



**RETURNED and SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA**  
**EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH**  
**ROUTINE ORDERS**



**Vol 28 No 3**

**June-July 2025**

**President:** Brian Swan AM  
45-47 Rawson Street, Epping 2121

**Treasurer:** Les Rowe  
subbranch@eppingsubbranch.com

**Secretary:** John Prestidge RFD ED  
Telephone 02 9868 3272

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**



April has been a busy month with ANZAC commemorations and the Federal Election.

The commemoration of Anzac is so important. We remember those who have fought and died for what we have, those who were wounded or have physical or mental injuries, and those who are presently serving.

Our ANZAC Sunday was well attended and Brigadier Hassell the Commanding Officer of the 8th Brigade gave a very moving speech. The attendance of 322 City of Ryde Australian Air Force Cadets swelled our numbers and the presence of the Golden Kangaroos, as always, was wonderful. The presence of the mounted police, arranged by Molly Mercer and Les Rowe, was an absolute highlight of the parade.

Irene Rowe was busy as ever taking photos of the march and the wreath laying. She was also busy at the Dawn service.

Just how many people attended the Dawn service is not known. The park was full, and I have heard estimates for about 2,000. It was a pleasure to see so many young people attending. Among the many people laying wreaths were school children, Scouts and many others. Captain Cobb-Clark gave an interesting and pertinent speech which was well received. Captain Cobb-Clark is the legal officer of the 8th Brigade.

Our next commemorative service will be on Friday 15th August for Victory in the Pacific Day. Details have yet to be confirmed.

I must thank our Committee for their support and advice for the Anzac arrangements. City of Parramatta events team gave us good support, as always, we have learned from our mistakes.

I also want to thank those Committee members who gave Anzac presentations at schools and nursing homes.

Brian Swan AM,

Epping RSL sub-Branch President

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**Epping RSL Life Members and Mid-Year Lunch**

**Sunday 15 June 2025 at 1200h**

**Tickets available at May General Meeting on Monday 26 May or at sub-Branch Office on Wednesday 28 May or Saturday 31 May.**

**Cost: \$30 adult**

**\$15 children**

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### VALE

### “WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”

During the months of April - May 2025, advice has been received of the passing of the following Service Member:

NAME	RANK	SERVICE	UNIT	SERVICE NUMBER	DATE JOINED	DATE DECEASED
<b>MARTIN</b> Peter	Radio Officer	British Merchant Navy		R293852	1971	23/04/2025

### WELLBEING SUPPORT OFFICER

Andrew (Andy) Brayshaw

Mobile: 0435 879 258

Email: brayshaw\_andy@hotmail.comGo co

Visit Andy in the sub-Branch office on Monday mornings between 9 a.m. and noon.

WSOs can offer:

referrals for training and employment pathways, housing providers, counselling and health services, and claims and compensation advocacy

support to claims Advocates,

visits to veterans at home, and in hospital and aged-care facilities

support services, such as driving and shopping trips

support at funerals

assistance organising domestic assistance or home maintenance services

assistance with administrative duties in a volunteer capacity

support organising and conducting social, family and Sport & Recreation Program activities

non-clinical and non-advocacy support to a veteran's family during time of grief, loss, and bereavement

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### FAMILIES OF VETERANS GUILD - WAR WIDOWS

Coordinator: Heather Gillam 9876 3588

Treasurer: Heather Gillam

Meetings: First Monday in month at 10.30 a.m.

Monday 2 June 2025

Monday 7 July 2025

Monday 4 August 2025

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**ROUTINE ORDERS** is issued 5 times per year, in January, April, June, August and October.

Contributions for inclusion in ROUTINE ORDERS, such as forward activities, interesting personal notes etc. are always welcome. Items for the next issue on Monday 28 July 2025 are required before Wednesday 16 July 2025.

Earlier would be appreciated. Electronic copy preferred if possible. *Routine Orders* editor Barry Hoschke bhoschke@tpg.com.au.

