



National Bosun's Call



Vol 6 No 2

Once Navy, Always Navy

March 2024



National Naval Memorial Canberra

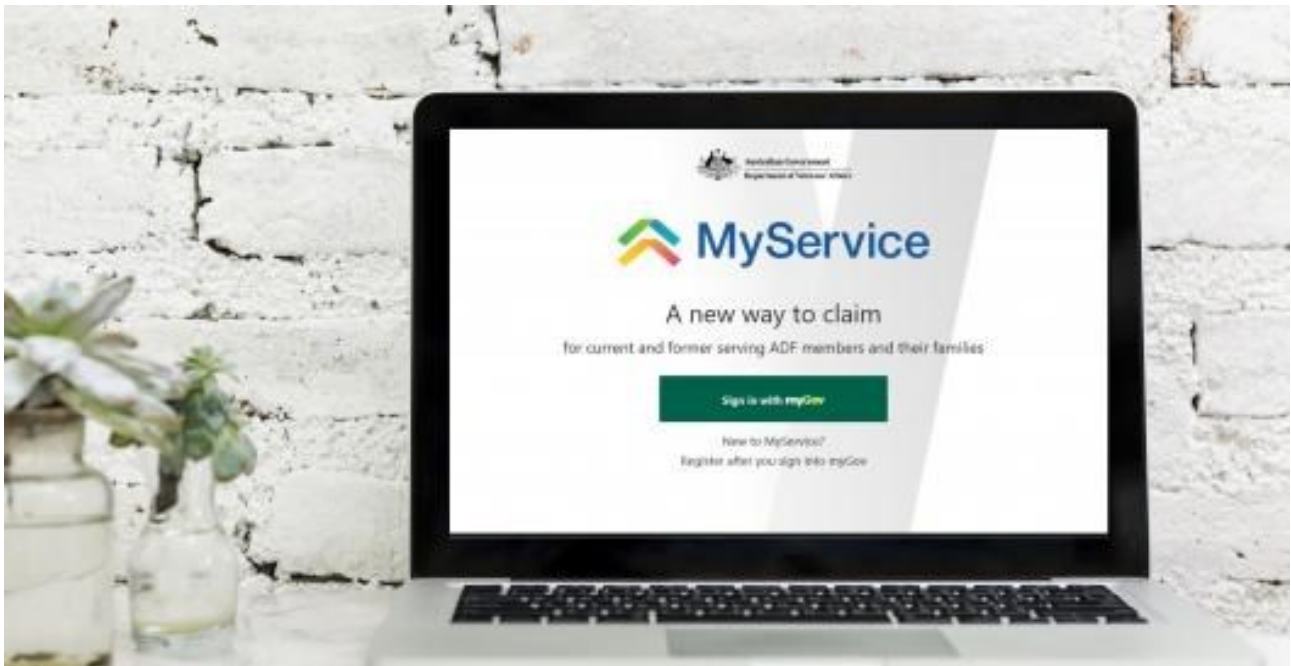
Photo Tripadvisor

1 March 2024—Navy Celebrates its 123rd Birthday



National Newsletter of the
Naval Association of Australia

Improving your MyService experience



27 February 2024

Modernising DVA's ICT is one of our top priorities and a focus of the Royal Commission's Interim Report.

Recent enhancements to [MyService](#) are making it easier for veterans and families to lodge claims and access support and services.

When claiming Initial Liability, Disability Compensation Payment, Application for Increase to Disability Compensation Payments and (from 26 February 2024) Permanent Impairment claims (DRCA/MRCA), you are now:

- prompted to provide the information needed to support the claim at the time you submit it
- notified through your myGov inbox if we need further information about your claim, along with a Task to complete that helps you to provide the additional information required
- given enhanced options to upload documents to your claims, including any 'Other' documents you might like to add up until determination, and view details of your documents and claims.

This means you can now view up-to-date information and provide all documents via MyService for all claims, whether submitted through MyService or other channels, reducing the need to send that information by email or post.

For more information, please see the [MyService Enhancements Factsheet](#). For any further assistance, please call us on 1800 VETERAN ([1800 838 372](#)).

The Naval Association of Australia Inc

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

Royal Commission—Quarterly Report – Improving the administration of the claims system

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has recommended urgent action to eliminate the claims backlog and make improvements to the claims administration system. This is detailed in their Interim Report, delivered on 11 August 2022, which can be found on the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide website.

This report outlines progress towards implementing improvements to the administration of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) compensation claims system as recommended in the Royal Commission's Interim Report (Recommendation 3).

Improvements progressed under this recommendation will also implement a number of the 11 priority initiatives from the diagnostic review of the DVA's claims processing system completed by McKinsey & Company in December 2021. The full diagnostic review is available on DVA's website: Government Reports | Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au)

Australian Government Response

The Australian Government agrees to this recommendation. The response states:

The Government recognises that some veterans and families do not have a good experience accessing support they deserve.

