



Positive social change

# Veterans Connect

Webinar presented by

**Eleanor Newton**

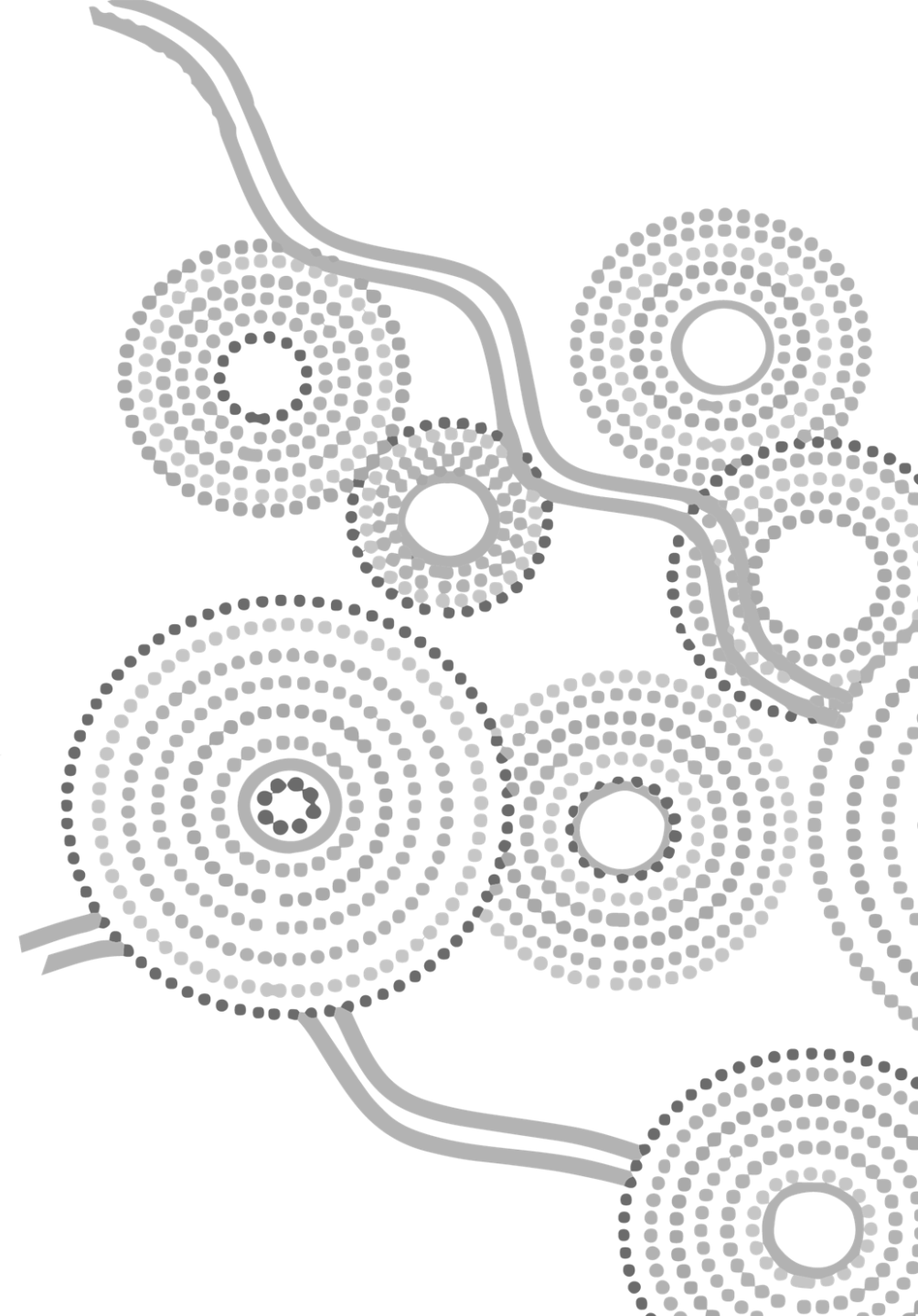
Team Leader - Veterans Connect

**Melissa Wiseman**

Senior Manager – Suicide Prevention and Community Care

[socialfutures.org.au](http://socialfutures.org.au)

