



**Disclaimer:**

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TO

**P.V.A. NSW's CATCH UP NEWSLETTER –  
SEPT/OCTOBER 2023 EDITION**



P.V.A. NSW's *Catch Up Newsletter* is sent out via email to all our listed Branch/Group Contacts. Any member who would like their own copy can email our NSW State Secretary, Kerrie, at [nswsecretary@pva.org.au](mailto:nswsecretary@pva.org.au) and she will arrange for it to be distributed directly to you.

Generally, *Catch up Newsletters* will be emailed in March/April and October each year. Additional email notices will be sent to those on our list when any vital news is available between Newsletter editions that has ramifications for our members.

**RESULTS OF THE SEPTEMBER NSW AGM**

The NSW Annual General and State Management Committee (SMC) Meetings were held on 8 September at Wollongong. The results of elections were as follows: **President** – Louise Freebairn; **Vice President** – Lorraine Burt OAM; **Secretary** – Kerrie McCormick; **Treasurer** – Cheryl Nicholson and **Committee Members** – Helen Purcell; Wanda Hamill; Rona Lunney and Narelle Bromhead OAM. Helen is now our **Wellbeing Administrator** with Lisa Pusey our **Admin Assistant**. President Louise thanked the outgoing Committee Members and welcomed the new Committee.



It was a pleasure to catch up with our Patron Lady Cosgrove, Members from Wollongong, Central Coast, mid north coast and Tweed Heads at these Meetings.

Our first State Management Committee Meeting with the new Committee followed the AGM; the next Meeting will be held electronically in early November. If there are any issues that members wish to bring to the Committee, please contact Kerrie on: [nswsecretary@pva.org.au](mailto:nswsecretary@pva.org.au)

**P.V.A. NAME BADGES**

These can be ordered through our Membership Secretary Wanda at: [wanda.ha@bigpond.com](mailto:wanda.ha@bigpond.com). Unfortunately, badge prices have had to increase recently; the new price per personalised name badge including postage to your address is \$20.00.

## JOINT GROUP LUNCH



In March, 2023 the ladies from the Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads Groups met together for a lunch held in Urunga. A good time was had by all, with lots of shared laughs, general news and the opportunity for Members to meet others from surrounding areas. It is planned to organise another joint lunch in the coming months.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Do you have any planned upcoming events for your Sub-branch / Group? If so, what are they? Upcoming events may be advertised in a variety of ways: in this Newsletter, on our Facebook page, on our website or in our **P.V.A. News Magazine**, which is sent out in July and December each year. Just let us know what you would like included in our various communication options.

## VETERAN & FAMILY ADVOCATES' SEMINAR

If you are interested in this Seminar, please contact Newcastle Legacy, as below, for further information and bookings:



# Save the Date

## 20th Annual Veteran and Family Advocates' Seminar

Hosted by Newcastle Legacy

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
9am - 4.30pm  
Hexham Bowling Club, 290 Old Maitland Road, HEXHAM  
*Invitations for Attendees and Stall Holders to follow*  
For enquiries please contact [newcastle@legacyclubservices.org.au](mailto:newcastle@legacyclubservices.org.au)

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## NSW VEHICLE REGISTRATION

You can make it easier to keep track of your car registration if you wish to opt-in to the new Digital Vehicle Registration service offered via MyServiceNSW and get your registration renewal notice and reminders via email.



You will never lose your Certificate of Registration again – when you opt-in, your certificate will conveniently be saved in your MyServiceNSW Account so you can access it anytime. For further details, and to register, email: [service.nsw.gov.au](mailto:service.nsw.gov.au) or phone: 13 77 88.

## POSITIONS VACANT – WELLBEING ADVOCATES AND SUPPORT OFFICERS



Any member who may wish to volunteer their time can do so by offering support to other Partners and those in the veteran Community in either of these roles. Volunteering in itself is a way to gain self-confidence, raise your self-esteem and to value your own worth in society.