The Government will consider ways to improve the veterans' experience of the claims system, remove complexity and enhance efficiency in supporting veterans and families navigating the veteran support system.

Measures to improve the claims system will be considered by Government, along with any necessary legislative amendments.

The Government notes that work is already underway in response to this recommendation, taking into account the recommendations of McKinsey & Company's claims process diagnostic to improve the administration of the claims system.

The overall benefits of the implementation of the work program will be demonstrated in the efficiencies reported as noted in the response to Recommendation 2 above.

Progress Update – 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023

To date, DVA has published two quarterly reports on improving the claims administration system. These can be found on the DVA website.

DVA's program of work for Recommendation 3 is organised into three overarching streams:

- **Efficiency improvements** such as claims screening teams that will reduce times taken to process claims
- **Improvements to the claims experience** such as proactive communications with clients to support the transparency of the claims process
- **Preparing for the future** by undertaking discovery processes for future ICT ecosystem, including ongoing improvements to the MyService portal

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 of the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide states:

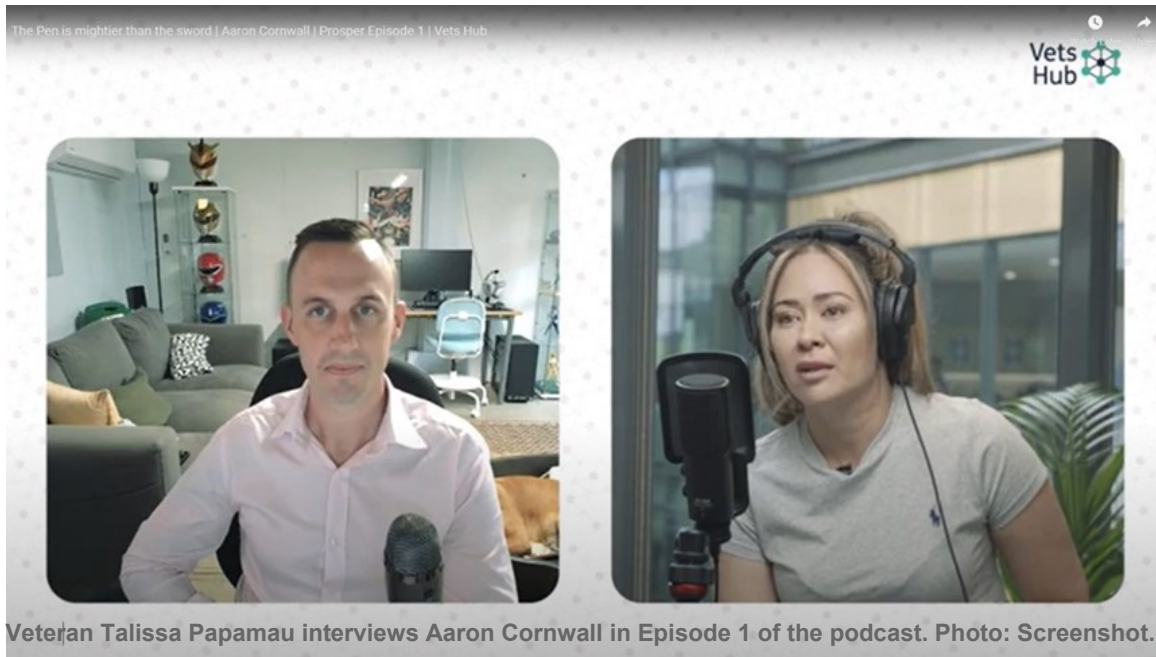
The Australian Government should improve the administration of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) claims system by 1 July 2024. The changes pursued should aim to improve veterans' experience of the claims system, remove complexity from the system and enhance efficiency in claims processing.

To this end:

DVA, having taken account of the advice received from McKinsey & Company and other relevant sources, should advise the Australian Government about potential measures it could include within a program of work aimed at improving the administration of the claims system.

- The Australian Government and DVA
- The Australian Government should provide DVA, and any other relevant agencies, with the resources needed to implement the agreed program of work. The allocation of these resources to DVA should not be offset by reductions in other resourcing of DVA.
- The Australian Government should seek passage of any legislative amendments required to implement the agreed program of work.
- DVA, and any other relevant agencies, should implement the program of work by 1 July 2024.
- DVA should publicly report on progress towards implementing the program of work on a quarterly basis.
- DVA should publicly report on the expected benefit of each measure included within the program of work, and, once implemented, report on the degree to which each benefit has been realised.

