

# National Bosun's Call



Vol 30 No 6 Once Navy, Always Navy July 2025

## **HMAS Arafura commissions**



On Saturday 28 June 2025, Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Arafura was commissioned into service in a ceremony at Fremantle, Western Australia.

HMAS Arafura is the first of class, and a further five OPVs will be brought into service, with the first two built at Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia, and a further four to be constructed at Henderson, Western Australia. Together with the evolved Cape Class Patrol Boats, the ships will play a key role in Navy's contribution to the nation's fisheries protection, as well as immigration, customs and drug law enforcement operations

Right: Royal Australian Navy Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Chris Smith, AM, CSM, RAN issues Commanding Officer of HMAS Arafura, Lieutenant Commander Marc Breecroft, RAN, the ship's commissioning orders during a ceremony NUSHIP Arafura emters Fremantle Harbour from her builders at Henderson on Cockburn Soumd Western Australia

Photo: Defence



Photo LSIS Zac Dingle



National Newsletter of the **Naval Association of Australia** 

## Improvements to claiming travel costs under MRCA and DRCA

#### 26 June 2025

DVA will introduce a range of updates to the way travel claims are processed and displayed in MyService for those eligible under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)* or the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related claims) Act 1988 (DRCA).

Developed in response to veteran feedback, these enhancements will improve the claiming process.

From 1 July 2025:

- Claim statuses will now be available in MyService for all new MRCA and DRCA travel claims.
- In most cases you will no longer be required to provide meal receipts when travelling or staying overnight. Instead, if eligible, you will automati-

cally receive reimbursement for meal costs based on a standard rate (available from the DVA website).

- You may be eligible for more than the standard rate and will need to provide a receipt and details about the reason you incurred the cost.
- While we no longer require receipts for most meal costs, we may request supporting evidence for other expense types

If you edit an incomplete claim that you saved in MyService prior to these updates, you may need to supply additional information.

For more information visit <u>Claim travel expenses</u> <u>under the MRCA or DRCA</u>. Sign in to MyService to start claiming, learn how at <u>About MyService</u>.

## **DVA—Claim processing times**

### Last updated 13 June 2025

DVA remains focused on actioning the recommendations of the <u>Royal Commission's Final Report</u> and processing outstanding claims as quickly as possible to reduce the amount of time it takes for determinations to be made for our veterans.

May 2025 was a record month for output, with over 10,500 determinations completed and delivered to veterans.

Where things are at

The last of the unallocated claims backlogs was cleared at the end of February 2024, ahead of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's 31 March 2024 deadline.

Of the 41,799 backlog of claims, identified in the Royal Commission's interim report, as at 31 May 2025, 99.8 per cent have now been completed.

The Government's previous commitment to fund additional ongoing staff has allowed DVA to clear the backlog and now operate in a new business-asusual (BAU) environment. This commitment has been extended in the 2024-25 Budget to maintain DVA's capacity to finalise claims and reduce time taken to process.

DVA receives around 4,000 claims every two weeks, and in this BAU environment it aims to reg-

ister, screen and allocate new claims to an officer for processing within two weeks of receipt.

DVA recognises that many veterans have been waiting too long for their claims to be processed. While clearing the backlog of unallocated claims is an important first step, DVA is focused on improving claims processing timeframes and outcomes for veterans and families.

As at 31 May 2025, DVA had 82,166 claims on hand, comprised of 12,347 unallocated claims and 69,819 claims being processed.

In the financial year to date (FYTD) (1 July 2024 to 31 May 2025):

- DVA received 92,061 claims
- DVA made 93,579 determinations
- the average time taken to process MRCA Initial Liability (IL) claims was 311 days, a decrease of 59 days (or 15.9%), compared to the previous FYTD.
- The average TTTP for MRCA IL claims received within the last 12 months, was 107 days.

The Naval Association of Australia Inc Patron-in-Chief His Majesty, King Charles III
ABN 56 653 989 978

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## **Annual increase to travel allowances**

30 June 2025

Travel allowances under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA), the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006 and the Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019 are increased annually on 1 July in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The increase applies to the private vehicle kilometre rate, meal and accommodation allowances for eligible Veteran Card holders travelling for treatment, or for disability and income support claims.

Visit the DVA website for more information. If you want to talk to someone you can:

Request a call back from us online through MyService.

- Register or log in to MyService via myGov.
- Phone us between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).