Some information on each of these options is given below. If you think you might be interested in either role and can allocate 1 or 2 hours a week/fortnight/month to assist with the wellbeing of partners and their families, please contact: [nswpresident@pva.org.au](mailto:nswpresident@pva.org.au)

### **Wellbeing Advocate:**

Due to a recent decrease in the number of Wellbeing Advocates working with our Association we are now limited in the amount of Welfare assistance we are able to offer our Members. We are looking for Members who might like to volunteer for these positions so that we can continue giving the qualified support that our Membership deserves.

### ***Role of a Wellbeing Advocate***

As a Wellbeing Advocate (WA) you are accredited through the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP). While providing services, assistance and support to clients Advocates are provided with Public Liability Insurance coverage by the Partners of Veterans Assoc. Inc. (PVA) through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc (VITA) once you pass the course and throughout your tenure in the position. Currently, there are over 35 organisations that are members of VITA.

Regular courses are available through ATDP to assist you in establishing what you will need to know in order to fulfill your Wellbeing Advocacy role. As a Wellbeing Advocate, you are a valued member of the WA Team and you will be supported by a Wellbeing Support Officer (WSO). Whilst undertaking the WA role you are expected to undertake PVA's wellbeing-led approach to advocacy, delivering high quality wellbeing support of, and assuring high quality services are delivered to, partners, veterans and their families.

A WA requires a depth of knowledge and a wide range of skills to successfully assist veterans, Defence and ex-Defence members, partners and their dependents in their dealings with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and any other agency as required. A Handbook will be provided which has been prepared under the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) ATDP in consultation with the ex-service community. It covers wellbeing support available under veterans' and associated legislation and information on a range of health and community services and is designed to assist Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) representatives and others within the veteran and serving and ex-serving community to perform their support role within that community. The latest version of the Wellbeing Advocate's Handbook can be downloaded from the ATDP website: <https://web.atdp.org.au/updates>. The Handbook is a national resource, and the focus is on national groups and organisations. It covers information on a range of health and community services based on the needs of ESOs. The Handbook does not refer to specific services offered by local councils, shires and regions. This would have made it unmanageable, given that much of the information from other local areas in Australia would not be relevant to the individual ESO representative.

As a WA, for PVA NSW, specific tasks, performed either directly yourself or in conjunction with a WSO would include:

- Assist those in need in person at an appropriate location, or by MSTeams, phone or email
- Provide Information and Advice to facilitate access to: Health, housing and other community services and benefits, and the wide array of Federal, State, Local government services, including those available from DVA.
- Conduct initial interviews and record keeping
- Arrange appointments

- Provide wellbeing support
- Maintain a comprehensive network of contacts with Service Providers
- Ensure regular contact is maintained with past and present Clients, delivering ongoing support needs
- Regularly review authoritative material on veteran and family wellbeing
- Participate in CPD sessions and the Regional CoP, taking a leadership role as appropriate

### **Wellbeing Support Officer (WSO):**

#### ***The Role of a Wellbeing Support Officer***

Whilst the Advocacy Training & Development Program (ATDP) does not provide formal training for Wellbeing Support Officers (WSOs) as is the case for Wellbeing and Compensation Advocates, PVA NSW will ensure that you are provided with some initial skills, mentoring support and a copy of the ATDP publication *Wellbeing Support Officer's Handbook*. The latest version of the Handbook can be downloaded from the ATDP website: <https://web.atdp.org.au/updates>.

Most Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) have their own definitions, specifications and responsibilities of the WSO role. Please remember that whilst there is no Nationally accredited course for a WSO, PVA NSW believes that WSOs should receive initial training and ongoing support.

A WSO is unaccredited and not covered by Professional Indemnification insurance. As a WSO you do not provide advice or connect with service providers nor monitor service provision.

