



**Australian Peacekeepers & Peacemaker Veterans Association  
APPVA STH QLD Inc.  
eNews**

**Issue #6 - March 2011**

*"Looking after our own"*

Web: [www.peacekeepers.asn.au](http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au)  
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**FROM THE EDITOR**

G'day, and welcome to the first 2011 edition of the APPVA South Queensland Branch News, an electronic newsletter for APPVA Sth Qld Branch members.

Combat stress, PTSD and suicide rates among serving and former members of the ADF have been in the news a lot recently, and the recent loss of 2 members of 1 CER in Afghanistan.

I hope our members and families are safe and well after the flooding and cyclones in Queensland, and I hope I kept our members informed during the period on the support services and financial assistance available.

I would encourage members to have a think and let the committee know of their needs, ideas and criticisms of the APPVA Sth Qld. Let us know how we can improve services to the members, and give something back to our members in the form of social gatherings etc.

Funding from DVA is available to the APPVA Sth Qld and if we can show our members needs we can apply for the appropriate funding, for the benefit of members.

ANZAC Day is rolling around and we hope to see a good turn out under the APPVA Banner on the day.

All the best, and hope to see you on ANZAC Day.

*Glenn Warnes*

APPVA Sth Qld eNews

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*"Keeping our members informed"*



*"In the Service of Peace"*

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

As most organisations know, membership numbers play a crucial role in determining the ability to provide adequate services, expanding the influence of the organisation and plan for the future. The APPVA is no different to any other group in this regard. Our influences in both the Ex Service community and the general community is determined by the impact that we can bring to bear, and the policies that we develop and implement, that can work for the benefit of our



**FROM THE PRESIDENT continued**

members and their families.

In order to achieve this end, we need the help and support of our members. Our general meetings have been poorly attended with most decisions being left to the few regular and dedicated members present. I appeal to all members to attend our meetings if at all possible. Only by voicing your needs, ideas, and yes criticisms, can we move forward and achieve what you, the members, expect of the APPVA.

We have a number of public activities occurring shortly and I encourage you to show your support by participating in these events. Two that need your participation are:

- 25 April Brisbane ANZAC Day march. We will march under our own banner and the more marchers that we can muster the greater the recognition that we receive.
- 29 May International Peacekeepers Day. This event is under the control of the United Nations association of Australia. The day is designated by the United Nations Organisation to recognise the service of Peacekeepers of all nations. The APPVA will muster in King George Square from 0915hrs and the march to ANZAC Square will move off at 0945hrs. A commemorative service, in ANZAC Square will commence at 1000hrs and be followed by morning tea.

A review of the National Organisation is to be implemented. The President of the APPVA in the ACT and Sth Qld has been tasked with

writing a National Constitution. This may lead to far reaching changes in the administration and disciplinary processes of the APPVA, at both national and State levels. It is hoped that this work will be completed by the time that the National Committee of Management Annual General meeting is held in October.

There is a requirement for training and appointment of more Pensions and Welfare Officers in South Queensland. Our area of responsibility extends from the NSW border to Rockhampton and west to the South Australian/ Northern Territory borders. This is a huge area and we need to extend our services over as much of this area as possible. Please consider whether you can assist in this vital work.

I encourage you to send us your thoughts and comments on how we can improve the APPVA. This organisation belongs to YOU, the members, and your input is necessary to get the APPVA on the right track to move into the future with confidence and determination. If we stand still we will stagnate and we will become irrelevant as a voice for Peacekeepers and Peacemakers.

*John Burgess*  
APPVA Sth Qld President

**SECRETARY REPORT**

For the new members a bit of my background to start the 2011 calendar.

I took over as the Secretary of the APPVA in Aug 09 whilst a serving member of the Army and have struggled ever since to balance work and APPVA duties. This said I have always had the interest of our members at the forefront of my endeavours and thank those other members of committee who have guided me along the way.



