



# Advocacy News! June 2023

Welcome to the second Advocacy News for 2023!

DVA remains grateful to ex-service organisations and advocates for their continuing role in helping veterans and their families' access services and support. We would like to say thank you for your Service, your expertise and your time.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with updates on DVA policies and programs relevant to the advocacy community. We are aiming for this newsletter to be issued twice a year in June and December.

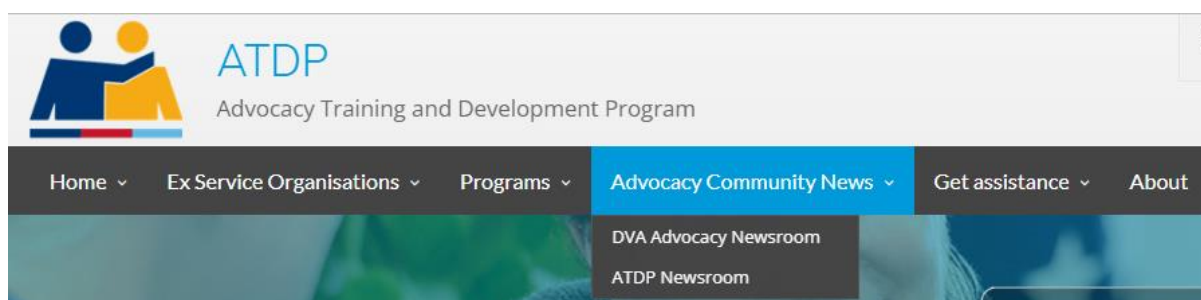
Information in this newsletter is sourced from:

[Latest news for veterans | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

[DVA Advocacy Newsroom](#)

In addition, the ATDP team will also be providing regular updates via the ATDP website within the Advocacy Community News tab:



The [ATDP Newsroom](#) provides messages about ATDP specific activities and other important information relevant to the provision of the Course in Military Advocacy. The ATDP Update Newsletter (last issue April 2023) supplements this newsroom. If you have any questions about the training and development available through ATDP please contact [ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au).

The [DVA Advocacy Newsroom](#) provides information about changes and updates in government legislation, DVA policies and programs and may include snapshots of articles that you will find on the DVA website. This newsletter supplements this newsroom.

In order to make this newsletter a success we would love to hear from you regarding articles that you would like to see. Please provide any feedback and requests for articles to [ATDP.communications@dva.gov.au](mailto:ATDP.communications@dva.gov.au).

**The Advocacy Training and Development Program team, DVA.**

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# Volunteering as an Advocate!



The Information Pack can be downloaded as a Word Template and customised for your ex-service organisation or Veterans Support Centre to distribute electronically, or as a hard copy.

[Here is the link to Information Pack!](#)

This Information Pack outlines broadly what your volunteer advocates and advocate support officers do to assist your members and clients. You will find out about:

**More about our  
advocates and  
advocate support  
officers' roles**

**The training and  
support provided by  
the Advocacy  
Training and  
Development  
Program (ATDP)**

**The benefits of  
volunteering as an  
advocate or  
advocate support  
officer**

**What commitments our  
volunteers are making**

**What insurance cover is  
provided to advocates by  
the Veterans' Indemnity  
and Training Association  
(VITA)**

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## 1. Budget 2023-24 investments to support veterans and families



The Australian Government is investing an additional \$328.1 million over four years to support the more than 340,000 veterans and dependants accessing services through DVA. This builds on the \$537.5 million invested in the October 2022 Budget as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring a better future for veterans and families.

The 2023-24 Federal Budget makes significant investments that will further reduce the veteran compensation claims backlog.

For further information about the 2023-24 Federal Budget, refer to the DVA website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news-veterans/budget-2023-24-investments-support-veterans-and-families>

Ph: [1800 VETERAN \(1800 838 372\)](tel:1800838372)

Email: [GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au)

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## 2. More than \$3.5 million awarded in community grants



The recipients of the 2022-23 Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) program have today been announced, with 57 organisations around the country set to receive their share of the \$3.552 million in funding.

The VWG program is designed to provide funding to ex-service organisations and the community organisations they support to deliver projects and activities that enhance the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families within Australia.

Some of the new initiatives that have received funding this year include a photography exhibition that will conduct a national tour, Mindful Based Stress Reduction training, fitness classes and community connection programs plus many more.

DVA is excited to see the new and exciting ways organisations continue to support the health and wellbeing of the veteran community, and look forward to seeing the end results of the activities and programs.

For a full list of successful grant recipients, refer to [www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au).