## **EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY JUNE 2025 – AUGUST 2025**

#### **JUNE 2025**

Monday 2	Families of Veterans Guild of NSW -War Widows	1030
Monday 2	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	1800
<b>Monday 9</b>	<b>KING'S BIRTHDAY</b>	
Sunday 15	Epping RSL Life Members and Mid-Year Lunch	1200
Wednesday18	Stand Easy	1300
Monday 30	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930

#### **JULY 2025**

Monday 7	Families of Veterans Guild of NSW -War Widows	1030
Monday 14	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	1800
Wednesday16	Stand Easy	1300
Monday 28	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930

#### **AUGUST 2025**

Monday 4	Families of Veterans Guild of NSW -War Widows	1030
Monday 11	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	1800
Friday 15	VP Day commemoration Boronia Park Cenotaph	1030
Wednesday20	Stand Easy	1300
Monday 25	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930

## **‘She smoked, she swore, she sat with her legs apart’: Dr Lilian Cooper, Australia’s battlefield surgeon**

Dr Lilian Cooper and Dr Agnes Bennett were indomitable medical pioneers and now a musical’s being staged about them.



Dr Lilian Cooper.

Meet Queensland’s first ‘lady’ doctor — a swearing, smoking, straight-talking revhead who later became a skilled battlefield surgeon operating on the front line.

Dr Lilian Cooper arrived from the UK in 1891, along with her lifelong partner Josephine Bedford after the women of Brisbane had written to the London School of Medicine for Women requesting a ‘lady doctor’.

The story of what happened next has now been brought to life in a musical, [A Girl’s Guide to World War](#).

“I don’t think Dr Cooper was quite what the women of Brisbane expected,” the musical’s co-writer Katy Forde says.

“She smoked and she swore, she sat with her legs apart, she was tall and imposing. She really did not care what anyone thought.”

Apparently her skills — she qualified as a doctor at the [Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) — soon won them over.

But this was also a time when cars were as novel as ChatGPT.

So perhaps it was no surprise given her character that Dr Cooper also became known as one of Brisbane’s first female motorists, clocking up fines for speeding, including one for racing down Queen Street at 17mph — nearly three times the legal limit of 6mph.

Dr Cooper’s story may have remained as inconspicuous as a small plaque honouring her on a heritage-listed building in Brisbane but for a serendipitous stroll back in 2015.

Ms Forde said she was walking with her life and writing partner, Aleathea Monsour, down Brisbane’s George Street.

“We walked past this beautiful old building called The Mansions and we noticed a little plaque that said, ‘Dr Lilian Cooper Queensland’s first female doctor lived here in 1893,’” Ms Forde said.

“And we were curious about her so we went home and started researching her, and we just couldn’t stop ... In fact, we are still going.”

At first Ms Forde thought the musical would be about the couple’s time in Brisbane, and how they became mini celebrities and loved for all their good works.

“Then we discovered they had gone to the front line in the war, and that Dr Cooper was head of surgery there. It was that discovery that led us to Dr Agnes Bennett.”

Who was Dr Bennett?

Dr Bennett was a Sydney-born doctor who had been unable to sustain a practice in Australia owing to “prejudice against female doctors” so she had gone to New Zealand to work as a GP.

When World War I broke out, Dr Bennett ended up as chief medical officer of a suffragette-funded hospital staffed by women near the Serbian border at Lake Ostrovo.

With the outbreak of war, the suffragettes suspended their campaign for the vote, instead pouring their resources into the war effort.

One of the outcomes of this was the founding in 1914 of the Scottish Women’s Hospitals for Foreign Service (SWH) which was supported financially by suffrage societies and the American Red Cross.

The SWH set up 14 medical units across Europe to treat wounded soldiers, providing only women doctors, ambulance drivers, nurses, cooks and orderlies to staff them.

Dr Cooper, now 55, joined the all-women’s hospital at Lake Ostrovo as chief surgeon in September 1916 along with Miss Bedford who was in charge of ambulances.

For the next year, Dr Cooper worked alongside Dr Bennett — stabilising casualties, amputating limbs and performing abdominal surgery which

mainly involved removing bullets and shrapnel.

“We took about 24 cases, all terribly bad wounds — abdominal, chest, head and compound fractures — it was terrible to see the poor fellows up at the dressing station,” according to Dr Bennett’s diary dated 20 September 1916.

Another entry five days later reads: “We can only just keep going but we can’t refuse these poor mangled things ... we try to save them but there have been 10 amputations in two days and others to come.”

Dr Cooper and Dr Bennett also pioneered a mobile field hospital to reduce the time from injury to treatment, working just kilometres from the front line.

