policy Statement" marked as ANNEX H. *The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.*

vii. by NSW that Mr Clarence Shaw be awarded the Naval Association Meritorious Medal. *The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.*

viii. that the following members be elected as office bearers of the National Executive of the Naval Association of Australia:

President	Gordon Fuller	(Tasmania)
Vice Presidents	Lorraine Grey	(NSW)
	David Manolas	(ACT)
Treasurer	No Nomination received	
Secretary	Cheryl Fittock	(SA)
Assistant Secretary	Eileen Calway	(Tasmania)

The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion.

4. The president asked the members of the committee to ask around the Section membership seeking to find volunteers willing to take on the duties of Membership Officer or Welfare Officer within the Section committee.

5. Tiger Lyons has stated his willingness to continue to maintain the Last Post Register.

6. The president has advised Chief of the Defence Force, Chief of Navy, the Director of the Australian War Memorial and the Secretary of Veteran Affairs of Peter Cooke-Russell having crossed the bar. He has also spoken with the RAN Bereavement Officer, formally seeking bereavement pins; the loan of an AWE for the casket; a uniformed officer to present the pins; and, a Navy Bugler to play the Last Post and the Reveille. He also asked the committee if they agreed that the General Meeting be asked if it is possible that we consider financial support for the cost of live streaming the service and for the catering costs of a wake. He will approach National and have them provide a wreath.

7. It was moved by Pauline Gribble and seconded by Alaric O'Neill that Susan Wheeler be elected to the vacancy on the ACT Section of the Naval Association of Australia Committee. Susan is a willing volunteer to fill the position. The motion was carried.

8. The president wished to bring to the committee's attention the compassion and tireless efforts of shipmate Tony Vickers in supporting Jenny and Peter's family at this most difficult time. BZ Irish!!

Meeting closed at 12:00

Attendees: Committee, Bev Joce, Veronica Heard, Raymond Horne, Alan Masters, Glen McNamara, Joe Slaats, Tony Vickers, Graeme Quinn, Stewart Gordon & Harry Beardsell.

Visitors: Mary Slaats, Deb McGown, Sue Lyons.

Apologies: Heather Milward & John Small.

Meeting opened at 13:30

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.
- Remembrance for shipmate Peter Cooke-Russell who crossed the bar late on Wednesday 29 April 2026.
2. May Bosuns' Call.
- The president called for a special thanks to be given to Darren Rush for the latest Bosuns' Call, dedicated to Peter Cooke-Russell. The publication was put together in an incredibly short period of time and has attracted a lot of good comments on its quality.
3. Birthday Congratulations
- May Birthdays
Alan Masters, Brian Warren, Dennis Lyons, Alex McGown & Stewart Gordon.
4. Minutes of previous meeting
- The minutes of the of the April 2026 General Meeting (published in May 2026 Bosuns' Call newsletter)
No questions or issues raised; motion to accept:
Mover: Joe
Seconder: Stewart
Carried
5. Vice President's Report
- There was no Vice President's Report as Alex was absent on sick leave.
6. Secretary's Report
- There was no Secretary's Report as Darren was absent on sick leave.
7. Treasurer's Report
- Current finances are stable. Alaric will be liaising with Darren to obtain a copy of the last Capitation Report to enable him to get the books in order.
8. Membership Report
- There was no Membership report. Efforts are being made to find a new Membership officer.

9. Social events
- After lunch meetings occur on the first Thursday of each month February to December. Informal fish and chips gathering in "Snappers" at the Canberra Yacht Club on third Thursday each month.
- All members are encouraged to attend.
10. General Meeting Reports
- Motion to accept reports:
Mover: Alan
Second: Alaric
Carried
11. Naval Association of Australia National Council Meeting
- The May 2026 NAA National Council Meeting will be held on 20 May 2026 at the Pavilion On Northbourne Hotel.
12. NAA National Annual General Meeting

The 2026 NAA National Annual General meeting will be held on 21 May 2026 at the Pavilion On Northbourne Hotel.

The following Notices of Motion have been put forward to be passed/recinded at the 21 May 2026 AGM, and are put to the meeting to verify how the members wish our delegate to vote on each motion.

