



**suncare**  
community  
services inc.

# Suncare Veteran Newsletter

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## Suncare News

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Welcome to the fourth edition of the Suncare Veterans newsletter. As you are all aware, I will be leaving in January on 12 months maternity leave. I would like you all to welcome Tony Bennett to the role of Suncare Support Facilitator for Veteran's Homecare Program. Tony has come up from the Caboolture office where he was working for Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre as a Support Facilitator.

Tony has a long history in the care sector and has taken on the new role with enthusiasm. He is keen to hear from you all and get to know you all and will be very helpful with any queries any of you have.

You may also be hearing some new voices if you phone the office. Please welcome Shiela who works Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday and Christie who works Thursday and Friday. Both ladies will be sharing a role in administration (busy ladies!) and can assist you with any questions in the absence of Tony.

For some of you in Caboolture, you are now hopefully settling in to your new routine with your new staff member after Carol left. Carol will be sadly missed and I appreciate the patience you have all shown whilst getting back into a routine.

Some of you have had some different staff whilst Cynthia was having her eye operation, thank you for your patience once again and we welcome back Cynthia and her enhanced vision (she should be able to spot more dirt now!!).

The Maroochydore area would like to welcome some new field staff members, Julia, Kym and Dawn whilst the Caboolture area welcomes Joanne.

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and wish you all the best of luck for the New Year 2011. Make sure you call the office if you have any questions at all, the team and Tony will be pleased to help our veteran community.

I hope you enjoy this edition (the last by myself).  
Melody Carbarns.

*If anyone would like to add something, a joke, short story, information etc. Please contact me on 5409 5994 or post to PO Box 5122, Maroochydore BC 4558.*

## Ageing Smart - taken from DVA website / At Ease



An elderly man is stopped by the police around 1 a.m. and is asked where he is going at this time of night.

The man replies, "I am going to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body".

The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replies...  
"My wife."



Ageing smart is about continuing to keep your mind alert as you age. Just like when you stop exercising you become flabbier and your muscles become weaker, when you are less mentally active your brain weakens. You may find yourself being forgetful or not being able to do the things as well as you could in the past. Ageing smart is a way of preventing your brain from becoming weaker.

As you get older there will be a variety of reasons why you may become less mentally active, such as retirement, loss of companions in the home, etc. Doing mental exercises are a great way of keeping your brain active as you get older, an added bonus is that they can be very enjoyable and satisfying.

Mental exercises can include:

1. Keeping an active social life, such as staying involved at a local club and/or keeping in contact with family and friends.
2. Regularly read newspapers, magazines and books.
3. Do cross-word puzzles or other mind games.
4. Learn something new, such as a language or an instrument.
5. Watch game shows and play along with the contestants.

### How does Mental Health and Wellbeing relate to Ageing smart?

Mental Health conditions such as stress can increase the chances of someone developing memory loss. This is due to an excess of hormones produced while you are stressed that can cause damage to your brain. Keeping control of your stress with prescribed medication and relaxation techniques can reduce the potential damage and help you function well mentally.

### Why is it important?

Keeping mentally active will enable you to continue enjoying all your favourite pastimes and interests as well as continuing to be an active member of society.

### Should I see a Health Professional?

If you feel that you are starting to suffer from memory loss you should contact your GP or LMO. While memory loss can be avoided by keeping your brain active some memory loss may be due to medications or disease and is unavoidable. Your health professional will have the skills and knowledge to manage your condition and provide you with the help you may require.

### Old Wisdom

After working his farm every day, an old farmer rarely had time to enjoy the large pond in the back that he had fixed up years earlier with picnic tables, horseshoe courts, and benches. So one evening he decided to go down and see how things were holding up. Much to his surprise, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. As he came closer he saw it was a group of young women skinny dipping in his pond.

He made the women aware of his presence and they all went to the deep end. One of the women shouted to him, "We're not coming out until you leave."

The old farmer replied, "I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim or make you get out of the pond naked. I only came down to feed the alligator."

Moral: Old age and treachery will always triumph over youth and skill.



## **POW chief jailed as impostor**

Article taken from The Australian Newspaper

**THE former public face of Australian prisoners of war will spend Christmas behind bars after admitting his war service claim was a lie.**

Arthur "Rex" Crane, 84, posed as a World War II veteran for 22 years and achieved a national profile as Australian president of the Ex-Prisoners of War Association until he was outed by a military historian who believed his story did not add up.