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I have recently left Defence after 30 years but I am still linked with them now as an Auditor of Defence Assets and occasionally I still do some Reserve days (mostly nights) for the “Company”.

The APPVA SQLD has 5 main events that we, and we hope you, will be committed to every year. These are:

25<sup>th</sup> April ANZAC Day, 29 May UN Peacekeepers Day, 14 Sept APPVA Memorial Service- Windaroo, 23 Oct UN DAY Canungra, and of course our yearly function normally in late Nov.

Saying this however, we as an Association support many other local events in the name of the fallen and attend various DVA, VVCS and Police Remembrance services and meetings. Our local footprint is large on paper but small in attendances and I ask that you attend as many of these committed activities as possible to ensure that the APPVA SQ remains a viable voice for the veteran. I am very aware of the pressures of family and social groups such as ours and the balancing required to be happy in both and seek your support by attending activities as often as possible.

A lot of members travel great distances, and if we can organise car pooling or such to attend then let's try that. I live on the Nth side so if any needs a lift or want to meet for a coffee etc then I am glad to assist where I can.

I will be absent soon for approx two weeks leading up to ANZAC day and the Treasurer Mitch will be filling in while I am away. Keep an eye out for the ANZAC Day news soon to be released.

See you all soon.

Blue or Rob (I do not mind which).

### **BRANCH NEWS**

#### **Recent events**

Members attended the Greenbank RSL Rooms on the 28 November 2010 for our end of year function and BBQ. Although a small gathering it was good to see the members in attendance and raffles run to raise welfare funds.

A number of APPVA Sth QLD bottles of wine were

raffled on the day and if any members are interested in purchasing please let us know. We have east Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan labels available. **Cost \$22.00 for either red or white.**



### **DCO Open Day Sunday 13 March 2011**

The President and Treasurer manned the APPVA information booth at the DCO Open Day at Enoggera on Sunday 13 March 2011. A number of referrals and membership enquiries were forthcoming, and this event also provided the APPVA Sth Qld to reinforce its presence within the Defence Community.

Thank you to John and Mitch for attending the event.

### **COMING EVENT**



**2.00pm Sunday 27 March 2011 2.00pm – General meeting Greenbank RSL Club Rooms (At the rear of the Services Club).**



**Monday 25 March 2011 Brisbane ANZAC Day March. Form up at APPVA Banner (Further details and timings to be advised)**



**Sunday 29 May 2011 UN Peacekeepers Day. 10.00am ANZAC Square Brisbane (Organised**



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by the UNAA)



**2.00pm Sunday 31 July 2011 General meeting Greenbank RSL Club Rooms** (At the rear of the Services Club).

### WELFARE & PENSIONS NEWS

Any members welfare support or pension advice please contact Glenn on 0410 132 711 or [welfareappvasq@gmail.com](mailto:welfareappvasq@gmail.com)

The new TPI Veterans Travel Pass is now being issued by the QLD Government. Details at:

<http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Public-transport/Public-transport-concessions/TPI-Veteran-Travel-Pass.aspx>

**Support services are also available for veterans through the VVCS.**



### **For separating and separated ADF Members**

The *touchbase* pilot program provides separating and separated ADF members with information on useful topics and links to a range of resources.

The key elements of the *touchbase* pilot program are the *touchbase* website and e-newsletter.

### ***touchbase* website**

The *touchbase* is an information portal where you and your family can access information and links to resources on a wide range of topics, from jobs, sports clubs and hobbies through to fitness, wellbeing and counselling.

### ***touchbase* e-newsletter**

The *touchbase* e-newsletter can be sent to you by email. The e-newsletter includes stories of interest about and for the ex-service community. It's easy to subscribe, just visit the *touchbase* website or download a subscription form. Your details will be kept private and secure.

Would your transition to civilian life make an interesting story? If you would like to share your story and help others who are separating, we would love to hear from you. Please send an email to [touchbase@dva.gov.au](mailto:touchbase@dva.gov.au).