Ph: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

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### 3. Energy Bill Relief Fund



The Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments are working together to provide targeted electricity bill relief to eligible households and small businesses.

Those eligible are holders of a:

- Pensioner Concession Card;
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card; or
- Veteran Gold Card.

The amount of reduction on the energy bill depends on where the eligible card holder lives. The eligible card holder must be the primary electricity account holder, or another named on the account.

Clients are encouraged to check whether the eligible card holder's name is on the energy account.

For those currently receiving energy concession, in most cases the electricity provider will automatically apply the bill relief to their electricity account and this will reduce the amount they owe on their next bill. How and when this happens depends on where they live. Each state and territory may do things a little differently.

If clients are not receiving energy concessions currently, we encourage them to check state government and energy provider websites to see if they are eligible.

Those not receiving energy concessions as at 1 July 2023 will be contacted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs around July-September by text, email or letter with further information on how to obtain the rebate.

For more information, go to:

<https://www.energy.gov.au/government-priorities/energy-programs/energy-bill-relief-fund>

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[Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au)

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## 4. Supporting veterans with chronic health conditions



DVA's [Coordinated Veterans' Care \(CVC\) Program](#) is designed to support eligible veterans diagnosed with one or more chronic health conditions to better manage their ongoing health care needs. Veterans may be eligible for the CVC Program if they are either a Gold Card holder and have one or more chronic health conditions, or a White Card holder with a chronic DVA-accepted mental health condition.

The CVC Program encourages veterans to play an active role in managing their health and wellbeing. For people with chronic health conditions, the CVC Program provides support in managing complex care needs and can help to reduce the risk of unplanned hospitalisation.

For further information about the CVC Program, refer to the DVA Website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news-veterans/supporting-veterans-chronic-health-conditions>

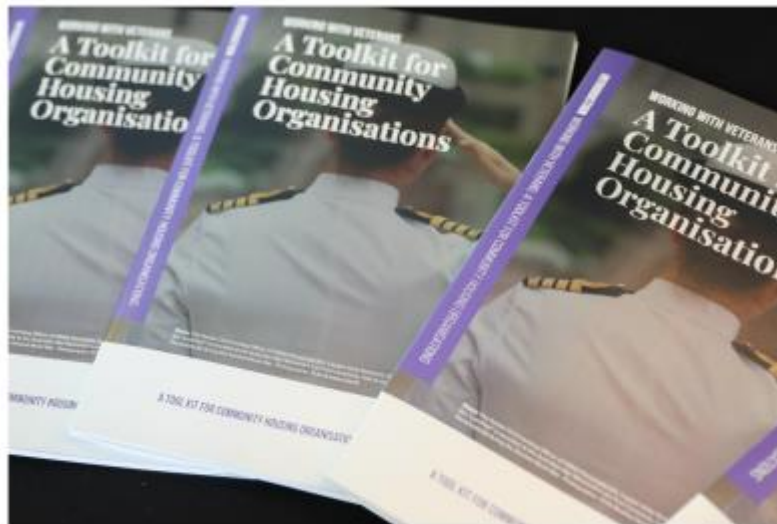
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## 5. Veteran homelessness resources for community housing organisations



A range of resources for community housing providers tailored to the needs of veterans experiencing homelessness was launched last month in a joint initiative by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA).

The resources provide an overview of the veteran experience of homelessness, including:

- Risk and protective factors
- Service needs
- Available referral pathways
- How to tailor support for veterans and families.

For further information, refer to the DVA Website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/provider-news/veteran-homelessness-resources-community-housing-organisations>

[Working with Veterans: Community Housing Toolkit and Standard – Community Housing Industry Association](#)

Ph: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

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## 6. Alcohol and other drug services for veterans



Do you have a patient who served in the Australian Defence Force and may need support managing alcohol and/or substance abuse?

Veteran Gold and White Card holders can access the following services for treatment for alcohol and other drug (AOD) abuse disorders:

- general medical
- psychiatry and psychology
- relationship support
- hospital care for detox support
- occupational therapy
- [Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling](#)

For further information, refer to DVA Website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/provider-news/alcohol-and-other-drug-services-veterans>

Open Arms: 1800 011 046

[DVA: Ph: 1800 VETERAN \(838 372\)](#)

[Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au)



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## 7. Time to update the CV or gain support for the next interview?

The Support for Employment (SFE) Program provides eligible veterans with up to 10 hours of one-on-one support across a range of pre-employment and post-employment services.

