

VASEY RSL CARE NEWS

The Quarterly Newsletter of Vasey RSL Care

ANZAC Day Commemorated Despite Restrictions

ANZAC Day is one of the most important days in the life of our organisation – a day when our residents and their families come together to remember those who lost their lives protecting our nation and to ensure that their sacrifice is never forgotten.

Coming together with families this year was not permitted, but each of our aged care homes and some of our ex-service locations held services of commemoration.

At Vasey RSL Care Frankston South, pictured below with Residential Manager, Jane and Lifestyle Coordinator Ruwan, veterans Lewis, Trevor, Ted and David laid wreaths at the flag while residents looked on from indoors.

At Vasey RSL Care Bundoora, the lone piper played Amazing Grace and the bugler played the Last Post outdoors, while residents listened through open windows.

At Vasey RSL Care Brighton East, the service was pre-recorded with residents taking part in the readings and prayers, and the video was played over the internal TV system.

Vasey RSL Care Ivanhoe and Brighton both held their services indoors with individual residents going out to the flagpole to lay wreaths.

Residents at the units in Geelong held a dawn service while residents at the units at Frankston South were flying the flag for their heroes.

See page 4 for more photos.



From Our CEO

COVID-19

Since our last newsletter, life has been turned on its head, and after suffering the worst bushfire season on record, we moved straight into the global virus pandemic.

This pandemic – with such devastating consequences for those over 70 – continues to occupy much of our time and resources. Each new development or government directive has far-reaching consequences and expectations on our staff have been significant.

Continuing to protect our community from COVID-19 has been our top priority for the last few months, and will continue to be our top priority for the foreseeable future.

Proposed Sale of Vasey RSL Care

Adding to the difficult times we are all experiencing is the directive from the War Widows Guild Victoria and RSL Victoria that Vasey RSL Care should be sold.

This is not easy news to receive at any time, but launching our Advocacy Campaign was our only option to ensure that the community was informed before it was too late to do anything about it – we felt that the timing was less important than the need for the community to be aware of the situation.

We are very grateful to all of you who have written letters supporting a strong future for our organisation to Dr Webster, President of RSL Victoria and Mrs Charlton, President of the War Widows Guild Victoria.

We know that the 850+ people we support and care for are appreciative of your support and we continue to work to try to resolve this situation to the benefit of current and future war widows and veterans.

Commemorations and Celebrations

Our usual services for ANZAC Day involving residents, family members and often with the support of currently serving members of the ADF from HMAS Cerberus and Simpson Barracks, were severely curtailed this year. Despite this, all our aged care homes held a service for residents to honour and remember all those who fought and died for their country.

Lest we forget.



Easter and Mothers' Day are also important dates on our calendar and times when family come together, so this was particularly hard on our residents and their loved ones. Our staff have done all they can to provide physical and emotional support to your loved ones during this time.

As restrictions begin to ease, I would like to thank you all for your patience and support during this intense period. And I ask for your continued understanding as the threat of infection is still with us.

Flu Vaccination

New government legislation brought in on 1 May now requires that every person entering an aged care home must have the current flu vaccination.

We were very pleased that our staff acted on this and despite some vaccine shortages, all were vaccinated by the deadline and thankfully, we did not need to stand anyone down.

This adds an additional layer of complication for visitors and staff as we are required to take responsibility for confirming the vaccination status of all visitors. We appreciate your patience in this matter.

Sadly, our annual Senior MasterChef Challenge has had to be cancelled this year, and our new Poppy Playgroup had barely begun before it was put on hold.

This is a particularly stressful and difficult time for everyone, and I encourage you to be kind to yourself, and we must all be especially considerate of those around us as we continue to make our way through unknown territory.

Janna Voloshin



The Proposed Sale of Vasey RSL Care

In April, Vasey RSL Care launched an advocacy campaign to enlist the support of RSL sub-branches and the veteran community to secure a strong future for our organisation. Why did we need to do this?

