



National Bosun's Call



Vol 5 No 3

Once Navy, Always Navy

April 2023

Navy goes nuclear



During a morning walk past the city's iconic USS Midway museum with Australia's Chief of Navy, VADM Mark Hammond, Australia's Prime Minister, Mr Albanese, remained tight-lipped about what would be announced, but talked up the massive project.

ABC News

13 March 2023

Australia's nuclear submarine program will cost up to \$368 billion over the next three decades, with confirmation that the federal government will buy at least three American-manufactured nuclear submarines and contribute "significant additional resources" to US shipyards.

Key points:

- The AUKUS-class submarines will be operated by both the UK and Australia, using American combat systems.
- One submarine will be built every two years from the early 2040s through to the late 2050s
- From as early as 2027, four US submarines and one from the UK will start rotating through Western Australia

The Australian government will take three, potentially second-hand Virginia-class submarines early next decade, pending the approval of the US Congress.

There will also be an option to purchase another two under the landmark AUKUS defence and security pact, announced in San Diego this morning.

In the meantime, design and development work will continue on a brand new submarine, known as the SSN-AUKUS, "leveraging" work the British have already been doing to replace their Astute-class submarines.

During the announcement, President Biden flagged that, from this year, Australian navy personnel would embed with both US and UK crew on submarines and at their shipyards.

ABC News



National Newsletter of the
Naval Association of Australia

These rates are current from 20 March 2023 to 30 June 2023.

NEW PENSION RATES FROM 20 MARCH 2023			
SERVICE PENSION	Old Rate (fortnightly)	New Rate (fortnightly)	Increase (fortnightly)
Single Person	\$1026.50	\$1064.00	\$38.00
Couples (each)	\$773.80	\$802.00	\$36.36
Single Person - transitional	\$856.40	\$887.60	\$31.2
Couples (each) – transitional	\$690.90	\$716.10	\$25.20
WAR WIDOW(ER)S			
War Widow(er)'s pension	\$1044.30	\$1082.50	\$38.20
DISABILITY PENSION			
TPI (Special rate)	\$1578.80	\$1676.20	\$97.40
Intermediate rate	\$1072.10	\$1111.30	\$39.20
EDA	\$872.70	\$904.50	\$31.80
100 percent	\$561.40	\$581.90	\$20.50
10 percent	\$63.07	\$65.12	\$2.05
VETERAN PAYMENT			
Single person	\$1112.30	\$1153.50	\$41.20
Couples (each)	\$867.20	\$899.30	\$32.10
MRCA			
Wholly dependent partner payment	\$1044.30	\$1082.50	\$38.20
Special Rate Disability pension (SRDP)	\$1578.70	\$1676.20	\$97.50

Notes

1. Figures are extracted from DVA website.
2. These rates include Energy Supplement. Refer to Energy Supplement

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National Patron His Excellency General The Honourable
David Hurley AC DSC Retd Governor General of Australia

Changes to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card Income Threshold

4 November 2022

The Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) provides access to Australian Government concessions on medical and pharmaceutical costs. The CSHC is available to Australian residents over pension age who are not entitled to an income support payment such as Service Pension (who are entitled to a Pensioner Concession Card and so already entitled to similar concessions) and whose income is below the CSHC income threshold.

The CSHC Income Threshold will be increased with effect from 4 November 2022.

The CSHC income threshold is set to increase from \$57,761 for singles, \$92,416 for couples, and \$115,522 for separated couples (separated by illness), to \$90,000 for singles, \$144,000 for couples, and \$180,000 for couples separated by illness from 4 November 2022.

Increasing the CSHC income threshold will allow more older Australians access to the relevant pharmaceutical and medical benefits discounts and other associated concessions that the card provides.

Current CSHC holders are not impacted by the change, however increasing the Income Threshold may allow people who currently do not receive a CSHC access to it. To check if you meet the eligibility criteria including income test limits, [visit the webpage](#).

Eligibility

Your eligibility for the card depends on your circumstances.

You can get the CSHC if you are an Australian resident who is either:

- a veteran aged 60 years or over with [qualifying service](#)
- the partner or widowed partner of a veteran with qualifying service who has reached [age pension age](#)

receiving a [War Widow\(er\)'s Pension](#) or a [Wholly Dependent Partner Payment](#) and are aged 60 years or over.

Your eligibility also depends on the CSHC income test which includes:

- your [adjusted taxable income](#)
- [deemed income](#) on account-based pensions (also known as allocated pensions).

You can earn up to:

- \$90,000 per year if you are single
- \$144,000 per year if you are a couple
- \$180,000 per year (combined) if you are a couple separated by illness, [respite care](#) or prison.

If you are caring for a child, you can earn an extra \$639.60 per year.

You may be eligible for a CSHC even if you are no longer receiving a pension because of changes to:

- your income and assets
- the pension assets test on 1 January 2017.

You may also be eligible for a CSHC if you are a widowed or separated from a partner who receives either:

- age pension
- invalidity service pension.

If you already have a [Pensioner Concession Card \(PCC\)](#), you will not be eligible for a CSHC.

Apply for a card

You can apply for your CSHC through us or [Services Australia](#).

The card will have the same benefits whether it comes from us or Services Australia.

To apply through us, you can either:

apply through your [MyService](#) account
complete the [Application for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card \(CSHC\)](#) and send to us with the supporting documents.

Media contacts

Ben Leeson (Assistant Minister Thistlethwaite's Office): [0404 648 275](tel:0404648275)
DVA Media: media.team@dva.gov.au

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling provides 24/7 free confidential crisis support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families on [1800 011 046](tel:1800011046) or the [Open Arms website](#). **Safe Zone Support** provides anonymous counselling on [1800 142 072](tel:1800142072). **Defence All-Hours Support Line** provides support for ADF personnel on [1800 628 036](tel:1800628036) or the [Defence Health Portal](#). **Defence Member and Family Helpline** provides support for Defence families on [1800 624 608](tel:1800624608)

The need for legislative reform

22 February 2023

Veterans' legislation is widely acknowledged as being complex and difficult to navigate and calls to simplify the current arrangements are longstanding. The legislative complexity and confusion impacts veterans, their advocates and families and DVA staff, directly contributing to delayed and inconsistent processing and claims backlogs.

