



**Veteran's Children Education Scheme (VCES),
Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme
It is up to you to apply!**

All those in receipt of a Special Rate pension (T&PI), War Widows pension and Extreme Disablement Adjustment pension (EDA) who have children **under the age of 25**, who are attending school, TAFE or University are eligible for assistance from the VCES regardless of their income, assets or children's income. Veteran grandparents with custody or grandchildren students who are eligible should also make application for assistance under VCES.

We are aware that a lot of new TPI's / War Widows / EDA's may not be aware of these Education Schemes. You are reminded that the DVA have no details on family members for many that have been granted pensions since 1982. There are several important financial benefits that the VCES has over AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY.

Veterans Children Education Scheme Eligibility

A Vietnam Veteran's dependents may be eligible for the Veterans Children Education Scheme (VCES), even if the Veteran is not receiving a disability pension at the Special Rate (TPI). A dependent is a student aged under 25 who is in the Veterans care. This includes grandchildren, step-children and foster children who are in the care of the Veteran.

VCES eligibility (from 1/1/2001) was extended to the children or former children of **veterans with Vietnam service**, where the child is diagnosed by an appropriately qualified professional as having a depressive disorder, or in the opinion of an appropriately qualified professional, is vulnerable

The VCES provides support and counselling for parent and student as well as financial assistance for education and tutorial assistance if required.

Once eligibility is confirmed, the student is eligible for the Education Allowance until he or she finishes full-time study which includes tertiary study. VCES eligibility entails other benefits, such as funding for tutoring if needed.

Education allowance Payable from 1 January 2008 are;

Primary Students: The annual education allowance for primary students is \$214.10

Secondary / Tertiary Students (fortnightly rates in \$)

Students	At Home	Living away from Home	Homeless
Under 16 years	44.00	332.56	355.40
16 – 17 years	194.50	355.40	355.40
18 years and over	233.90	355.40	355.40

Double Orphans Secondary / Tertiary (fortnightly rates in \$)

Under 16 \$197.50 16 – 20 years \$355.40 21 years and over \$431.70

Note: Secondary/Tertiary Double Orphans (fortnightly rates, applies VVCS students only)

We remind you that **you must** make application for these Education Allowances.

Please phone the DVA National Line on **1300 131 945** select your state and ask for the VCES State Secretary or contact your local DVA Office.

**DOING BUSINESS
WITH RSL
8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.**

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Website: www.rslwahq.org.au
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Tel: 9287 3799
Fax: 9287 3732

RECEPTION
Monday to Friday - general enquiries
Email: reception1@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3799

OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR
Monday to Friday - PA to State President & State Secretary,
Listening Post
Email: rslwahq@inet.net.au
Tel: 9287 3799

MEMBERSHIP
Monday to Thursday - membership enquiries, Sub-Branch enquiries
Email: membership@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3705

WELFARE
Monday to Friday - welfare applications, emergency housing, food & lodging grants, SS&A Relief Trust Fund applications. Overseas pensions
Email: welfare@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3707

ADVOCACY
Monday to Friday - S31 reviews, Veteran Review Board, Admin Appeals Tribunal
Email: rslwahq@inet.net.au
Tel: 9287 3708

FINANCE
Monday to Wednesday - all account enquiries, Sub-Branch credits
Email: accounts@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3706

Sub-Branch Insurance, information, claims, grant application assistance, DVA, Lotterywest (ABN, tax)
Email: State.Acc@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3703

PENSIONS
Monday to Friday - pension entitlements, claims preparation
Email: pensions1@rslwahq.org.au
Pensions2@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3709
9287 3710, 9287 3711

ANZAC CLUB
Monday to Friday - facilities bookings, catering/hospitality
Email: anzacclub@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3724

PRESIDENT'S PEN

ANZAC Day

Special thanks are offered to all who worked so hard to present ANZAC Day Commemorative Services to the community. From reports we have received it would appear as though large crowds turned out to honour our fallen and to show support for our serving members and veterans. We also acknowledge the many generous supporters of the veteran community for providing funds and infrastructure to enable high quality Services to take place. Of special mention we value the funding from Lotterywest who, this year, provided support not only to the Perth City Services but to many country and regional centres. Celebrate WA also joined in partnership with RSL to provide limited funding to sub branches and local communities where there are no RSL sub branches to conduct a traditional Gunfire Breakfast. In all, a highly successful day that will be the main feature in the next edition of *The Listening Post*.