“We have taken this step following a directive we received in August 2019 from RSL Victoria and the War Widows’ Guild Victoria, through their presidents, to sell our organisation by 2023,” said Janna Voloshin, CEO, Vasey RSL Care.

“While we have the utmost respect for our friends and colleagues in RSL Victoria and the Guild we have notified them that we cannot comply with the directive. We believe that to do so would be at odds with the duties of our directors of the trustee of the patriotic fund that owns the assets of Vasey RSL Care and their duties as responsible persons of a registered charity.

“We also believe it is not in the best interests of current and future generations of veterans. They require a trusted organisation with the strength and expertise to continue to deliver the direct care, housing and social support needed.”

A Deed was drawn up in 2012 by RSL Victoria and the War Widows Guild to put Vasey RSL Care up for sale by 2019, later changed to 2023. This Deed was not made known to the organisation members and not discussed at any AGM.

Vasey RSL Care is the only aged care organisation in Victoria that prioritises ex-service people, and does so regardless of their financial circumstances. Currently more than 70% of our aged care residents are ex-service and they are given priority when a vacancy comes up. Our Independent Living Units are exclusively for veterans and war widows.

Rather than wind up operations, the Vasey RSL Care board has a well-considered strategic plan to continue to meet the demand from older veterans and their dependants, while adapting to serve the needs of younger veterans and those in transition, with services such as supportive accommodation, employment and general and mental health support.

“We want to expand our services where veterans need them most, such as in regional Victoria and the western suburbs of Melbourne,” said Janna Voloshin.

Department of Veterans’ Affairs figures show that demand for the organisation’s services will continue to be strong, with veteran numbers in Victoria predicted to increase by almost 22% over the next decade. Already one in four veterans are younger, and with up to 6000

service men and women leaving the Australian Defence Force every year, this will only increase.

The President of RSL Victoria, Dr Robert Webster OAM has stated that his organisation entered into an agreement with the War Widows Guild Victoria to sell Vasey RSL Care because veteran numbers were expected to drop.

Evidence indicates the reverse is occurring; veteran numbers are strongly growing.

Dr Webster also questioned whether Vasey RSL Care can admit non-veterans under the terms of its patriotic fund status. In answer to this, Vasey RSL Care has received written advice from the regulator, Consumer Affairs Victoria, that there is no set ratio of veterans to non-veterans to which we must adhere.

“We want to work with RSL Victoria and the Guild on exciting plans to better support the veteran community. We need your help to highlight the importance of our aged care services and ensure we operate beyond the 2023 deadline given to us by RSL Victoria and the Guild,” Janna added.

If you believe that Vasey RSL Care should continue to provide support and services to war widows and veterans, please write to:

**Mrs Wendy Charlton, President,
War Widows Guild Victoria
172 Burwood Road
Hawthorn VIC 3122**

and to:

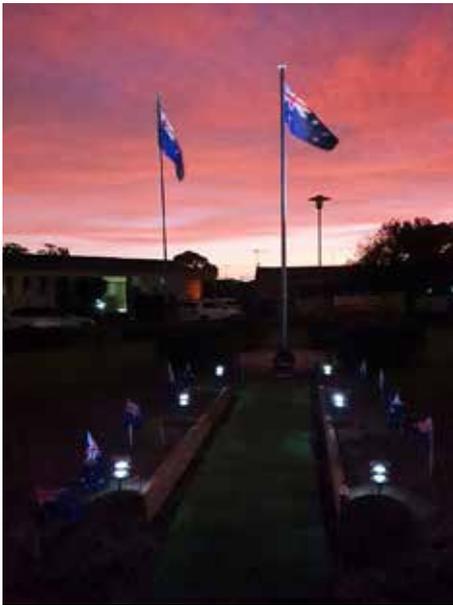
**Dr Robert Webster OAM, President,
RSL Victoria, ANZAC House
4 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000**

“We want to ensure the legacy of Mrs Vasey lives on and the support of war widows and veterans continues to evolve and develop as it has done from its inception.

