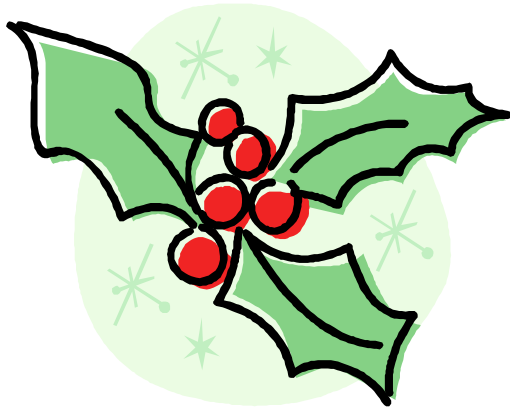


DVA NEWS

Welcome to the December Christmas Edition of DVA News..... On behalf of the department, we wish you a happy, safe Christmas and New Year. Please remember your feedback and suggestions are always welcome:

Madeline Carney (Client Contact Support Officer)
Carol McDonald (Manager, Brisbane VAN)
van.qsbrisbane@dva.gov.au

DVA Services during Christmas – New Year



All DVA offices will be closed from Friday 25 December 2009 to Friday 1 January 2010.

DVA offices will re-open on Monday 4 January 2010.

Many DVA services will still be available during the closure:

- Crisis Counselling – VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service offers 24-hour crisis counselling through Veterans' Line. This service is available toll

free on 1800 011 046 to veterans of all conflicts and their families, including members of Peace operations.

- Transport – if transport is not booked prior to the Christmas period, please pay up front and seek reimbursement from DVA later.
- Hospital admissions – doctors can admit DVA patients into hospital and request admissions approval, where required, when DVA re-opens.
- Defence Service Homes Insurance – help with policy and claim enquiries is available 24-hours a day on 1300 552 662, and payments can be made on 1300 304 989, for the cost of a local call.



Outreach visits

There are no visits scheduled for the month of December. The VAN Outreach program will resume next year, 2010.

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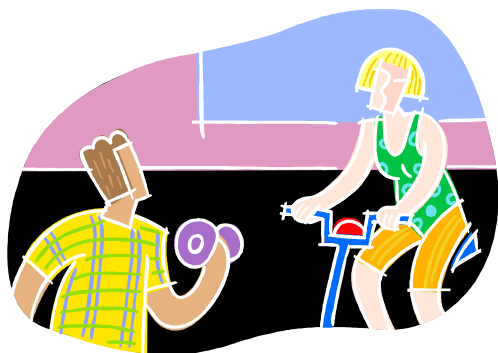
News From the Moreton Bay Healthy Ageing Partnership

Positively Ageless – Update

A reminder that consultation and opportunities to provide feedback for the discussion paper *Positively Ageless*, have now closed (4th Dec). Further stages of the Whole-of-Government Senior's Strategy and Action Plan will continue, incorporating feedback received from the community.

Programs, Workshops and Courses

Age Fit for Well being – For adults over 60. A gym program that guarantees muscle strength, balance, fitness and functional improvements, which increase one's ability in everyday living activities. The program is individualised and sessions are tailored to suit one's particular level of fitness. To book an assessment, contact *Game on Fitness* (07) 3310 4969.



World Health Organisation (online course) – The World Health Organisation has

launched an online course which addresses the social determinants of health. Please note, this course is designed to target WHO staff members and ministry officials, but is free and accessible to the public, for those who are interested. The course is composed of four learning units that explore the connections between health, equity, social justice and human rights. It aims to provide insight into the social determinants of health and encourage the development of policies that promote and protect the health of a population. The course guide is available at www.dds-dispositivoglobal.ops.org.ar.

Green Army Participants – For those who are:

- currently unemployed (12 months or longer)
- between 16 and 64 years of age
- residents of the Moreton Bay Regional council area
- who maintain an interest in environmental restoration.

Applications are invited for Green Army Trainees to undertake paid employment and training for the duration of 16 weeks, beginning 30th November 2009 and finishing 26th March 2010. This program aims to provide on-the-job experience to unemployed individuals who reside within the Moreton Bay Regional Council boundaries. Activities focus on the restoration of degraded bushland and park

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infrastructure. Within this specific work environment, a broad range of skills will be delivered, including manual trade and bushland restoring techniques, track development, infrastructure maintenance and installation, and teamwork skills. Assistance with job searching and career planning is also provided to participants and a statement of Attainment is received at the completion of the training modules. For more information, please visit: <http://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/general.aspx?id=59967> The program takes place at Deception Bay, and a minibus is available to collect participants at Caboolture Railway Station and provide transport to Deception Bay.



Funding Opportunities

The government has made available \$1.5 million under the Dementia Initiative for a third round of Dementia Community Support Grants. Organisations are invited to apply for funding for projects that will:

- raise awareness within the community about dementia
- provide support for people with dementia, their families and their carers
- Improve and encourage innovation within services for people with dementia, their families and their carers.