This complexity has developed over decades so there are now three different pieces of veterans' entitlements legislation that can apply to a veteran's circumstances.

On 15 August 2017, a report of the Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, titled *The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans*, was tabled in Parliament. The Committee 'found the legislative framework for the veterans' compensation system to be complex and difficult to navigate' and 'was concerned that inconsistent treatment of claims for compensation and lengthy delays in the processing of claims were key stressors for veterans and their families'.

The 2019 Productivity Commission's Report *A Better Way to Support Veterans* contained the headline recommendation to implement a 'two ongoing schemes' compensation model built largely around the existing legislation. The PC highlighted a number of issues with the current framework and made recommendations to simplify the existing arrangements.

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide identified 50 previous reports since 2000 that are relevant to the topics of suicide and suicidality among serving and ex-serving ADF members.

In its Interim Report the Royal Commission recommended the Government develop and implement legislation to simplify and harmonise the framework for veterans' compensation, rehabilitation and other entitlements.

The Government, in its response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's Interim Report on 26 September 2022 agreed to develop a pathway for simplification and harmonisation of veteran compensation and rehabilitation legislation noting funding would be considered in the context of the budget process and timing would be informed by consultation and legislative processes.

Recommendations also called for the claims backlog to be eliminated, administration of the claims system to be improved and for veterans and family members to access their records and other information more easily. The Government's response to all the recommendations of the Royal

Commission's Interim Report was delivered on 26 September 2022 and can be found online at <https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/governments-response-interim-report>.

The Royal Commission's final report is due to be handed down in June 2024.

Current Consultation Process

In October 2022, the Government commenced the first round of consultation on reforming veterans' legislation seeking views on the Productivity Commission's recommendations.

The Government is now undertaking consultation on the proposed legislation reform pathway, outlined in this document in line with the Government's response to recommendations of the Royal Commission.

How to provide feedback We are keen to hear from you about the proposed legislation reform pathway. Submissions may be made anonymously and will not be published without your permission

Website You can submit your feedback via the DVA website during the consultation period. Scan the QR code or visit www.dva.gov.au/veterans-legislation-reform-consultation-pathway-feedback-form. Submissions close on 12 May 2023.

Email You can submit your feedback via email to legislation.reform@dva.gov.au. Submissions close on 12 May 2023.

Download To download a copy of this information booklet visit www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/Veteans_Legislation_Reform_Consultation_Pathway_2023.pdf.

Fax You can submit your feedback via fax: (03) 62216602

Post GPO Box 9998 Brisbane QLD 4001

Translations If you require translation services, please contact the Translation and Interpreting Service (www.tisnational.gov.au/en) on 131 450. It's a free service. Just provide our name (DVA), the 1800 VETERAN phone number (1800 838 372) and your DVA file number, if you have one





A message from the National President:

We will all be aware that work has begun within the Minister's Office to develop a harmonisation process for the three existing Acts of Parliament, the VEA, DRC and MRCA in order to fulfill the Government's commitment to deliver a better future for the veteran community. This has resulted in the implementation of a Veteran Legislative Reform Pathway for consultation within the veteran community.

In this initiative, the guiding principles are the development of a future implementation strategy in consultation with the veteran community. The aim is to produce a simpler, sustainable legislative framework which does not reduce payments currently or previously received by veterans. Details can be sourced at: www.dva.gov.au/about-us/overview/reporting/reviews-and-reports/veterans-legislation-reform-consultation-pathway.

Please note that the deadline for submissions is 12 May 2023.

The Ex-Services Organisation Round Table (ESORT) members (of which the NAA is a member — represented by the National President) visited Parliament House on the evening of Thursday 29th March 2023 to hear the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Matt Keogh's proposals in relation to the Veterans' Legislation Reform Consultative Pathway.

First; may I say that at the outset the Minister made a clear case for not adopting a process wherein we would see yet another Act being developed. As he said; that would have given us four Acts which would have inevitably led to considerable delays and much deliberation and/or debate over which one and what to do next. The proposal is to take one of the existing Acts which provides the greater degree of benefits e.g., the MRCA, and improve upon that Act for the benefit of veterans.

I see the 'Grand-parenting' assurance as being a most important provision for us all to consider and to note. The Minister went on to say that while a perfect solution is not seen to be a realistic expectation, the intent is to ensure no veteran will be worse-off at the end of this process.

The salient points I took from the Minister's presentation are;

- a. having a single Act affords a higher degree of clarity around entitlements for veterans than is the case with the existing three separate Acts that veterans need to navigate in order to make a claim for compensation;
- b. as the MRCA provides more benefits than the other Acts, it is proposed this will be the sole ongoing scheme;
- c. the intention is to make improvements to the existing MRCA, to the benefit of existing and forthcoming veterans;
- d. existing arrangements provided for in the VEA, DRCA and MRCA Acts will be 'Grand-Parented' so as not to disadvantage veterans in the transition and ongoing application of the 'new and improved' MRCA;
- e. the intention is that current payment rates are maintained and indexed normally;
- f. this new Act will provide coverage for all future claims from a date to be determined, irrespective of when and where the veteran served, or when their injury or illness occurred: and,
- g. the Minister welcomes submissions from veterans as to how this proposal may be improved. Submissions close on 12 May 2023.

Please consider carefully and make a submission to DVA where you feel it is warranted.

Yours aye,

David Manolas
National President
Naval Association of Australia
3 April 2023



Australian Government
Defence

A message from the Secretary of the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force

14 March 2023

Colleagues,

Today marks a significant day in Defence's history.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of the United Kingdom (UK) and President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. of the United States (US) have today announced the Optimal Pathway for Australia to acquire a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) capability as soon as the early 2030s.

