Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Victorian Branch Inc.

OCTOBER 2026

FSB-VIC

NEWS BULLETIN

WE WON!

The proposed $5,000 Veterans' Health Cap has been scrapped!

Can you believe it?

Today, the Minister announced that the proposed cap has been scrapped. Veterans can finally breathe a sigh of relief as this ill-considered and dangerous policy is consigned to the dustheap.

***This is your win.** Without your support, and investment in this campaign it would not have happened.*

*Max, I cannot say this clearly enough. **Thank you!***

You stood with our veterans and told the Government, "NO! This is not good enough."

Please take the time to celebrate – tell someone you know this happened and that you played a part in pushing Australia in the right direction.

This was a dangerous policy that needed to be thrown out. By getting rid of it, we have saved lives.

Since the Government announced the cap, I've had hundreds of veterans contact my office, telling me about the devastating impact it would have on them.

We ask people to put their lives on the line for our country, with the promise we will look after them when they come home, to then turn around and tell them that care stops once they hit an arbitrary $5,000 limit, was a betrayal of the worst order!

This cap was cruel, it was dangerous and it should never have been announced in the first place.

VVAA MOTTO AT WORK

Statement on veteran allied health changes | Minister for Veterans' Affairs

***Source** - Extract of message to VVAA National President from Senator Jacqui Lambie.*

Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance 18th August 2026



IRONSIDE TRIBUTE TRUCK

Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living

VVAA Victorian State Branch—Executive

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VVAA Victorian Branch

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Newsletter: editor@vvaavic.org.au

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Enquiries: *Refer Secretary - Office no longer manned.*

STATE OFFICE:
VVAA Victorian Branch is no longer located in Anzac House Melbourne.

Refer enquiries to State Secretary or one of the other Executive Members listed above.

MEMBERSHIP MAIL:
Membership Manager

PO Box 189

MELTON VIC 3337

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



The two audio-visual kiosks provided to the NVVM through use of a State Government grant have been installed. The kiosks allow museum visitors to view Vietnam veteran interviews and to research the details of Vietnam veterans who died on active service.

Apart from a few bits of additional information to be provided to the State Government department that administers grant funding, all our grants tied to specific activities have been completed and acquitted.

In a break from normal practice, the next State Council meeting will be held in Seymour at the end of October.

We now sponsor two VVAA Victorian Branch bursary students, with the award of a second bursary this year. Members of your executive attended the 2026 AVCAT bursary award presentation at the Shrine of Remembrance. One of our bursary recipients is due to finish this year and may seek an additional one-year grant to undertake Honours studies. Children and Grandchildren of Vietnam veterans are eligible to apply for Long Tan bursaries sponsored by DVA, other ESO's, like us, also offer bursaries to applicants recommended by AVCAT.

Sadly, your executive is working with Sub-Branches who have decided to close this year. The branch closure plan provides guidance on the closure process and welfare fund distribution; your State Branch Treasurer provides oversight.

EDUCATION BURSARIES

AVCAT - ***Australian Veterans Children Assistance Trust*** - is a national independent charity that provides tertiary scholarships for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. VVAA Victoria provides financial assistance by funding scholarships.

Picture opposite is VVAA Vic Branch Bursary recipient William Keogh, pictured with VVAA Victorian State Secretary George Skell.



IRONSIDE TRIBUTE TRUCK

Glen Ferrarotto is an Afghanistan Veteran who, with his wife, runs Ironside Resources, including Ironside Trucking. Glen is passionate about veteran welfare and has a high regard for Veterans; so much so, Ironside 1 is a tribute to SASR, Ironside 2 is a tribute to Vietnam Veterans and Ironside 3 will be a tribute to the Anzacs.

The picture, taken at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, shows Glen and VVAA State President Bob Elworthy AM.



VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2026

Vietnam Veterans Day 2026 – 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne – 18 August 2026

Vietnam Veterans Day 2026 was commemorated at the Shrine of Remembrance under clear, sunny skies, marking the **60th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan**. A strong turnout of approximately **600–700 attendees** gathered to honour Vietnam veterans and their families.

A **PC-21 Pilatus aircraft** conducted a ceremonial fly past, providing a modern link to the aircraft types used during the Vietnam War and echoing those flown today by the RAAF Roulettes.

The service was attended by **Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC**, Governor of Victoria, who delivered an outstanding commemorative address. Senior representatives from the Victorian Government, the Australian Defence Force, and Ex-Service Organisations also participated in the ceremony.