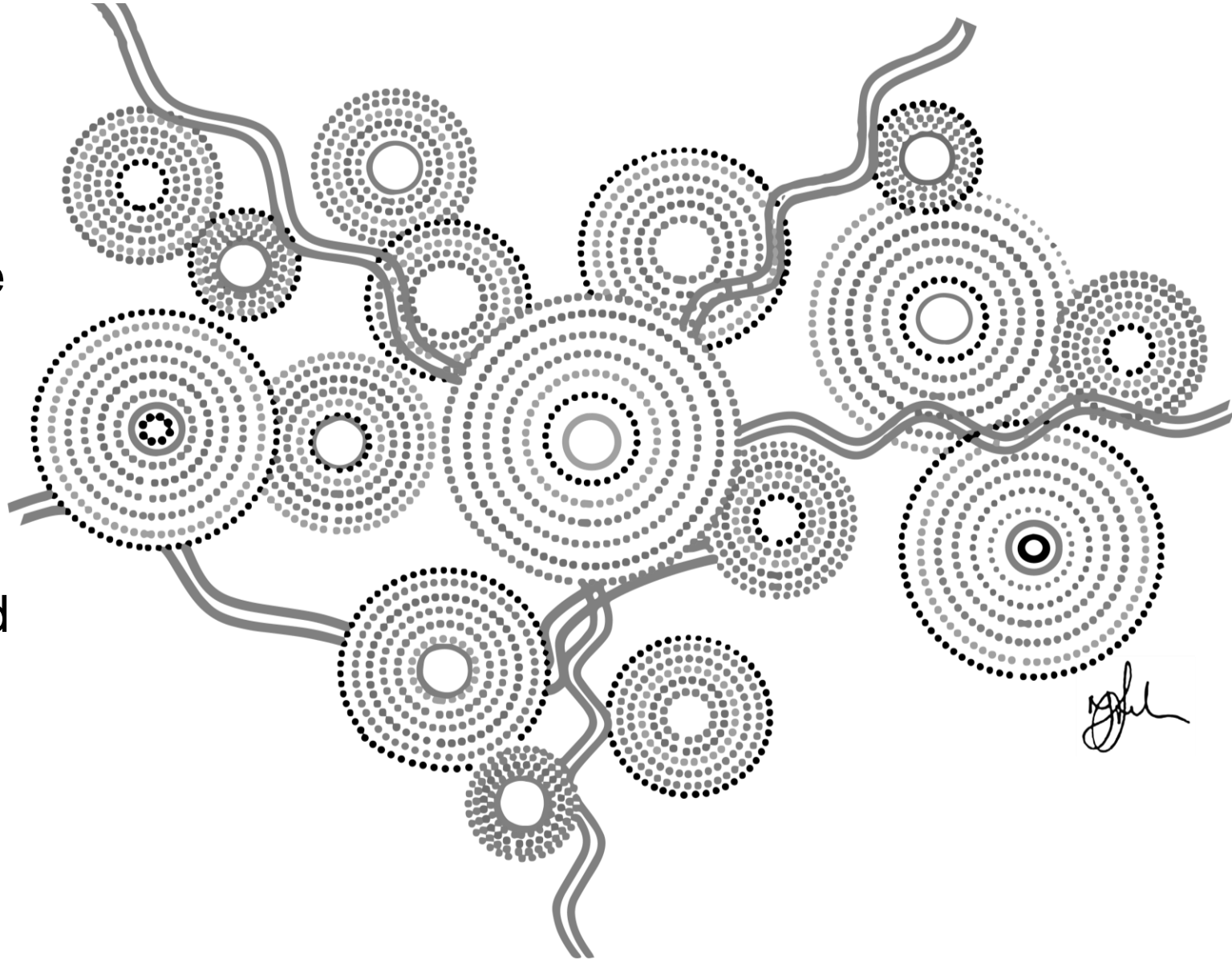
1800 719 625





We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community.

We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.



# Who is Veterans Connect?

Since the beginning of 2023 we have operated as a team of 3, with a Team Leader and two Care Coordinators providing support to Veterans and their families and building strong working relationships with providers.

Our small but mighty team comes with a wealth of experience and knowledge across all things Mental Health and Disability, DVA, NDIS and My Aged Care related.



