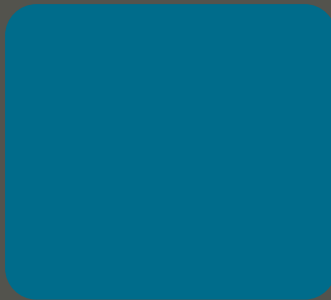
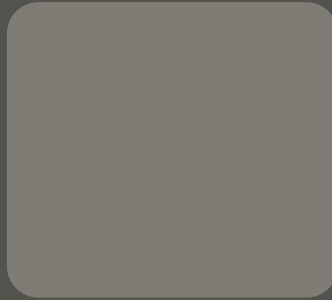


Respecting Victoria's Veterans



Premier's foreword

Veterans are important members of our community. Their service and sacrifice in defence of our democratic values deserves enduring recognition, support and respect.

The Victorian Government commemorates, honours and supports veterans in Victoria through a range of initiatives that promote understanding of their service both in war and peacekeeping operations.

That is why the Victorian Government is significantly strengthening its support of the veteran community and working to increase awareness and understanding of veterans' contributions and their legacy, especially among young people.

Working with the Victorian Veterans Council, and guided by feedback from the veteran community, the Government has identified four priority areas:

- Strengthening commemoration and education
- Promoting veterans' wellbeing
- Preserving veterans' heritage
- Supporting Ex-Service Organisations

The Victorian Veterans Unit in the Department of Planning and Community Development is responsible for delivery of these priorities and providing a central focus to responding to veteran community needs.

I look forward to working with you to meet the challenges veterans face in the years ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Brumby'.

The Hon John Brumby MP

Premier and Minister for Veterans' Affairs



Strengthening commemoration and education

Commemoration plays a vital role in bringing communities together to honour our service men and women and provides an important acknowledgement of their contribution. Education programs about the service of veterans are important in helping younger generations and the wider community understand the history and values associated with the contribution made by earlier generations.

Victorian Government initiatives include:

- Support for the *Shrine of Remembrance*, Victoria's largest war memorial and recognised as one of the finest war memorials in the world. Over \$2 million annually enables the Shrine to support commemorative programs and deliver its first class education program to both schools and the wider community.
- *Victorian Veterans Fund* grants administered by the Victorian Veterans Council to support commemorative projects and events, community education and direct educational assistance to veterans' dependents.
- The *Restoring Community War Memorials Grants* Program assists in restoring community war memorials and honour rolls. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to help repair, protect, restore and enhance war memorials and honour boards.
- The *Premier's Spirit of ANZAC Prize*, an annual schools competition for Year 9 and 10 students to explore what the spirit of ANZAC means to young people today. Each year 10 students are selected to participate in an overseas study tour to sites of significant campaigns involving Australian service men and women.
- Piloting a *Spirit of ANZAC Teachers Study Tour* which will send a group of secondary school teachers to Gallipoli and the Western Front. The aim is to build the knowledge and understanding of secondary school teachers involved in teaching Australia's war-time history.
- Planning for the Centenary of ANZAC activities in 2015 to ensure this significant milestone is commemorated appropriately.



Promoting the wellbeing of veterans

Improving veteran's access to quality health and aged care services, accommodation, transport and state concessions supports their wellbeing and helps them remain active and involved in the community.

Victorian Government initiatives include:

- *Upgrading the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital* – \$15.5 million has been provided for works at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, including \$14.5 million for the Centre for Trauma-Related Mental Health Services which is a redevelopment of the Veterans' Psychiatry Unit and will provide a 20-bed unit for inpatients and outpatients, treating veterans and others suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders and major mood disorders.
- Making \$2 million in funding available from the Victorian Property Fund to expand the supply of specialist housing to low-income or disadvantaged veterans and/or their dependants.
- The *ANZAC Day Proceeds Fund* grants administered by the Victorian Veterans Council which support the welfare activities of ex-service organisations.
- The \$80 million *Transport Connections Program* assists communities to improve community based transport such as school buses, community buses and volunteers. Thirty-two projects covering all rural, regional and metropolitan fringe municipalities are developing innovative approaches to making participation in community life easier for people with limited access to transport. Ex-service organisations will be encouraged to become active partners in the program where possible.
- The \$4 million *Men's Sheds* program provides assistance to establish Men's Sheds that support the health and well being of veterans and other members of the community through practical activities such as woodwork and by providing a place to socialise with other men.
- A range of targeted state concessions to Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card holders to assist them to remain independent and active in their communities. These concessions include exemptions for municipal rates, stamp duty, public transport, taxis, water and sewerage, winter and off peak energy bills, motor vehicle registration, disability parking and TAC insurance.

Preserving veterans' heritage

As the veteran population ages, particularly from World War II, it is important that Victorian communities preserve our veteran related heritage. From war memorials, community halls and avenues of honour to heritage trails, memorial gardens and personal memorabilia, we can preserve this important heritage by better identifying and preserving it and making it available for future generations.



Victorian Government initiatives include:

- Capturing the unique stories held by Victoria's veterans through the Digital Story Telling project, which records the experiences of many of those who served Australia in conflicts and peacekeeping operations, particularly those who served in World War II.
- Digitally recording the histories of military units raised in Victoria before 1948.
- Creating a state-wide register of veteran related heritage including war memorials, avenues of honour and honour boards.
- Undertaking research and heritage assessments for all veteran related monuments, buildings and botanic features not presently identified by heritage overlays.
- Establishing an online Victorian Veterans' Museum that includes these digital stories and unit histories, as well as access to the heritage register.
- Developing resources and guidelines for the community to protect and preserve significant veteran related heritage.

Support for ex-service organisations

Victoria's ex-services organisations (ESOs) are facing a number of key challenges including difficulty in engaging younger veterans and a declining membership and volunteer base. By providing access to effective advice and resources we can support ESOs in meeting these challenges.



Victorian Government initiatives include:

- The appointment of a Sector Development Adviser to support the Victorian Veterans Council to assist ESOs sustain and/or develop their operations.
- The development and distribution of a resource kit on issues such as managing succession and transition, available relevant services, grant opportunities to build capacity and advice on modernizing volunteering opportunities.
- Providing information sessions in partnership with Consumer Affairs Victoria to support Patriotic Funds Trustees meet their aims and obligations.
- The \$1.8 million Community Facilities program which is supporting 20 RSL regional sub branches to upgrade their facilities to remain in ongoing community use.

For all enquiries about State Government Concessions, please call the Victorian State Concessions Office on 1800 658 521.

For other enquiries, please call the Veterans Unit at the Department of Planning and Community Development on 03 9208 3333 or Information Victoria on 1300 366 356.

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format such as large print, please contact the Veterans Unit on 03 9208 3333 (TTY 1800 555 677) or email veterans@dpcd.vic.gov.au

This publication is also published in PDF and Word formats on www.veterans.vic.gov.au

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