As a WSO your role is to assist the Wellbeing Advocate which generally means that you are required to undertake straightforward tasks, work under routine direction against established priorities and procedures while exercising some autonomy. WSOs may be required to undertake procedural, clerical, administrative support and operational tasks and provide basic assistance and support to Advocates for Partners, Veterans and their Families. In PVA NSW the voluntary work of a WSO is characterised by one or more of the following:

- Front desk services at a Veterans' Centre (VC) or Advocacy Office for RSL Sub Branch, or Vietnam Veterans Association Sub Branch
- Exercising non-judgemental support and camaraderie
- Providing support within your scope of practice to Advocates as required by other team members
- Providing companionship with visits to the home, hospital and aged care facilities (ACF)
- Providing simple services such as driving, shopping trips and supporting domestic arrangements
- Arranging for simple domestic assistance or home maintenance service
- Assisting with administrative duties (eg within the ESO office) in a non-paid position
- Assisting with the administration of social clubs within a service club environment in a non-paid position
- Organising and conducting social, family and sporting activities
- Provide non-clinical and non-Advocate support to a partner's family during time of grief, loss and bereavement (serious illness or death of a veteran or war widow/er)

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**



Have you renewed your P.V.A. Membership for 2023 and updated your Membership details if necessary? If you have misplaced the Renewal Form included with your last P.V.A. Magazine, you can contact the N.S.W. Membership Secretary, Wanda Hamill, at: [nswmembership@pva.org.au](mailto:nswmembership@pva.org.au). The form can also be found on our webpage. Alternatively, a copy of this Form is included at the end of this Newsletter which you can print out and use.



## FUND RAISING

As a means of raising funds towards the ongoing Welfare work of P.V.A., we have the following items for sale:

### *Microwave Bowl Holders:*

Prices are:      Small Size      \$10.00 + \$3.70 for postage  
                         Large Size      \$15.00 + \$3.70 for postage

### *Seat Belt Covers:*

Cost:              \$15.00 for a pair + \$3.30 postage



To order, contact: Narelle Bromhead at: [nswadmin@pva.org.au](mailto:nswadmin@pva.org.au) or phone 0407 450 896.

## MEMBERS DAY – PORT MACQUARIE

This was held on 27 May and hosted by PVA NSW Inc. It was a tremendous success! The attendance was overwhelming; we had 60 attendees including 11 National Board Members and Lady Lynne Cosgrove. Member attendees included representations from Central Coast, Nambucca, Grafton, Newcastle, Maitland, Taree, Port Macquarie/Hastings and many others.

The day started at 10.00 am with Members and Guests arriving to share a sumptuous morning tea. The tables were gloriously decorated with magnificent table flower displays organised by Brenda Rowland from Taree. This was followed by a lovely welcome from Mayor Pinson of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council. The 11 National Board members present were introduced and they mingled with members present to answer questions asked from each table. After lunch our Guest Speaker, Debbie Sommers who is a volunteer from the Port Macquarie Museum presented us with a delightful ½ hour talk on the history of Port Macquarie. Debbie is also a PVA Member and her knowledge of the Port Macquarie past was illuminating. We did, of course, have an official “20<sup>th</sup> PVA National Anniversary” cake cutting ceremony and official photos were taken by Shelley Harbour, who also ensured several photos were taken throughout the day to mark this special occasion.



A special thanks goes to Jessie Kirkman, Lorraine Burt's granddaughter, who made the wonderful calico bags which were presented to Directors and Guests as a memento of Port Macquarie and PVA NSW Inc.; these were absolutely beautiful and very professional. Many Members expressed interest in having the opportunity to buy some of these bags in the future – we are investigating this as a form of fundraising and will advise details of price and availability etc when available.

So many members (and family) worked behind the scenes in preparation for this day – a big thank you to everyone involved. The day was one of laughter, fun, fellowship, and support!

## DVA MINDFULNESS-BASED, STRESS REDUCTION (MBSR) PROGRAM

*DVA is looking for veterans, carers and family members to participate in one of the upcoming FREE Mindfulness-based, Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs. Please refer anyone who may be interested, using the contact details provided below.*

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has contracted **Open Ground** to design and deliver a military culturally aware, online facilitated, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program.

