



# **PRIME MINISTER**

## **MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

### **PM ANNOUNCES MEMBERSHIP OF VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Australian veteran and ex-service community will have their views represented by the fourteen Australians appointed today to the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex-service Matters, the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin announced today.

The members of the Council are different to any other current veteran representative group. Members are drawn from every part of the veteran community, including servicemen, partners of veterans, war widows and veteran advocates. The Council reflects and brings together the diverse groups in the veteran and ex-service community.

The Chair of the Council will be Dr Allan Hawke, former Secretary of the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence and the current Chancellor of the Australian National University.

Dr Hawke will be assisted by Frank Benfield, Dr Robert Black AM RFD, the Hon Graham Edwards, June Healy OAM, Commodore Nick Helyer MBE RANR, Warrant Officer Peter Hind OAM, Ken Kipping AM, Gail MacDonell, Anne Pahl, Philip Pyke, Donna Reggett, Brigadier Keith Rossi AM OBE RFD ED (Rtd) and Brigadier Neil Weekes AM MC (Rtd).

"As a group, these people have personal and professional experience spanning the three services, in advocacy, rehabilitation and parliamentary processes, and have an understanding of the impact of service on families. I look forward to hearing their input on ex-service issues," said Mr Rudd.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs sought the views of the ex-service community about how they wanted their issues communicated to government. More than 100 submissions to a discussion paper were received, and the Minister met in excess of 800 people at consultation meetings held throughout Australia during the Parliamentary recess.

"As you'd expect, I've heard a variety of views, but veterans themselves were very supportive of the concept of the Council," said Mr Griffin.

The Council will advise the Government on veteran and ex-service issues, and identify problems and priorities to improve the Government's provision of services.

The Council will meet for the first time in October 2008. At its first meeting it will confirm its terms of reference and advise on a review of current consultation mechanisms between DVA and the ex-service community. The Government will also seek the Council's advice on major issues facing the portfolio in coming months, including the study of suicide in the ex-service community and the reconsideration of the Clarke Review recommendations not accepted by the previous Government. Further information on the Advisory Council is available at [minister.dva.gov.au](http://minister.dva.gov.au).

The establishment of the Council delivers on another of the Rudd Government's election commitments.

**Editor's note:** Biographies of the members of the Advisory Council are attached.

**TASMANIA**

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**MINISTER GRIFFIN – AARON JOBSZ 0439 043 613**

**PRIME MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEMBERSHIP**

**Dr Allan Hawke – Chair**  
ACT

Dr Allan Hawke's extensive career in public administration at senior levels includes past appointments as Secretary of the Departments of Veterans' Affairs, Transport and Regional Services and Defence. He completed his public service to Australia as High Commissioner to New Zealand.

Dr Hawke was appointed a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Public Administration in 1998 and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management in 1999 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to public service. In 2001 he became a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The Australian Financial Review's "Boss" Magazine, named him as one of Australia's top 30 true leaders in its inaugural list in 2001. Dr Hawke was appointed as Chancellor of the ANU on 4 February 2006 for a three year term.

**Mr Frank Benfield**  
Queensland

Mr Benfield enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1963 and served in Vietnam from November 1970 until November 1971. Post Vietnam he served overseas in Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. Following discharge (as a Sergeant) he was employed with the Royal Thai Navy Air Wing in Thailand from 1984 to 1987.

Mr Benfield's involvement in advocacy and welfare needs of veterans dates from the 1970s when he founded an Association to tend to the needs of Army Aviation veterans of the Vietnam conflict. He maintained an advocacy role for veterans from all conflicts and is a member of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (VVAA) and the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia (VVFA). He is currently a part-time Services Member of the Veterans' Review Board (VRB), being first appointed in 1999.

**Group Captain Dr Robert Black AM RFD**  
South Australia

Group Captain Black served in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve for 46 years including duty in Butterworth, Rwanda, Bougainville and East Timor.