This is a significant moment for Australia's Defence capability. Through the Optimal Pathway Australia will transform our strategic posture, bolstering security and stability in the Indo-Pacific for decades to come.

AUKUS partners will pursue the following approach to this endeavour:

- **Embedded Personnel and Port Visits.** Beginning in 2023, Australian military and civilian personnel will embed with the UK Royal Navy, the US Navy and, subject to any necessary arrangements, within the UK and US submarine industrial bases. This will accelerate the training and development of Australian personnel to ensure our ability to work together and for Australians to take on the responsibilities associated with these programs. The US plans to increase SSN port visits to Australia from 2023, with Australian sailors joining US crews for training and development; the UK will increase visits to Australia from 2026.
- **Submarine Forward Presence.** As early as 2027, the UK and the US plan to establish a rotational presence of one UK Astute class submarine and up to four US Virginia class submarines at HMAS *Stirling* near Perth, Western Australia —this initiative will be known as 'Submarine Rotational Force-West' (SRF-West). This rotational presence will comply fully with Australia's longstanding position of no foreign bases on its territory. It will put our nations shoulder to shoulder as Australia builds the necessary operational capabilities and skills to steward and operate its own fleet of nuclear-powered submarines. Australia is launching an ambitious national effort to grow its defence and industrial workforce to support this plan.
- **Sale of US Virginia Class Submarines.** Beginning in the early 2030s, pending approval from US Congress, the US intends to sell Australia three Virginia class submarines, with the potential to sell up to two more if needed. This action is critical to continue growing Australia's ability to own and operate a fleet of SSNs, and to provide Australia with a sovereign capability at the earliest possible date. It also ensures Australia sustains its undersea capabilities until SSN-AUKUS is ready, given the planned retirement of Australia's current fleet of submarines.

- **Build of SSN-AUKUS.** SSN-AUKUS will be the future attack submarine for both Australia and the UK. SSN-AUKUS will be based upon the UK's next-generation SSN design while incorporating cutting edge US submarine technologies, and will be built and deployed by both Australia and the UK. Australia and the UK intend to start building SSN-AUKUS in their domestic shipyards before the end of this decade. The UK intends to deliver its first SSN-AUKUS to the UK Royal Navy in the late 2030s. Australia plans to deliver the first Australian-built SSN-AUKUS to the Royal Australian Navy in the early 2040s.

Today's announcement follows an 18 month consultation period to define the Optimal Pathway for Australia to acquire this capability, while setting the highest international nuclear non-proliferation standards. Australia does not seek and will not acquire nuclear weapons. We will work with the UK and US to implement the highest standards of nuclear safety and security.

The Optimal Pathway delivers significant long-term strategic benefits for all three AUKUS partners. Importantly, we are building Australia's ability to safely own, operate, maintain and regulate a sovereign conventionally-armed SSN capability.

The Collins class submarine remains one of the most operationally capable diesel-electric submarine classes in the world and will continue to be critical to our ADF deterrence and defence capability in the coming decades as we transition to the nuclear-powered submarines.

We are getting access to this technology because we have demonstrated that we are a capable and competent Defence organisation. In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead, AO RAN and the Nuclear Powered Submarine Taskforce, who have worked tirelessly in collaboration with colleagues in Defence, across Government and their UK and US counterparts to develop this Optimal Pathway.

We will continue to update you on the progress of this remarkable endeavour. In the meantime, we encourage you to familiarise yourself with this historic announcement and read the [Public Report](#).

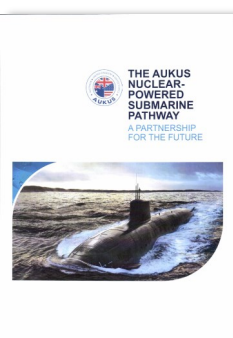
We recognise and value the hard work of everyone across the Defence enterprise in achieving our mission. Thank you for your contribution and ongoing commitment.

Greg Moriarty
Secretary
Department of Defence

Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC
General
Chief of the Defence Force

SERVICE
COURAGE
RESPECT
INTEGRITY
EXCELLENCE

To Defend Australia and its national Interests in order
advance Australia's security and prosperity,
WINW.6.460000)*.i.f



The Optimal Pathway fact sheet (PDF 624.98 KB)

AUKUS partners have identified an Optimal Pathway to achieve the construction and delivery of SSN-AUKUS as an enduring nuclear-powered submarine capability for Australia.

AUKUS partners appreciate the enormity of this endeavour and are committed to being responsible stewards of naval nuclear propulsion technology.

This pathway will ensure Australia safely and securely operates and sustains its nuclear-powered submarines.

Nuclear Submarine —Planned acquisition program

While the Virginia Class submarines are being purchased, design and development work will continue on a brand new submarine, known as the SSN-AUKUS, "leveraging" work the British have already been doing to replace their Astute-class submarines.

That submarine — which will form the AUKUS class — would eventually be operated by both the UK and Australia, using American combat systems.

One submarine will be built every two years from the early 2040s through to the late 2050s, with five SSN-AUKUS boats delivered to the Royal Australian Navy by the middle of the 2050s.

Eventually, the fleet would include eight Australian submarines built in Adelaide into the 2060s, but the federal government is leaving open the option of taking some from British shipyards if strategic circumstances change.

Meanwhile, the federal government estimates the cost of the submarine program will be between \$268 billion and \$368 billion over the next 30 years.

As part of that figure, \$8 billion will be spent on upgrading the naval base HMAS Stirling in Western Australia.

From as early as 2027, four US and one UK submarine will start rotating through Western Australia, to be known as the Submarine Rotational Forces West.

No decision has been made on a future east coast base for submarines, although Port Kembla has firmed as the most likely location.

Standing alongside Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, US President Joe Biden spoke of the strength of the alliance already.