The intention is to expand DVA's digital mental health capabilities, providing veterans and their families with alternate engagement pathways, access to virtual group learning and support environments, soft entry into mental health support and the opportunity for connection with like-minded individuals. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is particularly seeking to support improved social connection for those who are socially or geographically isolated, including those in rural and remote locations.

If you know of, or currently engaging with any veteran or family members who you think may benefit from this course, please let them know this is available to them. Alternatively, further information can be found at this link: [www.openground.com.au](http://www.openground.com.au)

**Cost:** MBSR programs are free for veterans and their families.

<b>Dates:</b>	<i>Course 1</i>	<i>6th September - 29th November 2023</i>	<i>(Veterans)</i>
	<i>Course 2</i>	<i>16th October 2023 – 8th January 2024</i>	<i>(Family/Carer)</i>
	<i>Course 3</i>	<i>29th January – 22nd April 2024</i>	<i>(Veterans)</i>
	<i>Course 4</i>	<i>29th April – 22nd July 2024</i>	<i>(Family/Carer)</i>

### What is Available:

A customised 8-week trauma-informed, military culturally aware program, exclusively for veterans and family members, led by experienced instructors. The course is practical, inspiring and transformative for those wanting to reduce job, family or health-related stress, including serious conditions. It engages participants physically, emotionally and intellectually to cultivate resilience and a greater sense of ease and effectiveness in work and life.

1. **Connect:** The program creates a safe space for veterans and their families, led by experienced instructors who understand the impact of trauma, and the veteran/family experience.
2. **Focus your Mind:** Mindfulness becomes your ally, anchoring you in the present moment. Gain valuable insights into your triggers, reactions and coping mechanisms.
3. **Dig Deep:** MBSR emphasizes self-compassion, helping you cultivate kindness and understanding toward yourself as you navigate the path to healing.
4. **Reinforce Resilience:** Rebuild your strength and resilience with specialised techniques to cope with adversity, adapt to life's challenges and thrive in the face of difficulties.
5. **Support:** You are not alone in this journey. Join a community of like-minded individuals who have walked the same path, and who come together to support one another through recovery.

### Participants Report:

Improved self-efficacy; Greater capacity to cope with short and long term stress; A lasting decrease in both physical and psychological symptoms; Increased ability to relax; More energy and enthusiasm for life.

## Testimonials:

*"MBSR has been life changing for me. It's allowed me to manage my negative thoughts and depression and assisted to make my relationships more productive."*

*"Thank you for allowing me to learn these skills. As someone who suffers from crippling PTSD, I recommend this course to any veteran who suffers. I can't recommend this course highly enough."*

*"Thank you for your support!"*

## For further Information or to Register Contact:

Elizabeth Granger

Phone: 0409 811 037

Email: [elizabeth@openground.com.au](mailto:elizabeth@openground.com.au)



Connecting carers | ●●●● to support services

## WHERE CARERS CAN FIND SUPPORT

A carer is someone who looks after a family member or friend with disability, a medical condition, mental illness, or someone who is frail due to age. If you are a carer, you can get help and support through Carer Gateway.

## It's OK to Ask for Help

Looking after someone else can be challenging. It's OK to ask for support as this helps when you are caring for someone. Unpaid carers often don't ask for help because they:

- Don't think of themselves as a carer
- Don't think they need support or services
- Don't think it's acceptable to ask for support
- Don't know about the in-language or culturally appropriate services that are available.

It's never too early or too late to get support and to make changes that will improve your health and wellbeing.

## What is Carer Gateway?

Carer Gateway provides in-person, phone and online services and support to Australia's 2.65 million unpaid carers. Carer Gateway has many services that can help you with any daily challenges, emotional and financial stresses that you may experience in your role as a carer.

Call 1800 422 737 to talk to a Carer Gateway service provider Monday – Friday between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm. Carer Gateway staff will help you to find appropriate services and support. There is a Translating and Interpreting Service available if required, on 131 450. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



The Carer Gateway Website: [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au) provides online services and information to support you as a carer.

