

David Harris

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing,
Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for the Central Coast

**Media Release****Central Coast veteran and defence community comes together on Kokoda Day****Friday, 3 November 2023**

State and Federal Government representatives and veteran support organisations have come together with local veterans and the defence community on Kokoda Day to focus on veteran wellbeing, mental health and support to transition to civilian life.

There was a great turnout at the forum held on the Central Coast, which according to the most recent Census, has the highest number of veterans of any local government area in NSW.

The forum was also held on Kokoda Day, an annual day of acknowledgement in honour of all those who served in the Kokoda campaign in the Second World War. The NSW Government designated 3 November as NSW Kokoda Day to officially acknowledge the Kokoda campaign last year.

Minister for Veterans and the Central Coast used the forum to praise the bipartisan and multi-government support of the veteran's community, welcoming the recent announcement by the Albanese Government to tripling of the payment to allow veterans to access GP services. With increasing costs of living and rising costs for business, it has been hard for veterans to find GPs who will treat them without out-of-pocket costs.

There are also a number of NSW Government services available on the Central Coast including Service NSW, NSW Trustee & Guardian, and NSW Ageing and Disability Commission that veterans and their families can access.

The NSW Government is committed to honouring our veterans and their families, and the NSW Veterans Strategy and 2023-2024 Action Plan ensures that the veteran community is supported.

For more information on veterans' support go to: www.veterans.nsw.gov.au/about-us/veterans-information-and-services/

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans, David Harris:

"It was wonderful to come together today with the Central Coast veteran and defence community to hear about and discuss the great initiatives, services and supports available for veterans and their families in our community.

"The increase in Veteran Access Payment will give veterans and eligible dependents the access to GP services that they deserve. There are more than 27,000 White and Gold Card holders in NSW who will benefit from this change.

"The NSW Government is committed to ensuring veterans are provided with the best services and support, and I applaud the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Government for implementing these changes and look forward to seeing how this change improves the wellbeing of the veteran community.

"Collaboration is key, and by working together to further enhance support and programs for the veteran community on the Central Coast we can continue to acknowledge their service and that of their families."

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