New podcast helps ADF members transition to civilian life



12 March 2024 | [Andrew McLaughlin](#)

A podcast designed to help Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel navigate the challenges of transitioning to civilian life has been launched by the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) through its Vets Hub service.

Hosted by veterans David Wilton and Talissa Papamau, the *Prosper* podcast features raw, real and honest veteran conversations on finding financial wellbeing after service.

Each 25- to 30-minute episode of *Prosper* features the story of an ADF veteran or family member, and explores their departure from the ADF and the challenges they had to overcome while re-entering civilian life.

Issues such as finding a new career, achieving a comfortable retirement, moving families out of ADF accommodation and overcoming isolation from ADF friends are all challenges faced by veterans, and these can be eased by accessing support through CSC's Vets Hub.

The podcasts are presented in a clear, calm and professional video and audio format, with stories and case studies many veterans will be able to relate to.

More than 6000 ADF personnel transition to civilian life – either voluntarily or involuntarily – every year, half of whom are in their 20s and 30s. These transitions can be prompted by a desire for a career change, retirement, medical condition or injury.

CSC defence and veterans liaison David Wilton said *Prosper* was about veterans hearing real experiences of other veterans about how they transitioned to civilian life.

“Transitioning out of the ADF can be a deeply challenging experience, often requiring the veteran to find a new source of income, begin a new career, or prepare for retirement,” he said.

“What *Prosper* shows is that light exists at the end of this tunnel. A successful transition is achievable and there's plenty of help along the way.

Prosper is based on the premise that nobody understands the transition to civilian life like veterans who have done it themselves.

“Every veteran carries their own unique experience, and this podcast is about creating a platform to share their personal stories and advice with ADF workers who are considering a life after service.”

CSC senior manager, brand, marketing, communications and digital engagement Matthew Wong said *Prosper* would help empower CSC members to make informed decisions about their financial future and encourage them to engage with CSC.

“Podcast was our medium of choice for capturing raw and honest veteran experiences of achieving financial wellbeing after service,” he said.

“We want CSC members to listen to each *Prosper* conversation and feel informed, inspired and confident about managing their financial situation in the next life stage.

“The series will play a critical role in the way CSC engages with veteran members.”

The first series of Vets Hub presents *Prosper* has six episodes, and the first two are now available on the [Vets Hub webpage](#).

Also see page 5

VALE

Vice Admiral Ian Knox AC RAN Rtd

9 February 1933 — 14 January 2024

Rear Admiral Guy R. Griffiths AO DSO DSC RAN Rtd

1 March 1923 – 5 March 2024

Member NAA 9 December 1980 — 5 March 2024

**The Vets Hub is dedicated to improving financial wellbeing for
Australian veterans and military families**

Commonwealth Superannuation Commission's (CSC) vision is to provide a collaborative network of services that are easy to navigate, allowing veterans and families to access the right support and information for them during various stages of their lives.

At times, it can be overwhelming to navigate the many organisation's supporting veterans and their families. The complexity of navigating vital support services remains a key challenge for many veterans, often limiting their ability to access the support available from an appropriate service provider. The Vets Hub is focused on improving financial wellbeing and outcomes through connection and centralisation of support services for faster and simplified access.

The veteran community is diverse and complex, therefore, the best course of action for one veteran or military family might not be ideal for another. The Vets Hub works in collaboration with the veteran community to identify their unique needs, financial goals and better understand their circumstances. This process assists the Vets Hub to tailor the support provided by our member education consultants, specialists in medical claims, and financial planners to achieve the best possible outcome for you and your family.

How can CSC help?

Our educators can offer you general information about financial wellbeing, either one-on-one, at an in-person seminar, or through [our recorded sessions online](#). The team can help you learn how to make the most of the pay and conditions of your military career, and help you get prepared for life after service.

Our financial planners are dedicated to getting to know you and what you want out of life and helping you lay out a path to get there, step by step. We're here to serve those who serve our country. We believe our customers deserve the guidance they need to secure a safe and comfortable retirement, as well as have the peace of mind that they and their families are in safe hands. Whether you're looking for General Information, Simple Advice or Comprehensive Advice, [we're here to help](#).

** Our authorised financial planners are authorised to provide advice by Guideway Financial Services (ABN 46 156 498 538, AFSL 420367.). Guideway is a licensed financial services business providing CSC financial planners with support to provide members with specialist advice, education and strategies.*

www.csc.gov.au/Members/Advice-and-resources/Vets-Hub

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE PUBLIC HEARING

Opening Address Transcript - Commissioner NICK KALDAS AP Hearing Block 12—Sydney—4 March 2024—Day 1

As always, we would also like to acknowledge the serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families for the unique and important sacrifices they have made on behalf of our country. We honour you for all that you do and all that you have done.