## Carer Gateway Provides Many Services, Including:

- *Coaching* – To learn new ways to manage stress and improve your wellbeing.
- *Counselling* – If you are feeling stressed, anxious, sad or frustrated, a professional counsellor can talk through your worries and help you one-on-one, either in person or on the phone in the comfort of your own home.
- *Respite Care* ‘Respite care’ having someone else take care of the person you care for. Eg you might need emergency respite care if you suddenly become ill or injured. You can also plan respite care to allow you can have a break. Arrange emergency or planned respite care by calling Carer Gateway to discuss options in your area.
- *Connect with Other Carers* – Carer Gateway can help you meet with people in similar situations to share stories, knowledge, advice and experience either in person or via the website forum which you can join.
- *On-Line Skills Courses* – Learn new skills through short, interactive on-line courses on the website; these will help you in your caring role, and provide information on caring for your own wellbeing and dealing with stress and legal issues.
- *Financial Support* – As a carer you may be able to access financial help from either of the two Support Packages available. These include funding for a one-off support for equipment or an item to assist in your caring role, or ongoing funding for things such as planned Respite or transport over a 12-month period.

## DVA COUNSELLING SERVICES

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling provides high quality mental health services to Australian veterans and their families. Open Arms’ staff can contact clients personally, by telephone and online video counselling as required. Open Arms offers **free** and **confidential** counselling, peer support, self-help resources, crisis accommodation, support, group treatment programs and suicide intervention workshops – provided by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

Our **Client Assist Contact Centre** – enhancing our ability to support Open Arms clients with a workforce trained in veteran issues – is available 24/7 for assistance by calling: 1800 011 046.



**Safe Zone Support** is a **free** and **anonymous** counselling line, created for vulnerable veterans and their families who might not otherwise seek mental health care due to concerns about protection of anonymity.

This service provides immediate access to Open Arms counsellors who understand military culture and experience. Call: 1800 142 072. Further information is available at: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/>.

## DVA BUDGET: 2023 – 2024

In mid-2023, the Department of Veterans Affairs released information about this latest budget. Further details are available at:

[www.dva.gov.au/about/accessing-information/what-can-i-access/corporate-information-access/budgets/budget-2023-24](https://www.dva.gov.au/about/accessing-information/what-can-i-access/corporate-information-access/budgets/budget-2023-24)

or a summary sheet at:

[www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/2023-24-Budget at a Glance BUDGET.pdf](https://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/2023-24-Budget%20at%20a%20Glance%20BUDGET.pdf)





Veterans And families can get face-to-face help with a range of DVA support services at all Services Australia Service Centres (formerly known as Centrelink Offices, and which include help with issues relating to Centrelink, Medicare, My Aged Care, Veterans Information Service etc) across the country. The service available from Services Australia Centres are in addition to those provided by DVA's Veterans' Access Network (VAN) offices.

These additional services include:

- Access to on-site wireless internet for public use and to self-service facilities including computers, printers and phones
- Document Lodgement
- Certification of Documentation
- Checking that forms contain the right information
- Help with creating a MyService Account
- Printing documentation from MyService
- Guidance on how to make updates to information when circumstances have changed

## **ENERGY BILL RELIEF FUND**



The Australian Government is partnering with state and territory governments to provide \$3 billion in electricity bill relief to eligible households and small businesses through the Energy Bill Relief Fund.

### ***Eligibility – Residential:***

Relief payments will automatically be applied to you if you already get an existing energy concession on your electricity bill – some may have already seen the first of these payments appear on their most recent energy account!

### ***Concession Card Holders:***

#### **How and When Payments Will Be Made:**

For most households relief payments will be applied directly to your electricity account. Each household can only receive one payment, even if there's more than one eligible person living there. For New South Wales residents, the total relief payment will be paid in instalments every three months. The first instalment is scheduled to be applied by the end of August 2023, for all states. Future payments are expected to be applied roughly every three months after that. If you have an eligible card or payment but are not currently receiving an existing energy concession, the Department of Veterans' Affairs or Services Australia will contact you after September 2023 to tell you what, if anything, you need to do.