## About Us

We are a pilot program funded by the PHN, founded in response to the preliminary findings from the Royal Commission into Veteran suicide rates. Our services are completely free for eligible people to access

## Objectives

Reduce the Veteran suicide rates and the severity of mental illness among the Veteran community

## What We Do

Provide non-clinical care coordination to participants in a range of delivery models to suit individual needs



# Where Do We Operate?

- Partially within the Hunter New England and Central Coast PHN
- Census data guiding our starting location
- Starting out on the NSW Central Coast 2023
- Expanding to the Hunter Region in 2024 due success of the program
- No wrong door policy for out of area referrals



## Who do we Support?

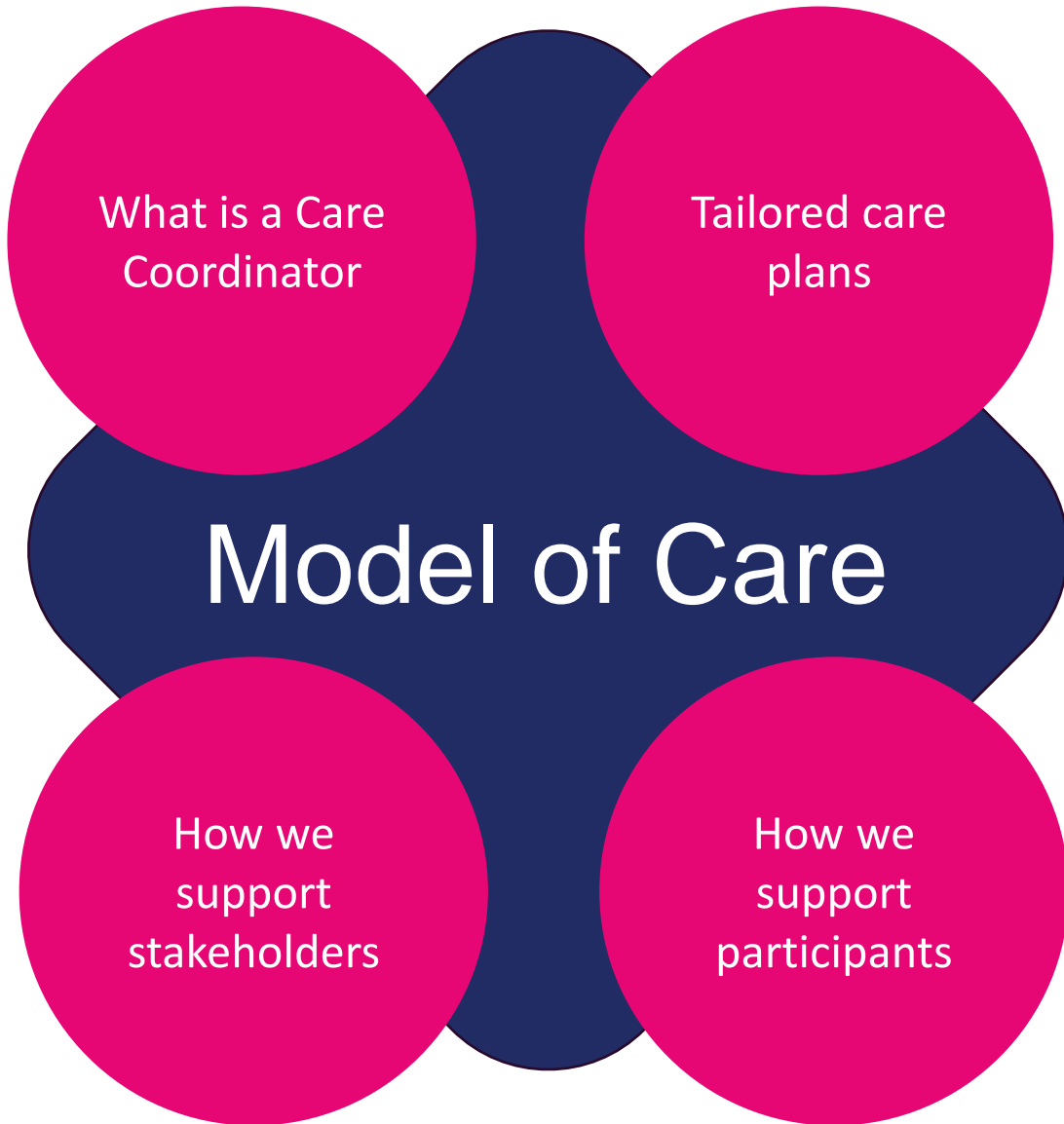
- Any ex-Serving Australian Defence Force members
- Current serving, but in the process of transition
- Family members

