

VA118

Thursday 27 November 2008

## **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (DVA) 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, despite the closure of the DVA offices between 5pm on Christmas Eve and 9am Friday 2 January 2009.

Mr Griffin said key services will continue to be available to the veteran community during this period, including:

- crisis counselling –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 of all conflicts and their families, including members of peace operations;
- 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 Friday 2 January 2009;
- 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.

Pensions due to be paid on 1 January 2009 will be paid earlier, on 30 December 2008.

"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.

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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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