Annual increase of travel allowances			
Type of allowance	Measure	New allow- ance from 1 July 2025	Travel with attendant †
Private vehicle	Per kilometre	44.3 cents	X1
Public, community or air transport	Actual fare	Actual fare	X2
Taxi transport	Actual fare	Actual fare	X1
Commercial accommodation non capital city – single*	Per night	\$183.30	X2
Commercial accommodation Capital city – single*	Per night	\$217.70	X2
Entitled person and attendant – commercial accommodation – shared*	Per night	\$298.10	X1
Subsidised accommodation – single*	Per night	\$114.50	X2
Private accommodation – single*	Per night	\$57.00	X2
Meal allowance – more than 50 km but less than 200 km from entitled person's home to the treatment location	Per day	\$18.20	X2
Meal allowance – more than 200 km from entitled person's home to the treatment location	Per day	\$37.10	X2

<sup>\*</sup> A meal allowance is not paid on a day where an accommodation allowance is paid as a meal component is already built into the accommodation allowance.

<sup>†</sup> Refers to the number of times an allowance is paid when an entitled person travels with an attendant.

## Korean War veterans gather to commemorate 75th anniversary

#### 30 June 2025

This year marks the 75th anniversary of Australian service in the Korean War and post-armistice period. Last week, on 25 June, Korean War veterans, families and descendants gathered for a moving National Commemorative Service at the Australian National Korean War Memorial in Canberra.

The service was broadcast nationally by the ABC and is available on iView (iview.abc.net.au and search for 'Korean War').

The anniversary was an opportunity to honour and remember the service of all Australians who served in the Korean War, their sacrifice, and the families who supported them.

In June 1950, a mere 5 years after the Second World War ended, Australians again found themselves at war – our nation became one of the first to be involved in the Korean War. Australia became only the second nation, after the United States, to commit to the war personnel from all three armed services. Australian sailors, soldiers, airmen and nurses were posted to both Korea and the support base in Japan. They won international respect for their courage, endurance and dedication to duty.

"The winter months were shocking in the snow, rivers froze. But we [Australian soldiers] always got on well together, because we had a job to do." - Mr John Munro OAM RFD ED, Korean War veteran

The Korean War has been largely overshadowed by the global devastation resulting from the Second World War and the Vietnam War – the latter being one of the longest conflicts of the 20th Century. Nevertheless, the role of Australian service personnel during the Korean War was significant and deserves national recognition.

"The South Koreans treated us with the utmost respect. It was clear how enduringly grateful they were for how Australia stepped up to help them." - Mr John Taylor, Korean War veteran

Seventy-five years on, we remember the more than 18,000 Australian personnel who served in Korea and those who paid the ultimate price: 340 in the Korean War, 16 while monitoring the ceasefire after the armistice, and 11 in the support base in Japan. We remember the wounded, those taken prisoner and those who lost their lives, 42 who have no known grave. We thank you for your service.

Lest we forget.

By DVA











Bottom Right Photo: NAA National President David Manolas laying wreath second from left.

## Defence of Sydney 31 May 1942 Remembered



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, and senior Australian Defence Force personnel commemorated the Defence of Sydney anniversary at North Head in Sydney on Friday, 06 June 2025. Australian Army Reserve soldiers from 2nd/17th Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment, formed a catafalque party for the commemoration, and local Australian Army Cadets also attended.

On 31st May 1942, World War II came to Sydney when three Japanese midget submarines conducted a brazen attack on Sydney Harbour, resulting in the torpedoing of the Royal Australian Navy depot

ship *HMAS Kuttabul* and deaths of 21 sailors on board (19 Australian and two British sailors).

The Defence of Sydney monument on North Head was laid by Sir Roden Cutler, VC, on 27 May 1995. On 18 November 1995 the monument was dedicated to "the memory of the men and women of the Armed Services of Australia, her Allies, and those who served in the Civilian Services and Volunteer Organisations who worked to protect the Port of Sydney throughout the Second World War' by His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC, Governor of NSW

Photo: LSIS Iggy Roberts

# Korean War veterans gather to commemorate 75th anniversary



Above: NAA National President David Manolas, front view

Left: Australian veteran Mr John Munro OAM RFD lays a wreath

Photo: Rodney Braithwaite



## Last Post Ceremony AWM and 75th Anniuversary of the Korean War



ADF Chief of Joint Capabilities, Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, AM, CSC, DSM and Commander US Space Command, General Stephen Whiting (front row second and third respectively from the left) attend the Last Post Ceremony, at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 22 June 2025

Photo: Nicole Mankowski

Chief of Joint Capabilities, Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, AM, CSC, DSM hosted the Commander US Space Command, General Stephen Whiting in Canberra continuing the well-established collaboration between the ADF and USSPACECOM.