- At the National NAA AGM, it will be moved:
- i. by the National Executive that the minutes of the National Council AGM held on 29 May 2025 be confirmed. The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion. A show of hands from those present showed that the membership agreed with the motion.
- ii. by the National Executive that the 2026 budget be adopted and approval of Audits for the Financial Year 2025 be approved. The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion. A show of hands from those present showed that the membership agreed with the motion.
- iii. that the National Sub Committee reports as presented and/or tabled be accepted. The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion. A show of hands from those present showed that the membership agreed with the motion.

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The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion. A show of hands from those present showed that the membership agreed with the motion.

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The Committee of the ACT NAA Section agrees with the motion. A show of hands from those present showed that the membership agreed with the motion.

13. Alan Masters reported that he had recently ran into Peter McNay. He said that he is doing well.
14. Peter Cooke-Russell funeral arrangements
- The president said that flowers have been sent to Jenny Burns and he has advised Chief of the Defence Force,

Chief of Navy, the Director of the Australian War Memorial and the Secretary of Veteran Affairs of Peter Cooke-Russell having crossed the bar. He has also spoken with the RAN Bereavement Officer, formally seeking bereavement pins; the loan of an AWE for the casket; a uniformed officer to present the pins; and, a Navy Bugler to play the Last Post and the Reveille. He also asked the members present if they agreed that the General Meeting be asked if it is possible that we consider financial support for the cost of live streaming the service and for the catering costs of a wake. He will approach National and have them provide a wreath.

Tony informed the meeting that an old navy friend of Peter's Hector Donohue and his youngest daughter Sarah will be conducting the eulogy.

There will be a meeting on Monday 11 May 2026 between the family and William Cole Funerals and the secretary will get a message out to everyone once the funeral details are known.

15. Vacant Committee Position

It was moved by Alaric O'Neill and seconded by Pauline Gribble that Susan Wheeler be elected onto the committee of the NAA ACT Section. Carried.

Meeting closed at 1406.

Next Meeting at 1200 on 4 June 2026

2026 DEFENCE BUDGET RELEASED



By Max Blenkin - 12 May 2026

Re-published from the Australian Defence Magazine with permission

29 May 2026

The 2025-26 Defence budget was supposed to come in at \$58.9 billion but it actually came in at \$63.2 billion, around \$4 billion higher than forecast, much of which was spent on the nuclear submarines program. Budget papers show spending on the nuclear submarine plan was budgeted at \$3.1 billion but actually came in at \$5 billion through additional payments to the US and UK to uplift their submarines industrial base.

This funding in what's termed as bring-forwards from later years, bumped up the total defence budget, with the curious result that, in comparison, the defence budget for 2026-27 has actually dropped back to \$62.6 billion.

According to the traditional calculation method, defence spending for 2025-26 hit 2.13 per cent of Gross Domestic Products GDP), the highest for many years.

But that meant the defence budget for 2026-27 declined to 2.02 per cent of GDP.

Marcus Hellyer, head of research at Strategic Analysis Australia said an interesting thing about this year's budget documents was what they revealed about last year.

"The budget has changed substantially. What has actually happened over the past year is the government has brought forward a lot of money from outer years into 2025-26. That increase is pretty substantial," he said.

"That meant that the budget for 2025-26 hit \$63.2 billion. Somewhat perversely it looks like the budget is decreasing as we go into 2026-27 but that is really an artefact of all of this money being brought forward from later years into 2025-26."

About \$2 billion of the funding brought forward has been directed to enhancing broad defence capabilities. The rest has contributed to a remarkable increase in spending on the nuclear submarines program, rising from \$3.3 billion to \$5.3 billion.

"A lot of that was simply cash contributions to the US and UK to boost their submarine industrial bases. We haven't reached the end of those contributions," Hellyer said.

In a federal budget devoted to responding to cost-of-living pressures, fuel security and taxation reforms, defence rated just a line and a half in Treasurer Jim Chalmers' speech.

"We're investing an additional \$53 billion over the next decade in our defence force to keep Australians and our region safe," he said.

The Budget appeared bereft of significant capability announcements following the flurry of announcements over the preceding month.

That included \$126.9 million to establish solid rocket motor (SRM) production, \$2.3 billion over a decade for additional HIMARS vehicles and long-range PrSM guided missiles, \$750 million for 268 new Bushmaster vehicles for Army, \$7 billion over a decade for enhancing defence counter-drone capabilities and \$176 million for 40 new Bluebottle uncrewed surface vessels.

Defence Minister Richard Marles said the 2026-27 Budget delivered on the Albanese Government's recently released 2026 National Defence Strategy (NDS) and Integrated Investment Program (IIP), outlining an additional \$14 billion over the next four years and \$53 billion over the decade.