## Important Things to Know

- Definition of a Veteran
- Not all injuries are the same
- DVA entitlements – white and gold cards
- DVA payments for GPs

## Why is it Important to Have Service Recognised?

Changes to past legislation and definitions means more people can get support



## What is a Care Plan?



- Detailed intake
- Person centered planning
- No minimum or limit to needs
- Can be done one on one or with other providers

# Case Study

## **Background:**

Veteran came to us to find a GP who can support them to start their DVA claims process

## **Actions:**

Care Coordinator contacted known local GPs with DVA experience to see who had their books open, then provided details of three different options to the Veteran for them to independently contact

## **Outcome:**

The Veteran made contact with their chosen GP, booked an appointment and was able to self manage all other needs from there.



## **Background:**

Veteran came to us to start their DVA claims process. They were unsure of what needs they may have and felt overwhelmed by the process.

## **Actions:**

Care Coordinator contacted some DVA advocates that were local to the Veteran and linked them in with support to get things going. From there the advocates gave the Care Coordinator and Veteran prompts for the next steps.

## **Outcome:**

The Veteran was linked in with the advocates who helped to guide the DVA claims process. The Care Coordinator worked with the advocates to line up the next referrals to a Psychiatrist, a Psychologist, a Pain Management Specialist and an OT to help with assessments to secure the right funding and support from DVA.

The Veteran's overall mood improved significantly towards the end of support with us. As part of our intake, service delivery and exit we utilise the K10 assessment tool to track mental wellness and show changes in mental health before, during and after engagement. This case showed a steady and clear decline in symptoms of anxiety and depression once they had been supported to work through their overwhelm.

# Stakeholder Engagement

- **Tracking experienced providers**
- **Constantly working to build and strengthen relationships with providers and other stakeholders**
- **Wide range of Health Care Professionals across all funding streams**
- **Case conferencing where needed**
- **Providing continuity of care**



**SOCIAL FUTURES** **VETERANS CONNECT** **phn** **PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK**

**Referral Form**

Veterans Connect is a program for ex-service personnel, their families, and carers in the Central Coast region. Veterans Connect is a free program designed to support veterans navigate health, social, and community services, overcome barriers to accessing care and increase health literacy and self-management.

**Referring Organisation Details**

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Eligibility Criteria**

Does the participant meet any, or all, of the following:

Is an ex-serving member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF – permanent or reservist).  Yes  No

Is a family member, or carer, of an individual meeting the above criteria.  Yes  No

Is NOT in a medical or mental health crisis and in need of acute clinical services.  Yes  No

**Participant Details**

All questions are optional, your responses won't impact on your access to the program or supports.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Name/Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Method of Contact:

Phone  Text  Email  Mail

Gender:  Female  Male  Non-Binary  
 Gender Fluid  Different Identity (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you identify as LGBTQSB?  Yes  No

Indigenous Status:  Aboriginal  Torres Strait Islander  Neither

Country of Birth:  Australia  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Main Language Spoken:  English  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you identify as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse?  Yes  No

Do you identify as a person with a disability?  Yes  No

If yes, please specify:  Hearing  Intellectual / Learning  Mental Illness  
 Physical  Speech  Vision  Other

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# Referral Pathways

## When to refer?

As soon as you identify that your patient is a Veteran or a family member and would like some extra support or more information around what's available.

It's never too early or too late to refer someone to us.

## When might we refer to you?

Once we have identified the need for the services of a GP that has experience and/or confidence working with a Veteran and the DVA system.

It's one of our most common connection requests among participants.