"Today, as we stand at the inflection point in history, where the hard work of announcing deterrence and enhancing stability is going to reflect peace and stability for decades to come, the United States can ask for no better partners in the Indo-Pacific where so much of our shared future will be written," Mr Biden said.

US subs to rotate off Australian coast

During the announcement, President Biden flagged that, from this year, Australian navy personnel would embed with both US and UK crew on submarines and at their shipyards.



"In fact, as we speak, the nuclear-powered sub, is making a port call in Perth and later this year, there will be a rotational presence of nuclear-powered subs to Australia to help develop the workforce it will need to build," he said.

"AUKUS has one overriding objective: to enhance the stability of the Indo-Pacific amid rapidly shifting global dynamics."

Mr Albanese confirmed that Australian submariners were already undergoing nuclear power training in the US.

"I am proud to confirm that they are all in the top 30 per cent of their class," he said.

"This will be an Australian sovereign capability, commanded by the Royal Australian Navy and sustained by Australians in Australian shipyards, with construction to begin within this decade."

Mr Albanese reiterated that Australia purchasing nuclear submarines would not breach non-proliferation treaties ratified by the country.

Mr Sunak described the alliance as a "powerful partnership" that would see "truly interoperable" submarines.

"The Royal Navy will operate the same submarines as the Australian Navy and we'll both share components and parts with the US Navy," he said.

"Our submarine crews will train together, patrol together and maintain their boats together.

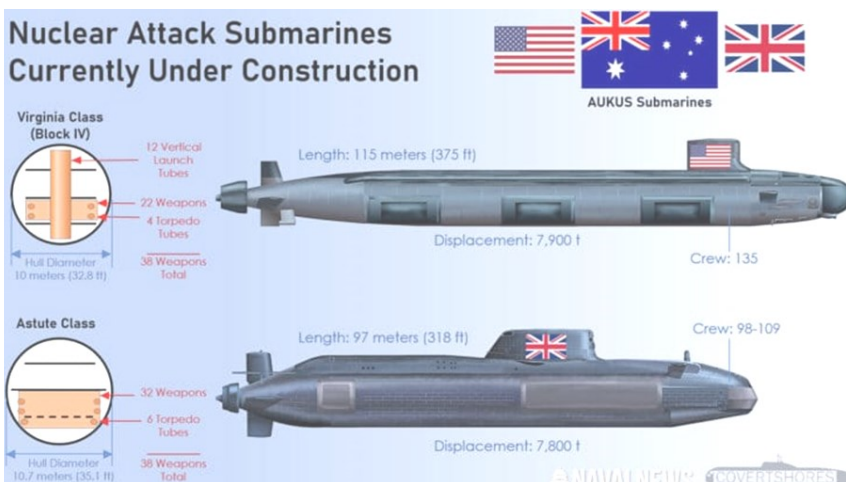
"They will communicate using the same terminology, and the same equipment."

Money for US shipyards

Australia will also contribute \$3 billion over the next four years to US and UK production lines, with the bulk of that money heading stateside.

Nuclear Submarine —Planned acquisition program

Nuclear Attack Submarines Currently Under Construction



"Australia is one of our very closest allies. They have stood next to us in no shortage of events and we feel very confident that they will take this this unique capability in a responsible fashion," one official said.

The three AUKUS leaders made the announcement at Naval Base Point Loma, in front of the Virginia-class submarine USS Missouri, which arrived in San Diego Harbour late last week.

Ashley Townshend from the Carnegie Endowment — an international affairs think tank — said

White House officials insisted Australia was preparing to make a "substantial contribution" to US submarine production facilities.

The US government will also request an extra \$US4.6 billion from Congress to upgrade the nation's submarine infrastructure, with a concession that the readiness of American production lines are "not where it should be".

"More will be needed, and the Australians will also contribute there, so this is a generational opportunity," a senior official said.

Included in its overall project budget, Australia will spend \$2 billion over the next four years upgrading the Osborne shipyards in South Australia.

The purchase of Virginia-class submarines from the United States was described by American officials as "a potent nuclear powered submarine force in the 2030s, much earlier than many had expected".

US officials tried to allay concerns about restrictions on sharing its nuclear technology with Australia.

Australia's move to acquire Virginia-class submarines in the 2030s was "far more than a stopgap measure".

"These are by far the most-capable submarines Australia has ever operated and the first to incorporate the capacity for long-range strike with vertically launched Tomahawk-land attack cruise missiles," he said.

He also said the announcement that the United States and the United Kingdom would build a rotational force of five submarines at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia would have profound implications.

"This is by far the most significant near-term contribution by AUKUS to strengthening deterrence in the Western Pacific," Mr Townsend told the ABC.

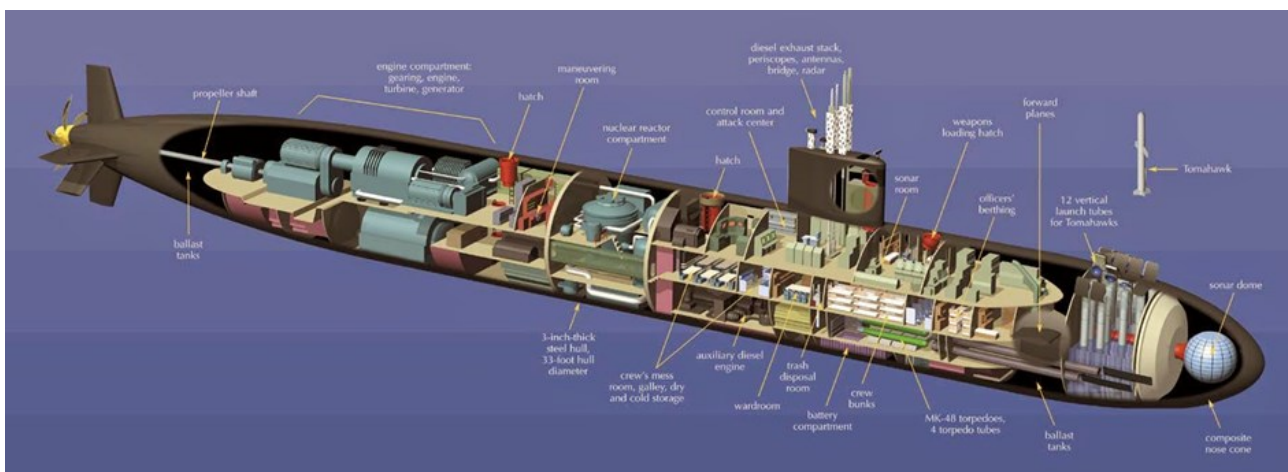
"It is also part of a seismic shift in the US-Australia alliance that will see Australia play an increasingly pivotal role in supporting and contributing to military operations in the region."