"As the Government has made clear, we identify the capabilities we need to keep Australians safe and we fund them appropriately," he said in the media statement accompanying the budget papers.

"The 2026 National Defence Strategy builds on the Government's strong track record in Defence investments. Together with the additional investments in 2024, the Albanese Government is investing a record

additional \$30 billion over the forward estimates and \$117 billion over the decade."

Marles said that brought total defence funding to \$887 billion out to 2035-36.

"This additional investment from the Albanese Government through the 2024 NDS and the 2026 NDS is the largest peacetime increase in defence spending in our nation's history."

Budget papers show a planned uniformed defence force of 63,345 personnel and 20,169 public servants in 2026-27, rising to 67,466 in the permanent force by 2029-30 and 69,000 in the early 2030s.

The documents note that the defence workforce is growing but maintaining the required growth across all the services remained a priority.

Defence will continue to improve recruitment and retention by initiatives such as widening eligibility criteria and recruitment of PNG residents and Five Eyes nationals living in Australia.

Marcus Hellyer said to give credit where it was due, Defence was finally making good progress on ADF personnel after years of diminishing recruiting and escalating separation which left the force about 5,000 short.

"Based on what we see today in the budget documents, they are well ahead of the new targets. The ADF has grown by about 3,000 people over the last couple of years," he said.

Budget data shows aircraft and helicopter annual flying hours, with Airbus Tiger attack helicopters flying 1,236 hours in 2025-26, 450 in 2026-27 then none at all, the type is retired from ADF service.

As the Tigers fly off into the sunset a year earlier than anticipated, new AH-64E Apache flight hours ramp up from 540 in 2025-26 to 2200 in 2026-27 and 5,800 by end of decade when all 29 are in service.

The Army's C-27J Spartan transport aircraft are a casualty of the 2026 NDS, with the type to be retired and replaced by a so far unspecified platform. Until then, Spartans will keep on flying around 5,000 hours a year.

The budget papers note spending of \$287 million on acquisition of additional MQ-28A Ghost Bat uncrewed collaborative combat aircraft and development and delivery of a Block 3 prototype. Under Project Air 6015, the project will focus on transitioning aircraft to the RAAF.

The Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) enterprise now has its own projects, termed GWEO 2087 and GWEO 2092 with total estimated spending of \$730 million in 2026-27.

GWEO 2087 aims to stand up domestic manufacture of GMLRS, Naval Strike Missiles (NSM) and forging of large calibre munitions. GWEO 2092 aims to lift ADF inventory of priority missiles.

Budget papers also show the first significant spending on the new General Purpose Frigates (GPF), with the first three to be acquired from Japan through Project Sea 3000, costing \$649 million in 2026-27. Construction of vessel one will start in 2026-27, for delivery in 2029.

The six Collins-class submarines continue to be defence's most costly capability, with a sustainment bill of \$921 million in 2026-27. Collins sustainment was deemed a Product of Concern in December 2024, with Navy and contractors working to meet performance targets.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has launched a new [Community questions answered](#) webpage to support veterans, families of veterans and the broader community with clear, factual information on key issues.

The page brings together responses to questions DVA is hearing from the community where there may be confusion, misunderstanding or misinformation. It is not intended to be a general frequently asked questions page, but a focused source of clear, factual information on issues where greater clarity may be needed.

A trusted source for clear information

Mixed messages or uncertainty can make it harder for people to understand the support available to them. The new webpage helps address this by:

- providing clear, factual responses where there is confusion or misinformation
- bringing together information in one place as a single source of truth
- offering content that can be confidently shared with others

The aim is to help veterans and families of veterans access reliable information and make informed decisions about their support and wellbeing.

Keeping information current

Content on the page will be updated as new issues emerge through community engagement, enquiries and correspondence, and feedback from veterans, families and stakeholders through usual DVA channels. This ensures the information remains current and reflects what matters most to the veteran community.

Supporting the community to share trusted information

The webpage is designed to be a practical resource that can be used across the community.

Veterans, families, advocates and ex-service organisations can check information quickly, use the page as a trusted reference, and share accurate information through their own networks.

