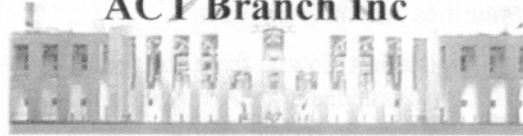




Capital Chit-Chat

Newsletter of the Defence Force Welfare Association -
ACT Branch Inc



July 2013

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

13 Aug	AGM of the DFWA, ACT Branch, 10.30 am, Buns Club, Kambah
26 Sept	DWSG CIT Lunch
9 Oct	DWSG War Memorial Commemorative Service
18 Nov	DFWA-ACT Branch/NATEX Dinner

HAPPENINGS WITHIN THE BRANCH

Trevor Goodhew has returned as Membership Registrar; Maelyn Wishart as a Member. Before their six month 'world' travels, Phil and Marjanneke McGuire resigned from President and Member. Bill Murray resigned as Secretary with

effect May 14. Les Bienkiewicz was appointed President and David Clinch Secretary. Peter Eveille and Hilton Lenard, on being TIP qualified, have been designated Welfare and Pensions Members respectively.

Annual General Meeting 2013.

The ACT Branch AGM will be held at the Burns Club, Kambah, at 1030 on Tuesday 13 August 2013. The Agenda:- 2012 Minutes; President's Report; DWSG Report; Finance Report; Appoint Auditor; Election of 2013/14 Committee.

Nominations for Committee may be lodged – to the Secretary by 3 August. Nominations for unfilled positions will be called from the floor. Your Committee has agreed that members unable to attend may appoint a proxy for the AGM – must be to the Secretary by 12 August.

Nomination and Proxy Forms are available from the Secretary – 0402 12 1679 or actbranch@dfwa.org.au.

Members are encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting.

DWSG NEWS

Because of important deadlines a separate newsletter has been sent to all widows. If you did not receive our Winter Solstice Message and would like one, contact Annette Sadler on 62478458

The attention of all DFWA members is drawn to two upcoming events which are not restricted to widows: Please find with this newsletter an invitation to our September lunch which is attended by several currently-serving personnel as well as representatives from other ESOs.

On Wed, 9 Oct, we will hold a short commemorative service at the Australian War Memorial, commencing 2 pm. If you would like

to attend or, for more information, contact the DWSG on 6265 9496.

Our Book *Here, There & Away* is now available through the following Canberra Bookshops: Uni Co-Op Books, Paperchain Bookstore, Dymocks, National Library, ABC Shops, and the Australian War Memorial

The Publishers Big Sky Publishing, currently have an online special, valid until 31 August. You can purchase a copy for only \$15 including postage within Australia; plus receive a \$10 gift voucher to use on your next online purchase. Enter PROMO CODE 'HTA' at the checkout. The web address is www.bigskypublishing.com.au

CHANGED MILITARY COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS

A Bill outlining improved military compensation arrangements recently passed through Parliament delivering increased support to the veteran and defence communities and their families.

The changes to legislation flowed from the recent Review of Military Compensation Arrangements. A full list of initiatives is shown below. More than half of the recommendations will be implemented by 1 July 2013.

Consultation is currently underway regarding two recommendations involving investigating an enhanced advocacy model and a single appeals pathway for MRCA claims. Discussion papers outlining options to address these matters are available for comment until 30 September 2013.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO MILITARY COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS

Permanent Impairment

Improved provisions which will allow earlier payment of compensation for permanent impairment for some claimants with more than one accepted condition under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA).

DVA will make greater use of the payment of interim permanent impairment compensation and will include a payment for an imputed lifestyle effect when determining the level of interim MRCA compensation payable.

A new method for calculating transitional permanent impairment compensation for clients under the MRCA who have been compensated previously under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) and/or Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA). Additionally DVA will undertake a reassessment of transitional cases determined between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2013. These reviews will be undertaken from 1 January 2014.