*touchbase* is available to all ex-service members, whether you've recently separated from the ADF or you've been out for some time.

Partners and other family members of ex-service personnel are welcome and encouraged to also access the benefits provided by *touchbase*.

Visit [www.touchbase.gov.au](http://www.touchbase.gov.au) for more information, and to subscribe to the *touchbase* e-newsletter.



### **VVCS group programs Southern Queensland 2011**

VVCS group programs aim to improve the quality of life of veterans and their families and complement counselling and other services that promote recovery through prevention, early intervention, and treatment.



**Queensland - Southern**

Program	Date	Location	Structure
Doing Anger Differently	22 Feb - 15 March	Maroochydore	4 weeks
	3-24 May	Brisbane	4 weeks
Mastering Anxiety	1-22 March	Bundaberg	4 weeks
	10-31 March	Maryborough	4 weeks
	9-30 June	Redcliffe	4 weeks
Beating the Blues	9-30 June	Beenleigh	4 weeks
	8-29 March	Caboolture	4 weeks
	17 March - 7 April	Toowoomba	4 weeks
Residential Lifestyle	10-31 March	Rockhampton	4 weeks
	2-13 June	Cleveland	4 weeks
	23-25 February	Gold Coast	2 day follow up
	14-18 March	Gold Coast	5 days
	9-13 May	Tewantin	5 days
	10-13 June, 1-3 July	Tewantin	2 weekends
	15-19 August	Hervey Bay	5 days
	23-26 Sept, 14-16 Oct	Tewantin	2 weekends
	7-11 November	Gold Coast	5 days
	Residential Lifestyle (F111)	28-31 March	Gold Coast
Building Better Relationships	3-24 May	Maroochydore	4 weeks

Full details are available by calling VVCS on 1800 011 146 or at [http://www.dva.gov.au/health\\_and\\_wellbeing/health\\_programs/vvcs/services/Pages/group.aspx#qsouth](http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/vvcs/services/Pages/group.aspx#qsouth)



**VETERANS NEWS**

**War-stress rort claim under fire**

- Ian McPhedran From: The Courier-Mail January 27, 2011

**Only 2900 ex-military personnel are being paid compensation for post traumatic stress disorder.**

Veterans groups and the Federal Government have reacted angrily to claims by a senior navy doctor that up to 90 per cent of recent PTSD claims were bogus.

Commander Doug McKenzie said it was not his intention to upset genuine claimants, but in his experience many compensation claims, particularly by navy personnel, were fraudulent. He called on the government to launch an independent inquiry into the PTSD "epidemic". Veterans Affairs Minister Warren Snowdon has denied any epidemic and said that a rigorous process was undertaken to determine liability for all claims made to the Department, including those for mental health conditions.

His spokesperson said the government took fraudulent claims very seriously and people accused of manipulating the system were thoroughly investigated.

Another senior Navy Reserve clinical psychologist and PTSD expert, Dr Stephen Rayner, said the



disorder was a long recognised and unfortunate feature of military service.

"If there were simple answers, we would have heard them by now," Dr Rayner said.

"It would be appealing to have definitive blood tests for everything, but they simply don't exist."

A government spokesperson said the mental health of veterans was taken very seriously.

"When we put our service men and women in harm's way, they know that the systems of health care will be there when they need it," they said.

"When they return home, they know that their recovery, care and assistance to family will be supported."

There are 27,500 veterans with PTSD as an accepted service-related condition. These include 20,000 from the Vietnam War.

But only 2900 claimants served in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Queensland PTSD sufferer Barry Gracey said he had taken Dr McKenzie's reporting charge personally.

"Exposing reporters is good, but generalising about percentages with 27,000 people is not acceptable," Mr Gracey said.

Dr Rayner said there was no doubt suitably motivated individuals could fake the symptoms and obtain a diagnosis.