“We are calling on Mrs Charlton and Dr Webster to rethink their decision in light of the updated data, and support the work we do for the ex-service community. Please help us secure a strong future for Vasey RSL Care,” said Janna Voloshin.

If you have questions, please feel free to email us at communications@vaseyrlscare.org.au or call 9810 5506.

ANZAC Day Around Vasey RSL Care



Top left: dawn at Vasey RSL Care Geelong units. Top middle: residents at Vasey RSL Care Frankston South units. Top right & 2nd from top right: residents from Vasey RSL Care Frankston South lay wreaths. Middle left, the bugler and piper at Vasey RSL Care Bundoora. Middle 2nd from top: residents at Bundoora. Above: laying wreaths at Vasey RSL Care Ivanhoe. Above right: Ken from Ivanhoe read the Ode. Left, Vasey RSL Care Brighton's flag-raising. Right: Mary at Vasey RSL Care Brighton East watched their service on video.





Making the Best of the Current Situation

Since visitor restrictions came in, finding ways to stay interested, occupied and connected has been the goal for our residents. We have been impressed with their support and acceptance and especially, their willingness to try new things.

To the tune of 'Doing the Lambeth Walk', residents at Vasey RSL Care Brighton got some fresh air and exercise while 'Doing the Coronavirus Walk', meanwhile the Easter Bunny distributed eggs showing very sensible social distancing.

Although not successful for everyone, many residents have found a new love of technology and have been able to connect with family members all over Australia and the world. Allan at Vasey RSL Care Frankston South was very happy to chat to his granddaughter and great granddaughter, while Peg from Vasey RSL Care Brighton East caught up with members of her extended family.



Showing that love conquers all, Marie moved into Vasey RSL Care Bundoora for respite and to be with her husband, Frank. Meanwhile the Drape family found a way to share a meal 'almost together'.

Window visits have been a good option for some families, such as Lorraine, at Vasey RSL Care Ivanhoe and her daughter Bronwyn. Lorraine found it funny that she was on the phone even though her daughter was so near!



Vue de Monde Deliver Goodies!

A surprise phone call just before ANZAC Day led to a rather special delivery of ANZAC biscuits....

We received a very lovely phone call out of the blue in the lead up to ANZAC Day, letting us know that the head chef and his team at a Melbourne CBD restaurant wanted to use their skills during isolation to show their appreciation for veterans and war widows. We said, that would be lovely!

What a wonderful surprise when a truck arrived carrying boxes with 'Vue de Monde' labels.

Head Chef Hugh Allen and his team made enough ANZAC biscuits for all the residents at Vasey RSL Care Brighton East as a gesture of thanks to veterans and war widows for their service and sacrifice.

Thank you to the team at Vue de Monde for their kindness – as well as appreciating the biscuits, our residents appreciated their thoughtfulness.



Top: a delivery truck arrived with a trolley load of boxes bearing the name 'Vue de Monde'.

Above: the contents of the boxes!

Left: Veterans Peg and Bill are first to taste the ANZAC biscuits, pictured with Residential Manager, Anna (left), CEO Janna (middle) and Lifestyle Coordinator, Jason.



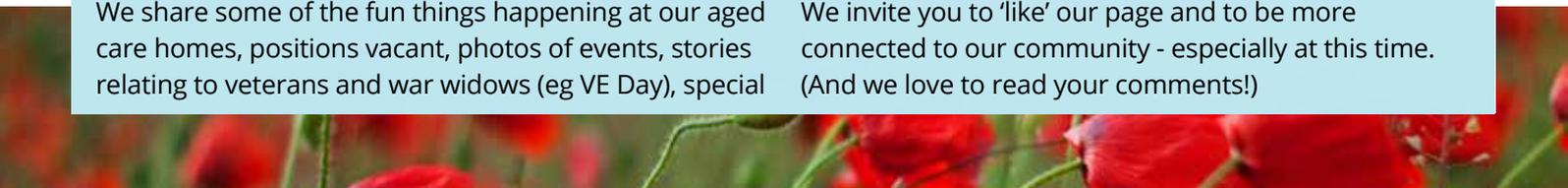
Follow Vasey RSL Care on Facebook!

