

Media Release



Geoff Brock MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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New Veterans' Advisory Council for South Australia

The South Australian Veterans' Advisory Council welcomes eight new members, including a new council Chair, to help drive better outcomes for South Australia's veteran community.

The new appointments reflect a broad range of voices, delivering greater representation of contemporary service people and families as well as an increased focus on wellbeing, incarceration, and homelessness matters.

Former Veterans SA Director, Colonel Robert Manton, has been appointed as VAC's Chair. The Chair and council provide advice to the South Australian Government about matters concerning the veteran community.

COL Manton's career in the Australian Army spanned 30 years and involved multiple command appointments, operational service in Iraq and advisory and peacekeeping roles with the United Nations, including advisor to the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations.

The seven new council member appointments are:

- **Miranda Van Hooff**, appointed as Deputy Chair, is an experienced research scientist who has devoted the last 15 years to better understanding and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of current and former serving Australian military personnel and their families.
- **Hayley Boswell**, a practicing lawyer, Defence spouse and founder of Defence Kidz, an organisation that advocates for Defence children, young people, spouses, and families.
- **Taylor Cowell**, a contemporary veteran with lived experience of the transition from service to higher education and employment. He established the Adelaide University Student Veterans' Association in 2021.
- **Bill Denny AM BM** who served in the Australian Army for over 21 years, including as Aide de Camp to the Governor-General and has continued to be an active member of many South Australian veteran organisations.

- **Alex Houthuysen (Hill)**, a proud Aboriginal man from the Yamatji Nation of the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Having served with the Royal Australian Air Force, he has been heavily involved in promoting the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service.
- **Kay Matthias**, a qualified journalist whose work in rural and regional South Australia has been formally recognised.
- **Kerryn Smith**, a veteran who served for eight years in the Royal Australian Air Force in a range of education and training roles. Ms Smith is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Legacy SA & Broken Hill.

The group will join existing members Cheryl Cates, Nathan Klinge, Chris Tilley and Mal Thiele who have been reappointed to the council in 2023.

Three ex-officio members representing the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army and Royal Australian Air Force have also been reappointed.

The appointments follow an independent recruitment process undertaken in recent months to recruit new members for an inclusive council.

The first meeting for the new VAC is planned for 23 February 2023.

For more information about the Veterans Advisory Council visit:
veteranssa.sa.gov.au/VAC

Quotes attributable to Geoff Brock

COL Manton is a highly respected member of the South Australian veteran community who will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to guide the council during his tenure.

I am confident that the South Australian veteran community is well-represented by the new VAC, which will continue to play a key role in promoting well-being and achieving better outcomes for the South Australian veteran community.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the outgoing members, including former chairs COL Susan Neuhaus and Mr John Godwin, for their valuable contribution to the council during their tenures.

Quotes attributable to COL Robert Manton

I am acutely aware of the unique demands that military service places on individuals, their families, and carers.

I look forward to working with council members and the State Government to ensure the needs of our current and former service people and their families are identified and addressed.