"Just because malingering or suggestibility exists, the suffering of genuine victims should not be trivialised," he said.

Veterans Affairs says PTSD can occur months or years after exposure to a traumatic event.

For urgent help, call Lifeline on 13 11 14



### **Invisible wounds can be fatal**

- Samantha Healy *The Sunday Mail (Qld)*  
February 27, 2011 12:00AM

***SOBERING STATISTIC: Defence figures show that 31 enlisted Defence personnel have, or are believed to have, committed suicide since 2005.***

**AUSTRALIAN families, friends and communities have buried 23 soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2002.**

Each one was hailed for their heroism, remembered for their larrikinism and commended for their dedication to their mates and their mission.

But there is an even sadder and often silent statistic that is forgotten - the number of soldiers, sailors and airmen and women who have ended their lives for reasons that don't command a full military funeral or public acknowledgement by politicians.

New Defence figures show that 31 enlisted Defence personnel have, or are believed to have, committed suicide since 2005.

Of those, 10 were in Queensland the highest among the states, with seven suspected suicide cases in NSW and six in the ACT.

The suspected suicide deaths of two other Queensland soldiers earlier this year are also being investigated by the coroner but are not



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included in the figures at this stage.

Young Diggers president John Jarratt believes the number of confirmed suicides is just the tip of the iceberg with many more going unaccounted for once they have been discharged from the defence forces.

“Look at Vietnam. The number killed was far outweighed by the number who took their own life in the years after their service,” Mr Jarratt said.

“We call it the invisible wounds of war, people dying not in combat but as a result of combat, years later.”

He warns the problem will get worse as more young soldiers embark on multiple deployments to wars where their enemy is not always easily identifiable.

In 2009, Professor David Dunt of Melbourne University's School of Population Health compiled a report on suicides in the veteran community for the Federal Government.

Titled Review of Mental Health Care in the Australian Defence Force and Transition Through Discharge, the report looked at the risk of self-harm, the contributing factors among ex-service members who have committed or attempted suicide, the extent of suicide in the veteran community and lifestyle or other factors that may be contributing to suicide. It made recommendations based on its findings.

The acclaimed professor, who was given unprecedented access to the files of Defence and Veterans Affairs, found that suicide data was “harder to quantify” once defence personnel left

the ADF.

The 2009 report found that the ADF had done well in supporting mental health research but “less well” in supporting ongoing recording of mental health clinical data (client characteristics, contact type, diagnosis, quality-of-life measure etc) which is routine in public community mental health services.

“On the one hand we need better statistics and analysis but on the other hand the programs we offer should be as effective and accessible as possible. We owe that to them,” Prof Dunt told The Sunday Mail.

“We need to apply a report card to each recommendation made, to each program implemented, to make sure they are not bogged down in bureaucracy, that they are working and still apply.”

While suicide statistics among enlisted personnel are kept by Defence no one is adequately monitoring suicide among veterans after they have been discharged.

The Sunday Mail asked the Department of Veterans Affairs about suicide rates among veterans and was told that they were unable to provide any “comprehensive data”.

This is despite the department commending Prof Dunt's inquiry into suicide rates among veterans in 2009.

After the report's release, DVA said it was “committed to supporting veterans at risk of suicide and increasing the awareness of members of the veteran community about suicide prevention”.



There is no argument that DVA provides a range of services to assist veterans at risk from suicide but without adequate data about the rate of suicides among its own clients it would be near impossible for DVA to determine the success or failure of its programs and initiatives.

A DVA spokeswoman said it was difficult to obtain suicide statistics for several reasons.

“DVA estimates there are currently around 370,000 surviving current and former members of the ADF, of whom currently only some 185,000 receive services from the department,” the spokeswoman said.

“In most cases it would be difficult to determine the reasons why a person has committed suicide, and it may not necessarily relate to their service. For legal and/or privacy reasons, when a client dies DVA cannot inquire about the cause of death unless it has a direct bearing on entitlements for their dependants.”