Speaking to you today at the opening of this final hearing block, we must reflect on the past 32 months of our inquiry. When we began in July 2021, the national tragedy of Defence and Veteran suicide was apparent, with 1,273 deaths by suicide confirmed between 2001 and 2019 for serving and ex-serving ADF personnel who had served since 1985. This undoubtedly underestimated the true number of deaths as it does not include deaths where the intent could not be confirmed, nor does it include veterans who served before 1985, as many of our Vietnam veterans did.

Sadly, the number of confirmed suicide deaths has continued to grow, illustrating the magnitude of the issue we have been confronting. We now know there have been 1,677 confirmed deaths by suicide between 1997 and the end of 2021 for those who served after 1985. If we include confirmed suicide deaths back to 1985, that number grows by 330 to 2,007.

If we look further back to tragic deaths that were not confirmed as suicide but include deaths of ex-serving members by drug and alcohol poisoning, both accidental and undetermined intent, as well as chronic liver diseases, that number rises by another 825.

To that, we must also consider the additional 623 ex-serving veterans who died during the same period due to road crashes, some of which may well have been unconfirmed suicides.

These numbers represent a staggering loss of life of some of Australia's finest and require us to confront this national tragedy head-on.

The Royal Commission has worked tirelessly looking for systemic factors where change can be leveraged across the broad veteran support ecosystem to stem the tide of these deaths. When we speak of the veteran support ecosystem, this encompasses governments, Defence, the ADF, DVA, other relevant federal, state and territory departments, oversight bodies, ex-service organisations and other veteran support organisations and the communities more broadly.

Our inquiry has been a complex undertaking in a complex environment, dealing with a complex issue. In that time, we've conducted 11 public hearings and heard from 308 witnesses, with some 40 witnesses scheduled for this hearing block.

We've received 5,889 submissions, all of which have been studied and read multiple times and

coded for the key themes that they reveal.

We've conducted 746 one-on-one private sessions with people with lived experience, with up to 200 more still to be completed before June this year. These have been completed with the assistance of our recently appointed Assistant Commissioners, Mr Bob Atkinson, former Queensland Police Commissioner and a former Commissioner on the Child Abuse Royal Commission, and eminent health practitioner, Dr Susan Young.

We've issued more than 450 compulsory notices and received more than a quarter of a million documents in response.

We've undertaken 26 visits to Defence bases across Australia to hear directly from current service personnel about the challenges and opportunities of life in our Navy, Army and Air Force.

We've reviewed academic literature. We've conducted a range of qualitative and quantitative analyses of data and information made available to us.

We've commissioned external research from esteemed academics and we've engaged broadly with stakeholders in Australia and overseas, including speaking with approximately 300 key informants in our "Five-Eyes" partner countries.

But, most importantly, our lines of inquiry have been informed by the voice of lived experience and we want to acknowledge the courage of all those who have come forward and shared their story with us in submissions, private sessions and public hearings.

It's been their deeply personal and often harrowing experiences that have shone a bright light on the cultural and systemic issues that are failing serving and ex-serving ADF personnel and which are contributing to the national crisis of Defence and veteran suicide.

For many, it's taken extraordinary resilience and strength to relive these experiences and, while heartbreaking, it's been essential for us to hear their stories, which have greatly influenced and shaped our thinking.

Many of the people who came forward told us of their immense pride of serving for their country, but also expressed a strong sense of disappointment and betrayal at being let down by the organisational responses to the issues they've raised.

Some are angry or bitter. Many are sad. Others are shattered, but almost all want to help make it better. They want the Defence Force to succeed. They do not want others to have the same experiences that they have had.

They want DVA to provide the support needed for veterans to live meaningful lives and participate in their communities to the fullest extent possible and, fundamentally, they want dignity and respect, to be

(Continued on page 7)

Opening address transcript Commissioner NICK KALDAS AP

(Continued from page 6)

heard, to be treated fairly and with compassion.

This is absolutely what this Royal Commission wants as well.

In September last year, I spoke at the National Press Club in Canberra about the tragedy of veteran suicide. My speech outlined how successive governments, government departments and the ADF have failed those who serve our nation in uniform.

We urge government and Defence leadership to see this Royal Commission as an opportunity, not a threat, to drive the long overdue change that is needed to ensure a sustainable, strong and better ADF which provides a psychologically safe workplace for its people.

My fellow Commissioners and I were heartened by the response from stakeholders and the public with whom our message resonated.

Perhaps there were many who had been touched by one of the more than 3,000 deaths since 1985 that should have been preventable, if only the lessons to be learnt over the decades had been heeded and the necessary diligence applied to ensure that the desired outcomes were achieved.

Perhaps it was their own experience in service or of post-service life or those of their loved one where the chord was struck. Such memories do not fade easily, but make no mistake: this Royal Commission is responding to a national crisis that has been decades in the making, a crisis that has not yet been stemmed.