Bob Elworthy AM, Victorian State President of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA), addressed the gathering and confirmed that **2026 marks the final year** in which the **VVAA Victorian Branch** will conduct a **formal Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration Service** at the Shrine. He noted the ageing veteran cohort, the increasing organisational effort required, and rising costs as key factors in the decision.

From **2027 onwards**, Vietnam Veterans Day at the Shrine will transition to an **informal gathering and wreath-laying** at the **Vietnam Tree** at **1100 hours on 18 August** each year.

The 2026 service was dignified, well-attended, and a fitting tribute to the courage, sacrifice and service of all who served in Vietnam.









60th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan



























Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living

LETTER OF THANKS

HEAD OF REGIMENT - Regimental Master Gunner

Regimental Sergeant Major of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

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Bridges Barracks. PUCKAPUN'AI. VIC 3662. AUSTRALIA

Robert W Elworthy, AM

Prcsidcnt Victorian Branch VVAA

4 Collins Street

ANZAC House

MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Bob.

I write to express my deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation for the extraordinary honour Of being awarded Honorary Life Membership Of the Vietnam Veterans' Association Of Australia, Victorian Branch.

To be recognised by an organisation that has done so much to support veterans, preserve their legacy, and uphold the values of service, mateship, sacrifice and remembrance is both humbling and profoundly meaningful. I accept this award with immense pride, but also with a clear understanding of the responsibility that accompanies such a distinguished recognition.

Please be assured that I fully appreciate the gravity Of this honour and the expectations that come with it. I recognise that Honorary Life Membership is not merely an acknowledgement of past contributions, but a continuing commitment to uphold the values, principles and traditions of the Association. It is a privilege that carries with it an enduring obligation to support the WAA its members, its Charter, and the legacy entrusted to it by those who served.

I am deeply conscious that this recognition has been bestowed by men and women whose service and sacrifice have shaped our nation's military history. TO be accepted into this dlstinguished company is something I will never take lightly. I will remain forever grateful for the confidence and trust the Association has placed in me.

I pledge that I will continue to dedicate myself to honouring this most special distinction through my actions, my advocacy, and my unwavering support of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia. I will strive to uphold the standards and values that this award represents and to contribute, in whatever way I can, to ensuring the Association's enduring strength, relevance and legacy for future generations.

Please convey my heartfelt thanks to the National and State Executive, the Board, and all members Of the Association whose support and consideration led to this recognition. It is an honour that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Thank you once again for this remarkable privilege. I will always remain steadfast in my commitment to e Association and deeply appreciative Of the faith you have shown in me.

Respectfully yours.

A Charles

Warrant Officer Class One

Regimental Master Gunner

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

22 June 2026

OUR VETERANS.

A POEM BY EDWINA SMITH.

Our "Pollies" never seem to learn;
they'd done all this before.
Pathetic plans and heartless haste;
a senseless rush to war.
They seeded fear of "Commie" spread,
a South-East Asian foe.
Birthday Ballots soon began,
deciding who would go.

Our Veterans did their duty well
when called upon to serve.
Those haunting missions on patrol
strained each and every nerve.
The foe disguised by steamy stealth
in thick monsoonal rain,
till gunfire cracked the eerie stress
with blood and searing pain.

Life back home just rolled along
for those who need not care.
While many never spared a thought,
there was mournful grief to bear.
In conflicts past the horrors hid;
most people never knew,
till TV cameras showed it sharp;
so clearly into view.

OUR VETERANS.

A POEM BY EDWINA SMITH.

Opinions soon began to move
away from what seemed right.
Protests in the streets flared up;
Why did we join this fight?
On their return, no victory joy
and when all was said and done,
it was a ghastly, brutal war
which never could be won.

Through hostile jeers and spitting rage,
a stinging slap of shame;
the only thanks Our Veterans got
and yet they weren't to blame.
Called to serve, they'd not deserve
the ranting and the vent,
given out so foolishly
by those who never went.

As time dragged on amends were made
to ease the hurt and scorn,
inflicted on Our Veterans
left lonely and forlorn.
They wore the badge of courage,
the Aussie Rising Sun.
To all Our Veterans then and now
We thank you and well done!

EDWINA SMITH

My name is Edwina Smith and I am a retired nurse/midwife from Canberra. I enjoy writing poems about animals and nature. Some of my poems can be found online and with Australian Children's Poetry Blog.

I also have an interest in Australian Military History. Three of my poems can be found on the late Lt. Col. Peter Winstanley website www.pows-of-japan.net

I have written a poem titled "Our Veterans" which I'd like to share with you. Although its focus is on how badly Vietnam Veterans were treated on their return home it may be relevant to all veterans. I would be happy for it to be included in your newsletter/media contacts if you think it's suitable.