Grants of up to \$50 000 will be considered for initiatives with a maximum duration of 12 months. For more information please visit:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/grantITA1300910>

Changes to DVA Cards



Changes to the look and functionality of all DVA Repatriation Health cards (gold, white and orange) are due to occur commencing in March 2010. The changes will coincide with a bulk reissuing of cards to cardholders, as most are due to expire at that time. The following factors will be different:

Magnetic Stripe Functionality

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The stripe will contain the client's full name, file number and expiry date. This will enable health care providers to use swipe card technology, similar to Medicare and Private Health Fund cards, as well as lodge claim information with DVA. The possibility of making errors in the transfer of client details, a common occurrence in manual processing, will therefore be reduced.

Security features upgrade

Each card will be micro-printed and will have a registered hologram. These features will make unauthorised reproduction of the cards more difficult.

Disclosure of Information

A brochure containing a Disclosure Statement will accompany the DVA cards. The statement will allow DVA to participate in the COAG Better Health for All Australians Strategy and to disclose information to health providers under the DVA MATES initiative. Briefly, the statement explains that DVA may disclose information to Medicare for the purpose of assigning the client an Individual Healthcare Identifier, and to contracted organisations for the purpose of assessing potentially hazardous doses or drug combinations, and to the clients doctor/s with advice about prescribed medications.

Overseas Clients

Eligible clients residing overseas will have their DVA card eligibility reinstated and

will be issued with a DVA card. This will enable provider claims for overseas clients to be paid more efficiently and it will no longer be necessary to issue such clients with temporary letters of authority.

More information and updates will be provided early next year, closer to the time of reissuing of the cards.

Changes to the Work Bonus



The Work Bonus is offered as an incentive, for those who are able, to continue working after they reach pension age. Recently, changes to the Work Bonus have been introduced. From the 20th September 2009, eligible pensioners will have only 50% of the first \$500 of their wages earned per fortnight will be included in the income test. The income concession amount of \$500 will be indexed in July each year. To receive the Work Bonus, a person must:

1. be over Qualifying Age*,
and

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2. receive an income tested pension from DVA.

*(Qualifying Age is the same as Pension Age. Pension age is 60 years for males. For females, Pension Age is currently being raised by six months every two years so that by 1 Jan 2014, female and male pension age will be the same. At present, Pension Age for a female is dependant on the year she was born, and will differ between individuals).

If both members of a couple are of Pension Age, each will receive the Work Bonus. An assessment must be undertaken to determine a person's individual rate of pension.

DVA clients do not need to apply for the Work Bonus, as it is calculated automatically when their pension is assessed. However, it is important for clients to keep the department notified of their employment earnings – this information is essential to the assessment process.

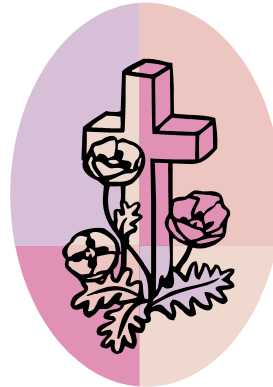
Fact Sheets about the Bonus scheme are available for viewing on the DVA website: www.dva.gov.au/factsheets

Saluting Their Service Grants

\$303 708 in funding has been allocated to the Australian Government's *Saluting Their Service* commemorative grants program. Grants will target local initiatives that recognise the service and sacrifice of

Australians who have served in wars, conflicts and peace operations. A priority of the this grants program is to help regional and rural communities across Australia to maintain their places of remembrance, as such memorials are essential to honouring the local members who have served the country, and their families.

Those local communities and ex-service organisations wishing to apply for funding, please visit www.dva.gov.au/grants or contact your nearest DVA office on 133 254 (for metropolitan callers) or 1800 555 254 (for non-metro callers).



New: National Carer Support Services

Carers Victoria (funded by DVA) and provides specialist Carer Support Services, Australia wide. They cater for the following people:

- Carers and partners of veterans and serving members

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- Veterans and serving members who are caring for family members
- Ex-service organisations supporting veteran and defence communities throughout Australia.

A DVA Carer Support Advisor is available for consultation to community service providers and ex-service organisations. The adviser may provide advice about enhancing carer/partner inclusive practices and gaining greater understanding of the needs of families within veteran and defence communities.

Additionally, two specialist educators work to provide educational and community development programs about improving health and wellbeing outcomes for carers.

In a nutshell, the main services provided under this initiative are:

- Consultation – on carer & partner issues & inclusiveness
- Workshops & educational programs
- Conference presentations
- Speaking engagements
- Publications – newsletter articles
- Resource development
- Community development

For further information about the services offered by Carers Victoria, as well as available educational workshops and

programs, please contact the Coordinator National Carer Support Services, Zena Sharples, on (03) 9396 9500. Alternatively, you may contact the Carer Association in your state on 1800 242 636, DVA on 133 254, or your local VAN office on 1300 55 1918.

E-News Bulletin

DVA has introduced a regular monthly DVA electronic news service, ***DVA e-News***.

It is intended that this new service will provide regular updates on Departmental activities to ex-service organisations, the media and other subscribers.

Subscription to the service can be made via the media centre on the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au/media/mainme.htm.

This electronic news service will contain a short summary of particular items with a link to the corresponding page on the DVA website or other DVA owned sites.