During that time, Crane successfully claimed \$464,409 in war pension and disability payments, which he was not entitled to receive.

He pleaded guilty in Brisbane's District Court last month and was yesterday sentenced to four years in jail, of which he will serve six months.

The court heard Crane developed the false war story to fit in with actual veterans he was working alongside in a country pub in the 1960s. Within a few years, Crane had convinced everyone, from doctors to his own family.

Crane explained his lack of documentation by claiming he was a boy guerrilla, conscripted by the British while living with his parents in Malaya in the 1940s.

He claimed he was then captured by the Japanese, tortured and sent to work on the notorious Thai-Burma Railway alongside 13,000 other Australian POWs.

But Crane's story came undone during a speech to veterans last year when historian Lynette Silver found his story unbelievable. Within a month, the historian found documents showing Crane had been enrolled at an Adelaide school during his supposed imprisonment.

Ms Silver also found his supposedly dead brother alive and well in the US.

The historian yesterday said she was "astounded" the Department of Veterans Affairs failed to identify such a blatant fraud.

"I don't know who (the department) asked, but I don't think they asked anybody who was skilled in this sort of research in their investigations," she said.

Crane previously said he needed to apply for a pension in order to keep his story going.

"It got to the stage where people push you," Crane told Fairfax Media last year.

"They knew people in Veterans Affairs and they asked me to go in. And I could not go in there and say this is all bullshit. So I went all the way with it."

Sentencing him yesterday, judge Marshall Irwin said: "Your conduct can only be regarded as an insult to those who fought, those who were captured, those who were tortured and those who died."

Crane has been ordered to repay the money, although it is unlikely the sum will ever be recovered.

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## Rehabilitation Appliances Program ( RAP )

The Department of Veterans' Affairs provides aids and appliances through the Rehabilitation Appliances Program. The aim of this program is to assist entitled veterans, war widows and widowers, and dependants to be as independent and self-reliant as possible in their own home. The program provides safe and appropriate equipment according to the specific needs of the entitled person. All Gold Card holders are eligible for Rehabilitation Appliances, while White Card holders may be eligible for appliances relating to their clinical needs. As of July 2007, veterans from allied countries are also eligible for RAP or home modifications relating to accepted disabilities.

The program provides safe and appropriate equipment:

- according to assessed clinical need;
- in an effective and timely manner; and
- as part of the overall management of an individual's health care.

The equipment should be:

- appropriate for its purpose;
- safe for the entitled person; and
- designed for persons with an illness or disability, and not widely used by persons without an illness or disability.

Stage	Description
1	Your need is assessed by: your doctor or a health professional eg. An occupational therapist
2	If it is clinically necessary, a referral is written for the appropriate rehabilitation appliance. <i>Note: standard household equipment for normal domestic requirements will not be supplied.</i>
3	The doctor or health professional's referral and prescription will be: sent to the appropriate supplier for issue or Sent to DVA to arrange issue

### RAP and Aged Care

#### **Am I entitled to receive RAP aids and appliances if I reside in a Residential Aged Care Facilities?**

RAP aids and appliances are provided to residents in Australian Government funded aged care facility depending of the level of care being received.

**Low level Care** – DVA provides RAP aids and appliances to entitled persons receiving low level care. These include custom made wheelchairs, continence products (such as pads and catheters), low vision aids, compression stockings, medical grade footwear, and other items which the aged care facility is not legally required to supply.

**High level Care** - RAP aids and appliances are not provided by DVA if you are receiving high level care in an Australian Government funded aged care facility. Approved providers of Australian Government funded aged care services are required to provide care and services as specified under the *Aged Care Act (1997)* and *Quality of Care Principles (1999)*.

Schedule I of the *Quality of Care Principles (1999)* lists the specified care, services and aids and appliances to be provided for all residents who require them.

**From low level care to high level care**

If you move from low-level care to high-level care, RAP items issued to you while in low-level care may be taken with you into high-level care subject to the approval of the aged care provider. DVA will maintain responsibility for the repair, maintenance and, if necessary, replacement of these items.

Entitled persons receiving Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) services or Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) are able to access RAP items where the service provider is not legally required to supply them.

Contact the Department of Health and Ageing **Aged Care Hotline on 1800 500 853** if you require further information concerning the provision of services and care for DVA entitled persons receiving Australian Government funded aged care services.