The Listening Post

Our new look Listening Post reached another milestone with the last edition. We have increased the editorial content leading to an edition of twenty-eight pages. From the feedback we are receiving at ANZAC House the publication is proving very popular with the membership. Remember, it is your paper and we would welcome contributions from sub branches and members. You can e-mail contributions and if you are including photographs, please send them in jpg format. Much of the improvement in production is due to the enthusiasm of Assistant State Secretary Denis Connelly, the editorial staff, office staff and proof readers who combine their talents to provide you with a first class publication.

The Listening Post is costly to produce and distribute. Our supporters advertise in the publication and you are urged to support them where you can. They support us – let us support them.

Amelioration Account Survey.

Thanks to sub branches for the prompt response to the Trustees on the matter of the Amelioration Account Survey. The returns are now being sorted and the data analysed. It is expected that the Trustees will report to State Congress on the manner in which we conduct our welfare service to our veterans. An initial scan of the return show that some sub branches do not have a clear understanding of the responsibility that is taken on when dealing with public money and these matters will have to be addressed to ensure our credibility is at, and remains at the highest possible level.

There are still a few sub branches that have not submitted their survey form and as we require a full response we will be making contact to obtain the document.

Fremantle War Memorial

The use of the Monument Hill War Memorial for commemorative services by veteran and community groups recently attracted media attention when the Australian-American Association sought to conduct the Battle of the Coral Sea Service at that location. Initially the use of the memorial was denied sadly for a number of reasons put forward by various interest groups. The RSL has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the use of the Memorial with the Fremantle City Council and with the support of the full Council the MOU was supported and the Service will take place at the Main Memorial. The Battle of the Coral Sea was a major sea battle fought by American and Australian forces and success in that battle turned the tide of the war in favour of the Allies.

In all, a common sense outcome to an issue that should never have taken place.

ENROL A MATE IN 08



REMINDER

If you would like to report to your ANZAC Day activities in *The Listening Post* Please submit your report and photographs (Digital in jpg format)

by 14 May 2008

Review of Recognition for the Battle of Long Tan and Service at RAAF Ubon

Members will be aware that an independent review panel was invited in late 2007 to review recognition for the Battle of Long Tan. The panel was subsequently invited to consider claims for additional medallic recognition for those who served at RAAF Ubon during the period of the Vietnam War.

The review report has been presented to the Government by the Chair of the Independent Review Panel, Major General Peter Abigail AO. General Abigail has also briefed, among others, the National President of the RSL focussing particularly on the approach adopted during the course of the Review

The Government has undertaken to make the Review Report publicly available probably by the end of April 08. It will then consider its response to the recommendations of the Review.

New Zealand Vietnam Veterans – Tribute 08

As one of the elements of the Memorandum of Understanding reached last year between New Zealand's Vietnam Veterans and the New Zealand Government, Tribute 08 is to take place over the weekend 30 May/1 June 08 in Wellington. Australian Vietnam Veterans and their families are warmly invited and encouraged to attend. Some assistance will be available with accommodation for those who register.

Registration forms and other information are available at the website www.tribute08.com. When registered, veterans will receive information directly from the organisers, keeping them up-to-date with the program of events and any special requirements.

The broad program provides for a Civic Welcome, Sub Unit gatherings, a March to Parliament and recognition by the Parliament of the service of Vietnam Veterans; an international concert, and a Commemorative Service at the National War Memorial involving Re-Dedications of Colours. These weekend events will be supplemented by an exhibition, plays, and other activities in the Wellington area including special concessions for those attending.

A warm invitation has been extended to Australian Vietnam Veterans and their families to attend Tribute 08 and we would like to suggest that those interested in taking up this invitation might download a registration form and register at the earliest opportunity. Accommodation and travel arrangements should be made as soon as possible to ensure your requirements can be met.

ANZAC Peace Prize

The ANZAC Peace Prize, announced annually, is awarded by the RSL to 'recognise any outstanding effort by an Australian citizen who has promoted the concept of international understanding and who, in so doing, has made a contribution to world peace.'

The RSL ANZAC Awards Committee has awarded the 2008 ANZAC Peace Prize to Scouts Australia. 2008 is the Year of the Scout and marks the centenary of Scouting in Australia. The award of the ANZAC Peace Prize recognises the part that Scouting has played in the development of two million Australians over the past 100 years, both as individuals and as citizens. Today young men and women, boys and girls, continue to enjoy the benefits of belonging to the largest youth movement in the world, with more than 28 million members in 155 countries. International Scout Jamborees, whether they have been held in Australia or in other countries, have brought young people and their leaders together from all parts of the world, regardless of nationality, creed or religion. The friendships thus established have made a significant contribution to international goodwill and understanding, and to world peace

State Congress

Sub Branches are reminded of the need to return their Congress Registration Form to State Branch by the due date, We ask that all Sub Branches endeavour to have representatives at Congress and also to support the Congress Dinner. It is a great opportunity to showcase our achievements and for you – the Sub Branch – to be involved in the decision making process and policy formulation of the League. I look forward to meeting with you at Congress.

