



GREG HUNT MP



FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FLINDERS

Veterans' News

Honouring those who served

Seniors' allowance to benefit gold card holders

Spring 2005



With local members of the Phillip Island RSL at a Victory in the Pacific medallion presentation

Local veterans and war widows will benefit from a Commonwealth initiative to extend the seniors' concession allowance to older veterans who have a Gold Card.

"This is a fantastic outcome for our local veterans who are of pension age and who do not already receive the seniors' concession allowance or twice yearly pensioners' utilities allowance," Greg Hunt MP said.

"Our veterans have made a massive contribution to the nation and will automatically be paid the first instalment of this new entitlement after 1 December 2005."

"This is an excellent initiative which was introduced to help seniors meet the cost of utilities bills such as electricity, gas water and sewerage and motor vehicle registration."

RECOGNITION FOR OUR WWII VETERANS

A special commemorative medallion has been made available to all our local surviving World War II veterans and widows to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the War.

I have been honoured to personally present this medallion to many of our World War II veterans and widows in recognition of their incredible service and sacrifice to keeping our nation free.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC DAY SPEECH



Presenting Don Funston with a Victory In the Pacific medallion at the Crib Point RSL

"I was fortunate to have the honour of representing the Australian Government at nine local Victory in the Pacific 60th anniversary commemoration celebrations. They were held at Phillip Island, Sorrento, Rye, Rosebud, Crib Point, Hastings and Dromana-Red Hill RSLs and, in addition, at Jean Turner Nursing Home, Lotus Lodge and Koorootang Retirement Village."

"It was wonderful to meet with so many veterans and to share with them their personal experiences in theatres of action such as Milne Bay, Kokoda, the Philippines and Ambon. I learnt first hand about experiences of service not just in the Pacific but also at Tobruk, in the Middle East more generally, North Africa, the Mediterranean and in Europe."

"To a person, they were modest about their contribution. To a person, they had a tremendous respect for and remembrance of those who had served with them and whom they had lost."

"It is that personal element, combined with the sense of getting on with life, which I think symbolises not just the Australian contribution

but the Australian spirit during the Second World War, that sense of energy, commitment, personal humility and respect for and remembrance of their colleagues, their friends and their families."

"The 60th anniversary of 15 August represents 60 years since the Japanese surrender. The end of World War II recalls to mind the fact that there were 40,000 Australians who lost their lives, 30,000 Australians who served as prisoners of war and, by some records, 150,000 Australians who suffered serious injury of some form or other."

"On behalf of not just the Australian Government but also succeeding generations within the local community, I want to express the profound gratitude we have for the service of those people within that Second World War generation."

(This is an extract from a Parliamentary speech delivered by Greg Hunt MP, for a copy of the complete speech please contact Greg's office on 5979 3188)



Presenting Donelda Smith with a Victory In the Pacific medallion at the Crib Point RSL

HELPING TO MAKE VETERANS' AND WAR WIDOWS' HOMES SAFER

The HomeFront program was developed to make the homes of eligible veterans and war widows safer from falls and accident hazards.

The program aims to help the well and healthy remain that way, and to reduce the risk of falls in those who are frail and sick.

HomeFront is available to all Gold and White cardholders. A free HomeFront assessment is available each calendar year and the Department makes a financial contribution towards the cost of recommended items and modifications. The HomeFront assessor also provides information about local community and Government services that are available to assist veterans and war widows remain living in their own home for as long as possible.

Eligible members of the veteran community can call **1800 80 1945** for free HomeFront assessment.



News Briefs

- Veteran's Affairs information guides for the 2005/2006 financial year are available through the office of Greg Hunt MP (5979 3188). They include all the recent budget measures.
- Members of the Australian Army Band have released a new spoken word CD titled Salute to the Aussie Digger, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. The CD is available from ABC stores.

ACCOMMODATION BONDS EXEMPTED



Greg Hunt with local resident Dot Barlow.

Aged care accommodation bonds are now exempted from the social security and Veterans' Affairs assets tests, under changes made by the Commonwealth Government.

The new rule applies to all lump sum bonds, regardless of when the bond was paid. The accommodation bond is an amount that may be paid when you enter permanent residential aged care. Previously, accommodation bonds were counted as an asset when determining income support pensions.

For more information call DVA on 133 254.

Preserving our Heritage



Greg at the unveiling of the John Coleman statue.

Helping to unveil a statue of the great John Coleman in High Street Hastings.

John Coleman was a local who won four premierships at Essendon, two as a player and two as a coach. He was rated number 2 in the "Champions of Essendon" behind the great Dick Reynolds, was named full-forward in the AFL's team of the century and named as a "Great" in the AFL's Hall of Fame. He played between 1949 and 1954 kicking 537 goals in 98 games.

Tadaust connect offers low cost internet access

The not for profit group Technical Aid to the Disabled Australia (TADAust), is offering low cost Internet access to members of the community on either a Disability Service Pension, the Aged Pension or who possess a DVA Entitlement Card.

The TADAust Connect plan costs \$5.50 per month in addition to a \$12.00 once off connection fee which includes, unlimited downloads, free email account, unlimited time (in 4 hour sessions) and local call available from almost anywhere in Australia.

For more information please contact TADAust on 1300 735 439.

\$54,570 TO HELP LOCAL VETERANS CLAIM BENEFITS

\$7,800 to help Basscoast Veterans

The Bass Coast Veterans' and Dependants Welfare Centre will benefit from \$7,800 in Commonwealth funding to help it to better assist veterans and war widows make claims for pensions and other benefits.

"This is part of the federal Government's commitment to make the veterans' claims process fairer, easier to understand and more efficient and to support the important work of welfare officers, pensions officers and advocates," Mr Hunt said.

Mr Hunt said the funding was part of the Government's Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program and provided for a new laser printer, an answering machine, filing cabinet and other administrative costs for the Welfare Centre.

"It also includes an additional \$2,000 for travel and related expenses that will be used to undertake Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA) work, including education and assistance with claims," Mr Hunt said.

\$46,770 to assist Peninsula Veterans

The Southern Peninsula Veterans' Centre in Rosebud will receive \$46,770 from the Australian Government to assist the veteran community to make claims for pensions and other benefits they are entitled to.

The Southern Peninsula Veterans' Centre will use the funding to pay for resources to provide essential and quality services and advice to the local veteran community.

"The team at the Southern Peninsula Veterans' Centre play a vital role in supporting veterans, war widows and widowers, current and former defence members and their dependants. I commend the Southern Peninsula Veterans' Centre for their service to the community and I am delighted that additional funding has been made available to them."



Delivering funds to assist the Bass Coast Veterans' and Dependants Welfare Centre to help veterans and war widows

Flinders Community Awards



Our local community is full of quiet achievers who hold our community together by volunteering their time to organisations such as veterans' groups, churches, charities, sporting clubs and various other volunteer organisations.

Their contribution to our community deserves to be recognised so if you know of someone whom you think is an outstanding role model then please take the time to nominate them for a Flinders Community Award.

Presenting Bob Barber and Donelda Smith from the Crib Point RSL and John Clark from the Dromana RSL with Victory In the Pacific medallions

Nomination Form

I wish to nominate the following person for a 2005 Flinders Award

NAME: (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr)

ADDRESS:

PHONE: FAX:

EMAIL:

AGE: (Please circle) 12-20 years 21-35 years 36-50 years 65+ years

DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Please attach additional pages if more space is required.

Nominated by

NAME: (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr)

ADDRESS:

PHONE: FAX:

EMAIL:

Where did you find out about the Flinders Community Awards?