## Best ways to make a referral?

- Pass on our contact details or flyer to the person to make contact themselves
- Call or email the team to pass along details and we can reach out to them
- Email in a referral with details for someone more complex

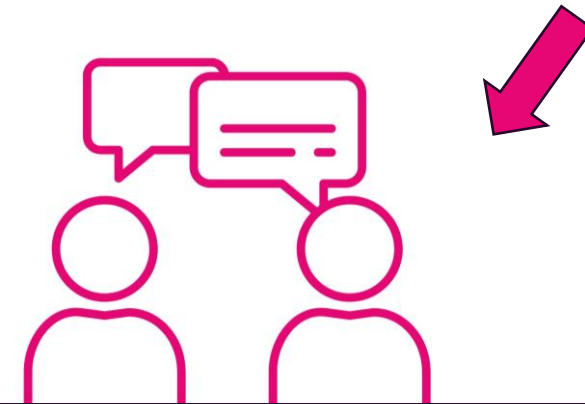
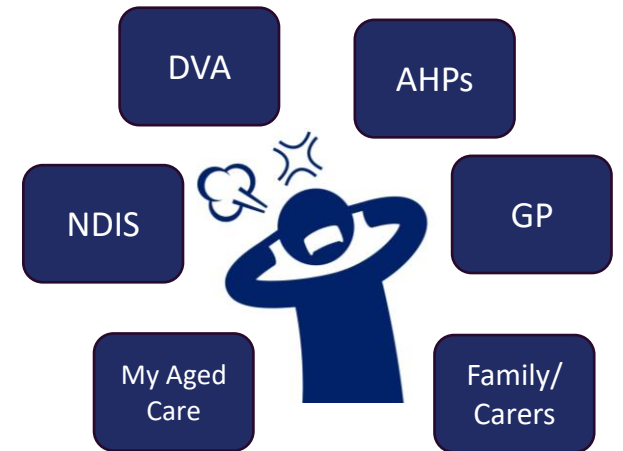
**Contact us 1800 719 625**

**veteransconnect@socialfutures.org.au**

# How can Veterans Connect Help Providers?

**By far the most valuable thing we can do for you is to give you back time in your day to focus on providing quality care to your patient.**

- Streamlining communication between providers
- Supporting with gathering or prefilling documents for participants
- Ensuring smooth referral pathways for providers
- Education for providers and participants
- Assisting with managing expectations with agencies, other providers and participants
- Where appropriate, light advocacy for participants with other agencies



**Turn overwhelm and reluctance to engage into an easy and stress-free process**

# Case Study

## **Background:**

This Veteran came in with complex, overlapping issues around needing surgery, respite and childcare. As a single parent they were struggling to be able to tend to their one-year old's needs due to a very painful hernia that had occurred as a by-product of a back and neck injury sustained during service. This hernia repair was made more complicated due to another abdominal scars becoming torn internally, they were referred to a specialist who charged a higher rate than DVA would generally approve. The Veteran had been trying to juggle communication between their DVA case manager, the surgeon's rooms, other health providers and their child's daycare for nearly 12 months and was at the point of absolute burn out. The providers in this instance had had multiple exchanges with each other and all sides were becoming frustrated to the point where the specialist was wanting to decline services altogether.

## **Actions:**

A Care Coordinator was able to step in and become the point of contact for all of the above providers, clarify what needed to be done by each party and follow up on a regular basis to keep things heading in the right direction. The Veteran would then receive updates only, when necessary, from their Care Coordinator. The Care Coordinator was also able to advocate on behalf of the Veteran to have the specialist book the surgery at a hospital that was closer to their home as their anxiety around being so far away from their child was causing a lot of distress. The Care Coordinator was also able to liaise with the childcare provider and the Veteran to secure extra funding to increase days in care.

## **Outcome:**

This Veteran has now been approved for their much-needed surgery, at the rate that the specialist surgeon had requested, at the hospital that was requested by the Veteran. The Veteran's childcare provider was able to access special government supplemental payments to support extra time in care with the centre.