**Can I get the aid or appliance delivered?**

Yes - Aids and appliances will be delivered to your home and the freight charges will be met by DVA.

**What about repairs or replacement of the equipment I have?**

You should contact the known supplier or DVA if repairs or replacement of the equipment are required.

**What do I do if I have problems?**

RAP and HomeFront Operation section is present in each DVA State Location and is available to advise and assist you if you have any problems in connection with the supply of aids and appliances.

**What do I do if I no longer require the equipment provided?**

Contact the supplier to arrange collection.

**Are some items only available for certain conditions?**

Some aids and appliances are only available to meet a clinical need related to an accepted disability, (e.g. scooters, electric wheelchairs and car modifications).

## YOUR ENTITLEMENTS - HOMEFRONT

*Homefront is a prevention program designed to prevent falls in and around the home. All Gold and White card holders are eligible for a "free" assessment which is accessed by calling **1800 80 1945**. Once an assessment has been made, an assessor will visit the*

*home and check potential hazards.*

*Common hazards are cluttered walkways and work areas, wet or slippery floor surfaces, unsafe steps or railings, loose floor coverings, poor lighting and the need for hand rails.*

*To "prevent" these hazards from causing falls, recommendations such as non-slip mats, hand rails, portable phones or even ramps, can be made.*

*The assessor will provide all information in writing and assist with any recommendations.*

*DVA will fund up to \$200.00 worth of modifications for falls preventions (where recommended by the assessor). If the recommended modifications cost more than \$200.00, information regarding relevant community services will be provided to assist with payments if necessary.*

*Homefront assessments can be done once every "calendar" year and funding will re-start each financial year.*

*The program is very useful as preventing falls is a very important part of ageing.*

### Free Breast Screening Qld - information taken from [healthservices Australia website](http://healthservices Australia website)

The Queensland Health Breastscreen Queensland Program is a population-based, public health program that offers free breast cancer screening and follow up services for women aged 50—69 years. This is the age group where research shows screening to be most beneficial. Women aged 40—49 and 70 years and older can also attend if they choose.

The Queensland Health Breastscreen Queensland Program is made available to women through a network of local services throughout Queensland including 11 fixed site screening and assessment services, 18 satellite (screening only) services, two relocatable services and six digital mobile units that offer screening at over 200 locations throughout Queensland.

All Breastscreen Queensland Services are now fully equipped with state of the art digital mammography technology. The new digital equipment enhances the breastscreen program as it follows radiographers to check the images on a computer for quality, and decrease the technical repeat rate.

To arrange a free Breastscreen -

To make an appointment, call 13 20 50 (local call) to be automatically connected to your nearest service.

### WARMER WEATHER HEALTH WARNING

Older people are among those most at risk of heat-related illness. Due to normal age-related changes to the body, older people do not always recognise that they are overheated. In addition, older people are more likely to have a chronic medical condition and to be taking medication that may interfere with the body's ability to regulate fluid.

To limit overheating you can do the following;

- check that the temperature in a home is kept comfortable, keeping curtains and blinds closed to reduce excess heat;
- drink small amounts of fluids often, rather than large amounts of fluids less frequently;
- have alternative forms of fluid, such as jelly, ice-cream or fruit juice blocks and limit alcoholic or caffeinated beverages;
- eat frequent small meals;
- wear loose fitting clothing, use sunscreen and keep skin covered when exposed to direct sunlight
- seek some shade when outside, and to avoid going outside between 1 am and 3pm;
- have additional tepid showers or sponging; and
- observe for signs of heat stress, such as nausea, and changes in appearance including red/pale or severely dry skin.

The effects of heat-related illnesses can range from mild conditions such as a rash or cramps to very serious conditions such as severe confusion or heat stroke. Heat may also worsen the condition of someone who already has a medical condition such as heart disease.

#### **A special note about medicines**

Some medicines are capable of increasing the risk of heat-associated illness in susceptible people. These include:

- medicines that cause dehydration or electrolyte imbalance;
- medicines likely to reduce renal function; and
- medicines that interfere with the production or regulation of heat.

If you are showing signs of heat distress, your medicines may need a review.

Contact your medical practitioner for any concerns.