Our Facebook page - **'VaseyRSLCareSalutingExcellence'** has over 1000 followers and provides a regular supply of news from all parts of our community.

We share some of the fun things happening at our aged care homes, positions vacant, photos of events, stories relating to veterans and war widows (eg VE Day), special

celebrations, messages from our CEO, and a variety of other information that may be of value to our followers.

We invite you to 'like' our page and to be more connected to our community - especially at this time. (And we love to read your comments!)





International Nurses Day – 12 May

Vasey RSL Care supports 850+ people in residential aged care, home care and ex-service accommodation. To do this, we have around 520 staff which includes over 150 nursing staff. While every single staff member at Vasey RSL Care is essential, 12 May is a day when we give extra attention to our wonderful nursing staff.

Twelfth May is the anniversary of the birth of the best-known nurse in the world, Florence Nightingale: this year it was 200 years since her birth.

Florence became known as 'The lady with the lamp' for her care of soldiers in the Crimean War, thanks to an article in The Times newspaper which stated, 'When all the medical officers have retired for the night and silence and darkness have settled down upon those miles of prostrate sick, she may be observed alone, with a little lamp in her hand, making her solitary rounds.'

Florence was born in Italy – in Florence – to a wealthy British family which moved back to Great Britain when Florence was a year old. She was educated at home by her father and felt a strong calling to help others. However, she respected her family's opposition to work as a nurse until the age of 24 when she rebelled against expectations and announced her intentions and went on to train, and then to train others.

The Crimean War (1853 to 1856) was between Russia and an alliance of the UK, France, Sardinia and the Ottoman Empire (modern day Austria, Turkey and other parts of southeast Europe, western Asia and northern Africa).

When reports of the terrible conditions for wounded soldiers got back to Britain, Florence got together 38 women volunteer nurses she had trained and 15 Catholic nuns, and they travelled to the main British camp at Scutari (now part of Istanbul), taking a couple of weeks to get there via land and sea.

They were faced with overworked medical staff, official indifference, lack of medicines, poor hygiene, infections and no food preparation equipment.

Florence advocated on behalf of the soldiers and her work led to improved survival rates, longer term improvements for soldiers in peacetime and to social changes, including the introduction of sanitation in working-class homes.

In 1855, the Nightingale Fund was established in recognition of her work in Crimea, and 45,000 pounds

was donated which allowed her to set up the Nightingale Training School at Saint Thomas's Hospital, London, in July 1860. It was the first secular nursing school in the world and is now part of King's College London.



Portrait of Florence Nightingale by Henry Hering, around 1860. National Portrait Gallery, London.

The first group of 'Nightingale Nurses' began work in 1865. In 1868, Florence sent Lucy Osburn and five other English sisters to Sydney Hospital in NSW to set up nurse training in Australia. In 1869, the Gothic Revival Nightingale Wing was built to house the female staff of the hospital, with input from Florence herself.

Florence was a social reformer, the founder of modern nursing, a statistician and a prolific writer, publishing medical knowledge and tracts written in simple English so they were accessible to people with limited reading skills. She was a pioneer of data visualisation using what we would now know as infographics to help make the information easy to understand.

From age 37, she was intermittently bedridden and suffered from depression, possibly caused by brucellosis and spondylitis which affected her until her 60's.

Despite a number of romantic interests and at least two proposals, it appears she felt that marriage would hamper her work and she stayed single all her life. She died in her sleep at the age of 90, in her home in London.

There are many other people who have helped the progress of nursing, but perhaps none who have been as influential as Florence Nightingale.