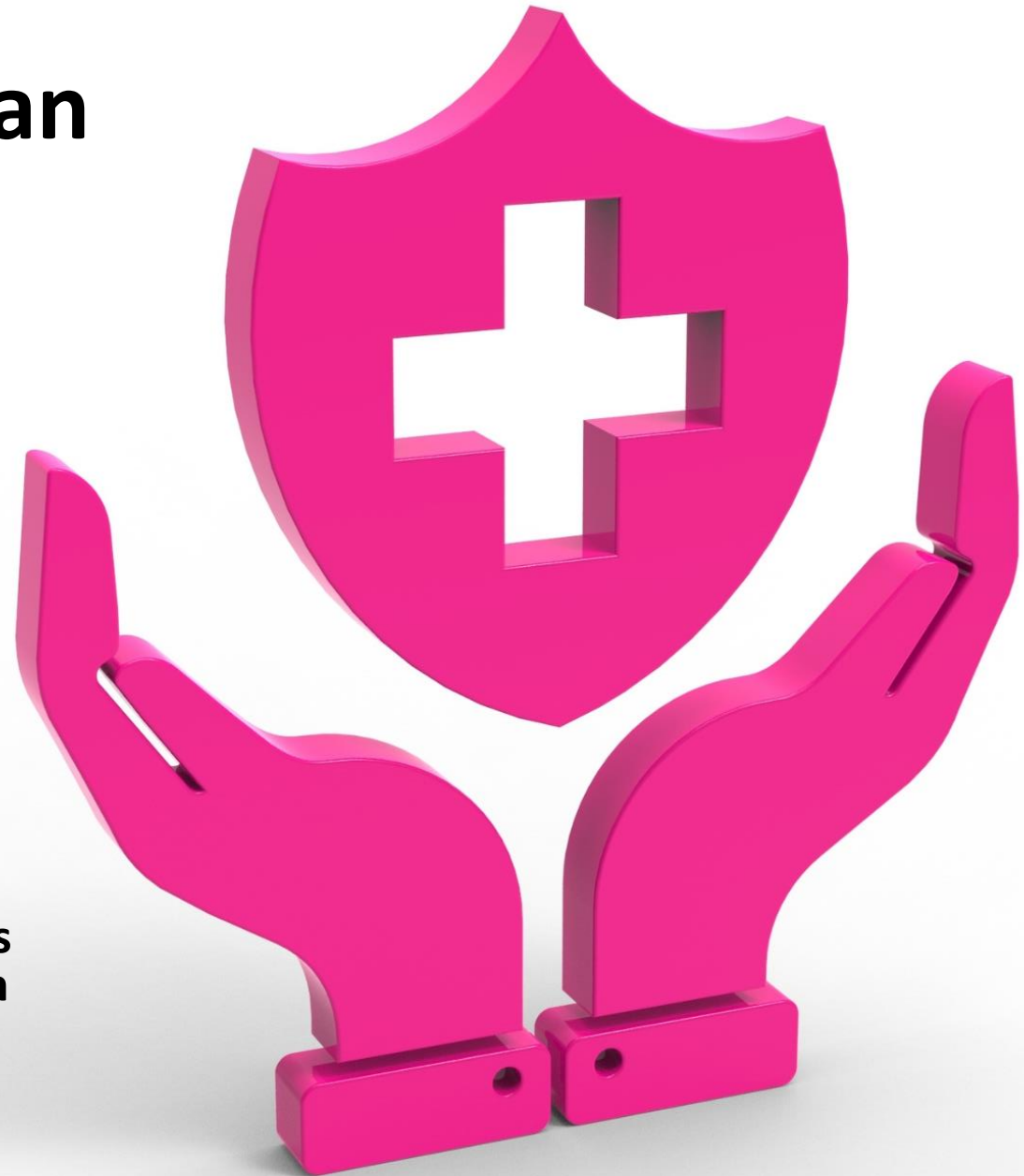
The surgery is booked for the coming months, but already the improvement in the Veteran's mental health and stress levels is incredible.

# Pivotal Role of GPs in Veteran Care

- A good GP is worth their weight in gold
- Impact of a good GP experience vs a bad GP experience
- The gatekeepers to further health care
- GPs have always been one of the most trustworthy professions



**Trust is one of the biggest barriers in the Veteran space, once trust has been earned by a professional then word will spread, and others will follow.**





## **Background:**

Participant came in requesting connection to new GP as they felt their current one did not support them with their service-related injury. As a result, the participant had not accessed any help to manage it over several years due to the costs that they would have incurred. Their injury had worsened to a point where they were unable to work or manage their day-to-day life, impacting their finances, relationship with their spouse and children and mental health.

## **Actions:**

We were able to find this person a GP in their area with the experience and willingness to listen to the Veteran and help them to complete their DVA claim for the injury. They were also referred to Open Arms for individual and relationship counselling.