The program can assist by building their job-seeking skills, helping them adjust to employment in the civilian workforce or when they might be considering a career change.

SFE is available to veterans who transitioned from the permanent Australian Defence Force (ADF) between one and five years ago.

Veterans can access services including help with interview skills, personal branding and marketing, mapping of transferrable skills and experience to civilian roles, developing career goals and assistance adjusting to, and understanding, the civilian workplace. This one-on-one targeted support means outcomes are personalised and directly relevant to the veteran and their needs.

Each veteran who participates in SFE is allocated a professionally qualified consultant, who works for independent providers, contracted to DVA for these services.

You may know someone who is actively job seeking, wanting to update their résumé or discuss career or study options. Don't let them miss this opportunity! Accessing the SFE program is easy.

### **Interested?**

Log into MyService account via myGov. If eligible, a Support For Employment tile will appear on the home page of the veteran's account. Click on this tile to start enrolment in the program. If a tile does not appear, and you believe you, or the veteran, are eligible, email [SFE@dva.gov.au](mailto:SFE@dva.gov.au).

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## 8. Veterans to be commemorated in communities across Australia



Almost 150 community organisations have been successful in receiving grant funding under the Saluting Their Service grants' final round of the 2022-23 program.

Saluting Their Service provides funding for projects which support commemoration of the service of Australian veterans and Defence personnel. It aims to ensure that Australia's wartime heritage is preserved and the sacrifice of those who have served during wars, conflicts and peace operations is remembered.

A variety of organisations including ex-service associations, community groups and schools will receive funding in this round, sharing in over \$2 million.

For further information, refer to the DVA Website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news-veterans/veterans-be-commemorated-communities-across-australia>

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## 9. Veterans' Covenant available for RFSU members



Current and former serving members of a Regional Force Surveillance Unit (RFSU) are encouraged to apply for the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, DVA's service recognition and support program.

Our vision is to honour veterans, and empower them and their families to continue life after service within a society that understands and values their military service and their ongoing contribution to the community. We do this through enabling self-sufficiency post-service, recognition of service and respect within the community, and maintaining veterans' health in body and mind.

A Lapel Pin, Oath and Veteran Card are items issued under the Covenant. The specific items issued depend on the applicant's type of service. You are eligible for all Covenant items, following one day of continuous full-time service in a RFSU or if you have engaged in Disaster Relief or Border Protection Service, or have been involved in a serious service-related training accident.

For further information, refer to the DVA Website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news-veterans/veterans-covenant-available-rfsu-members>

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[Email: GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au)

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## 10. Better access to information for ADF personnel and veterans



On 4 April, the Government announced that it has implemented a further five recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report.

Changes have been made to improve access to information and personnel records held by Defence and DVA, providing serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), veterans and families a more streamlined experience when seeking access to records.

This includes the establishment of Information Access Units within the two departments, additional education material on information-access processes, how and why redactions occur, and updates to both departments' websites.

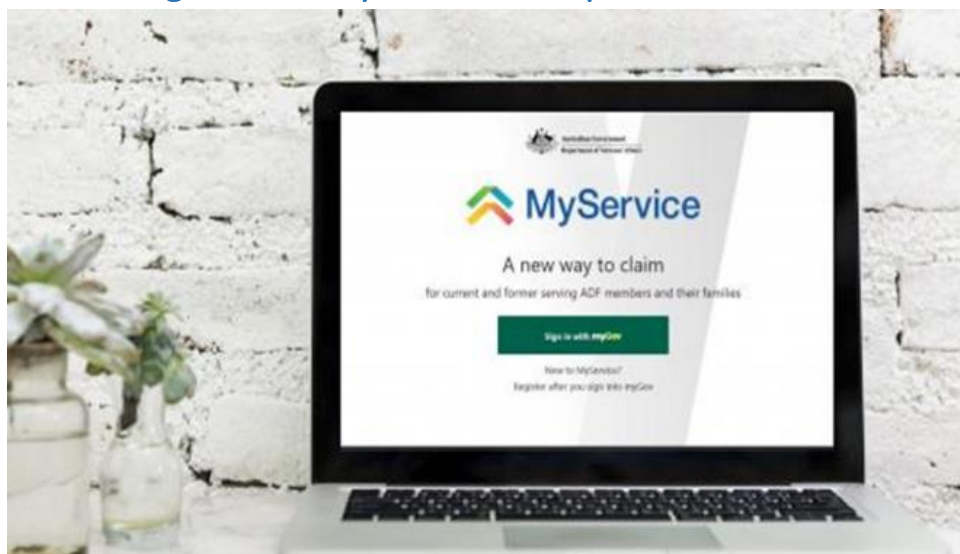
The Information Access Units will serve as a single point of contact within each department for information requests. The units are already working closely together to facilitate requests quickly and seamlessly.