LTGEN Coyle and General Whiting commenced the visit by attending the Australian War Memorial's Last Post Ceremony where they laid wreaths of remembrance. General Whiting met with Chief of the Defence Force ADML David Johnston AC RAN, Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Air Marshal Robert Chipman, AO CSC and Chief of Joint Operations, VADM Justin Jones AO, CSC, RAN.

ACT Section VP Alex McGown at right hand end of the front row in the photo laid a wreath in memory of Leading Stoker Rupert A Taylor who was lost with HMAS Sydney on 20 November 1942

# Memorial to Flight M!7

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP, visits the National MH17 Monument in the Netherlands when he travelled to The Hague, the Netherlands from 24 to 25 June 2025. While in The Hague, the Deputy Prime Minister represented Australia at the 2025 NATO Leader's Summit where he reaffirmed Australia's longstanding commitment to peace and security with global and regional partners.

Photo: Jay Cronan



## HMAS Canberra co-operates with New Zealand

HMAS Canberra conducted a port visit to Wellington, New Zealand, the sister city to Canberra, Australia, in support of city-to-city and Navy-to-Navy international engagement activities. The visit highlighted the strength and importance of the Australia / New Zealand alliance and the commitment to continued close Navy-to-Navy cooperation and coordination with our ally; enhancing interoperability, working towards interchangeability and building sovereign capability.





Above: Royal New Zealand Navy Chief Petty Officer Clearance Diver monitors Royal Australian Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy clearance divers as they undergo a hull inspection of HMAS Canberra before departing Fleet Base East, Sydney, for Wellington New Zealand

Left: Commanding Officer HMAS Canberra, Captain David McPherson receives the Freedom of Entry Charter from the Mayor of Wellington, Mayor Tory Whanau, at a reception held during HMAS Canberra's port visit to Wellington,

Right and below Ship's company of HMAS Canberra exercise their Freedom of Entry to the city of Wellington,.

Below Right: Soldiers from the 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment embarked onboard HMAS Canberra stand at attention during the Freedom of Entry parade through the streets of Wellington,

Photos Jarrod Mulvihill





## **HMAS Canberra visits Wellington New Zealand**



31 May 2025

HMAS Canberra will conduct a port visit to Wellington, New Zealand, the sister city to Canberra, Australia, in support of city-to-city and Navy-to-Navy international engagement activities. The visit highlights the strength and importance of the Australia/New Zealand alliance and the commitment to continued close Navy-to-Navy cooperation and coordination with our ally; enhancing interoperability, interchangeability and building sovereign capability.

### History

No. 6 Squadron was re-formed in 2005 to take over No.3 Squadron's role in operating the Royal New Zealand Navy's air element. No. 6 Squadron operates New Zealand's eight SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopters. The squadron was reestablished on 31 October 2005 by separating the Naval Support Flight from No. 3 Squadron RNZAF. The squadron is based at RNZAF Base Auckland.

6 Squadron is manned by Royal New Zealand Navy observers, pilots and helicopter loadmasters. Navy aircrew are trained by the RNZAF. The aircraft are maintained by RNZAF engineers, technicians and suppliers. RNZAF aircrew can also sometimes be posted to the squadron if required.

### **Future**

The Royal New Zealand Navy acquired ten SH-2G (I) Seasprites that replaced the existing SH-2G(NZ) aircraft in April 2005. Eight of the helicopters have entered active service representing a marked increase in capability while the other two are kept as spares.

Top: HMAS Canberra's embarked MH-60 Romeo Helicopter 'Siren' conducts flying operations as part of their transit to Wellington, New Zealand.

Photo; POIS Jarad Mulvihill

Above; Royal Australian Navy Pilot, Lieutenant Joel Bulley trades patches with Sub-Lieutenant Walkie Wang during a visit to New Zealand Defence Force 6 Squadron in Auckland during the ships visit to Wellington, New Zealand to share knowledge on the MH-60 Romeo platform.

Photo: POA Jacob Kambanaros

The Seasprites are due to be replaced by 2027 as part of the 2015 Defence White Paper review. Helicopters such as the NFH-90, MH-60R Seahawk, AgustaWestland AW101, and the Agusta Westland Wildcat are being considered to replace the Seasprites.

In May 2025, Defence Minister Judith Collins announced that NZ\$2 billion had been set aside to replace the Seasprites.