Text from ABC News

US Virginia Submarine Block V build

Complement Armament:

135 (15 officers 120 sailors)
VPM module 28 Tomahawk BGM-109, 12 VLS Tomahawk BGM tubes, 4 x 533mm Torpedo tubes (Mk 48 torpedo) UGM 84 Harpoon, 65 in total torpedoes and missiles



Vietnam War commemorative medallion and certificate

Department of Veterans' Affairs



THE HON ANTHONY ALBANESE MP

PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

and

THE HON MATT KEOGH MP

MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS

MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL

MEDIA RELEASE

29 March 2023

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION TO MARK 50 YEARS SINCE THE END OF AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will produce a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration.

The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War. Please note that only one medallion is available per Vietnam War veteran. While Australia can never repay the debt we owe to the 60,000 who

served in Vietnam, this medallion and certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour their service and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home.

The obverse design will feature the Commonwealth Coat of Arms with 'Vietnam War' inscribed at the top and 'Australia remembers' at the bottom. The medallion reverse design will feature words of thanks at the bottom with the years 1962-73 inscribed at the top to represent the years in which Australia was involved in the Vietnam War. The medallion also features a UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" Helicopter, a depiction of HMAS Sydney (III) "Vung Tau Ferry" and an Australian soldier holding an SLR.

The medallion will be presented in a display case and will include a card that explains the design and contains a brief expression of thanks.

The design of the commemorative certificate will complement the medallion. The design includes the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, 'Australia Remembers' wording and includes the signature of both the Governor-General and the Prime Minister.

The certificate will be contained within its own folder that will allow for independent display, framing and mounting.

Who is eligible for a medallion?

Any veteran who served in the Vietnam War. Additionally, a widow or a family member of a veteran who served is also eligible to apply. Although the family member doesn't need to be the immediate family of the deceased veteran it should be assumed that the immediate family members would have precedence.

How many medallions are available per veteran?

Only one medallion is available per Vietnam War veteran. It's advisable that an agreement is made within the family of a deceased veteran as to who will apply for the medallion and certificate. The registration system prevents multiple people applying on behalf of the same veteran.

How much does the medallion cost?

Nothing, the medallion is free for any veteran who served in the Vietnam War. Additionally, a widow or a family member of a veteran who served is also eligible to apply. Although the family member doesn't need to be the immediate family of the deceased veteran it should be assumed that the immediate family members would have precedence.

(Continued on page 11)

Vietnam War commemorative medallion and certificate

(Continued from page 10)

Are additional certificates available for family members?

Only one physical copy of the certificate will be made available and will accompany the medallion. Should any additional family members wish to obtain a PDF version of the certificate, this is available through the normal application process. You will notice that the option to receive the medallion is not available if someone has already applied.

How can I reprint the certificate?

A copy of the certificate can be downloaded from National Mailing and Marketing webpage

1. Log into account
2. Enter Veterans service number and name
3. Select: Verify
4. Yes – if details are correct
5. Type in text – name to appear on certificate
6. Select: Proof
7. A copy of the certificate will open in a separate box
8. Save (Option to save is 3 dots beside the cog)
9. Print

How long will it take to receive my medallion and certificate?

Initially, the medallions and certificates are expected to be distributed in June for those who have applied prior to or in June. Any subsequent applications are expected to be distributed within three weeks of submitting an application.

Can I have the medallion and certificate sent to an overseas address?

Yes. Delivery times may be delayed if the medallion and certificate are sent overseas.

Is there a closing date for ordering a medallion and certificate?

At this stage applications are expected to remain open for the foreseeable future.

How do I verify if a veteran served in the Vietnam War?

If you are unsure if a veteran served in Vietnam and is eligible for a medallion and certificate you can check the [DVA Nominal Roll](#). If you believe a name is missing from the Nominal Roll please contact the Department via email at

commemorations@dva.gov.au.

Are there other activities planned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War?

A series of events will be undertaken throughout the year, culminating in a national commemorative service on Vietnam Veterans' Day, 18 August 2023, at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra. More information can be found [here](#).

What are the operating hours of the commemoration team and how can I send an enquiry after hours?

The commemorations team can be contacted from 9am until 5pm AEST Monday to Friday and when prompted say the word 'medallions'.

After hours enquiries can be sent to

commemorations@dva.gov.au

Contact information

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Phone: [1800 838 372](tel:1800838372)

Email: commemorations@dva.gov.au



A piece of history returned home

10 March 2023

HMAS *Arunta* II received an unusual gift when the HMAS *Arunta* I white ensign was presented to the ship while in Tasmania for the Royal Hobart Regatta.

The flag was held by the now deceased Cedric Pretyman, who served on *Arunta* I during WW2 from April 1, 1942, as a signalman.

His family presented the ensign and other memorabilia to the ship during an open day.

It was by chance the family of the WW2 veteran learned that *Arunta* II would be in port in Hobart, and they took a chance showing up at the security gate with items they had discovered following Mr Pretyman's death.