Where to go for more information

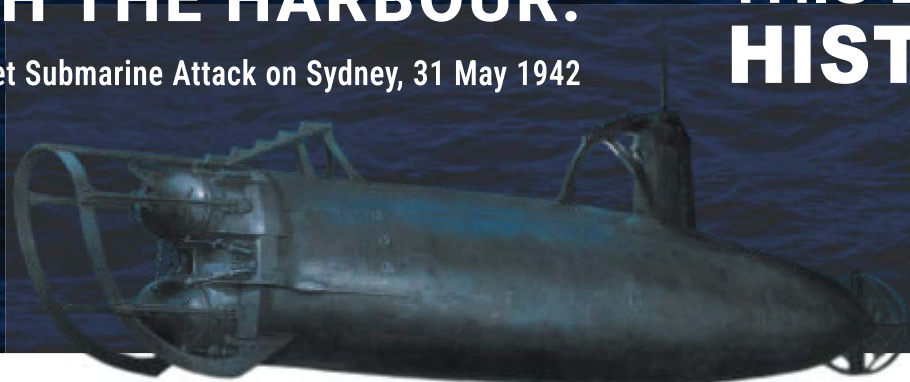
The [Community questions answered](#) page complements the broader DVA website and existing contact channels. The page focuses specifically on questions where misunderstanding or misinformation may be causing concern.

For broader information about services, supports and entitlements, veterans and families of veterans should continue to use the main DVA website or contact DVA through the usual channels.

BENEATH THE HARBOUR:

The Japanese Midget Submarine Attack on Sydney, 31 May 1942

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



On the night of 31 May 1942, Sydney – a city that had long considered itself beyond the reach of the war raging across the Pacific – discovered how wrong that assumption was. Three Japanese midget submarines slipped into Sydney Harbour, bringing the conflict to Australia's most iconic waterway and shattering the sense of distance that geography had seemed to promise.

A War Closing In

By mid-1942, the Pacific War had already torn through Pearl Harbor, Malaya, Singapore, and the Philippines. Darwin had been bombed in February, and Japanese forces were pushing south through New Guinea. Yet for most Sydneysiders, the war remained something heard on the wireless or read in the morning papers – terrible and real, but distant.

That sense of remove ended just after eleven o'clock on a Sunday night.

The Mother Submarines and Their Cargo

The attack was launched from five large Japanese fleet submarines – I-22, I-24, I-27, I-28, and I-29 – which had taken up positions off the New South Wales coast days earlier. Each carried a single Ko-hyoteki class midget submarine, a two-man vessel roughly 24 metres long, powered by electric motors and armed with two torpedoes.

Three midgets were designated for the harbour assault. Their crews – six men in total – knew the odds of returning were slim. They had studied charts and aerial photographs of Sydney Harbour, and their primary target was the USS Chicago, an American heavy cruiser anchored in the harbour as part of Allied naval operations in the region.

Into the Harbour

The anti-torpedo net strung across the harbour entrance was the first line of defence, but it proved inadequate. One midget submarine, commanded by Sub-Lieutenant Kenshi Chuma, became entangled in the net shortly after midnight, triggering an indicator loop that alerted harbour defences. Unable to free the vessel, Chuma and his crewman, Petty Officer Takeshi Omori, scuttled their submarine and died inside it – the first casualties of the night.

The alert had been raised, but confusion and the sheer improbability of the scenario slowed the response. A second midget, commanded by Sub-Lieutenant Kieu Matsuo, managed to penetrate the harbour. He fired two

torpedoes at the Chicago – both missed. One detonated beneath HMAS Kuttabul, a converted ferry being used as a naval depot ship moored at Garden Island. The explosion killed 21 sailors, most of them sleeping below decks. They were the attack's only fatalities.

The third midget submarine, commanded by Sub-Lieutenant Keiu Matsuo – a man trained to expect death – was depth-charged and sunk in shallow water after the attack. Its wreck was later raised from the harbour floor.

The Night Above the Water

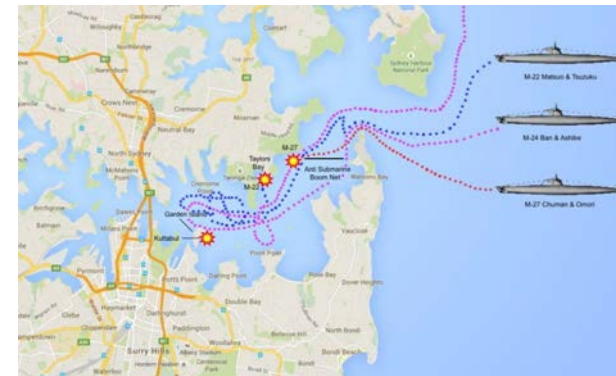
Sydneysiders who lived near the harbour or happened to be awake heard explosions, saw searchlights cutting across the water, and watched naval vessels steam urgently across the harbour. For many, the exact nature of what was happening remained unclear until morning. Anti-submarine patrols swept the harbour, depth charges were dropped, and the waterfront was blacked out.