## **HMAS** Arafura commissions



Above: Commissioning crew of HMAS Arafura alongside Fleet Base West, Western Australia

Photo: ABIS Connor Morrison

Left Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO, RAN, addresses guests and ship's company during the commissioning

Photo: LSIS Zac Dingle



Right: NAA National President David Manolas (centre) with his son Peter and grandson Noah at the Commissioning

Photo: Supplied

### **HMAS** Arafura commissions



Above: Governer of Western Australia His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson, AC, APM, inspects the guard during the commissioning of HMAS Arafura

Photo: Zac Dingle

The primary role of the OPV will be to undertake constabulary missions, maritime patrol and response duties to operate alongside Australian Border Force vessels, and other Australian Defence Force units and regional partners. In February 2024 the Australian Government clarified that OPVs are not intended to contribute to surface combatant missions, but will focus on civil maritime security operations and regional engagement in the southwest Pacific and maritime Southeast Asia.

HMAS Arafura was laid down on 10 May 2019 and launched on 16 December 2021 at a formal ceremony at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia. During the launching ceremony, water drawn from the pristine waters of the Arafura Sea, collected and blessed by elders of the Maningrida community, was used to connect ship to country. In 2022, crew members of HMAS Arafura visited the Maningrida community during a visit to the Arafura region

# Statistics - HMAS Arafura

Type:	Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV)	
Homeport:	Perth	
Pennant number:	203	
International Call Sign:	VLAR	
Motto:	INTERCEPT	
Laid down:	10 May 2019	
Launched:	16 December 2021	
Launched by:	Ms Nova Peris, OAM	
Commissioned:	28 June 2025	
Builder:	Luerssen Australia	
Characteristics:	Length 80 metres	
	Beam 13 metres	
	Draft 4 metres	
	Displacement: 1640 Tonnes	
Performance:	Speed 20 knots	
	Range 4000 nautical miles	
Crew:	Approx 40 officers and sailors with accommodation for up to 60 personnel	
Propulsion:	Machinery: • 2 x 4250KW diesel engines	
Sensors and processing systems:	Saab Situational Awareness System (SAS) with Saab EOS500 electro-optical fire control director     Terma SCANTER 6002 radar     Safran Vigy Engage electro-optical surveillance and fire control multisensor system	
Armament:	Guns:  • 2 x .50 calibre machine guns  • 2 x 8.5 metre sea boats (side launched)  • 1 x 10.5 metre sea boat (stern launched)	

## STS Young Endeavour 's future

The Young Endeavour Youth Scheme announced earlier this year that a new three-masted, barquentine rig, sail training ship accommodating 42 youth crew will be built in Australia to replace STS Young Endeavour



Above: STS Young Endeavour

Left: Members of the youth crew, Australian Army Cadets and Downs Syndrome NT onboard Sail Training Ship Young Endeavour while alongside HMAS Coonawarra, Northern Territory.

Below: Royal Australian Navy Sail Training Ship Young Endeavour sails into Darwin Harbour during her current circumnavigation of Australia last visited in 2016

Photos: Defence

Noakes Group will act as an industry partner for the STS *Young Endeavour* tall ship under a new contract with the Royal Australian Navy.

The NSW marine company will service *Young Endeavour* until the end of its service life, in the awarded two-year contract, with extension options for a further three years after a competitive tender process on 17 March.

The company will maintain the Navy's Young Endeavour at HMAS *Waterhen* and provide support to its crew during operations away from their home port in Sydney.

Young Endeavour was originally given to Australia as a gift to celebrate Australian Bicentenary by the British government in 1988, and has since hosted more than 14,000 young Australians in the Sail Training Ship Young Endeavour program delivered by Navy staff crew.

The ship has so far sailed more than 400,000 nautical miles, including two world voyages and four circumnavigations of Australia

Head Maritime Sustainment Rear Admiral Steven Tiffen said the contract would ensure *Young Endeavour* was operationally available to serve the youth of Australia where and when needed.

"Noakes has been instrumental in providing maintenance, engineering, supply and operating services to *Young Endeavour* for the past 30 years and is well suited to ensure the vessel is kept in a reliable and safe state to deliver youth development activities," Rear Admiral Tiffen said.

"This contract will ensure all necessary support is given to *Young Endeavour* until a replacement vessel is made available, continuing the proud history that began in 1988 when the ship was handed to Australia from the United Kingdom to mark the bicentenary."

"Navy has entrusted the complete care and maintenance of its beautiful Sail Training Ship Young Endeavour to Noakes as prime contractor for the past 30 years," said an online statement by Noakes Group.

"One of the world's most complex modern squareriggers, she was Great Britain's bicentennial gift to Australia.

"Noakes provides *Young Endeavour* with all maintenance services from rigging and paint to complete refits..