Rarely a week goes by that we are not alerted to the untimely death of another serving or ex-serving member, which serves to remind us of the seriousness of the issue.

We note that the Defence Force is currently faced with multiple complex challenges, including the recruitment retention crisis and geopolitical tensions.

We have consistently sought not to undermine Australia's Defence capability, nor have we sought to tarnish Australia's proud military history. We are not the cause of the ADF troubles, but our data analysis has confirmed that their greatest enemy lies within the ADF itself and its resistance to change.

It's apparent from the evidence we've uncovered that there are deep-rooted cultural and systemic challenges within the ADF and DVA and across the broader veteran ecosystem which have had dire consequences. They need to be urgently addressed.

Considering there's been at least 57 previous reviews and inquiries that have not succeeded in delivering impactful or sustained change, what is required for leaders across the veteran ecosystem is to accept the failures we have uncovered and to act now to address the issues affecting the health and Wellbeing of veterans and their families. There is no

time to waste.

No longer can these systemic issues be denied, dismissed, diminished or deflected by those in the halls of power and positions of leadership. The lack of ownership of these issues, the lack of curiosity about contributing issues and their willingness to accept glossy versions of history over stark facts cannot continue.

No more can the siloed, fragmented and incremental approach to veteran support with tolerated. There must be collaboration, cooperation, governance and accountability for all parties.

While government and the ADF frequently say people are their most important asset, it is very arguable that there has been inadequate accountability and, frankly, curiosity on the part of Defence leadership in relation to issues of suicide and suicidality among members.

I reiterate that this inquiry should be viewed by governments and all agencies as an opportunity for positive change.

Notwithstanding the recommendations we will make in our final report, which are due to the Governor-General on 9 September, we know that sustainable change will take time and without continued scrutiny and robust independent oversight, may never be achieved.

That is why we believe there should be an entity to follow this Royal Commission with sufficient powers to independently monitor the implementation of our recommendations and to ensure the issue of Defence and veteran suicide remains a key priority and focus for governments and agencies within the veteran ecosystem into the future.

Bipartisan commitment will be required to ensure the longevity of the reforms we will recommend. There should be no politicalisation of these issues and the parliament must maintain a stronger focus on these issues to ensure government and its agencies are delivering on their commitments.

We look forward to hearing from the Minister For Defence. The Honourable Richard Marles, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, the Honourable Matthew Keogh MP, who will appear before us for the first time during these hearings.

We also look forward to hearing again from Senator Jacqui Lambie regarding the role of parliament in driving sustained change.

We will hear from two State and one Territory Veterans Affairs Ministers to further inform our understanding of the Commonwealth-State divide when it comes to supporting veterans and their families.

We will hear from the Chief of Defence, the Vice Chief of the ADF and the tri-service chiefs, as well as a number of other senior military leaders, about what they are doing to address our concerns in the areas of culture, leadership, governance and ac-

(Continued on page 8)

Opening address transcript Commissioner NICK KALDAS AP

(Continued from page 7)

countability and plans for future action.

DVA and its approach to veterans' entitlements will again be a key focus over the next few weeks.

At our Adelaide hearing, we heard from the Secretary of DVA, Alison Frame, who apologised unreservedly for past practices of the department that have caused hurt and distress to the veteran community.

We acknowledge that DVA have made significant progress to eliminate the backlog of compensation claims, based on the recommendations in our interim report, and we congratulate them on beginning on their journey to improve.

However, the problems inside DVA are not restricted to the claims backlog. We have uncovered a range of cultural, systemic and structural issues that need to be urgently addressed. Work on some of these issues has already commenced and is continuing, but more needs to be done.

Of course, we will again hear from people with lived experience during the course of the hearings.

As we have said many times, this Royal Commission must be a line in the sand. Serving and ex-serving ADF members have done all their nation has asked of them. They have donned the uniform, trained hard, worked hard, prepared constantly, often leaving their loved ones for long periods of time and, when asked, they have gone where angels fear to tread.

Our nation owes them a debt of gratitude and we must ensure that all the issues causing them preventable harm are addressed.

We have heard the rhetoric about human capability and about people being the ADF's greatest asset.

Our recommendations to government will be designed to make this rhetoric a lived reality for all members and their families.

We again urge the Prime Minister, relevant ministers and the leadership of Defence and DVA to see this Royal Commission as an opportunity to drive the long overdue change that is required to ensure serving and ex-serving ADF members and their families have the support they need and deserve.

It's important to recognise that there will be no quick fix to these issues and real, long-lasting and meaningful reforms will take time and a concerted effort from both sides of politics and all concerned and it's imperative these issues are not politicised.

The public and the media also have a role to play. There is scope for more involvement and greater awareness and interest from all Australians in the plight of our military personnel and veterans.