Mr Jarratt said Young Diggers, run by veterans, was assisting Defence personnel who recently returned from Middle East battlefields who were getting into trouble with the law, self-medicating or struggling to adjust to civilian life.

“Calls to us have quadrupled since those Brisbane troops came back in October . . . a lot just want to talk, a lot are sounding off and getting angry, some are just confused.

“They feel they can't talk to their mates for fear of being seen as weak, or their families because they don't understand.

“They don't even feel comfortable talking to their superiors for fear of being stripped of any further

deployments.”

One of the young soldiers being assisted by Young Diggers is re-enlisting with the army because he feels “he can't make it in the civilian world” and will be re-deployed on his third tour later this year.

“That is the irony. Even the most screwed up of them are back in their comfort zone back there (in conflict). When you take them out of that zone they can't cope,” Mr Jarratt said.

Young Diggers also launched a new online toolkit called “Suicide - The Invisible Wounds of War” last week giving Defence personnel and their families a place to access information about combat stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide.

The group said such stresses affected 10-30 per cent of troops who had served in active combat zones.

“The military, especially the army, is getting better. The navy is not,” Mr Jarratt said.

“We have to do better. They served for us and now their lives depend on it.”

### **Soldiers returning home with PTSD**

2 March, 2011 7:36AM AEST 612 ABC Brisbane

**Paula's husband Glenn is an Australian soldier, and after serving in Timor, and Afghanistan he has returned home, a changed man, and his family are finding it hard to reach out to him.**

Paula's story is not an easy one to listen to. And she thought long and hard before telling it today.

The Brisbane mother and wife didn't want to - she wanted to work it out in her family. And then she



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wanted to work it out in the army.

None of that's worked. She even went to the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel minister Warren Snowdon. And now she's decided to tell it publicly.

Her husband Glenn is an Australian soldier. He went to Timor, and then Afghanistan.

And then last Christmas he came home. She almost didn't recognise him.

"He's like a shell.

"You see him and it looks like Glenn, but that's as far as you go, there's nothing there."

Paula says it took months before her husband Glenn was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and now he's being cared for at home.

Now Paula is asking how many other soldiers are suffering from PTSD.

Commodore Robyn Walker the Acting Commander of the Joint Health Command says the Defence force has a duty of care to all members, but wouldn't comment on Glenn's case.

"Defence takes it very seriously our responsibility to provide all health care to all members of our members of the defence force whether they're on deployed on operations or not.

Commodore Walker says the duty of care covers both mental and physical health.

"There are a range of services provided to help them, ranging from Medical care, whatever specialist that is required.

"There are many circumstances where we engage with the family about how we can help them deal with the member's illness, but there are no policies that exist to provide that specifically deal with the provision of carers.

Commodore Walker denied the number of soldiers, serving and former, that have been diagnosed with PTSD was related to suicide rates of returned soldiers.

*Paula and Commodore Robyn Walker spoke to Madonna King on 612 ABC Brisbane.*

### Police in Peacekeeping



Australia has had peacekeepers in the field with the United Nations continuously for over 50 years. In Indonesia in 1947, Australians were part of the very first group of UN military observers anywhere in the world, and were, in fact, the first into the field. Six multinational operations have been commanded by Australians.



Peacekeeping has not only been the preserve of the Australian Defence Force.



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Since 1964, Australian police have served in Cyprus, an island wracked by conflict between its Greek and Turkish communities. Here, too, there is no sign of an end to the conflict, but the police help minimise its effects and build bridges between the communities.

More recently, police officers from Australia have also served in places as widely separated as Cambodia, Haiti, Mozambique, Bougainville, Solomon Islands/RAMSI, East Timor/Timor Leste, Sudan and Afghanistan.

Since 1947 four (4) Australian Police Officers have died whilst on Overseas Peacekeeping Operations.

*(Source: AWM)*



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### **State Secretary**