The city's defenders – harbour patrol boats, shore batteries, and naval vessels – responded with energy if not always effectiveness. The Chicago herself fired into the darkness and contributed to the depth-charge effort, though her big guns were designed for targets considerably less elusive than a midget submarine.

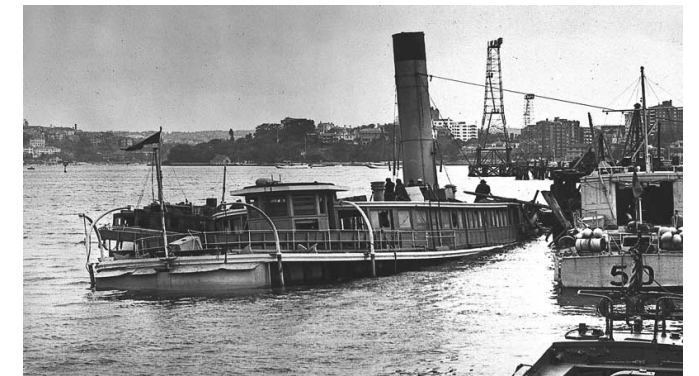
The Dead and the Aftermath

Twenty-one men died aboard Kuttabul: nineteen Australians and two New Zealanders. They were the victims of a weapon aimed at an American warship, killed by a torpedo that ran wide of its mark and found a softer target.

In the days that followed, the bodies of four Japanese submariners were recovered – from the two submarines that had been destroyed. The Australian Navy, in a gesture that drew both admiration and criticism at the time, conducted a funeral with full naval honours for the Japanese dead, cremated them, and – in keeping with the customs of their nation – returned their ashes to Japan after the war. The Australian government was criticised by some for what was seen as excessive courtesy toward enemy combatants; others viewed it as a mark of the respect owed to men who had faced near-certain death. The surviving midget submarine – or rather, the remains of the one caught in the net – was later raised. Two of the three submarines were subsequently salvaged and toured around Australia as part of a war bonds fundraising drive, drawing enormous public interest.



The tracks of the three midget submarines through Sydney Harbour.



HMAS Kuttabul in Sydney Harbour sunk by Japanese Midget Submarines.



USS Chicago (in Sydney Harbour - March 1941) - the intended target of the Japanese Midget Submarines

The Shells That Followed

The attack did not end with the submarines. On the night of 8 June 1942, two Japanese fleet submarines surfaced off Sydney and shelled the eastern suburbs, and a third shelled Newcastle. The bombardments caused minor damage and no deaths, but they confirmed what the harbour attack had already made plain: Australia was within reach.

What the Attack Meant

The strategic significance of the Sydney Harbour raid was limited. No major warship was sunk; the Chicago sailed away intact. But the psychological impact was enormous and lasting. The belief that Australia's geography offered some form of protection – that the war would be fought and won or lost somewhere else – could no longer be seriously maintained.

The attack accelerated civilian defence preparations, deepened the public appetite for American alliance, and concentrated minds in Canberra on the fragility of the home front. It also, unexpectedly, produced one of the war's stranger human stories: six young men dispatched on a mission from which they were not expected to return, met on the other end by a nation that buried them with honours it did not have to extend.

Memory and Memorials

The wreck of one midget submarine – M-24, commanded by Matsuo – was located on the seafloor off Sydney's Northern Beaches in 2006, having apparently made it out of the harbour after the attack and been lost at sea. It is now protected as a war grave.

The twenty-one men killed aboard Kuttabul are commemorated at the Garden Island Naval Chapel and at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Their names are among the more than 40,000 Australians who died in the Second World War.

Every year on the night of 31 May, the attack is remembered – not as a victory or a defeat, but as the night the war came to Sydney, and the city was never quite the same again.

The Japanese midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour remains one of the most dramatic episodes of the Pacific War on Australian soil – a reminder that in 1942, no corner of the Allied world was truly beyond the reach of Japanese ambition.



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