Later, Dr Cooper, who was not much of a diarist, was reported to have said during a talk to raise funds for the Red Cross in 1918: “It was jolly unpleasant. When a Boche plane came and dropped bombs all around the hospital, some within 50 yards of the patients’ tents. Honestly, I was never so frightened in my life.”

All three women returned as decorated war heroes — Dr Cooper and Miss Bedford to Brisbane and Dr Bennett eventually to New Zealand.

Ms Forde’s research led her to believe Dr Cooper suffered PTSD following her experiences as a frontline surgeon.

“In the years after the war, Miss Bedford would march every year in the Anzac Day parade, but Dr Cooper would never march.”

Dr Cooper continued to practise medicine until she retired in 1941, dying six years later, aged 86.

Miss Bedford donated land in honour of Dr Cooper to the Sisters of Charity for a hospital to care for the terminally ill which is now St Vincents’ Private Hospital. Miss Bedford died eight years after Dr Cooper, aged 94.

“We found out by accident about Dr Cooper. We’d never heard of her. I don’t think a lot of people had heard of her at the time,” Ms Forde said.

“But we’re really proud of the fact that her name is becoming better known, especially in Brisbane. To me all these women deserve to be household names.”

Contributed by Robin Cummins

## **An Australian Army Recruit sends home a letter...**

Dear Ma & Pa,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin’ on the farm - tell them to get in quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don’t hafta get outta bed until 6 am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all ya gotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack - nothin’!! Ya haz gotta shower though, but its not so bad, coz there’s lotsa hot water and even a light to see what ya doing!

At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there’s no kangaroo steaks or possum stew like wot Mum makes. You don’t get fed again until noon and by that time all the city boys are dead because we’ve been on a ‘route march’ - geez its only just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock!!

This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting medals for shootin’ - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a possum’s bum and it don’t move and it’s not firing back at ya like the Johnsons did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year! All ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target! You don’t even load your own cartridges, they comes in lil’ boxes, and ya don’t have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

Sometimes ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it’s not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza all at once like we do at home after the muster.

Turns out I’m not a bad boxer either and it looks like I’m the best the platoon’s got, and I’ve only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers - he’s 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and three pick handles across the shoulders and as ya know I’m only 5 foot 7 and eight stone wringin’ wet, but I fought him till the other blokes carried me off to the boozier.

I can’t complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how good it is.

Your loving daughter,

Patricia



# ANZAC Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025



Photos : Irene Rowe

Arr. John Curdie



Anzac Dawn Service  
Forest Park Epping  
Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025

PHOTOS : Irene Rowe  
ARR. John Curdie

**PHOTOS : Irene Rowe**

**ARR. John Curdie**



## **Eastwood Public School ANZAC Service Friday 11 April 2025**

Good morning boys and girls, members of staff and parents, my name is MAJ Andrew Brayshaw, RAAMC (Retd). I have been asked to come and talk to you a little about my military career and what ANZAC Day means to me.

I served 43 years in the military, 24 with the British Army and 19 with the Australian Army. I joined the British army at the age of 16 straight from school. I had always wanted to be a soldier ever since I was a young boy about your age. During school break times, what you call recess here, I used to play soldiers with my friends. Back then we didn't have mobile phones, iPads, Game boys or anything like that to entertain us. We had to make our own entertainment. Playing soldiers was very popular amongst young boys.

In the British Army I trained as a Combat Medic and my main role was to treat other soldiers that were wounded in Battle. During my 24 years in the British Army, I travelled and served all over the world in countries like Germany, Hong Kong, the UK, Africa, the Middle East, and the Falkland Islands. Unfortunately, I also had to go to war including the Falklands War, First Gulf War, Bosnia and Croatia.

When I joined the British Army, I had never heard the word ANZAC or even ANZAC Day as it wasn't a day that was commemorated in the UK. Our main day for remembering soldiers killed and wounded in war was Remembrance Day. It wasn't until I moved to Australia and joined the Australian Army that I learnt about the ANZACs and ANZAC Day.

Today, along with other school children in Australia we gather to remember those who have served to defend Australia. We do this because 110 years ago, the ANZAC spirit was born on the shores of Gallipoli in Turkey on the 25 April 1915 - it is a moment in our history that shaped our nation.