We, as a nation, owe those who pull on the uniform of our Navy, Army and Air Force an enormous debt of gratitude for the unique sacrifices

they make in going to work each day to protect us.

It is not enough to reflect on the sacrifice of our veterans only on days of commemoration and remembrance.

Finally, a warning that some people may find the evidence presented at this hearing distressing, so I remind everyone who is present that we do have counsellors available, should you need them.

For those watching our live stream, please get in touch with our counselling and inquiry support team if you require any assistance. The phone number is on our website.

Extract from opening address by Counsel Assisting Ms Erin Longbottom KC

As you identified, Commissioner Kaldas, this is the final hearing block of this Royal Commission. As Commissioner Brown acknowledged at the opening hearing, suicide is a complex phenomenon. It is rarely caused by a single issue and yet every Defence and veteran death by suicide is a tragedy, a cause for immense sadness.

The truth of this has pervaded the work of this Royal Commission over the past two and a half years. The Terms of Reference require you to examine systemic issues and common themes amongst Defence and veteran deaths by suicide and to endeavour to identify where the contributing risk factors may lie. As you know, those risk factors are multifaceted and can come from different parts of life, but as you have heard during the course of evidence across the past 11 hearing blocks, there are particular risks associated with service in Defence to which members are exposed and which cannot be ignored.

Later this week, you will hear evidence from (retired) Major General Jeff Sengelman. He aptly observes that service in the Australian Defence Force;

...is based on two covenants. One is with society and it is based on a commitment to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service, including the sacrifice of service families. The second covenant is between soldiers and their leaders. It is, Major General Sengelman says, an unwritten bond, and a commitment of accountability and responsibility to each other, the mission, and a pledge to care for the fallen, the wounded and their families.

That second covenant -- the commitment of accountability and responsibility between soldiers and their leaders, both military and civilian -- will be a focal point of the evidence across the next four weeks. We will call witnesses from amongst the

(Continued on page 9)

All-female Command Navigation Team takes HMAS Hobart to sea

Recently, HMAS *Hobart* proceeded from Sydney to Eden—although the nature of the evolution was not entirely routine—casting off with the first all-female Command Navigation Team (Bridge Special Sea Dutymen) comprised of the Commanding Officer, Commander Tina Brown; Navigation Officer, Lieutenant Tori Costello; Special Sea Dutymen Officer of the Watch, Sub-Lieutenant Cameron Moncrieff; and Quartermaster, Able Seaman Boatswain's Mate, Kendall Byrnes (seems that we do not have Coxswains anymore).

It wasn't until the ship was well underway, that it dawned on the crew that all key bridge and navigation roles were being performed by women.

Commander Tina Brown said it was a subtle, but profound revelation: "The Navy has made so much progress for women in leadership roles that these sorts of activities have become common place," she said.

"It made it all the more special that, in the first instance, we failed to recognise that we were all female, and then we did it twice again, departing Eden and returning to Fleet Base East."

Lieutenant Costello said she felt proud to be a part of a generation of women leading by example. "I believe it's important to showcase those who have reached a certain level in their field," she said.

"Being part of one of the first all-female command navigation teams in a destroyer is not only a demonstration that we're making progress, but we're breaking down long-standing barriers and opening the doors to many more opportunities."

Hobart arrived in Hobart on 8 March 2024 to exercise its Freedom of entry to the city. The CO, NO (right) and SSD OOW dressed up for the occasion.



Able Seaman Kendall Byrnes, left, Commander Tina Brown, Lieutenant Tori Costello and Sub-Lieutenant Cameron Moncrieff on board HMAS Hobart.

Photo; Defence

Photo Chronicle



Opening address transcript Commissioner NICK KALDAS AP

(Continued from page 8)

upper echelons of the Australian Defence Force, as well as the Department of Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the government. We will explore with those witnesses the extent to which senior leadership owns the issue of suicide amongst serving and former members, have the tools they need and are committed to identifying and addressing systemic risk factors. That examination will be directed to assisting you, Commissioners, in making recommendations that can effect meaningful, coordinated and lasting change.

We do not, however, ignore the voices of the veterans and service families whose contributions have been critical to the work of this Royal Commission. In the upcoming weeks, you will hear evidence from veterans who have grappled with suicide and suicidality in the context of their service in the military and the all-important stories of the families whose loved ones have paid the ultimate price.

The perspective of these witnesses with lived experience has, and continues to be, invaluable in understanding the underlying causes of this complex problem and the magnitude of its impact. We acknowledge their pain and desire to contribute to change and are particularly grateful for their efforts to engage with this Royal Commission.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE

04.03.2024

86-8436-86.8442

HMAS Diamantina's visits to Hobart— Family Business

HMAS *Diamantina* was the first vessel of its kind to be the flagship of the Royal Hobart Regatta, now in its 186th year. It was a proud moment for the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Georgina Rae-Martin, (at right) and crew.

