Contents

Contacts ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Privacy notice ...................................................................................................................................... 3
VHW – An overview .......................................................................................................................... 4
  The VHW themes .............................................................................................................................. 4
  Developing a VHW event ................................................................................................................ 4
  Funding ............................................................................................................................................... 5
  Types of events ............................................................................................................................... 5
  Insurance ........................................................................................................................................... 5
  Contingency plan ............................................................................................................................. 5
  VHW resources ............................................................................................................................... 5
  VHW promotional products .......................................................................................................... 6
  Other DVA health and wellbeing initiatives .................................................................................... 6
  Evaluation .......................................................................................................................................... 6
  Talk to DVA ......................................................................................................................................... 6
Promotion and media guide .................................................................................................................. 7
  Developing a promotion strategy ..................................................................................................... 7
  Be creative with your promotion ..................................................................................................... 8
  Use of VHW logo ............................................................................................................................ 8
  Social media ....................................................................................................................................... 8
  Media release ..................................................................................................................................... 9
Contacts

Each state and territory has a Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) Veterans’ Health Week (VHW) Coordinator who you can contact to discuss any aspect of VHW. Contact information is available on the DVA VHW website www.dva.gov.au/vhw

Privacy notice

Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988. Your personal information may be collected by DVA for the delivery of government programs for war veterans, members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), members of the Australian Federal Police and their dependants. Find more information at www.dva.gov.au/vhw:

DVA privacy statement
How DVA manages personal information

Glossary

DRN  Data Reference Number
DVA  Department of Veterans’ Affairs
VHW  Veterans’ Health Week

Purpose of this document

Please note: This document has been designed to assist you in developing a VHW event.

If you are applying for VHW funding or would like to register an event, please refer to the VHW Funding and Registration Guidelines located on the VHW website.

If you are not seeking VHW funding to support your event you can still register your VHW event on the DVA website. This will allow recognition and promotion of your event on the VHW national calendar. Non-funded events are referred to as registered events.

To apply for funding or to register your event, you will need to complete the VHW Funding & Registration Application Form located on the VHW page: www.dva.gov.au/vhw
VHW – An overview

The VHW themes

Veterans’ Health Week is an annual initiative supported by DVA to generate interest in, and raise awareness around, improving health and wellbeing for former and current serving personnel and their families. Four key themes have been identified to support veteran health and wellbeing — physical activity, nutrition, mental wellness and social connection. These themes rotate on an annual basis. VHW is held over nine days and includes two weekends to increase opportunities for participation. Refer to the DVA’s website for information on this year’s theme and dates: https://www.dva.gov.au/vhw

Developing a VHW event

It is important to consider how the VHW event you are planning supports this year’s theme. DVA encourages you to think outside of the box and host innovative events. Refer to the DVA VHW webpage for a list of event ideas that support the annual theme.

Table 1 Potential events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical event</th>
<th>Mental wellness</th>
<th>Nutrition</th>
<th>Social connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Come and try Tai Chi</td>
<td>Laughter workshop</td>
<td>Master chef cook off</td>
<td>Spouse pamper night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive sports</td>
<td>Meditation session</td>
<td>Nutrition workshop</td>
<td>Trivia night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking group</td>
<td>Choir group</td>
<td>Healthy pizza night</td>
<td>Social media classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness challenge</td>
<td>Art workshop</td>
<td>Healthy BBQ</td>
<td>Community picnic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning tips so that your event is successful:

- establish an organising committee
- set a goal or outcome for your event, what will participants get out of the event
- talk with members of your organisation
- think about what event participants will want
- think about what you can manage, ask for support and resources.

It’s also important to consider who will be participating in your event. The veteran and ex-service community is diverse, spanning all generations and life stages, and includes current and ex-service personnel, reservists, their families, children, dependants, carers, war widows and widowers. Make sure your event is relevant for those who will be attending.

The key focus of your VHW event should be this year’s theme. However, the event you plan may also include activities that support the other three VHW themes. DVA recognises that these themes are connected and work together to build health and wellbeing (see Table 2). For example, events that promote social connection are also likely to benefit mental wellness.
### Funding

How you plan your event will impact on whether you require funding. You can also plan more than one event in VHW and apply for funding for each.

To apply for funding or to register your event, you will need to complete the [VHW Funding & Registration Application Form](https://www.dva.gov.au/vhw) located on the VHW page: [www.dva.gov.au/vhw](http://www.dva.gov.au/vhw)

### Types of events

DVA encourages inclusive events, however, we understand that participation may be limited or restricted to best suit how the event is run. This might include events:

- where space is limited, i.e. number of seats on a bus
- that work better being run for a smaller group, i.e. a course or workshop
- where an RSVP is required, i.e. for catering purposes.

If there are any restrictions on attendance for your event, it is important to explain this in your VHW application and promotion of your event.

