

# DFWA NSW BRANCH

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A NEWS SHEET PRODUCED FOR THE INTEREST OF NSW MEMBERS NOVEMBER 2014

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## GREETINGS FROM MCHAEAL STUART-WATT NSW BRANCH PRESIDENT

*Now that we have settled in comfortably in our newish 'digs' on the Ground Floor of Building 96 near the front entrance of Victoria Barracks, on Oxford Street Paddington, we have a new lease on life and things welfare.*

There are emerging demands on our services, particularly advice, interpretation, advocacy and assistance to sister Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs). Our new location affords us better access and we are more visible to serving members and visitors alike.

We are very grateful for the assistance provided by the Asst. Senior ADF Officer and Base Support Manager and staff in aiding our settling-in period.

I recently attended my first Military EXPO as the DFWA Representative at the Singleton Army Museum in October where there were many stalls offering all sorts of services to Serving members and Veterans alike from the Newcastle area

Particularly on the subject of Veterans' health and wellbeing, there continues to be a strong theme fostered by DVA (VVCS and VANs) to ensure programs remain relevant. Our job in a sense is to ensure our members are aware of what's on offer.

I also received a familiarisation visit from Alex Gerrick, Acting Dep. Commissioner DVA (NSW) and Hadyn White, DVA Executive Officer, regarding the impending relocation of the VAN office in Parramatta which I visited in September. I am pleased to report that for the time being, VAN

services will remain with more thought being given to a co-lated Office arrangement with another Agency

Also, there is a heightened level of interest in the ADF's Pay Case, no doubt because of the recent Middle East deployment and increase in security levels at Bases generally.

DFWA has and will continue to champion ADF Remuneration and Indexation arrangements for Veteran Disability Pensions using a mature apolitical strategy to engage all politicians.

A methodical approach has so far been beneficial and enabled DFWA (National) to regularly engage in Four-monthly Forums with the Defence Minister and their key staff.

We can all play our part in making key opinion-leaders aware of the loss of buying-power that has resulted from the decline in (Military) Pension relativity. Consider having a chat to your local Councillors, Local and Federal Members and leverage off the extensive public support that has surrounded Remembrance Day across our communities.

Stay safe and best wishes for the coming Festive Season. **Michael**

**DFWA ANNUAL RAFFLE RESULTS APPEAR IN CAMARADERIE ON PAGE 15**

## NEW INITIATIVE LINKS INJURED VETS TO EMPLOYMENT

*Help for wounded, injured or ill veterans is part of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA's) recently launched Veterans Employment Assistance Initiative which will broaden the employment assistance and support for former members and employers currently provided under DVA's rehabilitation services.*

This initiative will help veterans to improve their wellbeing, reclaim independence, utilise their skills and capabilities and secure meaningful employment.

With an identified goal of returning to work, veterans will undergo early assessment of their vocational rehabilitation needs. This will include aligning the skills they have developed

in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to potential civilian employment opportunities.

Participants may also undertake employment focused training in line with their abilities and aspirations.

*For more rehabilitation information visit: [www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation](http://www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation).*



**The NSW Branch new office is located in Victoria Barracks, Oxford Street, Paddington. Should you wish to contact us please phone (02) 8335 5447 or email: [nswbranch@DFWA.org.au](mailto:nswbranch@DFWA.org.au).**

### A GOOD AND SAD CASE - BUT NOW FINISHED.

*Some years ago one of our Case Officers went to visit a friend in St Vincent's Hospital and while there he was approached by a member of the hospital staff who had a concern with a World War II Veteran currently in the hospital for major surgery without any assistance other than Medicare.*

Investigations resulted with the information that he lived near Taree and his knees were worn out and his wife had to bring him down to Sydney for treatment and they couldn't really afford the outlay for the treatment.

Our Case Officer visited him and prepared the groundwork to get the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to accept that his conditions were related to his War Service. Following through with the claim procedure the patient suddenly found that he could get treatment under the Veterans Entitlement Act (VEA) at no cost to him and also that his travel costs would be met by DVA.

The patient had no previous knowledge of any entitlements or the existence of DVA as he lead a quiet country life.

Recently in reviewing old case files our Case Officer thought it might be worth seeing how the client was managing life and rang his telephone number. When asking to talk to the client he was advised that the client and his wife had moved away and subsequently both had passed away.

It was just lucky that the new holder of the telephone number had known the previous owners well and kept in contact until the end. Thus the file could be closed off.

### THE NSW BRANCH VOLUNTEER COUNSELLORS ARE KEPT BUSY

*During the last three months John King and Barry Wright have handled more than 27 enquiries from serving and retired defence personnel concerning entitlements regarding injuries or illness resulting from their military service.*

The majority of these cases have seen members either lodging a new claim or preparing to lodge a claim to DVA.

As a result several members have received substantial increases in their disability pensions and a number have had initial acceptance of their claim.

An increasing percentage of inquiries are from Afghanistan and Gulf veterans as well as from personnel

preparing for separation as their military careers draw to a close. They have also been approached by a benevolent organisation asking for help with a homeless Afghan veteran regarding accommodation and counselling. This case was referred to Defence Care CRR and the VVCS.

For retired members, please remember that if your disabilities are worsening you can lodge a claim for review at any time – your Branch can help.

If you need assistance phone John King and Barry Wright on (02) 8335 5487
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## NSW BRANCH DONATIONS SINCE JULY 2014

*Thank you very much for the donations we have received recently, your generosity is keeping the Association going. Just a gentle reminder to renew your subscription if you have not done so, as numbers count when it comes to lobbying politicians.*

Colonel R H Meyer, St Ives; Mrs J E Metcalfe, Mollymook; Mrs L Millar, Mosman; WO2 C E Morgan, Guildford; Mr G K Murray, East Roseville; Mr R D Naggs, Tea Gardens; Major J M Neenan, Coogee; Mr J W Neighbour, Port Macquarie; Mr L O'Dea, Cessnock; CMDR R H Old, Umina Beach; Mrs N M Ovenden, Tenterfield; Mr D J Perry, Lithgow; Ms S J Picone, Parramatta; Mrs P M Porteous, Marsfield; RADM (Rtd) M Reed, Mosman; Mrs G Rice, Preston; LTCOL G F B Ricards, Normanhurst; Mr D A Roberts, Moorook; LTCOL P M Rogers, Woronora Heights; Mr N R Rohrlach, Whyalla Norrie; Mrs E C Roney, Terrigal; Commodore G A Rose, Tuross Head; Mr R L Rowley, Kurri Kurri; PRINCHAP B E Roy, Wollstonecraft; FLTLT J C Saunders, Evans Head; Mrs J Savage, Mosman; AIRCDRE I K Scott, Wentworth Falls, Mrs J H Sherwood, Mollymook,; Mr D J Sibraa, Armidale; Mr M A Skinner,

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BSB No. 803-205 Account No: 20370943***

### A STRONG MEMBERSHIP GIVES US A LOUD VOICE

*You can help swell the DFWA ranks by inviting any of your ex-service and serving colleagues and friends, who are not members of the Association to join up. Show them this copy of Camaraderie with an application for membership inside and let them know some of the aims of the DFWA and the advantages of joining us.*