MEDIA RELEASE - DVA Website 07.01.11

### **HELP FOR VETERANS AFFECTED BY FLOODS**

Support services are available to members of the veteran community affected by recent flooding, the Department of Veterans' Affairs' Deputy Commissioner in Queensland, Alison Stanley, said today. Large areas across Queensland and some communities in New South Wales have been greatly affected by flooding. There are some 11,000 veterans living in affected areas of Queensland who may require assistance. A number of veterans from NSW may also be affected. "The veteran community can access information on insurance, payments and counselling and I encourage those who have concerns to take advantage of these services," Ms Stanley said.

The following assistance is available:

- Property insurance – Veterans who have their property insured with Defence Service Homes Insurance and whose property has been affected by the floods are encouraged to contact their local customer service officer on 1300 552 662.
- Accessing your usual Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) payments – call DVA to discuss your circumstances. Regional callers can ring 1800 555 254, for the price of a local call.
- Veterans' Affairs Network (VAN) offices – to contact your local office about any queries or concerns you may have regarding DVA services and support, or if you need help connecting with local support networks in your area call 1300 55 1918.
- The VVCS - Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service – provides supportive, confidential counselling to veterans and their families. The VVCS can be contacted on 1800 011 046, 24 hours a day.

The Department is working with state and federal authorities to ensure help continues to be available.

An Australian Government disaster recovery payment is available to eligible residents in Queensland.

Further assistance is available through Disaster Relief and Recovery QLD ([www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/initiatives/disaster\\_recovery/index.aspx](http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/initiatives/disaster_recovery/index.aspx)) and Emergency Management NSW ([www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/home.html](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/home.html))

### **THE GOLDEN YEARS?**

Two elderly women were out driving in a large car --both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red but they just went on through. The woman in the passenger seat thought to herself "I must be losing it, I could have sworn we just went through a red light". After a few more minutes they came to another intersection and the light was red again and again they went right though. This time the woman in the passenger seat was almost sure that the light had been red but was really concerned that she was losing it. She was getting nervous and decided to pay very close attention to the road and the next intersection to see what was going on. At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was definitely red and they went right through and she turned to the other woman and said, "Mildred! Did you know we just ran through three red lights in a row! You could have killed us! Mildred turned to her and said "Oh SHIT, am I driving?"



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### RETIREMENT, A WIFE'S VIEW

A frustrated wife told me the other day her definition of retirement:

"Twice as much husband on half as much pay."

### **58 Grants to Support Veteran Health and Wellbeing Projects**

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, today announced funding to support local health and wellbeing projects that would enhance the lives of Australia's veteran community.

"I am pleased to announce that \$750,354 in Australian Government funding will support 58 projects across Australia in the third round of the 2010-2011 Veteran & Community Grants program," Mr Snowdon said.

Mr Snowdon said the Veteran & Community Grants program helps to fund projects in communities across Australia that benefit veterans, war widows and widowers and their families by supporting a range of initiatives including exercise, nutrition and social activities.

"This funding will improve access to community services, encourage social interaction and, ultimately, enrich the lives of Australia's veteran community.

"Veteran & Community Grants also help veteran organisations to continue their invaluable work in the community by funding the establishment and specific activities of Day Clubs, equipment for Men's Sheds, or travel costs for social excursions.

"In this round grants ranged from \$50,000 to help install a new community kitchen in Murray Bridge, SA, to \$5,000 to support the Pingelly Men's Shed in WA.

"It is important that the veteran community has access to a range of programs where they can learn skills to help them remain independent and active, particularly for the elderly living by themselves," Mr Snowdon said.

Since Labor took office, 760 organisations have benefited from more than \$9.7 million in funding through Veteran & Community Grants.

Veteran & Community Grants are available to ex-service and community organisations, veteran representative groups and private organisations to assist with funding projects that contribute to the health and welfare of the veteran community.

Applications for the next round of grants close on 22 January 2011. Local and community organisations interested in applying for funding are encouraged to visit [www.dva.gov.au/grants](http://www.dva.gov.au/grants) or contact their nearest DVA office on 133 254 (for metropolitan callers) or 1800 555 254 (for non-metropolitan callers).

We're on the web.  
[www.suncare.org.au](http://www.suncare.org.au)

*Well I hope you enjoyed my last newsletter, Tony will be taking over and completing the next edition. I hope you're all safe and well and free from flooding and wish you the best in 2011. Melody.*