Granddaughter of Mr Pretyman, Kadie Pretyman, said the family wanted to donate the original ensign and photos because they were part of *Arunta*'s history and belonged with the ship.



Duncan and Hudson Mennitz present the ensign from HMAS Arunta I to Commanding Officer HMAS Arunta II Commander Jason McBain.

Photo: Sub-Lieutenant Tahlia Merigan



HMAS Arunta I Pennant flag, photographs and other memorabilia donated by Cedric Pretyman's family from World War II.

Photo Merigan

"My Poppy (Cedric) would be happy and proud it's back with its rightful owner," Ms Pretyman said.

Ms Pretyman said her grandfather would tell them funny anecdotes of his time in the Navy, including that he once went to a movie and on returning to the ship found it was not there. Apparently, there was an emergency and the ship had to leave suddenly.

"It was a funny story Poppy told us. *Arunta* I came back later into port so Poppy was able to jump on board," she said.

Ms Pretyman said her grandfather loved his time in

the Navy and even aged 99 he could still remember the signals and Morse code.

Commanding Officer *Arunta* II Commander Jason McBain said it was a surprise when Mr Pretyman's family turned up with the memorabilia and ensign.

"They were just so keen to hand over the ensign and memorabilia to the Navy as they believe that's where this will be appreciated the most," Commander McBain said.

Ms Pretyman said her son Hudson and husband Duncan were thrilled with the experience.

"It was fantastic that Duncan and Hudson were able to be shown around the ship. Hudson had an amazing time and told all his friends," Ms Pretyman said.

"Everyone was so kind to them during the visit. Thank you for everything."

Commander McBain said they were planning to get the ensign mounted in a frame.

"To make sure it has pride of place where people can view it regularly and will be passed down from *Arunta* II to any future vessels that bare our name," he said.

By Sub-Lieutenant Tahlia Merigan





DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL OFFICE

A member of the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations

20 March 2023

MEDIA STATEMENT

TAXATION OF MILITARY SUPER INVALIDITY BENEFITS

Veterans who are medically discharged from the Australian Defence Force may receive Invalidity Benefits from their super scheme depending on extent of disability. For over 50 years, the Invalidity Benefit regimes have been designed to provide the same level of benefits to veterans and families for similar service and injury, regardless of the super scheme.

However, Veteran Invalidity Benefits are not all taxed the same way.

All Veteran Invalidity Benefits are reviewable and can be cancelled at any time up to the age of 55. The way the Invalidity Benefits are taxed should reflect that. The Federal Court, in the *Douglas Case*, confirmed this; however, the Government only applied the Court's decision to the Invalidity Benefits of older super schemes where payment started on/after 20 September 2007.

Other veteran Invalidity Benefits continue to be taxed as though they are permanent benefits.

For example, the tax paid on the same Invalidity Benefits of \$47,781 are:

- Older super scheme payments starting on/after 20 September 2007: \$0 tax
- Older super scheme payments starting before 20 September 2007: \$5,885 tax
- ADF Cover, introduced 1 July 2016 – all new and future enlistees: \$5,996 tax

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommended as urgent to harmonise veteran entitlements, and recognised that veterans medically discharged were most at risk. This unequal taxation goes against the intent of the Royal Commission, and of the original design.

It discriminates against Australia's newest and youngest ADF members at a time when attracting and retaining ADF Members is a priority for the Defence strategy.

No government would start out to design legislation that produces this inequitable outcome.

The legislation *Schedule 9 of the Treasury Laws Amendment (2022 No 4) Bill* addresses some issues but does not fix this problem – it entrenches unequal and unfair taxation treatment of injured veterans who receive the same Invalidity Benefits. In their haste, the Senate Economics Committee report totally ignored the veteran community submissions and evidence on this.

Schedule 9 - Taxation of military super benefits, must be withdrawn, given the consideration it deserves, and fixed to ensue all veteran super Invalidity Benefits receive the same tax treatment provided by the *Douglas Case*, regardless of which scheme or when payments commenced.

<i>Contacts</i>		
National President: Del Gaudry CSC: 02 6152 9162	www.dfwa.org.au	Spokesperson: John Lewis 07 2102 9879

Navy to the rescue



HMAS Hobart's rigid-hulled inflatable boat team rescues mariners from MY Vivierae II off the coast of northern Australia.

Photos Defence

6 March 2023

The ship's company of destroyer HMAS *Hobart* rescued six mariners from a 30-metre motor yacht north of Australia on March 6.

A rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) was deployed from *Hobart* in unfavourable conditions to enable the rescue of the crew, who had experienced engine trouble and became stranded in international waters north east of Darwin, near Kolepon (Dolok), Indonesia.

Under the watchful eyes of skilled sailors and officers, the RHIB was launched safely under challenging conditions, effecting the difficult transfer of personnel from the disabled MV *Vivierae II*.

RHIB coxswain Petty Officer Christopher Keillor said he was excited to be part of the rescue.

"It's a great feeling to be the operator in a situation like this and achieving the mission of getting people to safety," Petty Officer Keillor said.

"The training we receive to become qualified as RHIB Coxswains prepares us well for operating in real situations."

Hobart's navigator, Lieutenant Dean Gilbert, was in charge of the safe execution of the rescue.



"RHIB operations require focus and careful consideration of the weather conditions and sea state," Lieutenant Gilbert said.

"There are a lot of moving parts including providing an effective lee to enable the launch and recovery of the RHIB, to achieve a safe breakaway and recovery under challenging conditions.

"The team pulled together excellently for this rescue and it was great to see us achieve it safely."

By Lieutenant Max Logan

The six mariners were on passage from Darwin to Townsville and were disembarked from *Hobart* at Thursday Island

*Annette Lin
9 March 2023
Daily Liberal*



Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, The Honourable Alatoi Ishmael Kalsakau Ma'aukora (left) talks with Commanding Officer of HMAS Canberra, Captain Jace Hutchison, during a tour of the ship as it supports Operation Vanuatu Assist 2023.

