



**VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, (NSW BRANCH) Inc.**

*AFFILIATED WITH THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.*

***SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE AND HAVE SERVED***

## **WHAT ABOUT THE PARTNERS OF VETERANS**

Not enough is done for veterans' partners.

Yet it is clear that partners can be, and in many cases are, second wave war casualties.

Respected study after respected study shows that partners of combat veterans have a significantly higher risk of developing psychological problems as a result of living with, and caring for their veteran partners, when compared with the general population.

These research findings are universally accepted.

So more should be done for partners.

And its not only because the partner deserves greater support. It's also because you can't have a healthy veteran without the support of a healthy partner.

The greater the distress of the partner the worse the well-being of the veteran.

No matter how much effort and resources are spent on trying to fix the veteran, if his partner has become sick and troubled and cannot give support, all that effort may be for nothing.

Partners can seek counselling at VVCS. This is a valuable service.

But there can be long waiting times for appointments. Offices may be distant. And VVCS telephone counselling may not meet the clinical needs of the partner.

Yet early intervention is the key to the prevention of family disruption and even tragedy.

In the short term, an answer to the problem is to issue partners with a Non-liability White Card simultaneously with the issue of the same card to the veteran. This would guarantee immediate access to medical and psychological help.

Not only is this a sensible and practical solution, it would also be an acknowledgement by government of the essential and demanding role that partners play in supporting our psychologically and physically damaged veterans.

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And whilst this article has focused on the partners of war veterans, the same difficulties can arise with ex-ADF members experiencing adjustment difficulties.

So partners should be eligible for a Non-liability White Card at the same time as the ex-ADF member.