Group Captain Black is a Doctor of Medicine and has a Master of Surgery. He is a fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons. He was the Senior Visiting Specialist of the Daw Park Repatriation General Hospital for 23 years and has conducted a self employed private surgical practice. He was appointed a Services Member of the VRB in 2006.

**Hon Graham Edwards**  
Western Australia

Mr Edwards served as a Private in Vietnam as a member of the Assault Pioneer Platoon of 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. During his time in Vietnam, Pte

Edward's platoon moved into an area where mines had been laid. A M16 mine exploded wounding three men; both Pte Edwards' legs had to be amputated.

When Mr Edwards returned to civilian life, veterans' welfare became an important issue for him and he also moved into public affairs and state politics. After 14 years in State Parliament, he entered Federal Parliament in 1998, being elected to the House of Representatives for the seat of Cowan, in Western Australia. He retired from politics at the 2007 federal election and continues to maintain a strong and active involvement in defence, disability services, and veterans' issues. Most recently, Mr Edwards has accepted a position as a member of the National Disability and Carer Council.

**Mrs June Healy OAM**  
ACT

Mrs June Healy (nee Davidson) was a member of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corp (RAANC) in 1954 before enlisting in the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) in 1960. She was posted as Adjutant/Quartermaster at 31 WRAAC Barrack Melbourne and in 1962 to WRAAC School as Adjutant (ARA).

Mrs Healy became a member of the WRAAC Association and has served as National President. She is a foundation member of the Defence Widows Support Group. Mrs Healy is a former National Secretary of the RSL and former National President of the War Widows' Guild of Australia. She has been a board member of the Heart Foundation (ACT) Division and past National President of the Council on the Ageing (Australia).

**Commodore Nick Helyer MBE RANR**  
NSW

Commodore Helyer is an RAN veteran of the Vietnam conflict. He retired from the RAN in 2000 after thirty five years in uniform, four with the Royal Navy and thirty-one with the RAN. He has been an active member of the Reserve ever since.

He is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust and a Director of the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney. Commodore Helyer is also currently the Legacy representative at the NSW Ex-Service Round Table on Aged Care and is the NSW member on the Legacy Co-ordinating Council (National). Commodore Helyer's previous involvement with the ex-service community includes roles as past President and Director of Sydney Legacy. He is also Patron of three ex-RAN Ship Associations.

**Warrant Officer Peter Hind OAM**  
Queensland

Mr Hind joined the Australian Army Medical Corps in 1965 and served in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967. He joined the Australian Air Force in 1970 and served in Malaysia between 1971 and 1979. In 1996, Mr Hind was the Command Warrant Officer in charge of some 15,000 personnel before taking up an appointment as the military protocol Warrant Officer with two Governors of NSW, HE Admiral Peter Sinclair and HE Mr Gordon Samuels.

Mr Hind retired from the RAAF in 2000 and in January 2000 went to East Timor for eight months, working with Aid Medicale Internationale and Timor Aid to establish a pathology laboratory. Mr Hind regularly returns to East Timor and the laboratory is still operating today.

In January 2001, Mr Hind rejoined the Air Force to act as pathology technical advisor to the F-111 aircraft Deseal/Reseal Board of Inquiry, studying the effects of solvent exposure on Aircraft workers. In September 2001 he was appointed as the Chief of Air Force Advocate to support the affected members of the F111 aircraft Deseal/Reseal program. Currently, Mr Hind is the Deputy Director of the Military Claims Liaison Office, assisting all serving members injured in Defence due to their military service.

**Mr Kenneth Kipping AM**  
ACT

Ken Kipping is a renowned consumer advocate and supporter of the Australian Defence Force who has nearly 40 years experience in the financial services industry. Mr Kipping is an Accredited Defence Correspondent (with deployments to Rwanda, Middle East, Bougainville and East Timor).

Mr Kipping is a former Chairman of the Army Credit Union and was a consultant to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Defence Housing Authority, PNG Defence Force and to the Tongan Government during the initial deployment to the Solomon Islands. He was instrumental in structuring Defence Health Term Life and the AIG Services Security Plan, optional insurance programmes designed specifically for ADF members and their families. He is currently the Chairman of the Australian Defence Force Financial Services Consumer Council. In 2007, Mr Kipping was appointed to the Review of the DSH Insurance Scheme.