For further information, refer to the DVA Website at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news-veterans/better-access-information-adf-personnel-and-veterans>

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## 11. Changes to how you access MyService



Support for access to MyService via Internet Explorer will cease from 3 June 2023, impacting DVA clients. This change means MyService will no longer operate if clients attempt to access the platform using an Internet Explorer browser.

Clients who currently use Internet Explorer will need to switch to an alternative browser. There are many available—some of the more common ones are Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Apple Safari, Firefox, Mozilla, and Opera.

Microsoft Edge is the official replacement for Internet Explorer.

You must switch to a different browser to continue to access MyService, but there is no obligation to use Edge. You can use an alternative browser if you prefer. All are free to download from the internet—just search for them and follow the instructions to download the most recent version.

It is important to keep up to date with upgrades and improvements to the software you use to maintain protection against security vulnerabilities.

MyService can also be accessed from your mobile device, and is now directly linked through the new myGov app.

If you continue to experience issues with accessing MyService once you have switched browsers, please try restarting your browser, and if the problem is not resolved you can contact 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) for guidance.

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## 12. DVA help for veterans and families experiencing family and domestic violence



DVA is here to help if you or a family member experiences family and domestic violence. Our new [family and domestic violence help](#) webpage provides information about the various support services available for those experiencing, or who have experienced, family and domestic violence.

Some of the support services DVA can provide to veterans and families include counselling, short-term accommodation and payments.

Family and domestic violence is any action that is violent, threatening, manipulating or controlling, or that causes a family or household member to feel scared. It can be abuse that is physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or psychological. For more information on family and domestic violence visit the [family and domestic violence help](#) webpage.

If you need immediate counselling or someone to talk to, you can call Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling 24/7 on 1800 011 046.

If you or someone else is in danger, call triple zero (000).



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### 13. DVA Services and Support

This playlist is dedicated to providing information about the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the services and support we provide to Australia's veteran and defence community.



There are a number of Information and “How to” videos on DVA TV about DVA Services and Support.

The videos include:

- How to link, register and use MyService
- How to submit a DVA Claim online
- NLHC
- DVA Transition Support
- And much more

For access to the service, please click here: [DVA TV - YouTube](#)

## Feedback

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about this newsletter, please send an email to [ATDP.Communications@dva.gov.au](mailto:ATDP.Communications@dva.gov.au)

tell us what you **Think**

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by sending an email to [ATDP.communications@dva.gov.au](mailto:ATDP.communications@dva.gov.au)

### ATDP Contacts

For all general enquiries: [ATDPENQUIRIES@dva.gov.au](mailto:ATDPENQUIRIES@dva.gov.au)

Amanda Williams / Steven Hayter Region 1 Program Support Officer (PSO1) – Qld/NT <a href="mailto:ATDP.PSO1@dva.gov.au">ATDP.PSO1@dva.gov.au</a> 0472 704 592 SA time, 8.30-4.30, Mon-Fri	Dr Bob Grandin Regional Manager (RM1) - QLD/NT <a href="mailto:rm1@atdp.org.au">rm1@atdp.org.au</a> 0409 615 948
Samone Mason Region 2 Program Support Officer (PSO2) - NSW/WA/ACT <a href="mailto:ATDP.PSO2@dva.gov.au">ATDP.PSO2@dva.gov.au</a> 0472 674 665 AEST time, 9.00-5.00, Mon-Fri	Geoff Harrison (Interim) Regional Manager (RM2) - NSW/WA/ACT <a href="mailto:rm2@atdp.org.au">rm2@atdp.org.au</a> 0416 136 826
Phil Boys Region 3 Program Support Officer (PSO3) – Vic/SA/Tas <a href="mailto:ATDP.PSO3@dva.gov.au">ATDP.PSO3@dva.gov.au</a> 0472 704 948 SA time, 8.30-4.30, Mon-Fri	Roger Greene OAM, JP Regional Manager (RM3) - VIC/SA/TAS <a href="mailto:rm3@atdp.org.au">rm3@atdp.org.au</a> 0411 431 189
Elizabeth Owen Program Support Team Leader <a href="mailto:elizabeth.owen@dva.gov.au">elizabeth.owen@dva.gov.au</a> 0499 982 381 SA time, 8.30-4.30, Mon-Fri	