RSL Corporate Golf Day

The Annual RSL Corporate Golf Day and President's Cup is to be held at Meadow Springs Golf Course Mandurah on Thursday the 24th July, 2008.

One of RSL's major supporters – BGC – will host the event

Please reserve that date and encourage your Sub Branch to participate.

Full details and nomination forms are issued with this edition of the Sub-Branch Signal.



MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

AS AT 22 APRIL 2008

Service Members 7,729

Affiliates: 1,123 Total: 8,852



HQ POSTAL ADDRESS

RSL WA Branch

PO Box 3023

Perth Adelaide Terrace WA 6832

2008 Canberra Forum Service and Science

The Repatriation Medical Authority recently convened a conference which was held at Pavilion on Northbourne Canberra. About 100 people including presenters were accommodated.

The objectives of the forum were in part:

- To restate the RMA processes
- To inform and address issues of concern identified by the Veterans Community.
- To provide a forum for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defence to address current issues.

To identify future challenges.

The RSL Senior Advocate Jim Boland and Pensions Coordinator Ross O'Connor attended representing the RSL Branch. Members of other ESO's also attended.

Current Chairperson of the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA), Professor Ken Donald, addresses the issue of Statements of Principles (SOP's) and their relevance to the Veterans Entitlement Act (VEA) and The Military Rehabilitation Act (MRCA). He enlightened the membership on the processes required to examine, alter and issue SOP's.

Major-General Michael Crane DSC AM provided us with an update on troop numbers currently deployed in trouble spots around the world. He expanded on the Australian Defence Forces current strategy in the deployment of troops. It was of interest that the American troops are deployed for longer periods than Australians.

A number of highly qualified speakers provided information on current research into health issues including best practice mental initiatives in the military.

Professor Donald and other members of the RMA provided an insight into the current issues facing the RMA in: Defining disease and genetic diseases and cancer Stress and Stressors

Mr Barry Telford General manager Policy and Development Department of Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) spoke on Australia's involvement in overseas Veterans forums and possible changes to the assistance given to Veterans.

Members were divided into groups in an exercise to better understand RMA procedures and the application of epidemiology in the formulation of SOP's.

Your representatives felt that they gained value from their attendances at the conference and are better equipped to deal with Veteran issues.

On a lighter note, during the Tuesday evening formal dinner the audience were highly entertained by the after dinner speaker Mr Peter FitzSimons renowned columnist, author and former Wallaby Rugby Player.

Home Visits by GP's/Registered Nurses

Previously, preference was made to Veterans Home Care and increasing contact with the veteran by having either a doctor or registered nurse visit the home to ascertain how the veteran was coping living at home. This is an initiative being considered by DVA as it was felt that a more complete picture could not be achieved just by the veteran visiting the GP surgery.

To ensure that there is no confusion with this arrangement when compared to veteran home care packages the initiative described above is not associated with home care packages. The visit by the GP or registered nurse is entirely different and any funding will be separate from the funding for veteran home care packages. Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.

Pension Advocates

As part of the ongoing need to ensure our pension advocates are fully trained and up to date on changes to veterans' legislation and its application letters are now being forwarded to advocates to advise that unless they have completed a refresher course or have completed the prescribed courses they will no longer be accredited as an advocate until such times as they have completed the prescribed training. This has become necessary due to the need for the RSL to demonstrate to our insurers that we have been diligent in this aspect of our operations if or when we may receive a claim for damages if a person who has used the services of our advocates consider that the claim was not managed appropriately.

Western Australian Treatment Monitoring Committee

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs is considering setting up a consultative group to advise him on issues facing the veteran community. A decision on this initiative is still to occur, however, a number of other consultative committees that have operated under the DVA umbrella over many years of the previous government will be reviewed and it is possible a number of these may cease.

One such committee is the West Australian Treatment Monitoring Committee, which was originally set up to monitor the treatment at hospitals which were accepted under Tier 1 arrangements especially with the sale of the Hollywood Repatriation Hospital to Ramsays Health. The RSL has been represented on this committee since its inception and the appointment of the individual has been for a period of three years based on acceptance by the Minister of the appointment. The current appointment is now up for renewal but due to the uncertainty of its future due to the proposed advisory committee to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs the renewal of Mr. Ray Ward the Chairman of the RSL's Veterans Affairs Committee will only be for a period of one year from June 2008.