The Australian Defence Force, as part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade led Whole-of-Government response, is providing support to Vanuatu in the wake of Severe Tropical Cyclone Judy and Tropical Cyclone Kevin. Australia is proud to work with the Government of Vanuatu, the Pacific family and other partners to provide humanitarian support

Navy to the rescue



Commanding Officer HMAS Canberra Captain Jace Hutchison speaks with Vanuatu media during Operation Vanuatu Assist 2023.

Photos LS Matthew Lyall

Vanuatu media outlets got a pleasant surprise when the Commanding Officer of HMAS *Canberra*, Captain Jace Hutchison, greeted them in their local language.

With family connections in Vanuatu, Captain Hutchison spent a good part of his teenage years in the town of Luganville on Espiritu Santo Island and in the capital Port Vila.

Canberra arrived on the afternoon of March 9, at the request of the Vanuatu Government, and is providing support to Australia's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response following Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin.

The media gained first-hand experience of the landing helicopter dock platform and its capabilities, arriving on one of its embarked Army CH-47 Chinook helicopters and returning to Port Vila on one of the ship's landing craft.

Canberra and its crew sailed from Sydney at the request of the Vanuatu Government, with nearly 300 embarked force personnel, three Chinook helicopters, over 40 vehicles, small boats, landing craft and a range of humanitarian supplies and logistical support.



Left: Members of Australian Clearance Diving Team One (CDT1) conduct a salvage diving operation in Port Vila harbour during Operation Vanuatu Assist 2023.

Photos:

ABCIS Michaela Bennett

Right CDT1 and the Vanuatu Fisheries Department gather together following the successful salvaging of Fishing Vessel Scabra in Port Vila harbour during Operation Vanuatu Assist 2023.





Navy and Army turn 122

Left: Ron Rosenberg speaks with RADM Guy Griffiths at HMAS Watson

Below: NAA National President with National VP Lorraine Grey and NAA NSW Vice President Ron Rosenberg at HMAS Watson marking Navy's 122nd birthday 1 March

Photos LSIS Tara Morrison



Left: L-R) Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths, AO, DSO, DSC, RAN Rtd, Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, AM, RAN, and Seaman Maritime Logistics Support Operations Olivia Miles cut the cake in celebration of RADM Griffiths' 100th birthday and the 122nd birthday of the Royal Australian Navy at HMAS Watson 1 March 2023



5RAR with the Welsh Guards

Left: Members of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, line up to receive leeks from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, during the St. David's Day Parade in Windsor, United Kingdom.

Photos: CPL J. Goedhart

Right: 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, salute His Royal Highness, Prince William of Wales during the St. David's Day Parade

The day marked the 58th birthday of the 5th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, the 122nd Birthday of the Australian Army, and for the Welsh Guards; St. David's Day.



Navy Week's events in WA and VIC



The theme of Navy week 2023 is safeguarding Australia's economic wellbeing on and under the sea since federation. As part of Navy Week celebrations, Navy conducted a range of activities across the country. Navy week began on 23 February and culminated with Navy's 122nd birthday on 01 March 2023.

Left: HMAS Stirling's quarterdeck is dressed for the RAN's 122nd birthday at Garden Island in Western Australia.

Below: Commanding Officer HMAS Cerberus Captain Ainsley Morthorpe, CSM, RAN, and Charles Sevier the grandson of Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell, KCMG, KBE, RAN, at the "Father of the Navy" service held at Brighton Cemetery, Victoria on 1 March 2023.

Photos : Defence

Below: Local Flinders residents watch on as Boatswains Mates sailors from HMAS Warramunga prepare for a 12.7mm Browning Machine Gun firing at the West Head Gunnery Range



Retirement villages: urgent reform needed

16 February 2023

Slammed as a “lifestyle choice that requires a lawyer”, it's very much buyer beware when thinking of buying into a retirement village

Key Points

- Seniors and families complain of being “ripped off” by unfair and incomprehensible contracts and conditions
- Reform, standardisation and transparency needed to better protect older people
- National Seniors calls for urgent reforms to sector including national consistency led by federal government.

The retirement village sector needs urgent reform and regulation to better protect older Australians against unfair and incomprehensible contracts, fees, and charges.

That is the strongly worded key recommendation of the National Seniors Australia submission to the Victorian Review of that state's Retirement Villages Act.

Importantly, we are calling for nationally consistent and strengthened laws governing retirement villages across all states and territories.

Older Australians fed up with confusing laws want federal Housing Minister Julie Collins to show leadership, bring the states and territories together and demonstrate support for older Australians.

Concerns over exit fees & sale delays

Speaking to David Bevan on ABC radio in Adelaide, National Senior's Chief Advocate Ian Henschke said the retirement village sector is a minefield for many retirees and their families who are confronted by incomprehensible contracts that can mask the financial interests and responsibilities that consumers take on when entering and exiting the village.

Operators continue to undervalue entry costs and obscure exit costs to lure unsuspecting seniors. Many are later “hit” with fees and charges – the cost of which is not easy to understand without costly legal and financial advice.

Delays in the resale of properties result in ongoing costs to former residents or their families – a big problem when a resident is required to enter an aged-care facility.

Time limits for buy backs should be shortened to 6 months in metropolitan areas; 12 months in other areas.

It is unconscionable an operator would be given 12 months to sell a property in a metropolitan area after the resident gives vacant possession. Twelve months provides no incentive for an operator to act quickly to sell a property.

Operators pay the exit entitlement on the day after the specified period, and be obliged to:

- give a vacating resident a statement with the amount of their exit entitlement and how it was calculated, and

- make an aged care payment or alternative accommodation payment within prescribed periods after a resident makes a request.

Reforming retirement villages is part of [National Seniors Better Housing campaign](#). To support this, sign up to the campaign or become a [National Seniors member](#).

