



The Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

ARBN 105 524 972 ABN 95 105 524 972

Patron: Mrs. Lynne Cosgrove

Achievements of the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

The following is a list of achievements that have been gained through representation by the National Association for more than a decade to the Government of the day. This further bolsters the grass-root achievements of our state branches in NSW/ACT, QLD, WA, SA/NT and VIC/Tasmania that are part of the day to day welfare and support of partners and families at a state and local level.

- P.V.A. has earned recognition and acceptance within the Ex-Service Community. Our representatives now represent Partners and families on all State Government Committees and at the National level have representation on the Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) Round Table, Emerging Issues Forum, Mental Health Forum and Aged Care Forum.
- P.V.A. has member representatives on the National Advisory Council for the Veteran and Veterans Family Counselling Service (VVCS) and the Vietnam Veterans Family Study (VVFS)
- P.V.A. was the catalyst for the production and distribution of a brochure highlighting awareness of the Strongyloides parasite. Strongyloides is a round worm prevalent in jungle conditions.
- P.V.A. has advocated on behalf of members directly with Family and Community Services and Centrelink to clarify and rectify problems members were encountering with Carer's Allowance Application Forms. This resulted in Centrelink accepting Vietnam service as an "acute event" for payment of 3 months arrears of the allowance.
- P.V.A. was instrumental in having the age limit made open ended for children of Vietnam Veterans to receive counselling from the Veterans and Veterans Family Counselling Service (VVCS). Previously, only children up to the age of 36 years were eligible for counselling.
- P.V.A. lobbied for the Bereavement Payment to be calculated at the rate the veteran was in receipt of at the time of his/her death. Prior to this the bereavement Payment paid to the War Widow or Widower was at the 100% Disability Rate instead of the higher rate of disability the veteran was receiving at the time of death.
- P.V.A. advocated that the Funeral Benefit paid to eligible recipients under the Veterans Entitlement Act (VEA) was totally inadequate resulting in the Benefit being increased from \$572 to \$1000. This was further increased in the 2007 budget to \$2000. This remains an absolute priority for our association.
- P.V.A. supported and fought for Indexation of the Income Support Supplement (ISS) paid to eligible War Widows/ers. Prior to this the ISS had been frozen since 1984.
- P.V.A. persistently pursued the government to have the age limit for eligibility of War Widows to apply for the Income Support Supplement (ISS) removed.
- Prior to the Federal Election in November 2007 only those War Widows over 58 years of age were able to apply for ISS unless they had dependent children or were disabled themselves. P.V.A. ensured this was rectified in 2008.
- P.V.A. has been involved from as early as 2003 via our representative on the Children of Vietnam Veterans Health Study (COVHS)

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- P.V.A. compiled and distributed a Children's health questionnaire, the results of which highlighted the absolute need for more investigation into the health of our children.
- The announcement in 2007 by the former Liberal government to undertake a study into the health of children of veterans is being closely monitored by the P.V.A. via our Representative on the Vietnam Veterans Family Study (VVFS) Consultative Forum.
- P.V.A. brought to the attention of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) the fact that many veterans' partners receiving Partner Service Pension were actually carers and received Carer Allowance. However these carers were denied the \$1000 Bonus payment which was paid to carers in the General Community in the years 2004 and 2005. We were rewarded for our efforts in 2006 and 2007 when this bonus payment was actually extended to carers in receipt of Partner Service Pension as well as Carer Allowance.

The Federal Budget in 2009 finally ended the uncertainty of Carer Bonus Payments when the Government legislated that a \$600 Bonus for those receiving Carer Allowance plus a \$600 payment for those partners receiving Partners Service Pension would be paid each year.

- Since our inception P.V.A. has been investigating the deteriorating health of partners and/or carers of veterans with operational service, via our national health committee. Initially Newcastle University was involved but currently work is being carried out at the University of New England. Research is ongoing and we will persist in our efforts to seek and find funding to continue this important and ground breaking research.

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