### Insurance

Your organisation must have insurance cover for every VHW event you hold to protect it if anything were to go wrong.

Public risk/liability insurance is required to cover any liability owed to another person who suffers loss or damage by reason of the organisation or an individual’s events; and, if applicable, workers’ compensation insurance as required by state or territory law for any of the organisation’s employees.

### Contingency plan

It is always important to have a ‘Plan B’ in case of unforeseen circumstances, such as bad weather or unavailability of required equipment or personnel. Solutions may include:

- identifying an alternative, indoor venue that can accommodate your event in bad weather
- having alternative suppliers for goods and services if your preferred supplier is unavailable
- not undertaking all of the planning yourself; nominate a group or committee that can help
- creating a check list for tasks to be completed in the planning, setting up and running of the event [see [VHW Event Planning Checklist](https://www.dva.gov.au/vhw) on the DVA website].

### Previous events that address multiple VHW themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Physical event</th>
<th>Nutrition</th>
<th>Mental wellness</th>
<th>Social connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vets Go Surfing—surfing lessons &amp; nutrition talk</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Master Chef</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit a Vet Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamper Night for Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise N Shine Beach Walk and Breakfast</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Vet's Health Week Event Guide | Version 1.0 (March 2019) 5
VWH resources

Each year, DVA will source and produce a range of electronic resources for event organisers:

- Health articles and resources on the relevant VWH theme. You can print and distribute the relevant resources for your participant age group or cohort at your event. You can also include the printing costs as part of your VWH budget.
- You can download a general poster and one that can be edited to promote your event and a certificate of appreciation to thank those who assisted in the delivery of your event.
- Resources will be available on the DVA VWH webpage.

VWH promotional products

DVA will provide a range of promotional products that support the annual theme to VWH Event Organisers for distribution to participants at their events. However, you can also consider distributing additional promotional products. This provides participants with a useful reminder of the event and hopefully is a product that they’ll continue to use in the future. Refer to the DVA VWH webpage for a list of promotional products that DVA will supply and additional promotional product ideas. These products are suitable for adding the VWH logo. You can also include the cost of purchasing these products as part of your VWH budget.

Other DVA health and wellbeing initiatives

There are also opportunities to connect with existing DVA health and wellbeing initiatives, including:

- Heart Health
- Cooking for One or Two
- Men’s Health Peer Education
- Veteran and Community Grants

DVA’s AT-Ease portal also provides access to a range of online health and wellbeing resources.

Evaluation

During your initial planning think about how you will evaluate your VWH event. A good evaluation will tell you whether you achieved your aim, what were the strengths and weaknesses, and what you can improve. This will be useful if you are planning to participate in VWH in the future or continue the event throughout the year.

Talk to DVA

DVA staff can support you by helping develop your ideas to better reflect the VWH theme. We may also assist with developing partnerships with other groups or organisations that may have mutual benefit.

What makes a good VWH event?

- **Connect**: connect your event to the annual theme
- **Tailor**: tailor your event to Veterans’ Health Week
- **Collaborate**: work with other veteran, service or community groups
- **Include**: encourage participation and include wider community participation
- **Reach-out**: reach-out to veterans and their families
- **Embrace**: embrace the VWH themes on an ongoing basis
- **Achievable**: budget predictions are realistic, other funding may be sourced.
Promotion and media guide

Developing a promotion strategy is an important part of the success of your VHW event. DVA promotes VHW events on a national level, so you are encouraged to promote your events in your local area. By promoting your event you can make sure you reach your maximum attendance. This section will provide you with some ideas on how you can successfully promote your event.

Before promoting your event it is important to consider the following:

- Who do you want to attend your event?
- What are the best ways to reach these participants (especially the hard-to-get ones)?
- How do you want to let people know about your event? (e.g. newspaper, newsletter, social media)
- What information is important, what can you leave out?
- How can the people access further information? (contact details, your website)
- Have you considered inviting VIPs? (e.g. your local minister)

Promotion ensures people know what you are doing, when and where you are doing it, and how they can participate or share this information. Successful promotion can increase the public’s awareness of your organisation or group and presents an opportunity to connect with those who are hard to reach or engage.

Developing a promotion strategy

This should be one of the first and most important aspects of your planning process—start as soon as you have chosen your VHW event (step 2 below).

Timing is critical to effectively promote your event and maximise the opportunities for success. Once VHW funding is confirmed (step 4), you can start to implement the promotion strategies you have already developed in your planning phase. If not applying for funding, you can start to implement the promotion strategies once you’ve been notified by DVA that they will be registering your event.

Make sure you keep your messaging consistent, however, don’t post exactly the same words over and over. Use different wording or a different image to increase awareness and retention of your message. It is also important to continually promote your event without being excessive with promotion i.e. repetition is important.

