



Sharon's corner — July 2019

VA News sat down with Sharon Cavanagh, Manager of Veterans' Services, to talk about what has been happening at Veterans' Affairs over the last three months.

Sharon Cavanagh, Manager of Veterans' Services, at the Vietnam Veterans Health and Wellbeing Expo in Auckland

VA News: Kia ora Sharon, what have you been up to since we last spoke?

Sharon: I've been busy! A month after holding the Vietnam Veterans Health and Wellbeing Expo in Auckland, the Veterans' Affairs team headed over to Australia for forums in Melbourne and Perth. We had really successful forums in Sydney and Brisbane last year and we wanted to continue our work in connecting with our Australian-based veterans.

The forums are a fantastic opportunity to meet with veterans and their whānau, and for them to learn more about the support available to them — even when living overseas. My hat goes off to the veteran "connectors" who helped us get the word out on the ground with the veteran community.

VA News: what else have you been up to?

Sharon: We've been running a small "Transition Muster" pilot for members of Defence Force at Linton, Trentham, and Burnham camps who are transitioning into civilian life. The pilot was successful in getting people registered with Veterans' Affairs, which means that they are in our system and can easily get support when they need it. We are now looking at not only running the programme permanently, but also rolling it out to all the camps and bases. We want to get as many veterans connected with Veterans' Affairs as possible.

VA News: I hear progress has been made on re-introducing treatment cards?

Sharon: Yes — no more temporary letters. We've heard loud and clear from our veterans how useful treatment cards are, and that the letters can easily get damaged or lost. Our team has been working hard to implement a new system to streamline the process and this is now up and running. Veterans who already have a treatment card don't need to do anything — it is still valid — but veterans who were issued a paper treatment letter can get in touch with us to request a new treatment card.

VA News: It sounds like you have been really busy! What else do you have planned for this year?

Sharon: Starting in July we will have monthly case management clinics at Ranfurly Veterans' Trust in Auckland. The clinics will be an opportunity for veterans to meet one-on-one with case managers, and to explore the support they need. Veterans, both current clients and those not yet on our books, are able to book in to see us — they just need to get in touch with our enquiry line. The first clinic will be on Tuesday 30 July 2019.

Get in touch with the Veterans' Affairs enquiry line (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us/>)

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