"It's been such an honour and a privilege to be the first minehunter coastal to come down to be flagship of the Royal Hobart Regatta," Lieutenant Commander Rae-Martin said.



Arriving in Hobart ahead of the three-day Regatta at Princes Wharf No. 1, more than 2000 people toured the ship and asked the crew questions ."

Breaking down barriers and creating a positive culture on board *Diamantina* has been the highlight for Lieutenant Commander Rae-Martin.

"Being the first female commanding officer of a mine warfare and clearance diving vessel not only shows that we can open doors, but break down barriers. When my little girls grow up, I get to show them that they can be anything they want to be," she said.

Defence News



Below: HMAS Diamantina's visit in 1978, —her last before becoming the main exhibit in the Queensland Maritime Museum Brisbane QLD in 1980



Above left: HMAS Diamantina's Executive Officer Lieutenant Daniel McMillan, and his family

Above: ABCD Luke Alderton, with his family

Photos: AB Lucinda Allanson

HMAS *Diamantina* berthed in Hobart yesterday and was immediately dubbed the baby and honeymoon ship.

The ship's chief petty officer, Charles MacKenzie, learned he was the proud father of a baby boy.

And ... AB David Nelson, of

Victoria was met by his fiancée, and they dashed off to get married.

Diamantina had been engaged in classification ac-

tivities with Anzus partners, New Zealand, and the United States, for the past three months in the Tasman Sea, Coral Sea, and the South Fiji basin.

● Lieut Peter Corney of North Hobart, shows his mother, Mrs K. Corney, how the radar works.

Hobart Mercury
9 June 1978

Replenishment at Sea (RAS)



8 November 2023

The RAN is undertaking a regional presence deployment in Southeast and Northeast Asia.

During the deployment, HMA Ships *Toowoomba*, *Stalwart* and *Brisbane* demonstrated the Royal Australian Navy's ability to execute sustained operations in the deployed environments through superior Replenishment at Sea capability. During this evolution, *Stalwart* completing her first dual Replenishment at Sea evolution providing HMA Ships *Toowoomba* and *Brisbane* with F76 fuel, and F44 fuel for the embarked MH-60R Helicopters. Concurrently, *Stalwart* launched her embarked MH-60R Helicopter, *Boomerang*, to conduct a Vertical Replenishment of stores and mission-essential equipment to *Toowoomba*.

Regional presence deployments demonstrate Australia's commitment to, and engagement with, the region. The deployments play a vital role in Australia's long-term security and prosperity by protecting Australia's interests, preserving a rules-based order, enhancing cooperation and relationships with regional partners and allies, and developing capability and interoperability.

Photo: LSIS Daniel Goodman

HM Australian Fleet comings



15 December 2023

Left: HMAS *Brisbane* returns to her home port of Fleet Base East, Sydney, New South Wales, following the completion of a successful deployment.

Below: ABBM Melita Tennant greets her partner on arrival of HMAS *Brisbane* berths alongside Fleet Base East in Sydney, following a successful regional presence deployment.

Sydney Photos: LSIS Matthew Lyall



13 December 2023

Above: Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, AO, RAN speaks with family members waiting on the wharf for the return of HMAS *Toowoomba* from a Regional Presence Deployment.

Right: HMAS *Stalwart* returns to Fleet Base West after concluding a Regional Presence Deployment.



A MH-60R Seahawk helicopter conducts a fly past as HMAS *Toowoomba* returns to Fleet Base West after conducting a Regional Presence Deployment.

WA Photos: CPOIS Yuri Ramsey

...and Goings

23 January 2024

The RAN is undertaking an Indo-Pacific Regional Presence Deployment throughout South, Southeast and Northeast Asia.

During the deployment, HMAS Warramunga will conduct training, exercises and other engagements with Australia's regional partners.

The Regional Presence Deployments demonstrate Australia's commitment to, and engagement with, the region. The deployments play a vital role in Australia's long-term security



and prosperity by protecting Australia's interests, preserving a rules-based order, enhancing cooperation and relationships with regional partners and allies, and developing capability and interoperability.

Above: HMAS Warramunga departs Fleet Base East for an Indo-Pacific Presence Deployment

Left: CO HMAS Warramunga, Commander Jennifer Graham RAN, is farewelled by her husband and children onboard HMAS Warramunga

Photos: ABIS Benjamin Ricketts

ANZAC Day—Canberra Australian War Memorial

Mr David Manolas
National President
Naval Association of Australia
2 Lakeview Drive
MURRUMBATEMAN ACT 2582

Dear Mr Manolas,

I write to you on behalf of the Council of the Australian War Memorial and the ACT Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL), to advise you of the services and ceremonies that will take place on Anzac Day 2024.