## **Exercise Carlsbad at RAAF Base Tindal in April 2025**



Above: A MQ-28A Ghost Bat on the tarmac as an F-35A Lightning II taxis after a sortie during Exercise Carlsbad at RAAF Base Tindal.

Left: A MQ-28A Ghost Bat on the taxiway as an F-35A Lightning II prepares to land during Exercise Carlsbad at RAAF Base Tindal.

Photos: LAC Ryan Howell

.The successful completion of Exercise Carlsbad at RAAF Base Tindal in April 2025 represents significant progress for the MQ-28A Ghost Bat capability a collaboration between Boeing Defence Australia and the Royal Australian Air Force to develop a Collaborative Combat Aircraft. Defence continues to assess the MQ-28A Ghost Bat through systematic testing in both live and digital environments, and remains focused on demonstrating MQ-28A platform, payload and system capability in 2025.

Below: HMAS Sydney with HMS Spey In the South China Sea. Australia routinely operates with partners, including the United Kingdom, while undertaking regional deployments

Photos: Defence

HMAS Sydney conducted exercises consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in company with HMS Spey, around the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. This was a bilateral activity involving the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Navy.



# HMAS Sydney—Regional Presence Deployment 25-2



The Royal Australian Navy is undertaking its second Regional Presence Deployment for 2025. From late March until early July, HMAS Sydney will sail throughout the Indo-Pacific to conduct training, exercises and other engagements with regional navies. Regional Presence Deployments

play a vital role in Australia's longterm security and prosperity by protecting our interests, upholding the rules-based international order, enhancing cooperation and relationships with partners and allies, and developing capability and interoperability

Right: HMAS Sydney conducts a cross deck and manoeuvres with the Royal Navy's HMS Spey while at sea on Regional Presence Deployment 25-2

Photo: Royal Navy

Above: (L-R) Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer JS Haguro and HMAS Sydney conduct a light line transfer during Regional Presence Deployment 25-2

Photo: LSIS David Cox



Left: Royal Navy Lieutenant Hannah Beckett is greeted onboard HMAS Sydney during Regional Presence Deployment 25-2.

Photo: LSIS David Cox

# **UTUBE -SPOT THE DIFERENCE—AT LEAST FOUR**

# King's/President's Birthday Monday 10 June 2025





Spot the difference London Washington Also US Army's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday

## **Fleet News**



HMAS *Parramatta* undocked on 20 May 2025, having undergone the Anzac Midlife Capability Assurance Program, a major Anzac-class frigate (FFH) upgrade initiative to support capability enhancement in order to continually respond to the changing security environment while the Hunter-class frigate is brought into service.

Above: HMAS Parramatta is moved towards the lift during the Ships undocking at the BAE Systems shipyard in Henderson, WA

Photo: ABIS Connor Morrison

This is the final ship to complete the AMCAP project and will mark one major milestone towards the completion of this project that commenced in 2018.



On 23 June 2025 LCDR Sherrie Reilly, RAN handed over the weight of command of HMAS *Supply* to CMDR Kylie Turnbull, RAN on board HMAS *Supply* whilst alongside Fleet Base East in Sydney,

Photo: LSIS Daniel Goodman

### **DVA Contacts**

## **DVA Contact numbers**

 Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: <u>1300</u> <u>550 017</u>

• Provider enquiries: <u>1800 550 457</u>

• Transport bookings: <u>1800 550 455</u>

 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 <u>National Relay Service</u> (NRS):
- Talk To You (TTY) users phone <u>1800 555 677</u> then ask for 1800 838 372
- Speak and Listen users phone <u>1800 555 727</u> then ask for 1800 838 372
- Internet relay users connect to the <u>NRS</u> then ask for 1800 838 372

## **Claims Processing**

As at 31 May 2025, DVA had 82,166 claims on hand, comprised of 12,347 unallocated claims and 69,819 claims being processed.

In the financial year to date (FYTD) (1 July 2024 to 31 May 2025):

- DVA received 92.061 claims
- DVA made 93,579 determinations
- the average time taken to process MRCA Initial Liability (IL) claims was 311 days, a decrease of 59 days (or 15.9%), compared to the previous FYTD.

The average TTTP for MRCA IL claims received within the last 12 months, was 107 days.

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

### **PHONE NUMBER:**

Telephone:

1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

International callers:

#### +61 2 6289 1133

# POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Health Approvals & Home Care Section epartment of Veterans' Affairs

**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 confirm your diagnosis.
- Step 2: Supply the documents you need to;
- **Step 3:** Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.







1800 624 608



1800 628 036