![Diagram of Promotion strategy]

1. Establish planning group
2. Form an idea and outcome
3. Submit VHW application
4. Funding confirmation
5. Evaluate and acquit event

Veterans’ Health Week Event Guide | Version 1.0 (March 2019)
Be creative with your promotion

- identify community websites that may be happy to advertise your event at no cost
- ask to use your local ESO’s electronic noticeboard or display promotional flyers
- contact your local media and tell them about your upcoming event
- use community message boards at your local shopping or health care centre
- ask your local council about ways they can assist you with promotion
- local businesses can include information in their shop windows, keep your brochures on their counters, or publicise their event in their website or newsletters
- inform other branches, associations, local groups, clubs and community organisations about your event
- send out personal invitations to members of your organisation or group
- promote through social media channels
- encourage people to bring a friend or family member to join them. If your event is child-friendly, clearly advertise that fact
- you may like to consider approaching your local member of Parliament to attend your event
- encourage word of mouth among locals of the upcoming event.

When promoting your events, remember to:

- make the most of your pre-existing networks
- use different types of promotions
- repeat, remind, and update to keep your event top of mind
- consider a personalised/one-on-one approach for hard to engage groups
- make sure you have a contact who is available to talk about the event if people want to know more.

Use of VHW logo

Any group or organisation advertising their event for VHW must use the VHW logo. This is available on the VHW DVA webpage, and includes instructions and examples on how it should be used.

Social media

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram can be excellent ways to promote your VHW event for free.

The key is to plan ahead and consider how you’re going to effectively use your social media presence.

Tips on how to promote your event using social media:

- Using the official VHW hashtag (#VeteransHealthWeek) when posting on social media and to track the VHW conversation.
- If you want to make sure people in your state/territory are aware of events, use specific hashtags, such as the table below, but ensure you still also use the official VHW hashtag along with any other hashtags you add to your post.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#VeteransHealthWeekVIC</th>
<th>#VeteransHealthWeekTAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#VeteransHealthWeekWA</td>
<td>#VeteransHealthWeekQLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#VeteransHealthWeekSA</td>
<td>#VeteransHealthWeekNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#VeteransHealthWeekNSW</td>
<td>#VeteransHealthWeekACT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Other hashtags about the event can be used as well, such as #health #fitness #veteran #nutrition
- Make sure you are frequently posting information about your event.
• Create an event page on Facebook and invite people from your group/organisation’s Facebook page. You can also click ‘share’ to post this event on your followers’ newsfeed.
• Post visual content such images or short interviews and videos on why VHW is important to your organisation.
• The average engagement rate of a user on Facebook is about 8 seconds, so make sure your posts are short, sharp and to the point.

If you are uploading images or videos to social media, make sure you have permission from those in the image or video. Children under 18 years of age require parental/legal guardian permission before images can be used.

DVA is interested in also sharing some photos and videos from selected events on its social media channels, and also using these in other DVA materials, such as Vetaffairs and our electronic newsletter. A photo permission form can be downloaded from the DVA VHW webpage and if possible, we would appreciate if you could request those in photos and videos to sign this form and then pass on the signed forms, photos and videos to your VHW state or territory based coordinator.

DVA will provide shell social media template posts to assist you posting on social media platforms. Note- this is a guide only and you may choose not to use this and just develop your own content. These will be available on the DVA VHW webpage in the lead up to VHW.

Media release
Pitching a story to the media can be an effective way to promote your VHW event. When putting together a media release it is important to:

• write an attention-grabbing, short, headline. An example is: ‘Big crowds expected at Veterans’ Health Week family fun day’
• remember to include the who, what, when, where, how and why
• check your grammar and spelling; keep it simple and assume the journalist does not know the acronyms, so spell it out (e.g. use Veterans’ Health Week instead of VHW)
• be passionate; tell them why you or your organisation are involved in VHW
• keep the media release to one page
• invite the media to come along to your event; put out a media alert the day before
• have someone available for interview from your event. Media may also chat with participants but they will most likely arrange this themselves
• the media are looking for newsworthy angles to stories; celebrities attending, novel events etc. So highlight these in your media release.

DVA will provide a shell media release template to assist you with preparing your media release. Note this is a guide only and you may choose not to use this and just develop your own content. This will be available on the DVA VHW webpage in the lead up to VHW.
Remember

- Organisers are encouraged to use VHW branding (e.g. logos) when promoting their events.

- DVA will promote VHW on a national level and will post a listing of all VHW events (funded/non-funded) on the DVA website. Make sure you are doing your own promotion to make sure people know about your event.

- To find the contact details of your local media outlet, it is recommended that you search online. Media outlets will have a contact email and/or number that you can use to reach them.

- VHW can be viewed as more than just a week of events each year. It can provide an opportunity for ongoing events to continue the focus on the four themes.

- Please contact the DVA media team on media.team@dva.gov.au or call 02 6289 6466 if any media outlets request to talk to the Department, Australian Government or the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs.