

MEN'S HEALTH

PEER EDUCATION MAGAZINE

VOLUME 18 | NO 1 | 2019

THE FAMILY

The ties that strengthen us

Family time

A focus on families



CONTENTS

- 2-3 EDITORIAL
- 4 THE TIES THAT STRENGTHEN US
- 5 LEGACY SUPPORTING FAMILIES FOR THE LONG TERM
- 6 FAMILY AND END OF LIFE
- 7 KOOKABURRA KIDS
- 8 BUILDING YOUR OWN VILLAGE
- 9 FAMILY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT
- 10 FAMILIES REMAIN STRONG FOR THEIR MENTALLY UNWELL LOVED ONE
- 11 A FOCUS ON FAMILIES
- 12-13 FAMILY TIME
- 14 THE FAMILY THAT EXERCISES TOGETHER GROWS TOGETHER
- 15 OPEN ARMS FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES
- 16 A DEFENCE LIFE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
- 17 SUPPORTING LGBTI YOUNG PEOPLE
- 18-19 FAMILY NUTRITION
- 20 FROM MOTHERHOOD TO MILITARY
- 21 MY MILITARY FAMILY
- 22 DEFENCE COMMUNITY CENTRES CONNECTING COMMUNITY
- 23 MENTAL WELLNESS FOR VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK
- 24-25 SPIDER WEBS AND BOOKWORMS
- 26 CHANGING GEAR AS I BECOME OLDER
- 27 BE CONNECTED
- 28-29 HEALTH TECHNOLOGY
- 30-31 UNDERSTANDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILY STRUCTURES AND KINSHIP LAWS
- 32-33 LIVING INDEPENDENTLY WITH A LITTLE PRACTICAL HELP
- 33 CROSSWORD
- 34 5, 10 AND 15 YEARS RECOGNITION FOR MHPE VOLUNTEERS
- 35-43 MHPE NATIONAL ROUND UP
- BACK PAGE MHPE CONTACT DETAILS

EDITORIAL



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY EDITION

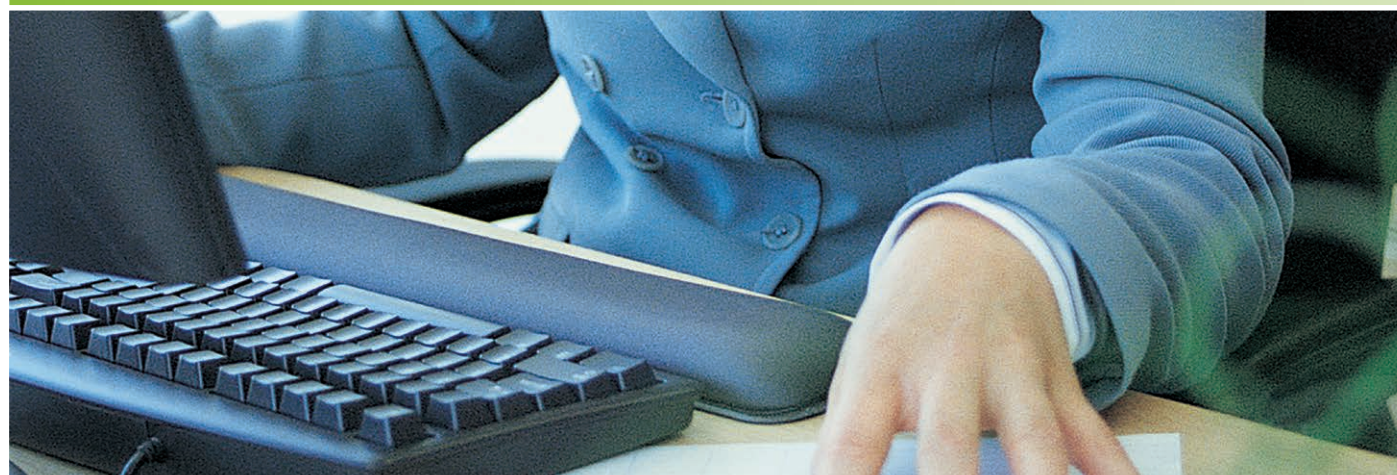
Families come in all shapes and sizes and not all are necessarily blood related. The unbreakable bonds you form with close friends who truly know you because of a shared experience is very much like a family tie. There's a wonderful kind of chaos that comes with being a part of a family. Families can be disorganised, funny and boisterous. On occasions there's resentment, disagreements, drama and fighting, and at times there's candid honesty.

For most of us, our families make us laugh, and during stressful and tragic times they wipe away our tears and hold us in their arms. Throughout life's ups and downs our family are there for us offering unconditional love

and practical support along the way. There is nothing quite like the feeling of belonging to a family. I also know that many people don't have a blood related family to connect with. This is where having supportive friendships is vital to our wellbeing. Good friends are open, genuine and honest and are there during the good times and the bad, and can share some of the most cherished memories.

In this issue of the magazine you will find articles about the importance of spending quality family time together even when you are time poor, as well as family support during recovery from injury or illness and how to combine family time with exercise.

Leonie Nowland
Assistant Secretary
Client Engagement
and Support Services Division



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What we're looking for...

Letters should be no more than 100 words and relate to articles or topics discussed in the magazine or regarding men's health generally.

PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

menshealth@dva.gov.au or c/- Department of Veterans' Affairs, Men's Health Peer Education Magazine GPO Box 9998, Brisbane QLD 4001

MHPE MAGAZINE AND REPRODUCTION OF CONTENT

Just a reminder to our readers, if you would like to include an article that's appeared in an edition of the magazine in your own publication, please contact the Editor to confirm if there are any restrictions on the re-publication of the material.



MHPE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

CATHERINE SPOONER
DVA MHPE Editor

DR WARREN HARREX
DVA Medical Adviser

DR LORETTA POERIO
DVA Mental Health Adviser

DR DIMITRI BATRAS
DVA National Health Promotion Adviser

CONAN ELPHICKE
DVA Public Affairs

LAUREN EASTAUGHFFE AND THOMAS GLEED
Open Arms

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MHPE VOLUNTEERS

Each year, we recognise MHPE volunteers by awarding certificates of recognition and badges for 5, 10 and 15 years of service. These awards are made during National Volunteer Week in order to acknowledge the value of volunteering within the broader Australian community. I would like to congratulate those volunteers who will achieve 5, 10 and 15 years of service and thank them for all their hard work, enthusiasm and ongoing support of the program.

DISCLAIMER

Articles with this publication are the views of the individual contributors and should not necessarily be viewed as endorsements by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Information provided should be carefully evaluated for its source, accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for your purposes. Users should obtain appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances. Users are encouraged to check with the author agency if they have any concern about the information provided. This publication includes links to sites that are not administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. These links do not constitute endorsement of material at those sites, or any associated organisation, product or service.

THE TIES THAT STRENGTHEN US



Family relationships are at the core of who we are as human beings. We know our brains are wired for connection with others, as social beings we need it for our very survival and wellbeing.

The benefits to children of living in healthy, safe and supportive environments cannot be underestimated. We know that the first five years of life provide the foundation for our health and wellbeing, and that families are critical in laying this foundation. However, the adage that 'it takes a village to raise a child' gives us pause to think about what family means. Taking a broader view of 'family' as meaning the nurturing of supportive and deep relationships can be liberating, especially if our experience of family is less than ideal.

If our experience of family has left us feeling less than supported, this can lead to a range of difficulties. In fact, unmet social needs have been likened to other needs such as thirst and hunger – thus, they are not just a 'nice to have'. Where our family of origin does not, or cannot, provide the succour we require to feel connected to the world, supported and loved, then creating our own family of friends and loved ones is an option. Creating your village one person at a time.

The sad reality is that loneliness has been identified as the next looming public health epidemic of the 21st Century. Interestingly, loneliness seems to be manifested in younger (18–29 year olds) and older adults (65–79). To be clear, loneliness is not a function of the number of people we have in our life, but rather, it goes to the quality of our connection with others. So, you may have 1500 'friends' on Facebook, but still feel disconnected from others and perceive your relationships as poor.

Providing more social opportunities is not necessarily the answer, though it seems to be a popular approach. It is those deeper connections we develop with people that provide the reassurance that our lives matter; that we matter. We build these connections over time through the sharing of our history; those people who were there when you jumped off your parent's roof into the swimming pool and broke your arm; bought your first car; went through enlistment training; or who provided a shoulder to cry on after a relationship breakup. These are the life experiences that build a sense of belonging and provide a sense that our life has meaning and purpose. That is the role family can play, and also close friends, and to some, it is the role the Defence Force plays. A 15-year study on wellbeing in Australia, conducted by Deakin University, found three things that are keys to happiness – good personal relationships, financial security and a sense of purpose in life.

It is therefore unsurprising that more and more research is indicating that stable friendships are important to aging well. Good family relationships, if you have them, are fabulous for your physical and mental health and wellbeing throughout life.

However, the older you become the more prominent strong friendships are in keeping you well.

Michigan researchers, led by William Chopik, postulated that this may be because family members often take on caregiving roles, and these roles can create a sense of obligation. Even though our relationships with family are important, they are not necessarily the source of joy that long-time friends are. Valuing friendships appears to add to an older person's wellbeing, over and beyond the presence of family, which provides the foundation piece for a good life.

If you have been fortunate to grow up in a loving family, then your wellbeing is assured throughout life. For those who haven't, then the good news is, you can create a loving village through close friends. The icing on the cake is that if you have both, especially in later life, you have the bonds that not only maintain your wellbeing, but also enhance your joie de vivre.

Dr Loretta Poerio
DVA's Mental Health Advisor

LINKS:

<https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2017/are-friends-better-for-us-than-family/>

<http://www.australianunity.com.au/health-insurance/sitecore/content/about-us/home/news-and-views/news-folder/the-essence-of-happiness-revealed-a-15-year-research-project>

LEGACY SUPPORTING FAMILIES *for the long term*

Legacy has been assisting the families of veterans who have given their lives or health for close on 100 years.

While the spirit behind what Legacy does has changed little over those decades, the way it supports widow(er)s and families has developed enormously.

Legacy grew out of the ashes of the First World War when thousands of widows were left to try and bring up their children alone. There was little government support and without Legacy many children would have ended up as wards of the state.

The Second World War saw a sudden increase in the numbers of families Legacy needed to support and they took this challenge on.

The way Legacy has supported widows and children is via Legatees – volunteers who make a personal commitment to assist the families of those who served our country.

In the early years, Legatees were returned servicemen, but today these dedicated men and women come from all walks of life.

Personal contact is what makes Legacy's care special. This gives Legacy its unique character.

Legacy continues to support widows in their senior years, providing them with support they need to live comfortable and socially-included lives.

Today's families are offered a range of support which ensures they do not suffer financially or socially despite their loss, whether the veteran has died or cannot be fully involved in supporting his/her family because of physical or mental injury.

Legacy may assist widow(er)s with retraining to help them move into better-suited employment so they can care for their family. Families may take holidays where they meet other families facing similar challenges. Children may attend camps and holidays where they soon make friends, often for life, with other children who just understand what they are going through.

Legacy endeavours to support every child through their education, from pre-school to tertiary studies for a diploma or degree. Financial assistance for school fees, textbooks, laptops, extra curricula activities are among the range of assistance given to secondary students. Tertiary students are provided with a range of support to ensure they are able to complete their studies.

Legacy families will also be provided with access to a whole range of specialist support, from counselling, financial or legal advice. Legacy advocates on their behalf to ensure they receive any government benefits to which they are entitled and are aware of other external assistance.



'The range of support Legacy provides allows families to thrive despite their loss,' said Sydney Legacy President Legatee Greg Wrate.

'Support that is offered is tailored to a particular family

'We listen to what their needs are and come up with solutions that will meet the families' needs within the parameters of what Legacy is able to provide.

'What is offered changes over time. Many decades back, it was books and school shoes, now it is laptops and extra-curricular activities.

'Whatever we provide, it is with the intent that these families should not suffer socially or financially after the loss of a Defence Force partner or parent.'

Family and end of life



In addition to assistance with everyday care, the family may have a role in assisting with decision making. It is best if an Advance Care Directive can be created, in which the patient's preferences for care are listed and someone is nominated to become the Substitute Decision Maker (SDM), or medical attorney, should the patient lose capacity to speak for themselves. This person will usually be the spouse/partner or a close relative, but can be anyone whom the patient selects. It is most important for this person and everyone involved to realise that their task is to carry out the known preferences of the patient.

If the patient has made no such clear statement, then consultation between family members may help: the agenda of such consultations is not 'What do we wish to do?', but 'What do we remember about the patient?' which can tell us, and the clinical team, about their attitudes and preferences.

The impending death of a loved one can create particular stresses for families. Old or existing tensions, rivalries and fault-lines may be exposed. Some members may disagree strongly with expressed preferences or decisions taken, especially over issues such as declining or ceasing treatments, or continuity of food and fluids. If such decisions are contrary to traditional cultural or religious practices within the family, the strife is likely to be greater. A guiding principle of palliative care is the sovereignty of the patient's wishes, but not all cultures or families value personal autonomy.

Impending death of a loved one can uncover powerful psychological reactions. The grieving process usually starts before the actual time of death and the classic stages of denial, blame, guilt and anger may play out in family interactions.

Guilt and blame reactions and an insistence on 'doing something' are most often displayed by persons who have not been in recent contact with the sick relative. While a spouse or formally appointed SDM may be clear about trying to realise the preferences of the dying person, opposition from other family members can be unhelpful and leave lasting enmities.

The Family Conference is the recognised process for communicating between family members and the treating/caring team. If the patient has capacity, they are naturally part of this conversation, otherwise the appointed SDM represents them. Available choices and options for treatment and any patient preferences are laid out for all to hear. The risks of 'Chinese whispers' and resulting misunderstandings can thus be minimised. It is best that further significant decisions or changes in the patient's conditions are then communicated through this spokesperson.

Becoming a carer for someone we love dearly is a very demanding task both physically and mentally. Considerate family assistance at such time can immeasurably lighten the load and likewise increase the sense of fulfilment or 'closure' for those who take part. The road into bereavement will still be rocky, but the carriage may be considerably more comfortable.

Dr Tony Ireland
DVA Medical Adviser

Recently a very dear cousin of mine died after several months of disabling illness. Many of us in our reasonably large and caring extended family were able to form a roster to help with care in the home. In this sad but privileged duty we were assisted by the partner's family, two previous partners and a couple of neighbours. My cousin was able to stay at home until the last three days, when our roster of care moved to the hospice.

At the funeral ceremony the hall was crowded with relatives, colleagues and friends from a wide spectrum of society, as tributes were made by present and past partners, brother, cousin, niece and associates. We shared in our sense of loss, the desire to honour a great life, and our strong bonds of good will.

In all this we were, and remain, a fortunate family.

It is mostly true that end-of-life care is improved if the family is closely involved. In line with current social practice, palliative care services define the family as whichever persons are regarded as such by the patient – those they most love and trust. The palliative care services seek to provide care for the defined family as well as the dying person.

KOOKABURRA KIDS

It is no secret that many serving and ex-serving personnel who may be suffering mental illness related to their military service worry about the effects their condition could have on their children. This is no different for parents Clint (serving) and Belle (medically discharged), who have three children aged nine and under: Tyler, Jackson and Charlotte.

Clint and Belle are among many serving and ex-serving families who DVA has introduced to Kookaburra Kids, an organisation that supports children aged 8-18 living in families affected by mental illness. The free program offers educational and recreational camps and activities, teaching children about mental illness, providing them with coping skills, psycho-education information, resilience-building techniques, empowerment and renewed hope.

Their son Tyler, now aged ten, has been attending Kookaburra Kids programs since the ACT program began just two years ago. Jackson and Charlotte will also participate in the program once they turn eight.

'Tyler has been a changed kid since attending Kookaburra Kids,' Clint has reported, also stating that attending activities and camps has put Tyler out of his comfort zone, showing a brave, new element of courage. Tyler has been one of the most consistent attendees of the Kookaburra Kids program since it began, and absolutely lights up whenever an invitation to the next activity arrives. And it's not just due to the new friendships with other kids in similar situations, but also the bond he has made with Kookaburra Kids leaders and volunteers.

While there is plenty of fun to be had at camps and activity days, the essential ingredient to the Kookaburra Kids program is Chat Group. Chat Group is the psycho-education component where leaders and children come together in a small group to have age-appropriate discussions about a) mental health literacy; b) appropriate health-seeking for emotional and personal problems; c) expanding effective basic coping skills and d) facilitating social participation around the theme of mental health and wellbeing.

In targeting these components, Kookaburra Kids believes kids will be able to bounce back and bounce up from challenges and adversity they may face. It's all about resilience, connection, empowerment, courage and hope.

Tyler has now started to gain a real understanding of what mental health is and knows his mum is going through a hard time. He has shown empathy and an understanding as to why his parents' moods can sometimes change quite quickly. As parents, it is



Image supplied by Kookaburra Kids



Tyler rock climbing



Friends Will and Tyler

often difficult for us to start a conversation about mental health with our kids. Kookaburra Kids teaches our children so much, and by talking this through with the kids, this in turn is also great for the parents' mental health.

'Kookaburra Kids has been a Godsend for our family,' says Clint. 'It's the only organisation I know of that focuses on kids. We can't wait for Jackson and Charlotte to also join Tyler when they are old enough to start the program.'

The Kookaburra Kids program for families of serving and ex-serving personnel is funded by DVA/Australian Government

For more information, contact Anita Kenny, Marketing Manager, Kookaburra Kids on

1300 566 525 or visit the Kookaburra Kids website (kookaburrakids.org.au).

BUILDING YOUR OWN VILLAGE

Defence families live a unique life. Military life often dictates that we live away from our own families, and then once we get settled, we're asked to move again. We often spend long periods of time separated from our partners due to deployments and other absences from home. Our children may move schools frequently and then become experts at packing up their own lives ready for the next move. Defence families frequently become very self-sufficient within themselves as a unit because of the unpredictable nature of life in the ADF.

There's an old African saying that says 'it takes a village to raise a child'. When many of us were growing up we had close contact with our grandparents and extended families to help support and nurture our lives. This is still true for many civilian families, however, for most Defence families this is just not the reality, because the village is not automatically there.

We have to build our own village

Often this village might be made up of other Defence families we meet through work, school or other communities we might be involved in. Sometimes it's made up of civilian families who don't quite understand the life we live but accept it anyway. They're the ones who might be able to pick up children from school in an emergency or mow the lawn while you're away. The kindness of new friends in posting locations is always welcomed but sometimes hard to seek out. It's always ok to ask for help.

Sometimes we might have to create a digital village to help support our family connections. With so many advances in technology it's become much easier to stay in contact with our own families regardless of where they are located. Make use of Skype or FaceTime and establish regular times to catch up with grandparents and other significant relatives. Create a group chat on WhatsApp as a simple way to share photos and family activities. Yes, it does take some effort to maintain these connections, but the benefits are always worthwhile.

We recently interviewed several Defence families about their own unique lives and how they manage military life. RAAF family, Clare, Jamie and their two daughters, commented that 'we build families where we are ... friends become almost like a family'.

Being able to connect with others in posting locations can help build your own village and give your family those social connections we all need in our own lives. This can create new friendships and perhaps help prevent isolation and loneliness, especially at times when families are separated because of deployments or other absences from home.



Image supplied by Defence Families of Australia.

How can you build your own village?

You can read more about Clare and Jamie's story on the Defence Families of Australia (DFA) website and how a medical emergency forced them to rely on new friends.

Defence Families of Australia is the national advocacy body for current serving families. Find out more at our website (dfa.org.au) or connect with us through social media.

Michelle Hoare
National Communications Officer,
Defence Families of Australia

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT IMPORTANT TO INJURY RECOVERY

The path to recovery from injury can be challenging at times and difficult to navigate - but being surrounded by the right support network can help make recovery that little bit easier.

Unfortunately, no one is immune to injuries. For ADF members, injuries are common and range from minor aggravations and disruptions in life, to permanent chronic pain syndromes. At Mates4Mates, we know that to manage and overcome injuries and the physical challenges that arise as a result, a multifaceted approach to support is imperative, targeting all areas of health and wellbeing.

While accessing the right psychological and physical support from qualified health professionals is an imperative part of the rehabilitation journey, surrounding yourself with support has also been shown to assist with recovery.

Several studies have demonstrated that good social support (family and friends) appears to buffer the impact of stress from injury and therefore, can enhance the rate in which a person recovers.

By spending time with your partner or family, communicating honestly, engaging in family activities that are suitable for your injury, having family meals together and appreciating the time you have together, can provide significant gains psychologically.

We know that family members can sometimes be unsure of the right way to support someone who is injured, leaving them fearful that they may accidentally make things worse. These concerns may be heightened when the injury is invisible, like in the case of a brain injury, chronic pain syndromes and musculoskeletal problems. Children may not understand why their mum or dad, or their siblings are moody, angry, lethargic, depressed and unpredictable and these behaviours may result in children and other family members distancing themselves from the injured person.

Education is also important. Make sure your family understand what you are going through, make use of the many resources



and services available, talk with your health professionals and encourage your partner and children to ask questions so they can better understand what you are experiencing.

Recovery from injury is possible, however doing it alone is not the best approach. Even if you don't have family around to support you, make sure you reach out to friends, community groups, health care professionals, and ex service organisations like Mates4Mates, to assist with your recovery journey.

At Mates4Mates, we are also here to support your family. Often the focus can be put on the individual recovering but supporting the family is imperative to ensure they also have a support network around them.

Our Family Recovery Centres provide a range of services to both Mates and family members. Family members can access many of the services including psychology, social connection activities such as BBQ's, coffee groups, and family fun days.

In addition, physical rehabilitation services that include exercise physiology, yoga, pilates and remedial massage, can assist you and your family's overall wellbeing.

For more information about Mates4Mates support and rehabilitation services, visit www.mates4mates.org or phone 1300 4 MATES.

Georgia Ash
Psychological Services Manager
Mates4Mates

FAMILIES REMAIN STRONG FOR THEIR MENTALLY UNWELL LOVED ONE

When first recognising a family member or friend might have a mental illness, it is common to feel many emotions: shock, fear, sadness, anger, and a feeling of isolation. During their lifetime, one in five (20%) Australians aged 16-85 experience a mental illness in any year. When someone we care about is living with mental illness, family members may have to take on more responsibilities and deal with things never expected. This in turn can affect work life or even the family's own health. Many carers can feel they have little or no choice in taking on caring. They may sometimes feel trapped and resentful. They may feel excluded - ignored by mental health and social systems. Some struggle to find the right information or the right help for their family member.



Many become socially isolated because of their caring role. After months or sometimes years, this wears families down physically and mentally making them particularly vulnerable to stress. An unwell carer will not be able to provide quality care to their loved one which could negatively impact on the individual's recovery. It cannot therefore be overemphasised that a carer's wellbeing is crucial to ensure they can support their ill family member in the best possible way.

For families to remain strong for their mentally unwell loved one, they need to be supported in their caring role. Support can be in the form of providing them with information of community supports to help with their caring role. It can also be through education about their family member's mental illness. Having this knowledge will better equip them to manage their loved one's behaviours and their reactions to it, recognising early warning signs to prevent relapse, responding to acute episodes and managing crises and emergency situations. Aside from feeling supportive, they need to be included in the design of, and have input into, decisions about the support and care of their loved one. After all, carers know their family member the best and carry the main responsibility of caring for the individual.

Being in hospital, allows time for addressing these needs through the following avenues: provision of family meetings where carers can voice their concerns about their family member's care and with the support of the treating team, identify appropriate strategies and supports to best meet the needs of the family unit, referral to carers support in the local community by our social work services, carer psycho-education by our clinicians and offering specific groups for both carers and patients to attend together to enhance the carers understanding of mental health concerns and ways in which to best support the patient.

Further, we find it best to use a collaborative approach between staff, patients and carers to improve outcomes for our consumers. This is carried out through the following measures:

- Carers are identified at first contact, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Carers are routinely introduced to the service and staff.
- Staff are "carer-aware" and trained in carer engagement.
- Whilst we provide a confidential service, with patient consent, carers are involved in the care planning and therapy process.

This collaborative carer-friendly approach provides a service for people and their families who would like to experience a mental health recovery journey where they felt supported, respected and included right from the start through to the end of their stay.

Deb Parker
Social Worker
Pine Rivers Private Hospital

a focus on families



Staff from the Organisational Change, Culture and Co-Design Branch and Darwin Defence Families.

We think the biggest impact in this space is the recognition that I [the family member] am here, I am important, and I am part of the solution - but only when I am ok, when I'm looked after, when I'm heard and when I'm considered.'

Participant,
Female Veterans
and Veterans'
Families Policy
Forum 2018

For many, family is an important part of life. During good times, families gather to share in achievements and in challenging times family can provide important support. Parents, siblings, partners and children can all be affected by the highs and lows of their loved ones. This is no different for the families of people in the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Service in the ADF impacts families as they support members throughout their ADF careers, during transition and beyond.

The ADF can place demands on not only serving members but their families too. The stress caused by postings and deployments can be hard for families, as it affects housing, schooling, childcare, health and wellbeing, and finances.

After transition, the many challenges that may face ex-service men and women such as finding a job, somewhere to live and managing their physical and mental health, may also be hard for families.

To try and better support families, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has been talking to families to understand the unique challenges they face.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester recently announced the establishment of a Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service. The Council

will advise the Minister on matters relating to women and families affected by Defence service. It will be a voice for all types of families.

The idea for the Council was first suggested at the Female Veterans and Veterans' Families Policy Forum, which was first held in 2016. The Forum is an interactive event which focuses on issues that are important to the defence families' community. It gives female veterans and family members the opportunity to provide feedback into current DVA projects and helps to build relationships.

DVA has also reached out to family members through the ongoing workshop series Understanding the Veteran Experience. In late 2018, family members of current serving personnel were brought together in Darwin to discuss the issues and challenges they face. This workshop focused on accessing DVA services and information, describing what the ideal DVA would look like for families. It also gave family members an opportunity to provide their feedback on current DVA projects, such as improvements to letters and the website.

DVA is looking for the best ways to support veterans and their families to lead happy, healthy and productive lives post-service, and working together will be an important way to achieve this goal.

Family time



So why talk about family time? Why is it an important consideration as we negotiate the stresses and responsibilities of everyday life?

Having strong and supportive family relationships is very important for people's mental health and wellbeing. Part of building strong families is, of course, having fun together, and having fun with each other is great for your wellbeing. It releases 'feel good' chemicals like dopamine and oxytocin, which are the body's natural anti-depressants. This in turn can help us to feel closer with each other and more connected.

When people get to the end of their life, rarely do they look back over their lives and wish that they had worked harder, earned more money and worried more. Rather, many people wish they had spent more time with their family.

Spending quality time with your family can help build strong relationships. This can make it easier to navigate times of family changes, difficulties or conflict. It can make managing your child's behaviour easier and make them more open to your direction.

TAKE THE TIME TO HAVE FUN!

Life is often stressful, so it is important to keep a balance and make some time for fun! Think about activities or mutual interests and try planning time to do some of these. Try asking your loved ones for some ideas about what they would like to do ... they might surprise you with something you will all enjoy.

Activities do not need to be expensive. Going to a beautiful spot in nature, having a picnic and taking a ball to throw with the kids is great fun and costs little. In summertime, try the beach or a bushwalk. If you're in a city, see if there are any free museums or art galleries, as these often have fun activities for the kids.

There are also websites that have lots of different ideas about free or low-cost activities, some of which might include be in your community.

SOCIALISING WITH EXTENDED FAMILY, OTHER FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Socialising and being connected with our wider community is not only fun but it guards against isolation. Feeling a sense of belonging to a community is a big part of maintaining and growing our mental health and wellbeing. Having a strong and supportive social circle is very strongly linked with mental health in research literature. You can help your kids to build this from a young age.

Socialising with other people can also serve to widen our perspectives and we can learn new things. You might learn how to play canasta or backgammon or something that you find enjoyable that you did not know about. It can keep life interesting.

HELPING OTHERS

Sometimes it can feel good to help others who are in need. It might be something as simple as baking a cake for the elderly neighbour down the road, or helping a friend mow their yard. Doing these types of activities as a family can teach our children the value of focusing on people other from themselves, and of what it means to be an active part of their wider community.

TAKE THE TIME TO TALK

Some people may seem like they were born to talk and never stop, while others prefer silence. It is probable that you would have people that fit both descriptions in your family. Regardless of whether you naturally like talking or not, talking with your family has benefits, such as building stronger relationships.

This does not mean that you have to start having 'deep and meaningful conversations' all the time. It might mean taking a few minutes from the tasks you are doing to ask someone how they are going. It might be about saying a few encouraging words or that you appreciate something someone has done. It might be about talking about some of the good times you have had, or sharing a funny memory.

It could be asking your children about how school is going, what their friends are up to, or about things they are interested in. It could be asking them about what they might like to do once they leave school, or talking about the latest movie they have seen. Sometimes great topics can come out of watching movies together, such as how to manage conflict

friendship troubles, grief, dating, sex, drugs. Ask them about their opinions about these things. Talk about what you may have seen in the news and ask them about their thoughts and feelings about things. Having these conversations will show your kids that you care about their opinion and that you value them. There is nothing as validating and good for building one's self esteem than to feel heard, listened to and understood without criticism or judgement.

If you talk with your children about their interests and ideas, then they are more likely to talk with you when times are tough for them. Being able to talk and feel supported by their parents is a big protective factor for our children's wellbeing.

KNOWING WHEN TO SAY NOTHING

When we have family time, and the intention is to enjoy each other's company, it may be best to not bring up difficult or painful topics. Sometimes our child or partner may do something we find annoying, but it is probably not helpful at these times to criticise or name call. Knowing when to say something and knowing when to keep quiet can be difficult at times. Sometimes in relationships we can get into the habit of 'fault finding'. However, it can re-energise relationships when we start to see all the good things the other person is doing, rather than all the wrong things. Be on the look-out for the great things about a person and try telling them sometimes. You might be surprised by the results.

WHAT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP DO I WANT WITH MY FAMILY?

Quantity of time spent together does not necessarily mean that it is quality time. The goal might instead be to try and increase positive interactions and decrease negative interactions.

AS PARENTS, WE ARE ROLE MODELS FOR OUR CHILDREN

They will copy our behaviour now, as well as in their future relationships. Behaviour is the way we talk and act, so we need to keep this in mind. You might like to think about the following questions, as our behaviour is shaped by our beliefs about certain things.

WHAT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP DO I WANT WITH MY CHILDREN?

What are important values for me? (These might be things like kindness, respect, honesty, fun, being genuine, etc. Sometimes we might 'take stock' of certain areas of our life. This might be thinking about whether certain things we say or do are helping to fulfil those values, such as 'Did that action/words take me closer to my values or further away from the type of person I want to be?')

Am I where I want to be, in terms of my parenting? If not, what can I do that will take me closer?

Anglicare Southern Queensland



THE FAMILY THAT EXERCISES TOGETHER, GROWS TOGETHER!



As our personal lives get busier, more complicated, and we struggle to maintain or improve our own health, fitness and wellbeing we don't have to go it alone. It can be easy to get caught up in sitting at home with everyone on their own device or plonked in front of the TV. What can we do to be more actively engaged as a family? Family meals are important of course. Family game or movie nights are fun. But have you considered exercising as a family? There are several benefits in getting together to exercise as a family.

Developing stronger bonds

The obvious outcome. Exercising together can help to strengthen relationships and build memories. Find activities you can all enjoy together. It may be taking a walk pre or post dinner, going for a swim at the local pool or beach, having a kick of the footy, going for a bike ride, or even making up your own picnic game. Your family will appreciate the time you spend together.

Improving communication

As someone who has recently started involving the whole family in some regular exercise, I have found that when we do exercise together our communication improves. My children seem to be more willing to talk about what is going on in their lives when we are being active together. This happens after they stop telling me how much better they are at whatever activity we are doing.

Teaching good habits

There are many studies out there that show how our bad habits can filter down to our children and grandchildren, but this is also the case for our good habits. Exercising together is a great way to teach our children the value of regular exercise. Exercise has innumerable physical and psychological benefits, including enhanced fitness and heart health, greater strength, better weight management, improved sleep and reduced stress.

When we make time to go for a walk with our family or go on a bike ride together, we are showing our family that we value them and want them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Saving money

My family are always trying to find activities that are budget-friendly. Going to the movies or tenpin bowling can be expensive. Exercising together can be done for little or no cost. Going for a walk, playing with the family pet, shooting a few hoops or even having a dance party together does not cost a thing.

Having fun

The other obvious. Find activities your family can enjoy together. It may not be perfect for everyone, but you might be surprised at the difference in everyone's mood after exercising together. It's therefore no surprise that exercising as a family is one of the best 'keys' for improved mental health. When the family create and foster a positive relationship with exercise and physical activity, the entire family benefits, both physically and mentally.

So, get your family together and head outside and play. Aim to make this time a necessary part of your daily routine.

The DVA funded Heart Health Program has been providing education and opportunity to improve health, fitness and wellbeing of returned service men and women for over 19 years. To confirm your eligibility for the 12 month health and fitness program visit <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility/> or call the program providers Corporate Health Management to learn more on 1300 246 262

PHOTO BY MICHAEL MORSE FROM PEXELS

OPEN ARMS FOR VETERANS and THEIR FAMILIES



Healthy relationships enhance everyone's wellbeing in the family. When all relationships are strong, families are better able to cope with unexpected external stress. Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling (formerly VVCS) provides free, confidential counselling and group programs designed to support current and former serving ADF personnel and their families. Open Arms has been at the frontline of mental health support in the veteran community for more than 35 years and today delivers a 24-hour national service.



Families can seek support from Open Arms to help them with:

- the absence of a parent during deployment, and adjusting when they return home
- transitioning from ADF to civilian life
- understanding, identifying and working through trauma
- addressing child concerns around changes and stressors like making friends at a new school
- building a blended family
- working through relationship challenges and breakdowns, and
- support if a serving member has died.

In addition to counselling, Open Arms offers a variety of evidence-based group treatment programs and educational workshops. These programs bring families together, to help them build better relationships, learn parenting skills and manage stress or learn about issues like living with PTSD, depression, anxiety and anger. These programs are very practical. People who take part are given tools to help them improve their wellbeing and connect with others who share similar experiences. Group programs are free and are delivered to small groups of people, face-to-face, by highly skilled facilitators with military awareness.

Four group programs that families may find beneficial include:

- **Building Better Relationships:** Helping you rediscover what's important in your relationship, so you can rebuild your relationship with your partner. By concentrating on what works well, you will strengthen your relationship, enhance your individual resilience and that of your relationship
- **Parenting programs:** Tailored to the needs of veteran families, parenting programs include '123 magic and emotion coaching', and 'Tuning into kids'. These programs help build strong and positive relationships between parents and their children
- **Relaxation and Stress Management:** Providing practical skills that can be used in everyday life to de-stress. This is designed to introduce you to mindfulness, which is a practice to shift focus from 'what has happened in the past' and 'what may happen in the future' to 'what is happening right now', and
- **Stepping Out:** Examining your transition process and what it means to go from military life to civilian life as an individual and as a family - in both practical and emotional terms. It aims to raise awareness of key issues related to personal and social change following discharge, and to provide participants with the knowledge, skills and resources to assist them in making the transition to civilian life.

Open Arms can help your family deal with issues related to military service, including the loss of a family member. Families can access this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 1800 011 046. You can also visit www.OpenArms.gov.au to find out how we can support you in building a stronger family.

A Defence Life with Special Needs



Image supplied by Defence Special Needs Support Group.

Living a life in Defence is generally hard for anyone. Challenges include being posted, partners away for months on end, leaving friendships and rebuilding friendships, starting or even finding a job and losing your support in the wider community.

Everyone always forgets about the serving members. They too also face these challenges. Starting a new posting, finding their feet in their unit, renewing connections and forming friendships with new mates.

Having children with special needs and living in a Defence community creates another level of challenge and a whole new outlook on life.

For instance, you have to explain to your child with autism that they need to change schools, build a new connection with a new therapist (once you've found the right psychiatrist), make new friends, move into a new house, and pack all their safety toys away. It can be like going through a cyclone of emotions and meltdowns.

You have to take on the mammoth task of going on a waiting list for a specialist, finding a therapist, going through the NDIS funding application all over again, getting medications filled in different states, finding the appropriate school, reconnecting your child with a new home, and unpacking boxes.

Who is going to watch the children while we unpack and ticket items of packing boxes, let alone doing this with special needs children who have no sense of danger or self-care or remorse and do not comprehend wrong from right?

The stresses placed on special needs families when being posted is undeniably underestimated.

Most of the time, it is left to the spouses to organise the removals without the help of their serving partner due to work commitments.

When is there time for a spouse living with special needs to have some down time and have a break and reconnect with themselves?

It doesn't matter how good your organisation and time management skills are, you can't prepare yourself for what the children bring to you daily.

Serving members are also affected by the stress on their family. They take their stress to work, which in turn affects their ability to fulfil their role to the best of their ability and impacts on their morale in the workplace. The serving member also stresses with seeking approval for leave to attend appointments which is critical to understand the complexities of the special needs within the family. With all this going on, they then are concerned about going away on deployments, courses, field exercises and so on. If they feel their family isn't supported then who will care for them if something was to go wrong?

The Defence Special Needs Group has been helping Defence families with special needs from across Australia since 1993. The Group provides advocacy and support programs and can help families connect to services in their local area to assist with their needs.

For further information please visit our website (www.dsnsng.org.au).

SUPPORTING LGBTI young people



Image supplied by Beyond Blue.

A positive response at the highly vulnerable coming-out stage for young LGBTI people can have significant and positive impacts on their wellbeing, a report from the National LGBTI Health Alliance has found.

The mindOUT LGBTI National Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Project Report 2016 found that many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people can benefit from focused and targeted efforts to support their wellbeing.

The report found this support is especially important when young people first reveal their sexuality or gender identity to their families or friends.

Young people naturally feel vulnerable at this time and some may even find themselves outed before they are ready to reveal their sexuality or gender identity, which adds an extra layer of distress and worry.

A positive response is essential at this time for LGBTI young people to develop a strong sense of self and be reassured they are accepted and celebrated for who they are.

Research into the experiences of these young people in families and schools shows the support they receive can make a significant difference to their mental health.

Receiving strong support from friends and family can also help reduce the negative impacts of discrimination and abuse that young gender and sexuality diverse people may face.

Supporting and encouraging them to connect with their peers and identifying strong role models is important when a young person comes out. This helps them build resilience, confidence and a sense they have a place in the world.

As part of Beyond Blue's Families Like Mine guide, Liam shares a part of his coming out experience, 'My sister told my dad while I was in

the room, and when she had finished explaining to him, my dad called me upstairs while my sister walked down crying.

I was expecting a bad situation, but my dad hugged me and asked why I didn't tell him this myself, and I am his son and he will love me not matter what.'

It's clear this moment, this act of love and celebration, has had a significant impact on Liam.

While having a young person bring up their sexuality or gender identity with their parents can be a surprise, there are supports which can help carers, parents, kinship networks and families learn more and feel confident to support the young people.

QLife is a national peer support and referral service for LGBTI people, which can be found at qlife.org.au.

Families of Intersex young people can find out more information and support options at an organisation called Intersex Human Right Australia, ihra.org.au.

Beyond Blue has also developed a guide called Families Like Mine, with information and stories about creating supportive and inclusive family environments for LGBTI young people. You can find the guide on the Beyond Blue website (beyondblue.org.au) and search for 'Families like mine'.

Mental health professionals are available 24/7 at the Beyond Blue Support Service on 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3pm-12am AEST) or email responses (within 24 hours).

For immediate support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or visit their website (lifeline.org.au).

Family Nutrition

Imagine a happy, healthy household bursting with energy. If only fostering healthy family eating was easy. Truth is, it doesn't need to be hard. As the adults of the household, we need to make a conscious effort to be a role model for our children or grandchildren. Focusing on small changes and the most important things first rather than fads can be a pathway to healthy living.

One big mistake that we've made over the years is separating 'Kids' food and 'Adults' food. Kids that eat well become teenagers who eat well. Teenagers who eat well become adults who eat well.

Nearly all Australian children under the age of 18 do not eat enough vegetables, so this should be your main priority for raising children who eat well. By using reward strategies such as "eat your vegetables, and then you can have dessert" can encourage children to 'devalue' healthy foods, leading to poor food choices. Try rewarding children non-food items such as words of praise or stickers away from meal times.

If you are trying to encourage your child to eat a wider variety foods, gentle suggestions to try something new is more effective than forcing. Try offering the new food in small amounts outside of mealtimes. Most food preferences come from familiarity first, before taste. It may take up to 11 exposures before a child (or adult) tries a new food. Forcing or punishment around dinner time may lead to long-term food refusal. Making food fun, making food more convenient or making food normal can nudge us towards healthier food choices.

TIPS:

- Freeze extra meals and snacks. They're a great time-saver for busy nights, or when there's nothing left in the fridge. Curries, stews and pasta sauces are perfect for freezing.
- Bulk meals out with extra veg. Grated carrot, zucchini go wonderful in mince dishes. Pureed tomatoes can be added to almost anything with sauce. Cauliflower can be mixed in with crumbs or rice.
- Keep a bag of frozen vegetables in the freezer to add to meals. I love using the mixed vegetable variety in curries; it saves time chopping up fresh vegetables, and they defrost well in the sauce, soaking up lots of flavour.
- Get the kids involved in the cooking or preparing meals. I find my daughter becomes more interested in what the food is and is more excited to try new things when she's helped prepare it. The sense of pride is magical to witness.
- Try adding fruit and vegetables to home-baked goods. Their water content creates a softer texture, and brings out a great flavour. Try adding banana to chocolate muffins to give them a fudge-brownie like texture. We've included a recipe for you.
- Avoid distractions at meal times like TV, phones and computers. Distractions can often disrupt our eating and connection with the family. Sharing stories of the day can make mealtimes more enjoyable.
- When serving discretionary foods (like chips, or lollies) portion a small handful in a bowl instead of eating out of the packet. This helps keep portion sizes reasonable and avoids the likelihood of overeating these foods.

References:

1. Australian Institute of Health and Wellness, 2018
2. Wardle et al, 2003
3. Cooke et al 2011
4. Lumeng JC, Burke LM, 2006



GOOEY CHOCOLATE MUFFINS

These one-bowl muffins may be simple to make, but they sure don't lack flavour. I love making a double batch and freezing half for when I need snacks later in the week.

MAKES 8

Ingredients:

- 2 large overripe bananas
- 1 large grated or food processed zucchini
- ¾ cup rolled oats (or GF rolled oats or almond meal)
- ½ cup almond, hazelnut or macadamia nut meal
- 2 Tbs cacao powder
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, slightly softened or nuttalex
- 2 Tbs honey
- 1 tsp chia seeds
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1.5 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- ¼ cup cacao nibs or choc chips

Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 180°C (fan-forced).
2. In a medium bowl, place all ingredients except for the cacao nibs/choc chips.
3. Mix well, as if almost whipping the mixture.
4. Fold through nibs/ chips.
5. Spoon into lined muffin tray and sprinkle with extra nibs/chips.
6. Bake for 25-30 minutes

Note: These muffins won't rise very much, so are small in size. Even though these are a little healthier, they are still a treat, or sometimes food.



PHOTO BY BRIGITTE TOHM AND KIMONAFROM PEXELS

From Motherhood TO MILITARY

In 2007, I was a shy 21-year-old woman, and recently married to a new soldier. We learned early on that Army life would be difficult. We got married following a 10-week engagement after our application for recognition of de facto relationship was rejected.

After our wedding, I moved to Ballarat to be close to my new husband while he trained at Puckapunyal in Victoria. We spent our first six months of married life seeing each other on weekends, and talking during the week on the phone.

After my husband finished his training we were off to Darwin on his first posting. I had just found out I was pregnant. Oh no! New state, no job and now pregnant.

During our posting to Darwin I had two beautiful children while working short stints in all different kinds of work. It was hard to find flexible employment, with two babies and a husband who left on training often. Many employers didn't want to hire me. I realised Darwin wasn't going to last forever so I decided, let's give joining the RAAF a go! After all, these days, it requires two parents working full-time to pay for children.

November 2012 was my enlistment date. I was so nervous. I was a 26-year-old unfit mum of two, and leaving my children for the first time. It was going to be a long time away with no chance to come back.

I had not expected how hard it would be. I missed my daughter's first day of school and her fourth birthday. In fact I remember doing PT and bursting into tears realising she would have just started class. Luckily I had made some mates

to keep me focused on why I was there. I had to keep in mind if I failed a part of my training it would delay me seeing my babies. Don't let that happen!

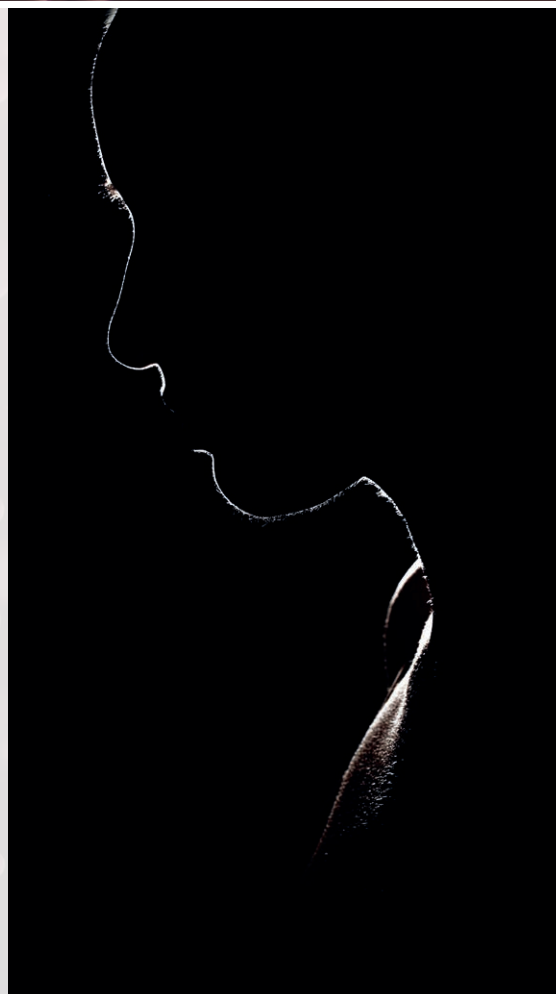
At the end of April 2013 I marched out of my Personnel Capability Specialist (or clerk in old terms) course with Dux. I was so proud of my achievement, and I was excited about my new posting.

Over the next year I settled into shift work while being a parent. Wow, when do I get to sleep! I had suffered an injury during initial employment training but I didn't think it was bad. After all, my physiotherapist and doctor cleared me. Then came the dreaded fitness test.

I failed. For the first time in my short career, and boy did I feel the pressure. I gained some weight as I didn't get time to exercise enough. But this pain kept coming back. I saw the doctor and physiotherapist, and my physiotherapist decided something more must have been going on. I was medically downgraded and sent for scans. I thought great, some relief to work on this pain and not have to worry about my job. I was wrong.

Work, which I loved and I usually excelled at, became a constant source of anxiety. It got so bad that I decided to see a psychologist. I was dealing with a stress fracture and possible arthritis. Additionally, my physical recovery was meant to be four weeks but turned into 14 weeks. I felt like I'd let my family down. This is when our family started to break down.

I eventually found out after many months and seeing several



specialists that I had a dead bone. I was now a single mum, facing the need for potential career-ending surgery, and my mental health suffering from the pressure and lack of understanding of my issues. I realised that I wanted to do my best in my career. I took medication and I passed my fitness test to get medically upgraded to deploy on a peacekeeping mission. I deployed hoping I would be ok. I ended up on crutches within days, but I managed to see out my deployment. What a relief.

Within weeks of my return I was medically downgraded and booked in for surgery and later - medically discharged. I blamed myself constantly and my family life suffered due to my mental health.

MY MILITARY FAMILY

Family! What is family? I want to tell you about my family. They say you are born into your family. That you can't choose your family. This is true of your birth family. But I was lucky enough to make a choice that would bring with it a family that most could only imagine. I joined the Army.

While I joined that immediate green family it does not replace your birth family. Like your birth family the green family has similarities in character. There are the elders who hold the history, traditions and the lessons, which they pass down to the young. It's made up of larrikin misfit nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters, but as a family it works.

It's also a loving family. I am sure that many of you are scratching your heads and wondering how this family loves, but it does. It's true, I've seen it, I've lived it, I've given when needed and I have received in my own difficult times. In a pinch it's a family that gives of its individual

parts when help or support are needed. When it does, a lot of the time that support, help and assistance comes from the most unexpected people and places.

When you are a member of this family and you take a partner or marry, that wife, husband or partner become a member of the family too. Your partner may never truly understand everything there is to know about the family, but they are a member nevertheless.

There are many clans within the family. They each play a different role and function. Like within your birth family the clans will tease and taunt each other and occasionally they may fight. They will compete with each other to be the best. Do not misjudge this banter and do not attempt to take them on. They will bind together and as one family they are strong.

As I progressed through my career I discovered the other two tribes within the family: the sky blue one,



Air Force, and the grey (sometimes they wear white) Navy. They too are part of the bigger family. I now have sky blue or grey brother and sisters. Like the competition between the clans, the tribes will also tease and taunt each other. But when the tribes are united, together they bond.

There's no colour or race within the family except the colour of the outer skins we wear of green, blue and grey. Within the family you are respected for the skill you bring and the role you play.

When you leave the family, well, you just don't! However long or short your time within the family, it's always there. The friendships you built, the tough times you endured, the heartaches you shared and the pain you saw. These are shared memories among brothers and sisters.

You will see my family gather once a year old and young. Listen to them, they will share stories, laughter, pain and sorrow. But above all they share a bond that has been tested and will be tested again. You cannot break that connection; it's too strong.

Yes, this is my family and it's the best damn family in the world.

WO1 Patrick Blaik
Defence Force Recruiting

IMAGE TOP RIGHT BY BELINDA MASON PHOTOGRAPHY

I'm now 32, and have to be careful not to end up requiring walking aids in the near future. I see a psychologist to help me adjust to my new lifestyle. I have seen so many specialists and I have a pile of x-rays, ultrasounds, MRIs, and bone scans that rival that of an 80-year-old. I'm debating the requirement of my 10th cortisone injection, in the 10th different place, because it's just a cycle of fix one place to find another issue.

But I am still me. I have a close circle of friends that understand what I have gone through, because they understand the requirements of a military life. I am back helping people when I can. I spend as much quality time with

my kids as I can, and as much time resting and rehabbing when they are with their dad. The only way I have been able to achieve this is by reaching out for support when needed.

It hasn't been easy, and I have a long road ahead of me, but I value my time in the services. I got to make friends, learn new skills, be part of a great team and work hard! I am a proud veteran.

Kim McCormack
Ex-serving RAAF Airwoman

BACKGROUND IMAGE BY AZIM ISLAM FROM PEXELS

DEFENCE COMMUNITY CENTRES

Connecting Community

An integral part of Defence life is being posted to new locations. Defence Community Centres are an amazing way to learn about the new location, meet new people and engage with a welcoming community network. The mission of Duntroon Community Centre (DCC) is to provide 'A Place to Belong'. We understand the unique, dynamic complexities that Service life can present. The DCC provides connection and support among the chaos of moving, finding schools and all the other tasks that go with a new posting.

Defence Community Centres across the country play a vital role in supporting families to enhance a sense of community, connect with others and learn about a new local area. We provide opportunities for families to access social interactions through fun and engaging community events such as family fun days, movie events, kids' discos and Christmas parties.

The DCC is also a trusted place to turn when seeking fresh ideas on places to eat, new parks and playgrounds to explore, or even for recommendations on a dentist or doctor.

The DCC has been providing support to families for over 17 years. Through a range of family-friendly events and programs, all members are encouraged to get involved. We have a range of core programs such as three-year-old Playschool, and playgroup and craft that run regularly throughout the year. We then enhance these programs by providing workshops, family events and child-focused activities at various times throughout the year. The range of programs and events allows the DCC to support the development of social networks and common interest groups.

As a not-for-profit organisation the DCC relies heavily on the involvement and support of our members, understanding that our centre is enriched by the diverse skills and experiences Defence families provide. The DCC is passionate about involving our families in the day-to-day activities of our centre and encourages people to share ideas for events or workshops they would like to experience. The DCC is constantly evolving and adapting to meet the changing needs of our Defence Families.

A MESSAGE FROM DCC VICE PRESIDENT CORPORAL MATT FORD

I am an Australian Army corporal at Australia's Federation Guard (AFG) and the Vice President of the DCC - a role I have held since February 2018.

Before my posting to AFG I was posted to a couple of units based at Robertson Barracks in Darwin. While at these units I experienced a very high tempo of work. I was a digger at 8/12 Regiment, which is an artillery unit, and I was also posted to 1 Aviation Regiment. Both units were very operationally focused and involved long periods of time away on exercise across Australia.

This brings me to my point, that a posting to Canberra is like a breath of fresh air and a time to fully unpack your stress to enjoy the excellent facilities and attractions of the national capital. It is a time to connect with family and spend quality time together. It was this feeling of liberation that inspired me to attend a DCC information evening in Feb 2018. Knowing I was going to be relatively static for a couple of years, I felt I could give back and get involved in the community. Convinced by the great presentations I stuck my hand up and ran unopposed for the position of Vice President.

I urge people posted to Canberra to consider getting involved in the community, especially through the DCC. I am sure that when people look back on their time in Canberra, they will always have fond memories of their time spent with family and being able to give back to the community.

MENTAL WELLNESS for Veterans' Health Week



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Veterans' Health Week (VHW) 2019 will be held from 26 October to 3 November and planning is already underway. The purpose of VHW is to encourage current and former ADF personnel and their families to find out more about how to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing. This information includes ways to actively participate in veteran community programs, and the resources available that promote good health and wellbeing.

Each year, VHW promotes one of four themes. Along with this year's theme of mental wellness, the themes are: social inclusion, physical activity and nutrition. DVA will once again support ex-service organisations and community groups across the country to deliver a range of VHW events to highlight the importance of improving and maintaining good mental health.

Events will help veterans and current serving Australian Defence Force members and their families to recognise the signs of mental

illness - and to get involved, to take action and increase their knowledge of available services and programs to maintain good mental health. Mental wellness is essential for an individual's overall health and wellbeing, which in turn, strongly influences our physical health and social connectedness with family, friends and our community.

VHW 2018 was a great success with around 10,000 people attending 130 events across Australia. The theme for 2018 was nutrition and its importance to our health and wellbeing.

VHW 2018 was also enjoyed by families and friends across a variety of events. These included talks by dietitians and nutritionists, cooking classes, supermarket tours and visits to community gardens and farmers' markets. There was strong participation from Defence and ex-service organisation groups, and events were held on weekends to encourage family participation.

DVA encouraged event organisers to use the week as an opportunity to reach out to people who often miss out on the benefits of engaging with their local veteran and ex-service community groups.

Men's Health Peer Education and ex-service organisation volunteers were central to the planning and implementation of many events. Volunteers worked in partnership with DVA personnel throughout 2018 to engage with service providers, community organisations and former and current serving ADF personnel.

For more information on VHW, contact DVA on 1800 555 254 or visit the VHW page of the DVA website (dva.gov.au/vhw).

SPIDER WEBS AND BOOKWORMS



Books

FATHERHOOD - STORIES ABOUT BEING A DAD BY WILLIAM MCINNES

William McInnes, one of Australia's best-known storytellers and actors, has turned to a subject that is close to his heart. Fatherhood is about family, about memories of his father and the memories he's creating as a dad himself, with his own son and daughter.

Warm, witty and nostalgic, these tales are just like a friendly chat over the back fence, or the banter of a backyard BBQ. They will stir your own memories: of hot summer days and cooling off under the sprinkler while Dad works in the garden with the radio tuned to the sports results; that time Dad tried to teach you to drive - and then got out of the car and kissed the ground; or taking your own kids on a family road trip.

Fatherhood is full of memories: the happy, the hilarious, the sad, bad, and the unexpectedly poignant moments. You will laugh, you may even cry - but you will recognise yourself and those you love somewhere in these pages.

Hachette Australia, 2018
RRP \$29.99 eBook \$14.99

CALM PARENTS, HAPPY KIDS - THE SECRETS OF STRESS-FREE PARENTING BY DR LAURA MARKHAM

Most parenting books focus on changing a child's behaviour, but the truth is that children only change when their relationship with their parents changes. In *Calm Parents, Happy Kids*, Dr Laura Markham introduces an approach to parenting that eliminates threats, power struggles and manipulation, in favour of setting limits with empathy and communication. Bringing together the latest research in brain development with a focus on emotional awareness (for both parents and children), it will appeal to all parents who don't want to force their children into compliance and WHO lose their temper, but want to keep calm and help their children want to behave.

Ebury Publishing, 2014
RRP \$24.95

THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES BY DR GARY CHAPMAN

Marriage should be based on love, right? But does it seem as though you and your spouse are speaking two different languages? New York Times bestselling author Dr Gary Chapman guides couples in identifying, understanding, and speaking their spouse's primary love language, whether it be quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, or physical touch. By learning the five love languages, you and your spouse will discover your unique love languages and learn practical steps in truly loving each other.

Chapters are categorised by love language for easy reference, and each one ends with specific, simple steps to express a specific language to your spouse and guide your marriage in the right direction. A newly designed love languages assessment will help you understand and strengthen your relationship. You can build a lasting, loving marriage together.

Moody Press, US
RRP \$24.95 (\$27.99 for the military version) eBook \$8.28

MARRIED QUARTER - BOOTS, BERETS, AND BLOODY UNIFORMS BY MARIA AUGUSTUS-DUNN

Serving the nation in uniform is a career choice. But have you ever wondered about the life of a partner of these brave men and women? You will laugh and cry as Maria Augustus-Dunn tells you her story: from the perils of dining-in nights to meeting the King of Cambodia; from her disastrous attempt at making a cheesecake to seeing her husband off for a 12-month deployment; from arriving in Townsville in the middle of a cyclone to breaking down on the side of a mountain in Tasmania with a caravan in tow. *Married Quarter* takes you on a 21-year journey of the highs and lows of life as the spouse of a serving soldier.

Blue Sky Publishing, 2017
RRP \$29.95 eBook \$8.99

FACTFULNESS: TEN REASONS WE'RE WRONG ABOUT THE WORLD - AND WHY THINGS ARE BETTER THAN YOU THINK BY HANS ROSLING, OLA ROSLING, ANNA ROSLING RÖNNLUND

When asked simple questions about global trends - what percentage of the world's population live in poverty; why the world's population is increasing; how many girls finish school - we often get the answers wrong. So wrong that a chimpanzee choosing answers at random will consistently outguess teachers, journalists, Nobel laureates and investment bankers.

Factfulness offers a radical new explanation of why this happens. It reveals the ten instincts that distort our perspective - from our tendency to divide the world into two camps (usually some version of us and them) to the way we consume media (where fear rules) to how we perceive progress (believing that most things are getting worse).

Our problem is that we don't know what we don't know, and even our guesses are informed by unconscious and predictable biases.

It turns out that the world, for all its imperfections, is in a much better state than we might think. That doesn't mean there aren't real concerns. But when we worry about everything all the time instead of embracing a worldview based on facts, we can lose our ability to focus on the things that threaten us most.

Inspiring and revelatory, filled with lively anecdotes and moving stories, Factfulness is a new thinking habit that will change the way you see the world and empower you to respond to challenges and opportunities of the future.

Flatiron Books, 2018
RRP: \$26.99; eBook \$14.99

THE BODY KEEPS SCORE: MIND, BRAIN AND BODY IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRAUMA BY BESSEL VAN DER KOLK

A pioneering researcher and one of the world's foremost experts on traumatic stress offers a bold new paradigm for healing trauma.

Veterans and their families deal with the painful aftermath of combat; one in five Americans has been molested; one in four grew up with alcoholics; one in three couples have engaged in physical violence. Such experiences inevitably leave traces on minds, emotions, and even on biology. Sadly, trauma sufferers frequently pass on their stress to their partners and children.

Renowned trauma expert Bessel van der Kolk has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he transforms our understanding of traumatic stress, revealing how it literally rearranges the brain's wiring - specifically areas dedicated to pleasure, engagement, control, and trust. He shows how these areas can be reactivated through innovative treatments including neurofeedback, mindfulness techniques, play, yoga, and other therapies. Based on Dr van der Kolk's own research and that of other leading specialists, *The Body Keeps the Score* offers proven alternatives to drugs and talk therapy - and a way to reclaim lives.

Penguin UK, 2014
RRP: \$24.99; eBook \$14.99



MINDFULNESS BY DR ELLEN J LANGER

The highly innovative findings of social psychologist Dr Ellen J Langer and her team of researchers at Harvard introduced a unique concept of mindfulness, adapted to contemporary life in the West. Langer's theory has been applied to a wide number of fields, including health, business, aging, social justice, and learning.

There is now a new psychological assessment based on her work (called the Langer Mindfulness Scale). In her introduction to this 25th anniversary edition, Dr Langer (now known as 'the Mother of Mindfulness') outlines some of these exciting applications and suggests those still to come.

Da Capon Lifelong Books; Anniversary edition, 2014, RRP: \$18.95; eBook \$11.59

Changing gear as I become older - for you and your family

Over the past few years, as I have become older, my behaviour and my body have made it clear that I need to make changes in the way that I live.

If I don't make any necessary changes to vary my behaviour it could have repercussions for my family. Your family can help by reminding you of any necessary changes you need to make.

You can also observe older members of your family to see if they need to sharpen their awareness as to how they act in everyday life. The following practical tips can also apply to them. Don't forget to set an example to them of your enhanced awareness as you go about your everyday life.

Firstly, I must check my daily rituals and habits and assess whether they are still effective and relevant for my current physical and mental wellbeing. The sense of 'getting older' can vary from person to person.



LET'S LOOK AT SOME PERSONAL EXAMPLES:

- 1) Noticeably I must now focus on what I am doing, and doing one task at a time otherwise, I make mistakes which could cause some harm to myself. For a domestic example, in the past I could take a dish out of the microwave with one hand and at the same time with the other hand move a pot on the draining board but now I have to do one action at a time to its completion otherwise I will bump the dish and spill the contents.
- 2) Importantly I keep one hand free as I move around so that I can steady myself on something solid if need be. Thus, I only carry things in one hand. At home I walk around the house ensuring I know where to put my hand to support myself if necessary, to avoid falling.
- 3) I watch and focus on chewing my food when eating otherwise I might bite my cheek or tongue. My facial and mouth muscles are not as flexible or reactive as they used to be when younger.
- 4) When responding to others in the past or asked for a comment or question it used to be as easy as the words just came out almost immediately. However, now I ensure I do not rush my responses and take more care with my words otherwise my responses are not so crisp or coherent.
- 5) I watch my step closely in walking up and down stairs and when walking. I ensure I know where my feet are and that they are safely and steadily placed. Otherwise there is a possibility I may fall or harm myself in some way. Wasn't great when I could run up the stairs without even looking at the steps?!!!
- 6) There's many a slip between the cup and the lip. How true this is for some older people who may not be paying attention.
- 7) And now I realise more and more that I need to take care and respect my body and myself and pay more homage to my living. And perhaps sadly for many this realisation did not come earlier in their lives.

Peter Lawrence
MHPE Volunteer

PHOTO BY RAWPIXEL.COM FROM PEXELS

BE CONNECTED



Paul Webster served in the Royal Australian Air Force for 18 years and is one of five children to take after his father by joining the RAAF. With a mother in-law and father in-law who were ex-Army (lieutenant and major), and two cousins who are also ex-Army (brigadier and lieutenant colonel), it's safe to say Paul has a strong family history with the Australian Defence Force.

Paul now volunteers as a Be Connected digital mentor at the Langwarrin Men's Shed. He, along with a few other like-minded veterans at the Shed, work to support others in their community.