“As Australia's peak body for older people, National Seniors regularly hears about the frustration at the lack of consumer protections in retirement villages.

“People contact us with a deep sense they are or have been ripped off and are not being protected by local laws and at the mercy of retirement village marketing people and lawyers,” Mr Henschke said.

Even residents who have had an enjoyable experience in a retirement village are surprised and disappointed at unforeseen fees and conditions that limit the sale returns and add unforeseen costs upon exiting the village.

National Seniors says seniors are not legal experts and need government action and greater transparency between operators and residents to rebalance the relationship so older Australians can feel confident they are not being taken advantage of.

What is particularly worrying is that seniors might feel they are protected because retirement villages are covered by specific legislation.

Speaking on Adelaide radio, where seniors and family members talked about their personal experiences, Mr Henschke said: “The retirement village market should be reformed to resemble the residential property market, where the owners have greater control over the private areas of their unit and process of reselling. We need nationally consistent laws.”

Buyer beware

National Seniors supports the advantages of downsizing, enabling older people to better manage their retirement years.

However, we do not believe the current fragmented, and unregulated retirement village business model makes it a suitable downsizing option despite the possible benefits of this type of tenure.

Retirement villages have the potential to give older Australians a comfortable lifestyle option, which is more suitable as people age, but this promise has been lacking because the legislation has enabled practices that are detrimental to the financial well-being of seniors.

We urge a strong “buyer beware” approach to retirement villages. This is disappointing given that retirement housing could play a stronger role in addressing some of the factors fuelling the housing crisis.

National Seniors' submission to the review of Victoria's Retirement Villages Act can be read [on the website](#).



National Council

NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Patron in Chief: Her Majesty the Queen

Patron (National): His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
National President: David Manolas **Email:** nationalpresident@navalassoc.org.au
National Secretary: Russell Pettis **Email:** nationalsecretary@navalassoc.org.au
Postal: 221 Centenary Avenue Melton VIC 3337 **Telephone:** 0419 898 427

All Sections and Sub-sections.

Due to Banks phasing out cheques, expected to occur on or by 30 June 2023, it has come to our notice that the Constitution and By-laws do not cater for this eventuality.

Until such time as the Constitution and By-laws can be changed approval is given for all Sections and Sub-sections to institute a system whereby, they may use a Debit Card in lieu of cheques.

The National Executive currently has a system where the Treasurer has a Debit Card for use where necessary and any other transaction that has to be done through a system whereby the Treasurer logs a payment with the Bank sends a text or phone call to another member of the Executive who then signs off on the transaction electronically. This system has proven to be very expedient and successful.

Unfortunately, when the Executive was investigating this type of action, it was found that the Commonwealth Bank does not allow for it to happen this way. It is however known that at least Westpac Bank and Bendigo bank, amongst others, do allow for this type of transaction to take place.

As the world is moving to mainly electronic banking it is suggested that Sections and Sub sections consider moving to this type of banking and please remember to use your three character Sub-Section code on all banking transactions.

Any queries please direct them to:

National Vice President Blue (Gordon Fuller) or to
the National Treasurer (Eileen Calway).

Yours aye,

Gordon Fuller

Gordon Fuller
National Vice President Blue
Responsible for the Constitution and By-laws.

Extracts from the Suicide Royal Commission's Newsletter—Edition 15 7 March 2023

You'll remember we delivered our [Interim Report](#) last August comprising 13 urgent recommendations to improve the lives of serving and ex-serving members. The Government has so far adopted 11 of our recommendations – this is a positive sign.

Notably, consultation has commenced to improve the laws governing veterans' compensation. These laws are set to be overhauled, consolidating three complex compensation schemes into one simplified system. DVA has committed to bring on additional resources to eliminate the backlog of 42,000 unprocessed claims by March next year.

And we've signed an agreement with Defence and DVA to ensure serving and ex-serving members and Departmental staff can share information with us without the fear of punishment or reprisals.

It's heartening to see some progress, but we still have a lot of work to do – and the issues under examination are complex, multi-layered ... and many.

We're acutely aware of the significance of our inquiry. Our recommendations must help to change the environment – build the case for change – and ensure that action is taken by Government, Defence and DVA. The success or otherwise of the measures adopted from our recommendations must also continue to be assessed.

We're keen to make one thing very clear: this Royal Commission is not about portraying our troops and veterans as 'broken'. The large majority have fulfilling careers both in the military and after they leave the services. Nor do we seek to undermine Australia's Defence capability or proud military history.

To the contrary. We aim to bring about long-lasting structural and cultural change to better support our serving and ex-serving members and their families; and build a stronger, more resilient and better ADF for Australia's future defence needs

Learning about life on base in the West

Royal Commission staff travelled to Perth last month to meet with ex-service organisations and other support groups, and hear from serving members about life on base at Campbell Barracks and HMAS *Stirling*. Royal Commission Chair Nick Kal-das said the visit would help the local Defence and veteran community prepare for the [Perth public hearing block](#), commencing on 15 May, and improve the Commission's understanding of the

unique issues affecting serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force, their families and supporters in WA.

The Commission has received over 3,200 submissions and held more than 360 private sessions but remains keen to hear from more serving members, and wants to encourage sailors, soldiers and aviators to make a submission. We want to hear about a variety of experiences – good and bad, past and present – including from those who continue to serve and protect our country.

DVA Contacts

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 & Territories are listed below:

PHONE NUMBER:

Telephone:
[1800 VETERAN \(1800 838 372\)](tel:1800VETERAN)

International callers:

[+61 2 6289 1133](tel:+61262891133)

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Health Approvals & Home Care Section Department 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)

OPEN
Veterans & Families
Counselling
ARMS
1800 011 046



**SAFE ZONE
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FREE ANONYMOUS
COUNSELLING LINE
CALL 1800 142 072

**Defence
Family
Helpline**



1800 624 608

**Defence
All-hours
Support Line**



1800 628 036