This was the first major military campaign for soldiers from both Australia and New Zealand. Since then, the 25th of April has been known as Anzac Day. 'ANZAC' comes from the name Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. It was shortened to ANZAC in 1915. Since then, when

Australians and New Zealanders have served together, they have been called ANZACs.

At Gallipoli, Australians and New Zealanders served with soldiers from other nations, including England, France, and India. The Australians at Gallipoli came from all sorts of backgrounds, but they shared the terrible experience of war. Ever since then, for more than a hundred years, the men and women in our navy, army and air force have honoured the memory of our original ANZACs.

On the 25th of April every year we now commemorate the lives of those who died in the Second World War, in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and in peacekeeping operations around the world. We remember the sacrifices they made, the challenges they faced, and the bravery they showed. We thank them for their service, and we honour their memory.

On Anzac Day, there are many ways to honour people who have served, and those who continue to serve, in Australia's armed forces. We can gather like this and hold a school ANZAC Service, attend a Dawn Service in your local area on ANZAC Day or participate in an ANZAC Day march which are held in most towns and cities in Australia and New Zealand.

Ever since joining the Australian Army every year on the 25th of April I attend one of the many Dawn Services then travel into the city to march along other veterans who have not only served in the Australian military but who have also served in war. I do this not only to remember those men and women from Australia and New Zealand who paid the ultimate sacrifice but also those friends of mine that have lost their lives in battle. You can also wear a sprig of rosemary as a symbol of remembrance.

Today there are none of those original ANZACs left so it is up to you the younger generations of this great nation to go forth and march on ANZAC Day or attend a Dawn Service to remember them and keep their spirit alive.

Towards the end of today's ceremony, the Last Post will be played on a bugle. This historical music was played in army camps to announce the end of the day, a time when soldiers should be resting. The Last Post is played today for those



who have made the ultimate sacrifice. It means that they have done their duty and are now at rest. After the Last Post, there will be one minute of silence. This is a time to think about those who have served in Australia's armed forces, those who continue to serve, and about those who have lost their lives.

For me ANZAC Day is very personal and special, I come to remember many of my military friends, who answered the call of duty and who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

LEST WE FORGET

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## **Honouring Australians who served in the Battle of the Atlantic**

DVA News, 1 May 2025

"The Battle of the Atlantic was the dominating factor all through the war ... Never for one moment could we forget that everything happening elsewhere on land, at sea, or in the air, depended ultimately on its outcome."

-Winston Churchill, on the Battle of the Atlantic

Running from September 1939 to May 1945, the Battle of the Atlantic was the longest continuous military campaign of the Second World War – and Australian service personnel and merchant seamen played took part in this critical battle.

This 6-year struggle was pivotal in ensuring vital supply lines between North America, and Europe remained open, enabling the transportation of troops, equipment and essential goods to Great Britain and from there to North Africa and to Russia.

The Royal Australian Navy's light cruiser HMAS Perth took part at the start of the war, and later the heavy cruiser HMAS Australia (II) escorted convoys. The N-Class destroyers HMAS Norman, Napier, Nepal, Nestor and Nizam and Q-Class destroyers HMAS Quickmatch and Quiberon each also took part, escorting convoys and hunting submarines in the North and South Atlantic. The RAN also sent more than 1,100 officers and sailors to serve in Royal Navy

warships, including anti-submarine warfare specialists trained at Rushcutter naval base, Sydney.

The Royal Australian Air Force's No. 10 Squadron served with RAF Coastal Command right through the war, operating Sunderland flying boats on long and hazardous anti-submarine patrols. No. 461 Squadron also operated Sunderlands and No. 455 Squadron flew Hampden bombers and Beaufighter strike-fighters. Later, No. 458 Squadron flew Wellington bombers out of Gibraltar. Many Australians also flew in RAF squadrons, flying from bases spread across Britain, West Africa, Gibraltar, Iceland, Greenland, the Azores, and other Atlantic islands.

Many Australians, including merchant seamen and RAN gunners posted to defensively armed merchant ships, served on Allied merchant ships carrying supplies and troops from Australia to Britain, between North America and Britain, and to Russia and the Mediterranean.

The relentless battle saw the loss of at least 3,500 Allied merchant ships, 175 warships, and more than 2,000 aircraft. Tragically, more than 80,000 Allied merchant seaman, naval personnel, and airmen lost their lives.