#### **How Much You'll Get, if Eligible:**

New South Wales – Households \$500 (in four \$125 instalments), in addition to existing NSW energy rebates.

#### **How to Check if Bill Relief Has Been Paid:**

To check if your supplier has applied your bill relief payment, check the copy of your latest bill. You can also view your bill online if you have registered for this in relation to your energy supply. Remember, the first instalment will be applied by the end of August 2023 in all states, so it won't appear on your bill until then.

## LEGACY HOUSE – MOSS VALE

Some of you may have missed out on the opportunity for a stay at Legacy House, Moss Vale in recent years due to Covid then transport/renovation issues at Legacy House. We have recently been advised that if any ladies wish to visit Legacy holiday house later this year, the available dates set aside for PVA NSW are 5 – 14 December 2023.



We will be able to have 18 ladies in total; there are 14 bedrooms, one upstairs, so some will need to share. Please note that you do not have to attend for the full period; you may choose to take three days, five days, or one week of respite. Legacy organises pick up from the airport and Sydney Central railway station and also organises the activities/outings during your stay at no charge.



We are advised that for anyone who is a Legacy Beneficiary, Legacy can assist with the cost of your travel from home to Moss Vale and return. Contact your local Legacy office for further details.

If you wish to make a holiday booking for this year, please contact our President, Louise Freebairn on: [nswpresident@pva.org.au](mailto:nswpresident@pva.org.au) no later than 30 September 2023.

## UPCOMING OPEN ARMS GROUP PROGRAMS

### GROUP PROGRAM SCHEDULE



1800 011 046  
OpenArms.gov.au



### OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023

### GREATER NSW – NEWCASTLE & LISMORE

#### safeTALK

Lismore 1/2-day Workshop

Mon 2 Oct 9 am – 1 pm

#### DOING ANGER DIFFERENTLY

Newcastle 2-day Workshop

Thurs & Fri 2 & 3/11 9 am - 5 pm

#### BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Newcastle 3-day Workshop

Wed – Fri 27 – 29 November  
9 am – 5 pm

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### safeTALK:

In the safeTALK half-day workshop you will learn how to become more alert to suicide prevention opportunities, and how to offer help.

### Doing Anger Differently:

Doing anger differently will help you to understand anger and manage it more effectively so that it doesn't have a negative impact on your own or other's lives.

*Contact Open Arms to register.*

**OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023**

## **GREATER NSW – SYDNEY & NOWRA**

### **STRESS AND RELAXATION**

*Sydney 1-day Workshop*

Fri 6/10/23 9 am – 5 pm

### **STEPPING OUT**

*Liverpool 2-day Workshop*

Thurs & Fri 9 & 10/11/23 9 am – 5 pm

### **BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS**

*Nowra 3-day Workshop*

Wed – Fri 18 – 20/10/23 9 am – 5 pm

### **UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY**

*Parramatta 2-day Workshop*

Mon & Tues 20 & 21/11/23 9 am – 5 pm

### **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**

*Dubbo 2-day Workshop*

Thurs & Fri 7 & 8/9/23 9 am – 5 pm

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Stress and Relaxation:**

Relaxation and stress management provides practical skills that can be used in everyday life to de-stress via mindfulness techniques.

### **Building Better Relationships:**

Building better relationships can help you rediscover what's important in your relationship and rebuild a relationship with your partner.

### **Mental Health and First Aid:**

Mental Health First Aid is a two-day workshop that teaches practical skills for helping a family member or friend who is experiencing mental health problems.

### **Stepping Out:**

A two-day program for ADF members and their partners who are about to or have recently separated from the military.

### **Understanding Anxiety:**

This program will help you to understand anxiety and teaches you strategies and skills to reduce anxiety and associated stress.