## **Outcome:**

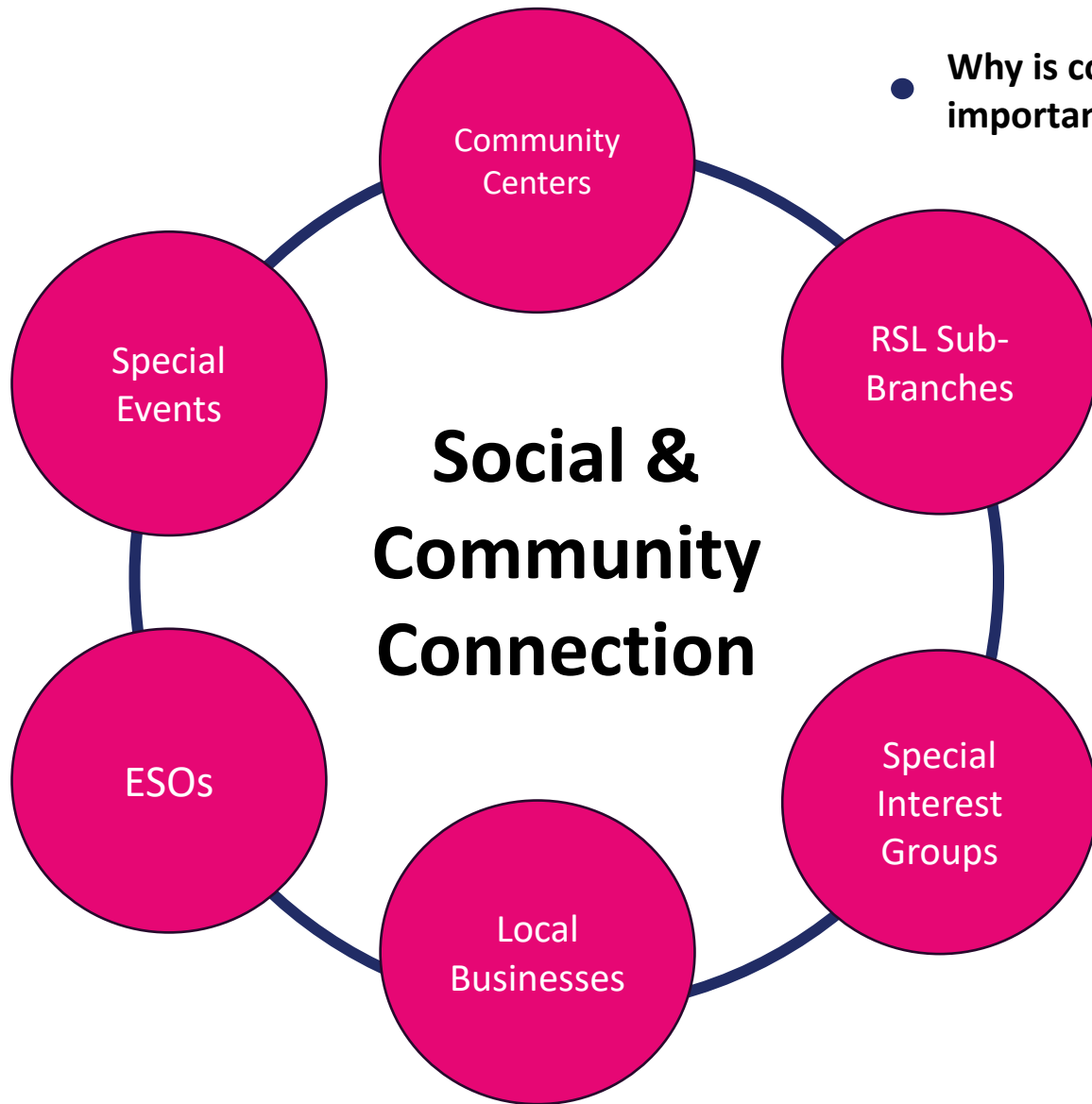
With the support of the right doctor the Veteran was able to submit a DVA claim for the injury and access the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment (PAMT) program while they waited for their claim to be approved. The Veteran began accessing the right providers to manage their injury. This Veteran was able to return to work, mend their relationships and significantly improve their mental health with the right support from the right GP.

# Linking Agencies

Thanks to our team's unique knowledge and experience we have assisted many of our program participants understand their rights when accessing these schemes.

Helping them to balance their services to ensure any gaps are filled and supports wrap around them to create a more holistic sense of care.



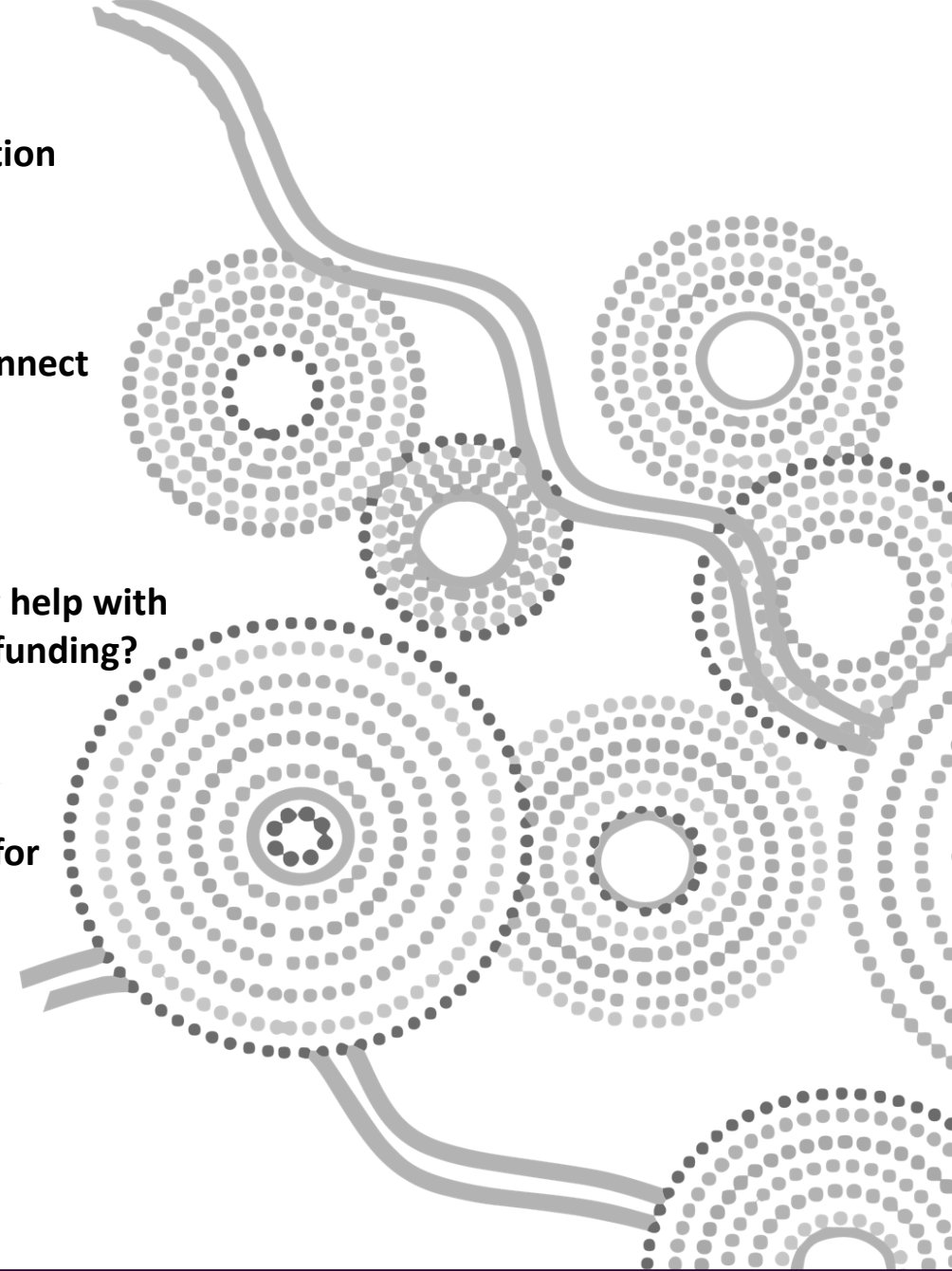


- **Why is community connection important?**

- **Who do we connect with and why?**

- **Is there any help with support or funding?**

- **Is this just for Veterans?**



# How can you be involved?

- Register your interest/experience with us
- Book in an in-person visit
- Have flyers available to patients

[veteransconnect@socialfutures.org.au](mailto:veteransconnect@socialfutures.org.au)

1800 719 625 or 0459 300 731

# Questions?



# THANK YOU

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