These included hundreds of Australians, among them Ordinary Seamen David Hall, George Hall, John Shannon and Ian Startup, who were among the 1,418 crew who perished when the Royal Navy battlecruiser HMS Hood was sunk by the German battleship Bismarck in the Denmark Strait on 24 May 1941.

The Battle of the Atlantic is commemorated annually on 1 May, providing an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made and the crucial role played by Australian service personnel and merchant seamen in securing the Allied victory.

Lest we forget.

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My poor knowledge of Greek mythology has always been my Achilles' elbow.

I struggle with Roman numerals until I get to 159, then it just CLIX.

A penny for some people's thoughts is still a fair price.

## **Cadet ‘drone’ school takes off**

**AIRFORCE April 17, 2025**

**FSGT (AAFC) Michael Thomas**

Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) now have the opportunity to receive Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) accredited training as part of the newly launched Remotely Piloted Aircraft Training School (RPATS).

The school was officially opened by ACAUST AVM Glen Braz at the 2025 Australian International Air Show.

RPATS will enable cadets from around the country to experience a fully in-house training program that will take them from assembling and flying small remotely piloted aircraft, to flight programming, advanced flying and obtaining their CASA remote pilot licence.

At the launch, Chair of the CASA Board and former Air Training Corps Cadet ACM (retd) Mark Binskin presented the CASA remotely piloted aircraft operator’s certificate (ReOC) for training and operations to CO RPATS SQNLDR (AAFC) Matthew Fletcher.

“After multiple successful trial training activities building towards the award of the ReOC, we understand what works and we are ready to roll out this program nationwide to every AAFC Wing with a scalable, flexible and distributed model,” SQNLDR (AAFC) Fletcher said.

“This is a new era in RPA and aviation technology for the AAFC, and we are in a great position to deliver contemporary training that is directly applicable.”

RPATS will be run by qualified AAFC volunteer staff, similar to the elementary flying training and glider training schools.

Director General Cadets Air Force AIRCDRE Craig Heap said this new program is a significant moment in the Australian Air Force Cadet organisation’s history.

“This new school will provide opportunities for our ADF cadets to acquire contemporary

aviation skills that will benefit the cadets now and Australia in the future,” AIRCDRE Heap said.

“Air Force is committed to supporting our cadet program and this new school is part of the ongoing modernisation of the AAFC as we continue to inspire and develop Australia’s future leaders.”

Starting this month, training courses will run progressively throughout Australia as the school’s capability is expanded, with the program also offering opportunities to Army and Navy cadets in the future.

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## **Stand Easy**

The Epping RSL sub-Branch stands as an example of support, camaraderie, and connection for those who have served, their families, and the wider community. As we navigate the challenges of an ever-changing world, it is more crucial than ever that we maintain the bonds that have kept us strong and united. One of the most valuable ways to nurture these connections is through our regular Stand Easy meetings, held on the third Wednesday of the month at 1300hrs for two hours at the Epping Club.

It is in these informal, relaxed gatherings that the true spirit of the Epping RSL sub-Branch is brought to life. These Stand Easy meetings are about more than just meeting up for a chat; they are about creating a space where we can check in with each other, offer support, and be reminded that we are not alone.

As we look to the future, let’s remember that our sub-Branch is only as strong as the connections we build with one another. The Stand Easy meetings are a chance to strengthen those connections, to remind ourselves that we are not alone, and to reaffirm the support and friendship that defines us as a community. Let us commit to being there for one another, to attending these meetings with the intention of contributing to the collective wellbeing of our sub-Branch, and to carrying forward the legacy of camaraderie and support that has always been at the heart of the Epping RSL sub-Branch.



## **An ANZAC Poem by an Australian Nurse from the Great War**

On June the 12th, 1917, a large contingent of army nurses left Melbourne for overseas. They went to Salonika, in Greece, to staff British hospitals there. Christine Erica Strom was one of these nurses. She penned this poem called “50 Years Later.”

