

**David Harris**

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing,  
Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for the Central Coast

**Media Release****War Widows honoured in Sydney and across NSW****Thursday, 19 October 2023**

War widows in New South Wales were honoured today with events across the state to commemorate the second annual War Widows Day.

War Widows Day is held annually on 19 October, the birthday of Mrs Jessie Vasey OBE CBE (1897-1966), founder of the Australian War Widows Guild.

Mrs Vasey, widow of Major General George Vasey who was killed en route to New Guinea during the Second World War, founded the NSW War Widows Graft Guild, a self-help organisation to support women widowed in the War to come to terms with their loss, while creating opportunities to support themselves and their children financially.

There are more than 15,000 war widows in NSW. Over 1,200 veterans transition from the ADF into NSW annually, and many of these veterans have a family that has supported them through their service.

This year, the Guild, now known as Australian War Widows NSW, is partnering with Legacy to recognise war widows and celebrate their contributions to their families, their communities, and the nation.

Minister for Veterans David Harris will join war widows and the defence and veteran community at a commemorative service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place.

For more information on how to support War Widows Day, visit [www.warwidowsnsw.com.au](http://www.warwidowsnsw.com.au).

**Minister for Veterans David Harris said:**

“From the Great War and Second World War, through to more recent conflicts and peacekeeping operations, the service of our veterans is acknowledged and commemorated at various times throughout the year. Yet, every veteran has a family, and we must not forget the important role that family plays in the lives of veterans, and the sacrifices that families also make that allow veterans to serve their country.

“Families of our veterans are their primary support network, and families too can be affected by the service of their loved ones.

“It is wonderful that we now have a War Widows Day. The NSW Government designated this day last year, and it is great to see this gaining traction around the country.

“NSW is leading the way in many aspects of veteran support, and with thanks to Australian War Widows NSW we are now paving the way for support to families too.”

**CEO of Australian War Widows, Ms Renee Wilson said:**

“Today is a special day as war widows from around New South Wales have come together to acknowledge War Widows Day, in honour of our founder, to celebrate the contributions to our families, our communities and our nation. I invite you to continue to stand with our war widows and widowers, and to show your support through purchasing a limited release lapel pin or support our ‘Buy a Widow a Coffee’ campaign, to help raise much needed funds to help us to deliver our social connections program.”

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