White Card for SRCA Veterans

Certain former ADF members with long term health conditions accepted under the SRCA will receive a White Repatriation Health Care Card from 10 December 2013 for specific conditions and a supplementary pharmaceuticals payment (if not already in receipt).

Compensation for Dependents

Dependent children of deceased members will receive increased periodic compensation

payments, aligning payments under the MRCA with similar payments made under the SRCA.

Future wholly dependent partners (widows or widowers) will have greater flexibility in the way they receive compensation following the death of an ADF member or former member.

Financial advice

Eligible persons will be able to receive compensation for legal advice and increased compensation for financial advice from financial advisers and lawyers in relation to decisions on selected compensation options.

Expanded eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria for the Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP) will be expanded. This will affect clients who have either redeemed small amounts of incapacity payments or who have had their incapacity payments fully offset by their Commonwealth funded superannuation payments. Clients who are SRDP eligible will be automatically accepted as permanently incapacitated for work for the purpose of Invalidity Service Pension.

General improvements to the delivery of benefits and services

The claims process for a person with an accepted condition under the VEA, which has been aggravated by service on or after 1 July 2004, will be simplified.

Current and former members, including reservists, will benefit from improved consistency and flexibility in accessing rehabilitation and transition services.

Education of rehabilitation providers, clients and their representatives will be increased to ensure that they are well informed about DVA entitlements in the event of injury or death. Information products on rehabilitation and transition from the ADF will also be improved.

A range of initiatives designed to improve the quality and timeliness of claims processing, including keeping clients informed of their claim's progress, and improved reporting to assist the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to fulfil its functions.

STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

The last few weeks have seen a significant change in the political environment with a new PM and ministry. In all this we have continued to press our case for improved ADF service conditions with both the Government and the Opposition. The promised meeting with the previous PM (Ms Gillard) never eventuated so we initiated a proposal for a meeting with Mr Rudd which occurred on Thursday 11 July.

We hope to release a statement soon on what the Government proposes in response to our representations concerning the deficiencies in the military superannuation schemes and specifically their proposal on the indexation matter.

We have no control over the Government's timetable and like the rest of the country pretty much rely on the press for information on the latest developments in Canberra. We will continue to press for an early release of the Government's decision.

Regards, David Jamison

LOCAL PUBLIC MEETINGS - FAIR GO CAMPAIGN

The ACT Branch DFWA will be joining with the ACT Branch of the Commonwealth Superannuated Officers Association (SCOA) in two local public meetings relating to the fair indexation of superannuation pensions. The meetings will be attended by local MPs and electorate candidates and it provides an opportunity to hear from them on this matter AND for them to hear from us!

The meetings will be held:

Eden Monaro electorate: Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club 1030am Tuesday 30 July

ACT electorates: Ainslie Football Club 1030am Tuesday 6 August

All members are encouraged to attend.

CONCESSIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (ACT) DVA FACT SHEET CON08

DVA produces a fact sheet listing possible concessions for people living in the ACT. It is 12 pages long so only a list is produced below. The Fact Sheet can be obtained from the VAN Office in Phillip, Tel1800 555 254 or 133 254 in major cities; www.dva.gov.au or email GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

Health

- Treatment Cards – always use your Gold or White Card
- Pharmaceutical Benefits
- National Diabetes Services Scheme
- Hearing Services
- Spectacles Subsidy Scheme
- Low Vision AIDS Scheme
- Ambulance

Transport

- Public Transport
- Great Southern Railway (GSR) Services
- ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme

Household

- Australia Post
- Telstra
- Energy (Gas & Electricity)
- Life Support (Energy & Water)
- Rates
- Water & Sewerage

Vehicle

- Drivers' Licences
- Motor Vehicle Registration Fee
- Motor Vehicle Duty (stamp duty) Exemption
- Motor Vehicle GST Exemption
- Other State Seniors Card

(DVA do point out that they do not 'provide' the concessions: the providers decide whether to grant them and to whom.)

Other possible concessions (not on DVA Fact Sheet) are with AustPost (mail re-direction) and ACTION buses (free travel for over 70s).

