



# Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA100

Tuesday 1 December 2009

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS ARRANGEMENTS DURING CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Veterans will be able to access key services throughout the Christmas and New Year period, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, said today.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs' offices will close between 5pm on Christmas Eve and 9am Monday 4 January 2010, however key services will continue to be available to the veteran community during this period, including:

- 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 and peacekeepers of all conflicts, their families and eligible members of the Defence Force;
- transport – if transport is not booked prior to the Christmas period, it will need to be paid for up-front and reimbursement can be sought from DVA at a later date;
- hospital admissions – doctors can admit DVA patients into hospital and request admissions approval, where required, when DVA re-opens on Monday 4 January 2010;
- Defence Service Homes Insurance – help with policy and claim enquiries is available 24-hours a day on **1300 552 662**, while payments can be made on **1300 304 989**, for the cost of a local call or via the website [www.dsh.gov.au](http://www.dsh.gov.au)

Pension pay days will not be affected by the Christmas shutdown arrangements.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to wish all veteran, defence force and ex-service communities and their families, a safe and happy Christmas and New Year," Mr Griffin said.

### **Media inquiries: Belinda Cole 0437 863 109**

The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **1800 011 046**.

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