**Ms Gail MacDonell**  
NSW

Ms MacDonell is the partner of a Vietnam veteran. Several years ago Ms MacDonell decided to study psychology to gain insight into problems of families of veterans and has attained a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours). She is currently studying for her Masters (Hons) at the University of New England in the area of the psychological and social well-being of the partners of veterans.

Ms MacDonell is a well respected member of the Partners of Veterans Association (PVA) and represents the PVA on the National Veterans' Mental Health and Well Being Forum. Ms MacDonell has been working with veterans and their partners and families on a volunteer basis for just over 10 years

**Ms Anne Pahl**  
Victoria

Ms Pahl joined the RAN in 1988 and saw warlike service on the HMAS Jervis Bay as part of Operation Solace in Somalia during 1992/93. In 1999, she transferred to the RAN Active Reserve and currently holds the rank of Chief Petty Officer with the Defence Force School of Signals Maritime Wing at HMAS Cerberus.

Ms Pahl is active in representing the interests of veterans, particularly younger veterans and current ADF serving members. Ms Pahl has been a Board member of the Victorian RSL State Executive since September 2003. She is currently the RSL National Representative on the National Younger Veterans' Consultative Forum. Ms Pahl is also the chair of the Victorian State RSL Young Veterans Forum and chair of the State RSL Veterans' Affairs Aged Care Consultative Committee. She is also a member of the Victorian Ex-Service Round Table on Aged care.

**Mr Philip Pyke**  
Tasmania

Mr Pyke is currently a member of the Australian Army Reserves with the rank of Major. He has served in the Middle East and Iraq in 2003 and, more recently, in East Timor.

Mr Pyke has had an extensive role in Defence public affairs across the three Services and, in civilian life, was a member of Tasmania Police until recently when he resigned to take up a media and communications position with the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart. Mr Pyke takes an active interest in the welfare of veterans and their families, including Reservists. He is currently a member of RSL Tasmania, the Defence Reserves Association and is the Tasmanian point of contact for the Australian Peace Keepers and Peace Makers Veterans' Association.

**Ms Donna Reggett**  
Queensland

Ms Reggett is the partner of a long serving RAAF veteran who served as a peacekeeper in Somalia and is also a daughter of a RAN veteran who served in Vietnam. She is the current State Secretary of Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) and a member of the National Treatment Monitoring Committee (NATMOC).

Ms Reggett has undertaken studies in Counselling and Mediation at the Southern Cross University and is trained under the Department's Program as a Level Three Advocate. She is actively involved in the veteran and ex-service community as a pensions and welfare advocate for a range of ex-service organisations in the Ipswich district.

**Brigadier Keith V Rossi (Rtd) AM OBE RFD ED**  
Victoria

Brigadier Rossi served in the Australian Army from 1937 to 1976, progressing from the rank of Private to Brigadier. He served in World War II in the Middle East and Pacific and, later, in Vietnam. Mr Rossi joined the RSL in 1943 and since that time has been involved at the Sub-branch level on committees, as President and, at Branch level, State Senior Vice President, State Executive member and RSL Historian.

He has been the RSL Representative on Gallipoli, Western Front and Greece pilgrimages and Chief Marshal at Anzac Day ceremonies. Mr Rossi was also involved in Legacy as a Legatee, on the Pensions Committee, Commemorations

Committee and Youth Employment Committee. Mr Rossi is a member of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA).

**Brigadier Neil Weekes (Rtd) AM MC**  
Queensland

Brigadier Weekes served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, in South Vietnam in 1968 as a Platoon Commander, where he was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for gallantry. He remained with the Battalion for its tour in Malaysia and Singapore during 1969-1971. He subsequently served in postings in Papua New Guinea and Malaysia.

He is currently the Patron of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (Townsville Branch), Patron of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia (Townsville Branch) and Patron of the Townsville Branch of the RSL. He is also the Chair of the North Australian Military Heritage Association.