*Contact Open Arms to register.*

**ONLINE: OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023**

**MANAGING PAIN**

*2 x 90 minute online sessions (instructor lead)*

1230 hr – 1400 hrs AEST

Tues & Thurs 31/10 & 2/11

Wed & Fri 22 & 24/11

Tues & Thurs 5 & 7/12

**RECOVERY FROM TRAUMA**

*2 x 90 minute online sessions (instructor lead)*

1300 hrs – 1430 hrs AEST

Wed & Fri 18 & 20/10

Wed & Fri 22 & 24/11

**SLEEPING BETTER**

*2 x 90 minute online sessions (instructor lead)*

12.30 hrs – 1400 hrs AEST

Wed & Fri 18 & 20/10

Wed & Fri 8 & 11/11

Wed & Fri 29/11 & 1/12

**UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY**

*2 x 90 minute online sessions (instructor lead)*

1100 hrs – 1230 hrs AEST

Tues & Thurs 17 & 19/10

Tues & Thurs 28 & 30/11

Tues & Thurs 19 & 21/12

**DOING ANGER DIFFERENTLY**

*2 x 90 minute online sessions (instructor lead)*

1300 hrs – 1430 hrs AEST

Wed & Fri 4 & 6/10

Wed & Fri 25 & 27/10

Wed & Fri 15 & 17/11

Wed & Fri 6 & 8/12

**BLENDED MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**

*Part 1: Self-paced Learning*

*Part 2: 2 x 2.5 hr online sessions (instructor lead)*

1300 hrs – 1530 hrs AEST

Wed & Fri 25 & 27/10

Mon & Wed 20 & 22/11

Tues & Thursday 12 & 14/12

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**Managing Pain:**

This program will help you learn about pain and teaches you strategies and skills for effective pain management.

**Understanding Anxiety:**

This program will help you to understand anxiety and teaches you strategies and skills to reduce anxiety and associated stress.

**Recovering from Trauma:**

This program will help you to understand the possible impact of trauma, and teaches you strategies and skills to help you to manage its impact on you and your family.

**Doing Anger Differently:**

Doing anger differently will help you to understand anger and manage it more effectively so that it doesn't have a negative impact on your own or other's lives.

**Sleeping Better:**

Sleeping better is an educational and skills-based group program to help you manage disturbed sleep.



## Mental Health First Aid:

Mental Health First Aid is a two-day workshop that teaches practical skills for helping a family member or friend who is experiencing mental health problems.

*Contact Open Arms to register.*



**CONTENT SUMMARY**

**Kookaburra Kids offers a range of programs specifically developed to support and empower young people from families experiencing mental illness.**

Our programs offer participants a much-needed break, whilst introducing them to new friends from similar situations, and equipping them with lifelong knowledge and resources to help them reach their highest potential.

**Our programs**  
We offer three resilience-building services that we equally encourage our young people to participate in. Though unique in their own way, each service promotes mental health literacy and safe, positive help-seeking behaviours while uniting kids from similar situations to assure they feel understood and supported.

**Kookaburra Kids camps**  
Kookaburra Kids camps are free and offer young people from families experiencing mental illness the opportunity to learn and grow while having fun in a safe, supportive environment. As expected, campers get the chance to thrive in a new place, participate in fun outdoor activities and make new friends.

What makes Kookaburra Kids camps unique is that woven through the program are important lessons about mental illness that empower kids with skills and abilities they can take home. ► **Learn more at:** [www.kookaburrakids.org.au/camps/](http://www.kookaburrakids.org.au/camps/)

**Kookaburra Kids activity days**  
Held during school holidays, Kookaburra Kids activity days provide the opportunity to catch up with friends from camp for a fun and free day out. Activities can include ice skating, laser tag, bowling, movies, putt putt golf and beach activities, to name a few.

These days present another great opportunity for our young people to connect with friends from similar situations, empowering them by building up their mental health knowledge. ► **Learn more at:** [www.kookaburrakids.org.au/activity-days/](http://www.kookaburrakids.org.au/activity-days/)



**Kookaburra Kids Connect**  
Kookaburra Kids Connect is our new interactive online program where kids, new and existing engage with each other in supportive, strengths-based resilience discussions.