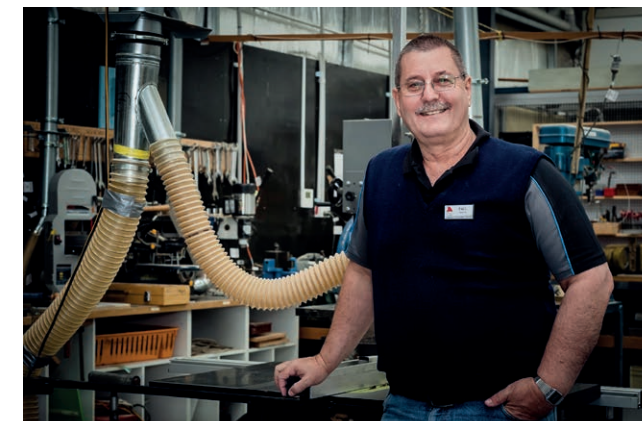
His family are very supportive of him volunteering as a digital mentor, so much so that a lot of his extended family across the country are now building their digital skills from the comfort of their own homes on the Be Connected Learning Portal. Paul is very encouraging of this and says the digital world has opened up a lot of new conversation points between them.

'Now, when we catch up over the phone, we always have a quick chat about the various Be Connected activities followed by questions about their computers! But it's great to connect with them, and it gives me a chance to bring them up to date on new scams [to watch out for],' says Paul.

As a digital mentor, Paul has the opportunity to present safety seminars and digital skills training at various local organisations including retirement villages, Probus and Seniors' groups. One of the first topics he covers is creating strong passwords after learning that many ex-defence force members are likely to use the one number they'll never forget: their service number.

'I encourage them to change their passwords, as this is one number that can be easily guessed if a hacker knows of their service,' says Paul.

Safety is one of the main reasons Paul began volunteering as a digital mentor at Langwarrin Men's Shed. Although Paul himself has always been into computers, many other men and women his age don't have his digital skills. After a few of his family and friends fell victims to online scams, Paul took the opportunity to educate them on how to be more diligent with their online safety.

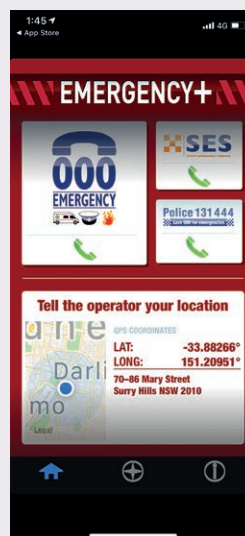


'Although completing safety modules on Be Connected won't stop you from being targeted by scammers, it will make you more aware of how you can prevent yourself from being scammed. During any of the safety presentations I give, there's always at least one person who's been scammed and this makes me more determined to educate people on how to protect themselves.'

And the other reason Paul began volunteering as a digital mentor? Giving back to the community, he says.

'Anyone who has served will know that the Defence Force community is a family and you always look after your family. This is just an extension of that - looking after my community.'

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY



Emergency + (free, iOS and Android): this handy app for you and all your family members has been developed by a range of Australia's emergency services, and covers all states and territories. The app interface is very simple and has three main emergency numbers prominently featured (Triple Zero, the State Emergency Service (SES) and the Police Assistance Line) plus the exact GPS coordinates of your present location which you can then relay to these services if required.

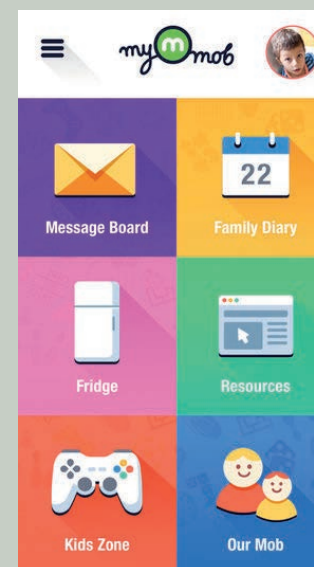
There are other national numbers featured, including those for Crimestoppers, National Relay Service, National Security Hotline and Poisons Information. The tag line for this app 'Save the App that could save your life' succinctly sums it up!



MedicineWise (free, iOS and Android): developed by an independent and not-for-profit organisation (in conjunction with the federal and state/territory governments), MedicineWise will allow you to manage information related to medicines and other important health details for you and others in your family. The list of features in the app (which features a secure log-in feature, and an assurance your personal and health information will only be stored in Australia) is truly vast.

Where do I start? Users can: create lists of medicines used by scanning barcodes, record important information such as allergies and medical conditions, set reminders to take medicines, generate lists to share with health professionals, store, graph or share test results, create separate profiles for others and store notes/questions to ask your doctor.

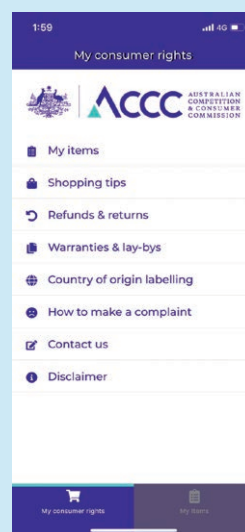
MedicineWise is an excellent example of using the latest technology to enable you to manage your health and wellbeing needs at your fingertips!



MyMob (free, iOS and Android): developed by Stepfamilies Australia to assist blended families, this app can be just as helpful for any type of busy family, no matter the size of the family, where the family members are located or their age.

MyMob features a message board (for all family members to post their thoughts or activities), a family diary that allows you to know what's happening in the family, the 'family fridge' (a virtual space where special moments can be shared), a resources section for all types of situations, a kids' zone (where your children/grandchildren can share their lives), and an Our Mob section for profiles of your family (or even multiple family structures for grandparents or those with blended families).

This app can be an integral part of your plan that allows your family to stay connected and to share stories, with the ultimate aim being to create a stronger family.



ACCC Shopper (free, iOS and Android): while strictly not a health-related app, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has developed this extremely practical app which, I'd argue, will provide a degree of wellbeing and satisfaction for you and your family. There is a health component in the app which details the myriad elements associated with the 'country of origin' on food labels, and explains the meaning of the various graphics and charts that appear on food labels.

Apart from that functionality, you will find information on refunds and returns, Australian consumer law, warranties, how to write complaints and other consumer rights.



UNDERSTANDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT

ISLANDER FAMILY STRUCTURES AND KINSHIP LAWS

The family structure is the foundation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities.

In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, immediate family means more than parents and siblings. It also includes Aunties, Uncles, cousins and the extended family. Under the kinship system my Aunty is also my mother and my Uncle is also my father and my male cousin is also my brother, and so on.

Family relationships are not based on how closely one is related but built on the principle that, regardless of how we are connected, family is family. Even those who marry into the family are automatically brought into the family circle and are referred to and respected as family.

FAMILY/KINSHIP SYSTEM

Kinship laws and structures provide individuals with a physical spiritual, emotional and cultural connection to their families, land, country, rivers, sea and animals. These laws explain where the spirit of an individual comes from at birth and where it will return to after death.

Kinship Laws also include Avoidance Laws that determine how individuals, families and communities interact and engage with each other. This may mean that some individuals or groups may not be allowed to look at, speak to or interact with other individuals or groups within the community or neighbouring clans. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities still practise, teach and strictly adhere to Avoidance Laws, which are based on history and lived experiences.

Avoidance Laws are also designed to respect, protect and develop relationships. For example: *In some communities the son in-law is not permitted to speak to or interact with his mother in-law. In this case the line of communication is strictly between the mother and daughter and any issues, concerns or conflict need to be dealt with between them and not involve the son in-law. This changes the relationship between mother and daughter as the daughter now takes on the role of an adult, parent, wife, teacher and protector of her own family circle and is no longer seen as a young child.* Similar laws and systems also exist in the Torres Strait Islander culture known as Island Custom.

At the broader community level, Avoidance Laws help to protect land, language, culture and determine physical boundaries between communities, tribes and clans.

These laws are based on Dreamtime and the Before Time and also help to identify those in the family who are and have the potential to become teachers, leaders, healers and Elders.

For Indigenous peoples who choose to join the military it can be a difficult transition to be away from and somewhat disconnected from family and community. However, some find the brotherhood and sisterhood of the military to be very similar to cultural practices.

Unfortunately the families of those who join the military are at times not so understanding. They sometimes feel it has taken their family member away from family and culture especially during times such as Sorry Business or a death in the family. Culturally the individual would be expected to be there for the family and funeral and unfortunately there is little understanding about the fact that they cannot attend because they are on deployment overseas. So at times family and kinship laws can be very difficult to adhere to especially if you are a current serving member.

However, due to family and kinship laws many current and ex-serving member also know that they will always have family and community to return to when they transition out of the military. Many often become a proud symbol of their families due to their time in the service and are often seen as role models for the younger generation.

Leith Dewis
DVA National Indigenous Liaison
Officer

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY with a little practical help



Image supplied by DVA

Veterans' Home Care (VHC) is designed to assist eligible DVA clients who need a small amount of practical help to continue living independently in their own home.

VHC services can be tailored and provided as short-term or as ongoing support. Services can also be increased for a short time after surgery or a stay in hospital to assist with your recovery.

Services offered under VHC include:

- Domestic assistance
- Personal care
- Safety-related home and garden maintenance
- Respite care

PERSONAL CARE

Personal care includes assistance with non-medical daily self-care tasks if the client can't do it themselves. Services may include assistance with:

- showering, bathing, toileting
- dressing, grooming/teating

- application of non-medicated skin care creams and lotions
- putting on compression stockings, protective bandaging, splints and calipers
- getting in and out of bed
- moving about the house.

DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE

Domestic assistance provides support with basic household tasks, such as:

- internal house cleaning like dishwashing, vacuuming and mopping
- bed making and linen changing
- clothes washing and/or ironing
- some assistance with meal preparation (but not total preparation of meals)
- bill paying
- unaccompanied shopping (the service provider goes shopping on your behalf).

Domestic assistance is not intended to replace tasks the client is capable of doing. That's because doing domestic activities yourself can have a beneficial health effect, even for the frail and very elderly.

SAFETY RELATED HOME AND GARDEN MAINTENANCE

To keep a DVA client's home safe and habitable, VHC can provide minor maintenance or repair work, which may be carried out by a handyman, for example:

- replacing light bulbs
- changing batteries in smoke/security alarms
- cleaning of gutters
- internal and external window cleaning
- cleaning ceiling and exhaust fans, air-conditioning and split-system units.

Safety-related home and garden maintenance does not include major repairs or services requiring a qualified tradesperson, such as tree-logging or tree felling/removal.

Garden tasks such as lawn mowing and pruning can be done if a safety hazard exists. Routine, cosmetic gardening such as weeding, maintaining flower beds, regular lawn mowing, or pruning of roses are not available under this service.

RESPITE CARE

VHC also assists eligible carers with respite services, in recognition of the vital role they play in the veteran and defence community. These include:

- In-home respite care
- Residential respite care
- Emergency short-term home relief

DVA offers respite care to:

- carers of a Gold or White Card holder
- Gold or White Card holders who are carers
- Gold or White Card holders who are self-carers (for residential respite only).

IN-HOME RESPITE CARE

In-home respite is available for eligible DVA clients who are:

- being cared for, and their carer needs a break from the caring role; or
- caring for someone, and they need a break from the caring role.

Self-carers are not eligible for in-home respite.

In-home respite allows a carer to have a break while a substitute carer comes into the home to take over the caring role.

In-home respite can be for regular visits or one-off situations. It gives the carer the

opportunity to attend to everyday activities, and supports carers who have other work/education commitments, or are re entering the workforce.

RESIDENTIAL RESPITE CARE

Residential respite care provides short-term care, usually in an Australian Government-funded aged-care facility. It can be used if a DVA client's carer needs a break, or if a client is a self-carer.

EMERGENCY SHORT TERM HOME RELIEF (ESTHR)

This service will help when an eligible DVA client's carer is unexpectedly unable to provide care, and general community services are not available. If the only alternatives are admission to hospital or being left without the necessary care, DVA can provide care in the client's home until general community services are arranged, or the usual carer is able to resume the caring role.

ACCESS AND ELIGIBILITY

To receive VHC services, you need to have a Gold Card or White Card and be assessed by a VHC Assessment Agency. VHC services are provided based on eligibility and need. There are no age requirements for this program.

The client can contact the VHC Assessment Agency directly themselves or another person can contact the Agency with the client's consent, such as a GP, hospital discharge planner, family members, carers and friends.