The Dawn Service will again be held in the Captain Reg Saunders Courtyard commencing at 5.30 am. The Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Vice Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, will deliver the Commemorative Address on this occasion.

This year, the RSL veterans' march will return to the Parade Ground and will

commence from Anzac Parade at 9.30 am. On conclusion of the march, Afghanistan veteran Mr Damien Thomlinson will deliver the Anzac Day Address.

Later that afternoon, the Anzac Day Last Post Ceremony will conclude the day's commemorations starting at 4.30 pm. The previous official wreath laying will no longer occur, however should you wish to attend and lay a wreath, please contact the Last Post Ceremony team directly at lastpostceremony@awm.gov.au. A representative is not required should you be unable to attend.

For further information regarding Anzac Day, please contact the Events and Ceremonies team via ceremony@awm.gov.au or on 02 6206 9813.

Yours sincerely,


Matt Anderson

20th Anniversary of the opening of the Australian Ex-Prisoner of War Memorial—Ballarat



His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley, attend the Australian Ex-Prisoner Of War Memorial 20th anniversary event at Ballarat, Victoria. This February marks a significant milestone as the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat commemorates 20 years since its grand opening in February 2004.

This memorial was the first dedicated tribute in Australia to the brave ex-prisoners of war and was the culmination of more than eight years of planning. The idea for the memorial was sparked during a Remembrance Day ceremony in 1996, where remarks were made about the need for a more fitting tribute to Australian prisoners of war and their families.

The memorial stands as a testament to the pain and suffering endured by all prisoners of war, honouring the thousands of mates left behind and recognizing the sacrifices made by families during wartime. It displays 36,400 names of Australian ex-POWs on a 130-meter-long granite wall, serving as a powerful reminder of their courage and resilience.



Above: His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia (right) and Councillor Des Hudson OAM, Mayor of the City of Ballarat, walk past the 36,400 names etched into the Australian Ex-Prisoner of War Memorial in Ballarat, Victoria.

Below: Commanding Officer HMAS Ballarat, Commander Benjamin Dalton, CSC RAN (left) and Able Seaman Medic Adam Falvey lay a wreath during the Australian Ex-Prisoner Of War Memorial 20th anniversary event

Photos: CPOIS Andrew Dakin

Australian Defence Force Academy—2023 Graduation



The Australian Defence Force's newest officers graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) on the 14th December 2023.

More than 800 ADFA Trainee Officers were on Parade to celebrate the graduation of 274 Midshipmen and Officer Cadets, which marks the culmination of their three years at the Academy at the completion of their military training and academic studies.

The Parade was reviewed by His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Above: The Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus J. Campbell, AO, DSC, presents Midshipman Georgia Braggett, RAN with the Chief of the Defence Force Sword of Honour for Leadership.



Right: The Deputy Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley CSC, RAN (Representing the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO, RAN) presents Midshipman Edward Brownlee, RAN with the Chief of Navy prize

Photos: Thomas Lucraft

1 March 2024—The RAN celebrates its 123rd Birthday



Commander Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral Chris Smith AM, CSM, RAN, hosted a morning tea to celebrate the Royal Australian Navy turning 123 at HMAS Watson. The event provided an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of naval history and personify strength and resilience in our people

(L-R) Seaman Maritime Logistics Chef Gracie McNaughton, Rear Admiral Chris Smith and Seaman Combat Systems Operator Connor Davis cut the Royal Australian Navy birthday cake in the wardroom at HMAS Watson

Photo: PAIS Tara Morrison

DVA CONTACTS

Provider enquiry numbers

- Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: [1300 550 017](tel:1300550017)
- Provider enquiries: [1800 550 457](tel:1800550457)
- Transport bookings: [1800 550 455](tel:1800550455)
- [Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre \(VAPAC\)](#): [1800 552 580](tel:1800552580)

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](tel:1800555677) then ask for 1800 838 372
- Speak and Listen users phone [1800 555 727](tel:1800555727) then ask for 1800 838 372
- Internet relay users connect to the [NRS](#) then ask for 1800 838 372

Claim Processing

Where things are at

In the month of January 2024 we:

- made 7,374 decisions on claims
- received claims from 5,335 veterans

As at 31 January 2024 we:

- were working on 72,276 claims
- had 3,697 active claims not yet allocated to an officer for processing (known as the claims backlog), lodged by 1,991 veterans

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(1800838372))

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)

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.

OPEN
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Counselling
ARMS
1800 011 046



**SAFE ZONE
SUPPORT**

FREE ANONYMOUS
COUNSELLING LINE
CALL 1800 142 072

**Defence
Family
Helpline**



1800 624 608

**Defence
All-hours
Support Line**



1800 628 036