### **50 Years Later**

How long ago it seems!  
So young we were, with earnest questing eyes  
That probed the future for our destiny;  
With sense of purpose, and with plans and dreams  
Concerning many things.  
And then the challenge came: and so we went;  
And, looking back across the drift of years,  
One would not now have had it otherwise.  
So much is clouded now in memory,  
But contemplation brings  
Some aspect we can share.  
Adventures on the way; and all the joys  
Of fellowship; the team-work that was there;  
The tents; the wards; the boys;  
The busy nights and enervating days.  
Greece and its ways;  
Laughter and fun;  
Long conversations when the days were done.  
The night-staff gathered in that supper tent,  
Their lanterns waiting like so many dogs;  
The dixies, and the taste of mutton bird.  
The scraps of news we heard:  
Rumours and warnings.  
The awful misery of winter mornings.  
Mail days, and all that letters meant to us;  
Long thoughts of home, and matters to discuss;  
Depression and despair,  
And pillows damp with tears!

The summer heat, and nets above the beds;  
The locusts, the mosquitoes, and the frogs;  
The wasps that fought with us for marmalade;  
Mushroom, in autumn, thick upon the slopes.  
The harassed Head  
Whose rules we thought unjust –  
All those mistakes we made!  
The pale romances, and the shattered hopes;  
Real loss, and quiet grieving.  
Pay days, and cash to spend; days off and dust  
Upon that winding road  
Of tragic poverty.  
The guns that broke the silence of the nights,  
And (how one hears it still!)  
The Last Post sounding on that quiet hill.  
Winter again...  
The mud that followed rain.  
The smoke-filled wards; dark days; the driving snow;  
The Vardar wind that seemed for ever blowing,  
Those large and frozen bottles of quinine!  
Then peace, at last;  
And soon upon the scene  
All those reactions common when a strain,  
Long held, has passed.  
Then, gradually, the end:  
General upheaving;  
With friend's farewell to friend  
The patients leaving.  
The closing of the wards: sorting and stowing;  
How we had longed to go –  
And how we hated going!

*Christine Erica Strom, Great War Nurse.*

# VETERANS' LEGISLATION REFORM

<https://www.dva.gov.au/about/royal-commission/veterans-legislation-reform>

Last updated: 19 March 2025

## **Creating a simpler, easier to use system for the veteran community.**

The Government is committed to ensuring that Defence personnel, veterans and their families are well looked after.

As highlighted by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide in its Interim Report, and fully supported by the Government, we are simplifying and harmonising the legislation that governs compensation and rehabilitation. This is so veterans and families can more easily get the support they are entitled to.

## **On 13 February 2025, the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025 (VETS Act) was passed by Parliament.**

The VETS Act closes the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) and Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) to new claims from 1 July 2026. From this date, all compensation and rehabilitation claims will be determined under a single ongoing Act – the improved Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA).

### **Amendments to the MRCA**

- Single Act – all new claims for compensation and rehabilitation will be considered under an improved MRCA.
- Closing the VEA and the DRCA to new claims for compensation and rehabilitation. Payments being received under the VEA and DRCA prior to 1 July 2026 will be grandparented, which means they will continue uninterrupted.
- Various beneficial provisions which operate differently across the MRCA, DRCA and VEA will be standardised. This includes retaining war widow/er auto-grants, and posthumous grants of Permanent Impairment compensation.

### **Enhancements**

The Act will see the MRCA enhanced for various entitlements. Enhancements include:

- The introduction of a new Additional Disablement Amount (ADA), similar to the Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) available under the VEA. Like the EDA, the ADA would compensate veterans who are Age Pension age or older and who have a high degree of incapacity due to service-related conditions.
- The legislated ability for the Repatriation Commission to specify injuries and diseases that can be determined on a presumptive basis where they are known to have a common connection with military service.
- Expanding eligibility for Household Services and Attendant Care.
- Retention of automatic granting of VEA funeral benefits.
- An increase to \$3,000 for funeral allowance for previous automatic grant categories under the VEA, and the availability of reimbursement of funeral expenses up to \$14,062 for all service-related deaths.
- The availability to all veterans of the higher travel reimbursement amount, regardless of kilometres, when a private vehicle is used to travel for treatment.
- Standardisation of allowances and other payments, including: acute support packages, education schemes and additional compensation for children of severely impaired veterans.
- Enhancement of the Repatriation Commission's ability to grant special assistance to veterans and dependants.
- Where the Repatriation Medical Authority updates a Statements of Principles (SoP) between the veteran's primary and reviewable decision, the version of the SoP which is most beneficial will be applied.
- The definition of service injury is being amended to allow for an injury to be accepted on the basis that it occurred while the person was 'on duty' as a defence member (such as heart attacks and strokes), regardless of whether or not the injury was caused by the member's duties.