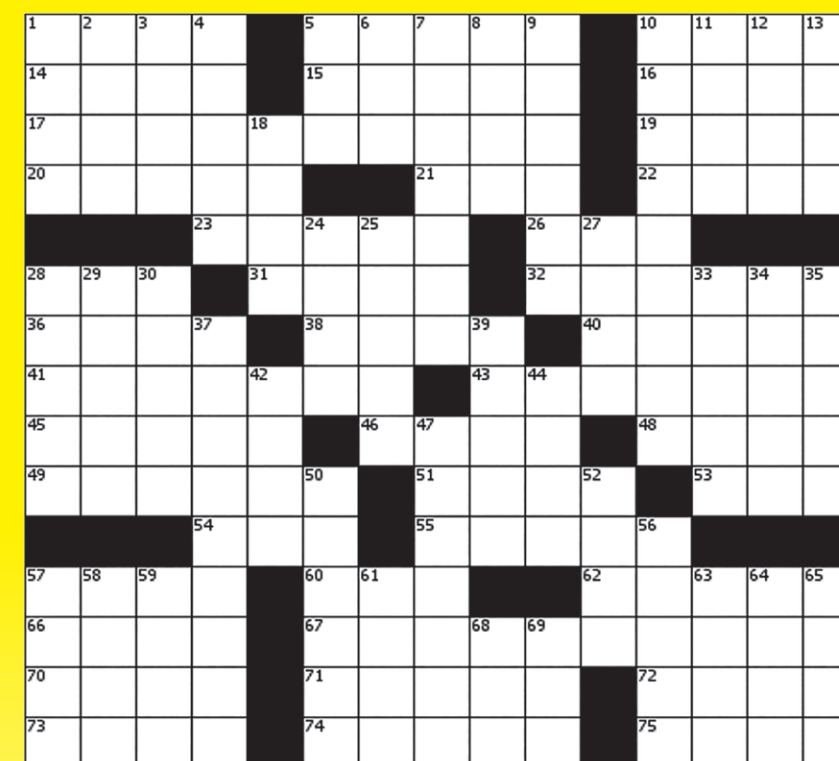
VHC Assessment Agencies generally assess a client's needs over the phone in the first instance and approves services if appropriate. The VHC Assessment Agency, in consultation with the client, will develop a VHC Care Plan.

Services will normally start within two weeks once the VHC Care Plan is approved but this does depend on the availability of service providers in your area, particularly if you live in a rural or remote area.

To access VHC services call a VHC Assessment Agency via 1300 550 450.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit the DVA website at dva.gov.au/vhc or freecall us on 1800 555 254 for more information.



ACROSS

- Short message
- Pulls apart
- Right away!
- Kitchen hot spot
- Check accounts
- Curved doorway
- Having a backbone
- Attract
- Carrying a weapon
- Part of mph
- Youth
- Put back to zero
- Compass pt.
- High explosive (abbr.)
- Neck area
- Sailor
- Stadium cheers
- Go by taxi
- Not fresh
- Free from germs
- Declares
- Carved gem
- Window frame
- Mob scene
- Votes in
- Bright sign
- Snaky shape
- Golf prop
- Shine
- Tibet's locale
- Originally called
- Woman's title
- Refuses to
- Unable to read
- Daft
- Cook's oil
- Mailbox opening
- Big Dipper component
- Sped
- Pelvic joints

DOWN

- Flaring star
- Above
- Duration
- Door sign
- Restaurant bill
- Belgium's cont.
- Modified
- Ceremonial act
- Ships' rears
- Brine (2 wds.)
- Accurate
- Land unit
- At that time
- Paradise
- Mumbai dress
- Heroic tales
- Loch ____
- Track down
- Twangy
- Subject
- ____ Antoinette
- Female singers
- Homes for birds
- Observer
- Artist's prop
- Shopping bag
- Pump, e.g.
- Cherubic
- Junior's dad
- Appoint
- Bog
- Punching tools
- Chimney dirt
- Peruvian Indian
- ____ Fitzgerald of jazz
- Painter Salvador ____
- On the peak
- Citi Field players
- "____ Got Sixpence"
- Baseball's ____ Williams

FIVE, TEN AND 15 YEAR RECOGNITION FOR MHPE VOLUNTEERS

A NUMBER OF MHPE VOLUNTEERS HAVE ACHIEVED FIVE, 10 AND 15 YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE. A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS BELOW FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE VETERAN AND EX-SERVICE COMMUNITY.

FIVE YEARS

Trevor Anthony	VIC
Barbara Hagger	NT
James MacDonald	NSW
Robert Owen	NSW
Robert Roach	NSW
Gerrard E Smith	NSW
Barry Snell	NSW
Ian Short	SA
Annie Carr	QLD
John Morris	QLD
Richard Holtsbaum	TAS
Michael Bartlett	WA

TEN YEARS

Peter Cowley	WA
Dean Dyer	WA
Carole Matthews	WA
Malcolm Small	WA
Robert Crisp	NSW
Richard Frost	NSW
Phil Lilliebridge	QLD
Ray Benzie	SA
Jock Carlyle	SA
Gareth Hubbard	SA
Robert Kelly	SA
David Moore	SA

FIFTEEN YEARS

Marsat Ketchell	QLD
Brian Griffin	NSW
Peter O'Loughlin	NSW

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND UP

MHPE Queensland

MHPE volunteer John Morris, from Geebung RSL Sub Branch, collaborated with Lowood RSL Sub Branch to deliver an informative and popular VHW 2018 event: 'Eat Your Vegetables - Or Become One'. The group of 70-plus participants experienced a nutrition presentation, a trip to the local fruit market and finished with a healthy buffet lunch. John's drive and enthusiasm ensured it was a very successful day's outing.



Pictured (L-R) Kevin Moss, Alison Bowman and veteran Ralph Stephenson

MHPE volunteer John Robinson (Kilcoy RSL) ran the annual VHW Veterans' Golf Day, followed by a nutritious lunch to focus on the yearly topic of Nutrition. Almost 50 people participated in this great event that regularly connects people in this small but vibrant community. John is a tireless and valued volunteer who is always willing to give of his experience with all things MHPE.

MHPE volunteers Alison Bowman organised and ran an MHPE display at the Partners of Veterans Association annual fundraising day held in October, assisted by MHPE Queensland State Rep Kevin Moss. Despite the rain, the day was a success and Alison and Kevin were able to spread the news to attendees about men's health.

On 5 October 2018, the Tin Can Bay RSL Sub Branch conducted an information day which was attended by no fewer than 50 community groups who provided displays and offered information on their respective services. MHPE local



Pictured (L-R) Anne Warren, Kevin Moss and Maureen Costello

volunteer Ms Ann Warren organised the MHPE information stand assisted on the day by MHPE Queensland State Rep Kevin Moss.

The RSL were looking for a different way to engage with veterans in the area. They received funding from DVA in the form of Health and Wellbeing Funding to purchase an X-box to be used in a fun and interactive way to connect people and increase physical activity. The fitness game 'Your Shape Fitness' includes a variety of different exercises including yoga, dance and martial arts and will be incorporated with various social events scheduled at the RSL.



Alex Lennox

MHPE Western Australia

VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK 2018

A good number of MHPE volunteers were involved in a variety of events during Veterans' Health Week in September 2018. These included a Catch and Cook event, Healthy eating on a Budget presentation and lunch, Magical Mystery tour and Eating Healthy away from Home tour.

MHPE Volunteer Alex Lennox, organised the Catch and Cook event, which was well attended by members from the North Beach RSL. Members braved a cold and windy

morning to go fishing offshore at Hillarys Yacht Club. Narelle Little, MHPE WA Coordinator was lucky enough to join this fishing expedition and after a few hours of braving the windy conditions they caught enough fish for lunch. A delicious feast of barbecued fish and fresh salads were enjoyed by all. The group also took part in completing a nutrition quiz while enjoying their catch. It was a lovely day which really hit the VHW theme of nutrition.

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND UP

MHPE Western Australia continued



Pictured (L-R) John, Narelle and Nola at the Seniors Expo

MHPE Volunteer Jude Firth, organised a Healthy Eating on a Budget presentation and lunch at the Armadale RSL. Narelle Little, WA MHPE Coordinator and nutritionist delivered a nutrition presentation to members which included a hands-on food budgeting activity. Members enjoyed a healthy lunch and everyone participated in completing a nutrition quiz. It was a lovely morning and everyone said they had learnt something new.

NUTRITION DISPLAY AT ARMADALE RSL DURING VHW.

MHPE Volunteers Tiny Small and Paul Prickett organised a Magical Mystery Tour which was well attended by members from the Cockburn RSL along with Narelle Little, Western Australia MHPE Coordinator. The tour headed north out of Perth and incorporated numerous stops along the way. These included the famous Bindoo Bakery for morning tea and the historical New Norcia Hotel for lunch. Members completed a nutrition quiz on the bus and much debate was had over what a standard glass of wine should be! It was a gorgeous Spring day for an outing and everyone had a wonderful time.

MHPE Volunteer Lester Leaman organised a Healthy Eating away from Home tour which was well attended by other MHPE volunteers from the Forrestfield area. The idea of the tour was to learn how to choose a healthy meal while travelling away from home. This can prove quite difficult if the choices are limited! There were several stops on the way including a stop at Noble Falls in Gidgegannup. The volunteers got the opportunity to explore the area and enjoy the falls before heading to the nearby restaurant for lunch.



SENIORS AND CARERS EXPO

On 5 October 2018, MHPE Western Australia State Representative, John Sharp along with MHPE volunteers, Nola O'Shea and Phil Lear attended the Seniors and Carers Expo which was held in Rockingham. They set up a stall and spent the day chatting to attendees and other service providers about the MHPE program and DVA services. It was a very busy day which also provided a great opportunity for networking.

BRIDGETOWN BLUES FESTIVAL

On 10 November, MHPE regional volunteers, Clare Quinn and Leanne Quinn held a stall at the Bridgetown Blues Festival. It was a huge event which attracted many visitors to the town. Clare and Leanne spoke to a number of veterans on the day and provided them with information on the MHPE program, DVA and information on men's health and wellbeing issues.

MHPE Victoria and Tasmania

The Community Support team and the Victorian MHPE volunteers welcomed the Tasmanian volunteers who have joined MHPE Victoria.

The MHPE volunteers in Victoria and Tasmania have continued to engage with their local communities to promote health messages. Below is a snapshot of volunteer activities.



Men's Shed participant and Graham Tongs

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Gary Treeve is the Volunteer Representative for Victoria and Tasmania. Gary supports the veteran community in the region by working with organisations such as the Albury RSL, Soldier On Albury and the Wodonga/Albury Men's Shed. Gary enjoys keeping fit by visiting his local gym regularly and travelling with his wife.

Gary along with Dr Rob Webster - RSL Victoria State President have been selected as veteran representatives for the Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize taking 22 students to Vietnam and Singapore in early April. We wish Gary, Rob and the students all the best and look forward to hearing all about their experience.

Graham Tongs - The Community Support Team visited Graham at the Melbourne Men's Shed to witness the Shed's Cooking for One or Two Program in action. The program was a Health and Wellbeing initiative between DVA and Melbourne Men's Shed. Graham was joined by a number of 'shedders' who prepared and cooked a meal for each other.

It has moved away from Graham holding cooking classes to a more participatory program, where all members can get involved. Graham feels that the program works well at the Melbourne Men's shed and gives members an opportunity to join in, share and most importantly provides a space to have a chat.

Hugh Morrison is recovering well from a recent knee operation and is looking forward to returning to the

mindfulness sessions he runs at the Box Hill and Camberwell RSLs.

Rob Bailey is currently in NSW connecting with the Goulburn veteran community.

Marty Tanzer - President of the Sale RSL. Marty continues to work with the Young Veterans Sale group as well as continuing his work within the RSL and the Veterans Centre. Sale RSL, Sale Lions and Sale Freemasons groups are combining to support the Sale Royal Children's Hospital Appeal in the Sale Mall. Young Veterans Sale has provided shirts for the RAAF East Sale Spouse Netball Team, sponsored the RAAF Inter-service Golf Team and have also sponsored a Sale RSL staff member to participate in the Sale to Sea kayaking event.

Ken Bryce was recently involved in an RUOK? Day with the RSL and the local Neighbourhood House. He continues to support veterans and is involved with the Woodend RSL.

Doc Anthony continues to liaise with local health service providers. Doc has engaged with the Country Women's Association and promotes the men's health message.

Harry Beckwith is continuing his role as Pension/ Welfare officer at Sunbury RSL. Harry is liaising with RSL Active and the Vietnam Veterans' Association in Melton.

Graeme Cox continues his involvement with Stawell RSL as a Pension/Welfare Officer and also with the Wimmera Veterans Centre.

Gordon Trail continues to support the local community especially the Little Geelong Camera Club group.



Gary Treeve, Minister Robin Scott & Dr Robert Webster

Ray Barling - Vice President of the Lakes Entrance RSL. Ray continues to engage with the younger veterans and their families by hosting breakfast mornings at the RSL.

Alan White is involved with the promotion of the Peter Mac Prostate Cancer Research.

Richard Houltbaum attends a veterans-only yoga program. Richard is part of the workshop at the Army base in Hobart. Richard states he keeps 'an eye on the blokes, talks to them one to one and is always referring men to see their GP'.

Laurie Harrison has recently decided to resign from the MHPE program. Many thanks to Laurie for the support he has provided to the veteran community while he was an MHPE volunteer.

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND UP

MHPE South Australia

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAND ROVER, NATIONAL MILITARY VEHICLE MUSEUM

On 18 November 2018, MHPE volunteers John Hunter, David Moore and Ian Short assisted the DVA VAN Community Support Team with a display at the 70th Anniversary of the Land Rover event hosted by the National Military Vehicle Museum (Edinburgh Parks, Defence Precinct, SA). In addition to promoting DVA information and services, MHPE volunteers made connections with veterans and volunteers at the Museum and discussed opportunities for future events such as Men's Health Week and Veterans' Health Week.