These chat sessions, run by youth for youth, are hosted by Kookaburra Kids staff and volunteers to provide a safe, supportive setting where young people living in families experiencing mental illness can express themselves.

By expanding our program digitally, we can deliver our services to more young people across the country, including those in rural areas. ► **Learn more at:** [www.kookaburrakids.org.au/kookaburra-kids-connect/](http://www.kookaburrakids.org.au/kookaburra-kids-connect/)

**Like to know more?**

► Visit our website for further information on eligibility criteria, how to refer a young person and more: [www.kookaburrakids.org.au](http://www.kookaburrakids.org.au)  
Or, email us at: [info@kookaburrakids.org.au](mailto:info@kookaburrakids.org.au)

AUSTRALIAN KOOKABURRA KIDS FOUNDATION

KOOKABURRAKIDS.ORG.AU

## **UPDATE: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS – VETERANS' MATES PROGRAM**

In late August 2023 the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) issued an updated statement on the Veterans' MATES program – now available on the DVA website: [Statement from the Department of Veterans' Affairs - Veterans' MATES program - Update | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#). The University of South Australia is contracted by DVA to deliver the Veterans' MATES program on DVA's behalf.

This program has been operating for more than 18 years to provide a valuable proactive service addressing 'real life' health care problems in the veteran community. Specifically, the program seeks to positively change veteran medicine usage, and increase the uptake of complementary DVA funded health services, all to support veteran wellbeing and a reduction in adverse medicine events. It takes an evidence-based, targeted approach, using a team of clinical experts to develop current health and medicine information, using secure and private billing data to identify members of the veteran community who would benefit from receiving this information.

Identified data is only used to determine veterans who are at risk of medicine related problems and facilitate DVA writing to the veteran and their doctor to bring them together to have a positive conversation that is tailored to the veteran's specific health care needs. All other data used in the program is de-identified. DVA takes privacy very seriously, and we would like to assure veterans and families that DVA and the University of South Australia have strict policies in place including relevant research ethics approval processes to ensure the appropriate protection of personal information, and that ethics approval remains in place, guiding the delivery of the program.

Since its inception, the Veterans' MATES program has reached more than 300,000 veterans. Each year approximately 77,000 veterans receive health educational material from Veterans' MATES, specific to their health care needs. Veterans report they find the information useful, and that it empowers them to take an active role in their own health. This targeted and timely information and support for veterans, and their healthcare teams, has achieved many positive health outcomes across a range of health issues affecting the veteran community. Evidence shows that adverse medicine events have been reduced and that veteran access to suitable health services has increased.

DVA would like to reassure veterans and families that there has not been a breach of their data, and there is no systemic data security issue. The recent determination by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) relates to an individual case in 2017 whereby the individual opted out of participation in the program and DVA did not fully implement this request. DVA has unequivocally apologised for this. Veterans have always had the ability to opt out of the program; however, DVA has taken steps to more prominently communicate this, so veterans can make an informed decision about their participation.

The OAIC determination has highlighted that DVA's notices to veterans could include more information about how their billing information would be used for the purpose of the Veterans' MATES program. More information about privacy, and the ability of veterans to opt-out of the Veterans' MATES program has been added to DVA's website and Veterans' MATES program materials. A review of the Veterans' MATES program has been requested to ensure that all requests to opt out of the program have been actioned appropriately, and to provide further assurance of compliance with the opt out provisions under the program. As part of this review, DVA has temporarily suspended provision of further data while it ensures individual requests regarding participation are dealt with, and frameworks are in place to ensure the circumstances addressed by the OAIC in its determination do not reoccur. DVA will complete this process as quickly as possible. DVA will continue to engage with the OAIC openly and in good faith, as it looks to improve its processes. More information about the Veterans' MATES program and the use of personal information can be found at: [Veterans' MATES | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#) and <https://www.veteransmates.net.au>



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



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**FOR THOSE WHO STAND BESIDE THEM**

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