

# 1200-plus respond on better care for carers

The House of Representatives Family and Community Committee held a round-table discussion with a wide range of carers as part of its public hearing in Sydney on August 6 for the federal parliamentary inquiry into better support for carers.

Carers are those who look after others, usually family members and friends with chronic illnesses, disabilities or frailty. Recent figures from an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey found that there were more than 2.5 million carers in Australia, including more than 470,000 primary carers — people who provide the most care to persons needing support. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare anticipates that there will be more than 600,000 primary carers by 2013, 70 per cent of them women. “Carers are often exhausted, socially isolated and under extreme financial pressure as they try to provide [high-] quality care for their loved ones with limited resources,” committee chairwoman Annette Ellis (Member for Canberra) said. “The strain that carers are under has certainly been forcefully illustrated in many of the 1200 submissions received by the committee for the inquiry so far.”

In the course of the round-table discussion the committee sought suggestions on where further support could be provided to make carers' work easier.

The committee took evidence, with a particular focus on multicultural issues, from Multicultural Mental Health, the University of Western Sydney, and Carers NSW. Others involved in the talks included Carers NSW; the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies; the University of Western Sydney; Anglicare NSW; the University of NSW; the Australian Foundation for Disability (AFFORD); the Disability Council of NSW; and Family Advocacy.

For more information contact the Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 4566 or by email [fchy.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:fchy.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit the committee's web site: [www.aph.gov.au/fchy](http://www.aph.gov.au/fchy)

## More Reservists for the Solomon Islands

More than 140 Reserve soldiers from Canberra, Wollongong, Bathurst, Orange and Sydney's western suburbs have been deployed to the Solomon Islands as part of the Australian contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.

The contingent has been drawn from the 5th and 8th Brigades under the banner of the Royal New South Wales Regiment.

The Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, said, “During the four-month deployment the soldiers will carry out 24-hour street patrols and other designated tasks in support of the participating police forces [in] the Solomon Islands.”

The employers of reservists will see first-hand the benefits that Reserve service brings to their employees and to Australia when they fly to the Solomon Islands later this year.

## Naval Association gets \$94,000 to support veteran services

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, presented the Naval Association of Australia with a cheque for more than \$94,000 to support its services to veteran and defence communities across Australia.

Speaking at the opening of the association's triennial conference in Hobart on July 28, Mr Griffin said part of this funding would support local veterans in Tasmania.

“This government wants to support ex-service organisations [ESOs] to support veterans, ex-serving members and their families,” he said.

“Before the last election, we promised to rectify a lack of government support for ESOs wishing to keep their capital equipment, like comput-

ers, printers and internet access, up to date, and provided an additional \$5 million in funding for this purpose.

“More than 250 ESOs have already benefited from this commitment. ESOs can now access financial assistance to help fund staff, computers, office equipment and other resources they need to provide quality advice and guidance to the veteran and service communities.”

Applications for the next annual BEST grants will open in early 2009.

For more information visit [www.dva.gov.au/pensions/best&tip/b&index.htm](http://www.dva.gov.au/pensions/best&tip/b&index.htm) or contact your nearest DVA office on 133 254 (for metropolitan callers) or 1800 555 254 (for non-metropolitan callers).

## \$68m to upgrade Orion maritime patrol aircraft



File picture

An RAAF AP-3C Orion of the type to be re-equipped in the Defence program, jet-tisons flares during a trial of electronic warfare self-protection systems.

The Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, has announced a \$68 million program to provide enhancements to the ADF's maritime patrol capability.

AIR 5276 Capability Assurance Program 1 will equip the whole AP-3C Orion Maritime Patrol Aircraft fleet (Orion fleet) with modern electro-optic/

infra-red sensors, a high-data-rate communications system (tactical common data link) and a replacement video recorder system that will also help protect coalition forces by warning them of hostile or suspicious activity.

Aircrew training and engineering support, too, will be provided under the contract.

## Veterans have their say

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, says eight meetings with the ex-service community being held nation-wide to discuss the structure and role of the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex-Service Matters has attracted more than 100 individuals and organisations from all around Australia. Contributors have been responding to a discussion paper

on the advisory council issued earlier this year.

The Government is also reviewing all mechanisms of consultation between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the broader defence and ex-service communities

Details of meetings and copies of submissions are available at [minister.dva.gov.au/PMAC/index.htm](http://minister.dva.gov.au/PMAC/index.htm)

## Submissions wanted for review of mental-health care

Submissions to the review of Defence mental-health care and the transition to non-military life are being sought by both the Minister for Defence, Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin.

Headed by Professor David Dunt, the review will make an independent assessment of the effectiveness of existing mental-health programs and support across the ADF and Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Written submissions are being sought from Defence members, veterans and interested members of the public. All submissions will be confidential, access limited to Professor Dunt.

Mr Snowdon said, “The review will [be of] the mental-health care needs of ADF personnel and the ex-service community and assist us in ensuring the very best care is available.”

Mr Griffin said it would be particularly helpful in examining the transition from military to civilian life and would help Veterans' Affairs to provide services that met the needs of younger veterans.

“The number of recent deployments make it essential that ... DVA and Defence work together to support those who have returned from active duty, particularly ... service personnel who are then seeking to [return] to civilian life,” he said.

The closing date for written submissions is 20 September and can be forwarded by email to [mentalhealth.review@defence.gov.au](mailto:mentalhealth.review@defence.gov.au) or posted to:

**Melbourne University Post Shop  
PO Box 4285  
Melbourne University  
Victoria 3052**

For more information (including the terms of reference) access <http://www.defence.gov.au/health/DMH/i-dmh.htm>

## New faces at Defence Housing

The former Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Derek Volker AO, is the new chairman of the Defence Housing Australia Board.

Since leaving the APS he has had a number of board-based management roles and for several years has been an adviser to a multinational building and civil engineering firm.

Mr Sandy Macdonald has been appointed a board director. He has considerable management skills and an understanding of Defence personnel issues gained during his time as a commonwealth parliamentarian, including the period spent as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence.

These appointments replace existing board members whose terms have expired.