VAN Senior Community Support Officer, Ana Teleki and MHPE volunteer, Ray Benzie.

OPERATION UNITY, TEA TREE GULLY RSL

On 23 November 2018, MHPE volunteers Richard Kirkman, Ray Benzie and Ian Short assisted at an Expo organised by 'Operation Unity' for current ADF members, ex-military personnel and family members. The focus was on those who were 'doing it tough' with the aim being to demonstrate the number of various supports available in terms of physical and mental health, employment, rehabilitation, financial support, transition to civilian life, hobbies and more. A wide range of partners supported the event which was hosted by Tea Tree Gully RSL.

'Operation Unity' are planning a number of 'on the road' events in 2019 to reach out to veterans 'doing it tough' and a number of MHPE volunteers are keen to assist at these events. Operation Unity were successful in obtaining DVA Health & Wellbeing funding to support a number of their initiatives.



MHPE recall training.

MHPE RECALL TRAINING AT PARTNERSHIPS HUB, JAMIE LARCOMBE CENTRE, MENTAL HEALTH PRECINCT

Seven MHPE volunteers attended the end of year Recall training and enjoyed the opportunity to go off-site and learn more about the Veterans SA Partnerships Hub and Jamie Larcombe Centre. Justin Brown, Partnerships Hub Coordinator, Veterans SA was a fantastic host for the day and provided the group with an informative overview of activities provided to veterans and their families.

The group were also very grateful of the informative presentations provided by Darren Renshaw, Veterans Health Advocate from the Jamie Larcombe Centre and Di Greene, Employment & Operations Officer from Soldier On. All agreed the day was very beneficial in terms of identifying opportunities for future partnership opportunities.

DEFENCE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION (DCO) ANNUAL TWILIGHT EXPO, ADELAIDE ZOO

On 15 February 2019, MHPE volunteers Richard Kirkman and Ian Short assisted the VAN Community Support team with a display at the annual Twilight DCO Expo at Adelaide Zoo. The event attracted around 1400 ADF Members, spouses and children and was a great engagement opportunity for the MHPE volunteers and Community Support team.

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND UP



RAAF Edinburgh Annual Xmas Treat for Defence Families.

RAAF EDINBURGH ANNUAL XMAS TREAT FOR DEFENCE FAMILIES

On 6 December 2018, MHPE volunteers, Bob Kelly and Richard Kirkman assisted the DVA VAN Community Support Team with a display at the RAAF base Edinburgh and were kept busy with more than 2000 adults and children braving the extreme heat! The event was a great opportunity for MHPE volunteers to engage with current serving ADF members and their families and provide DVA information and services. DVA and MHPE are committed to being an ongoing partner in various veteran support precincts organised by Defence.



Community Support Adviser, Neil Davies and MHPE Volunteer Ron Boyce with Mobile Service Centre Logistics Manager and Waikerie RSL Representative.

OPERATION UNITY, 10,000 STEPS WALKING CHALLENGE

Operation Unity fielded 45 individuals in nine teams for DVA's 2018 Armistice 10,000 Steps National Walking Challenge. Eight group walks were organised and participants contributed towards prizes and an end of challenge healthy BBQ. MHPE Volunteer Representative Richard Kirkman attended the BBQ to congratulate participants on their achievements and to provide an overview of MHPE in SA.



Centre - MHPE Volunteer Representative Richard Kirkman with Operation Unity members and organiser, Bill Bates.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MOBILE SERVICE CENTRE (MSC)

On 30 January 2019, Neil Davies from DVA's VAN Community Support Team and MHPE volunteer Ron Boyce had the opportunity to spend the day with the Australian Government Mobile Service Centre (MSC) on its first stop for the year in South Australia.

Neil and Ron were given the opportunity to observe first-hand how rural and regional community members are able to make an appointment or drop-in and more easily access government services offered by DVA, Centrelink and Medicare.

The MSC was based in the centre of Waikerie and a sausage sizzle was cooked by Waikerie RSL members with a marquee provided as shelter from the 41-degree heat! Neil and Ron enjoyed the opportunity to meet with veterans and the wider community and explore future partnership opportunities.

For more information about the MSC pilot (currently until 30 June 2019) and locations refer to the DHS website itinerary at humanservices.gov.au and search for 'Mobile Service Centres'.

UPCOMING MHPE INITIATIVES

MHPE volunteers will be organising and assisting events during Men's Health Week (10- 16 June 2019) and will also be in attendance at the 4th Annual 'Walk for veterans with PTSD' on Saturday 27 July. The walk honours veterans, emergency services personnel, and their families who have been affected by mental illness due to their service. The walk is a joint initiative between Henley & Grange RSL and Largs Bay RSL with the aim of raising funds and awareness for organisations that support veterans and emergency services mental wellbeing programs.

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND UP

MHPE NSW/ACT

HEALTHY AIRWAVESNSW NORTHERN RIVERS MHPE VOLUNTEER; ROB FRY, NSW NORTHERN RIVERS MHPE VOLUNTEER

Rob Fry recently completed ten interviews about Men's Health with Graeme Stuart, Morning Announcer, at Paradise FM 101.9. They are titled: 'Man-to-Man' chats. The first two were aired on Tuesday 23 October 2018 and the second last Tuesday 30 October 2018 around 8.10am. They were also aired on several occasions during the week afterwards. Positive feedback was received from many people who listened to the shows.

Rob has been a volunteer with MHPE for seven years. He is on the far North Coast of NSW where there are not many other MHPE volunteers to work with. Despite this he finds ample opportunity to promote the men's health message to the veteran community. The radio interviews are one avenue. Rob has coordinated 10K steps teams three years running. He organises a VHW event each year with his local sub-branch



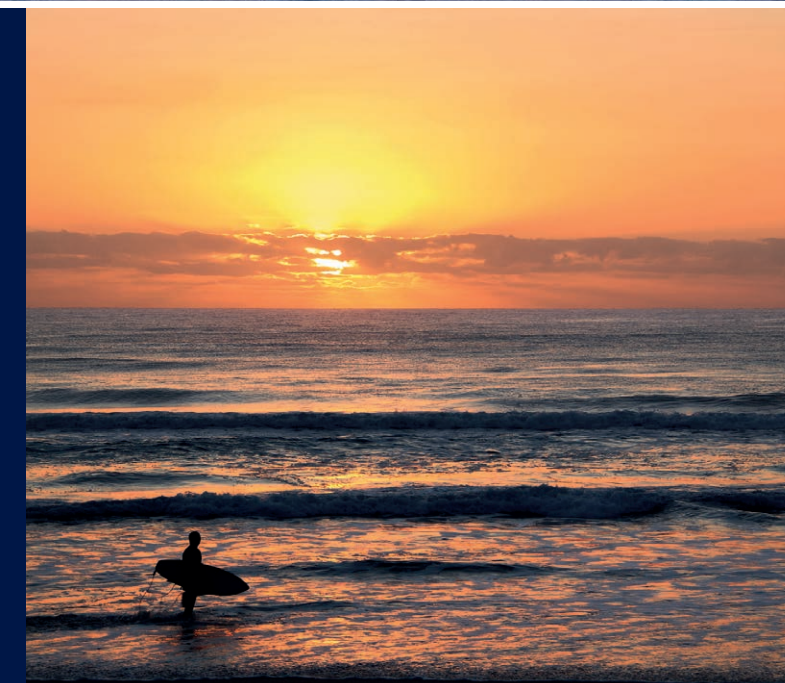
Rob Fry and Graeme Stuart, Paradise FM 101.9

and is actively involved in the RSL and Veterans' Advocacy Centre. It's wonderful to see what a difference one man can make in his local community.

Naomi Blundell
MHPE Coordinator NSW & ACT

SOUTH COAST MHPE VOLUNTEERS 23 FEBRUARY 2019

MHPE South Coast volunteers again hosted a stall at the Defence Community Welcome Day held at Bay and Basin Leisure Centre on Saturday 23 February. The day is about welcoming new Defence families to the area and showcasing local communities and services. A great chance for MHPE volunteers to connect with the younger current serving population.



MHPE Volunteers Spot Swales, Bob Crisp, James O'Brien (DHS Financial Information Officer) and Wally Sweet at the Living Well Expo.

LIVING WELL EXPO - COFFS HARBOUR MHPE VOLUNTEERS

During the last part of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, the Coffs Harbour MHPE volunteers have held stalls at four key local events as well as stalls held at Nambucca on a regular basis.

On 15 August 2018 we had a stand at the annual Living Well Expo at the Coffs Harbour Ex-Service Club which always attracts huge crowds and is a very good source for networking. This year around 2,000 people attended the expo and everyone comes away with new ideals, knowledge and

resources to support positive choices in health and wellbeing.

In September 2018 we held two Veterans' Health Week events, one at Urunga picnic area in conjunction with Coffs Legacy and the other was at a Veterans' Information Day held at the Nambucca Heads RSL Club. Both were very well attended.

October 2018 saw us operating a stall at the Dorrigo Dangar Falls in conjunction with NSW Health for Mental Health Week.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

MHPE volunteers are encouraged to attend training to support their skills and volunteer work. One of the courses we support is Mental Health First Aid training. It's like physical first aid, except for mental health issues and gives participants some tools to identify different conditions and know how to apply first aid.

In NSW volunteers from two areas have been successful in accessing courses through the website at mhfa.com.au. Feedback from the volunteers from Newcastle and Wagga Wagga who recently attended has been positive. And the best bit, these courses were both hosted in their local area and at no cost to them.

**CLUB OLD BAR
SENIORS WEEK
HEALTH EXPO**



**GUEST SPEAKERS
40+ EXHIBITORS
ENTERTAINMENT
& GIVEAWAYS!**

*Proudly brought to you by
the Old Bar Mens Shed*

FREE ADMISSION + FREE MORNING TEA!

**WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY
10AM- 1PM
CLUB OLD BAR**

For further enquiries please call John 6557 4165






OLD BAR HEALTH EXPO - 20 FEBRUARY 2019

Old Bar Health Expo is an annual event organised by MHPE NSW & ACT State Rep, John Macartney. This year's event was held at Club Old Bar and began with Year 6 local primary school students doing a welcome to country followed by the National Anthem. There were 38 exhibitors ranging from nursing homes to podiatry, legal advisers, mental health services and men's sheds. The MHPE stand was staffed by Lynn Mooney and Cindy Ulstrup from our DHS Community Engagement service. This year there was a good level of interest and passing feedback.

As a testament to how far this event has come, when the first event was held four years ago attendance was very poor despite all the planning, promotion and information provided. Not one to be easily put off, John keeps learning from past years mishaps and has turned this into a highlight on the local calendar so newsworthy they made Channel 7 News!. Check out the footage at prime7.com.au/news/6619-seniors-health-a-priority



MHPE VOLUNTEERS – WHAT DO THEY DO?

MHPE VOLUNTEERS SHARE HEALTH INFORMATION. FOR EXAMPLE: ONE-ON-ONE CHATS; HEALTH WEEK EVENTS; WORKING WITH MEN'S SHEDS; DISTRIBUTING HEALTH INFORMATION; RUNNING A STAND AT A COMMUNITY EXPO, OR GIVING A TALK AT A LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP OR EX-SERVICE ORGANISATION MEETING.

TO TALK TO A VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT THE RELEVANT MHPE STATE/TERRITORY VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE BELOW:

NAME	LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
KEVIN MOSS	Queensland	0418 734 899	kevin.moss04@gmail.au
GARY TREEVE	Victoria & Tasmania	0407 480 201	gdmtreeve@bigpond.com
RON BLANCHARD	Northern Territory	08 8927 5638 or 0476 145 303	aileron@bigpond.com
RICHARD KIRKMAN	South Australia	08 8336 7082 or 0413 816 437	bkandrc@tpg.com.au
JOHN MACARTNEY	NSW & ACT	(02) 6657 4165 or 0427 787 296	jrmaca@bigpond.com
JOHN SHARP	Western Australia	08 9291 9214 or 0419 663 246	rosssharp@ii.net

YOUR LOCAL CONTACT IS:

NEXT ISSUE: **VOLUME 18 NO 2. 2019**

THEME: **VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK MENTAL WELLNESS EDITION**

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES:
30 AUGUST 2019

If you'd like to share your story with our readers or have an idea for an article, we'd like to hear from you. You can email the Editor at **menshealth@dva.gov.au** or call the DVA General Enquiries number **1800 555 254** and ask for the MHPE Magazine editor.



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs
Men's Health Peer Education

MAGAZINE PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCED BY:
Editor
Men's Health Peer Education Magazine
Department of Veterans' Affairs

AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT:
<http://www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm>

Feedback, Articles and Ideas:
Email the editor: menshealth@dva.gov.au

MAIL YOUR LETTER TO:
Editor
Men's Health Peer Education Magazine
c/- Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO Box 9998
Brisbane QLD 4001