INTERESTING WEBSITES

www.soldieron.org.au

Founded in April 2012, *Soldier On* seeks to help wounded soldiers through enhancing their rehabilitation; inspiring them to overcome obstacles in their lives and empowering them to continue to live rewarding and fulfilling lives.

www.rozart.com.au

Roslyn is the wife of a veteran who has established a home-based business which enables her to care for their son who requires care 24/7. His story can also be found on the website.

DVA – HOMEFRONT

This is a précis of the DVA Information Sheet on the HomeFront Service. The Service is applicable to Gold and White Card holders and is available once a year. DVA sets aside a sum of money each year, (recently about \$220) to pay for assessed and necessary areas of concern relating to falls, trips and accidents in your home and its surrounds. Please ring the 1800 80 1945 number to arrange an assessment. A report will be made out by the assessor, after discussing recommendations with you, and sent to Allianz Global Assistance. If the recommended work is less than the maximum DVA contribution, DVA will pay the entire bill and you will be contacted by a tradesman to arrange a suitable time for the work to be undertaken. If more than the maximum DVA contribution, an approved tradesperson will be contacted to arrange a suitable time to complete a quotation. The extent of the work to be performed will be your decision. All efforts will be made to complete work within 60 days. [Examples: non slip mats, sensor lights, hose reel, night lights, etc., etc.]

SOCIAL

The National Executive will hold its conference and AGM in the ACT on Mon 18 and Tue 19 Nov 2013. There will be the Annual Dinner on the evening of Mon 18th. Members of the ACT Branch are welcome to join this important event.

Details of venue (and cost) are not yet known, but any members desiring to join the group who have run our campaigns this year, would be welcome. Any members interested are requested to inform the Secretary on 6265 9496 (answer machine) or 0402 12 1679 (direct) or actbranch@dfwa.org.au so that we may inform you of details closer to the day. If you look in your *CAMARADERIE*, soon to be delivered, you will be proud of the contribution made by ACT members to the National cause – Deputy President, Vice Presidents Pay & Conditions of Service, Advocacy & Compensation and Defence Widows; Hon Advisers – Families and Medical; the Executive Director, and volunteers in the Fair Go Campaign. See you there for a fine evening.

TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS



Thinking About A House Swap Overseas ???

Did you know you can swap your house with other like-minded house owners - in Australia or overseas – for a week or even months?

It's a great way to reduce travel expenses and to experience actually living in another country/community. My wife and I have swapped our home in Canberra for a week in Auckland; six months in the UK; a week in Coffs Harbour, Melbourne and the Central Coast; and we are

about to do it all again for three months in the UK.

How is it done ?

There are a number of websites which provide what is best described as a “match-making” service. We use www.homeexchange.com – it's

free to just look but if you want to consider a swap you need to open an account for a small annual fee. The website can best be described as a “match making” service bringing together like-minded people. Once contact is made with a potential swapper, it's a matter of negotiation between the two parties – the website has no involvement in your negotiation. You can even negotiate the swapping of

cars.

There are of course risks –you need to prepare your home; negotiate things such as internet connections, who pays the rates; putting their names on your car insurance, etc. A “house manual” can provide useful information.

We have found the whole experience to be rewarding and positive, and highly recommend it. Feel free to phone for a chat.

Les, ACT Branch President, 0411 444248

BEATING THE BLUES

A short course on improving mood offered by the VVCS and available to Australian veterans, peace keepers, their families and eligible ADF personnel. Provided free to eligible participants.

This two-day course focuses on understanding and improving depressive moods, and explores contributing factors such as thinking styles, emotional responses and military experience, stress. This program provides practical and proven strategies to solve problems, challenge unhelpful thoughts, reduce stress and improve lifestyle. Dates: 5 and 6 September, 9.30am – 4.00pm. To register your interest call 02 6225 4620 or 1800011046; Email: VVCS-CANBREG@dva.gov.au

CONTACT DETAILS

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