

AVCAT Alumni Survey Report

October 2020



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

AVCAT Alumni

NETWORK

Executive Summary

The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) Board Directors and staff are very excited to establish the AVCAT Alumni Network. Like all good ideas the concept of the alumni began a couple of years as we farewelled our current scholars who finished their studies and scholarships. AVCAT was interested to know what impact the scholarships made on them personally and professionally. I remember a few scholars telling me that because they went to university, it had influenced their siblings to consider and enrol in a tertiary education course. Intergenerational change for children and grandchildren in the veteran community is a very worthwhile goal.

As well, we thought that it would be important to reconnect with people who had received a scholarship many years ago to understand the impact of the scholarship on their lives and careers. AVCAT now has data on 1023 past scholars and we have commenced contacting them. This will take some time, but we are pleased that the initial contact to 300 people has resulted in 132 people completing the survey. Here are the key findings of the survey:

- AVCAT scholarships and the Long Tan Bursary (LTB) help create intergenerational change in the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans.
- AVCAT scholarships have a positive ongoing impact on the life of the scholar.
- AVCAT scholarships and the LTB have a positive impact on the family and wider network of AVCAT scholars.
- AVCAT scholarships make a critical difference in building hope and confidence in scholars.
- AVCAT scholarships and the LTB create a sense of pride for the scholar, the veteran, and their family.
- More than 50% of AVCAT scholars go on to further study or professional development.
- The financial pressure for AVCAT scholars to complete their tertiary studies was and is very significant. Many struggle with managing the ever increasing financial pressure.

An important question in the survey was to understand what AVCAT could have done better in supporting the scholars. The key recommendations for AVCAT are:

- Increase contact with scholars and alumni to foster a sense of belonging.
- Establish an alumni network.
- Establish a mentorship program for current scholars.
- Communicate available assistance and resources to scholars.

AVCAT has already made some changes to increase contact and support for scholars by implementing the watchlist program. We have also established a Facebook group where

scholars can easily communicate with AVCAT and each other. Planning the alumni network is well underway and will be launched in November 2020 by the Hon Darren Chester MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

The results of the survey will inform the development, purpose and life of the alumni network with a focus on a mentorship program and asking the group to help AVCAT support the sponsorship of more scholarships. Since 2016, AVCAT has not been able to award a scholarship to 110-120 people each year due to the limited number of available scholarships.

The following quotes from the alumni tell a range of stories. See Appendix C for a full list of the quotes:

'My family felt that the scholarship gave us validation - that it recognised the difficulties that my Dad's service had brought to our family.'

'Obtaining my degree, proved to ME personally, that I was capable of achieving greater things. Other people believed in me, but I had to discover and achieve MY own 'self-worth'.'

'Enhanced my gratitude towards my father for the sacrifices he made throughout his life.'

'Completing my degree has had a positive impact on my siblings and parent in many ways. It has had a positive emotional impact on my single mother as she takes pride on the things I have been able to achieve since graduating. I also believe that graduating has helped encourage my younger sibling to do his best to succeed in his own studies, and his future. I am also able to contribute comfortably in terms of financial aid to both my mother and brothers if the need arises.'

'It made my family members, especially my kids, believe that they could also complete tertiary studies.'

'My dad, who served in Vietnam, is really proud that I was able to go to, and successfully complete my uni degrees'

'Enabled me to complete prolonged studies that I would otherwise have struggled to do due to financial constraints'

In conclusion, I would like to thank the people who filled out the survey. They told their experiences and stories with honesty and insight. I also acknowledge the staff team of AVCAT including Georgina Nash, former Scholarships Manager and particularly Emma Dallas, Scholarships Communication Officer who coordinated the survey, analysed the results and wrote the original report.

Joan Hughes
Chief Executive Officer
22 October 2020

Scope of the Alumni Project

In early 2019 AVCAT staff came across a box full of lists and information about past scholarships awarded.

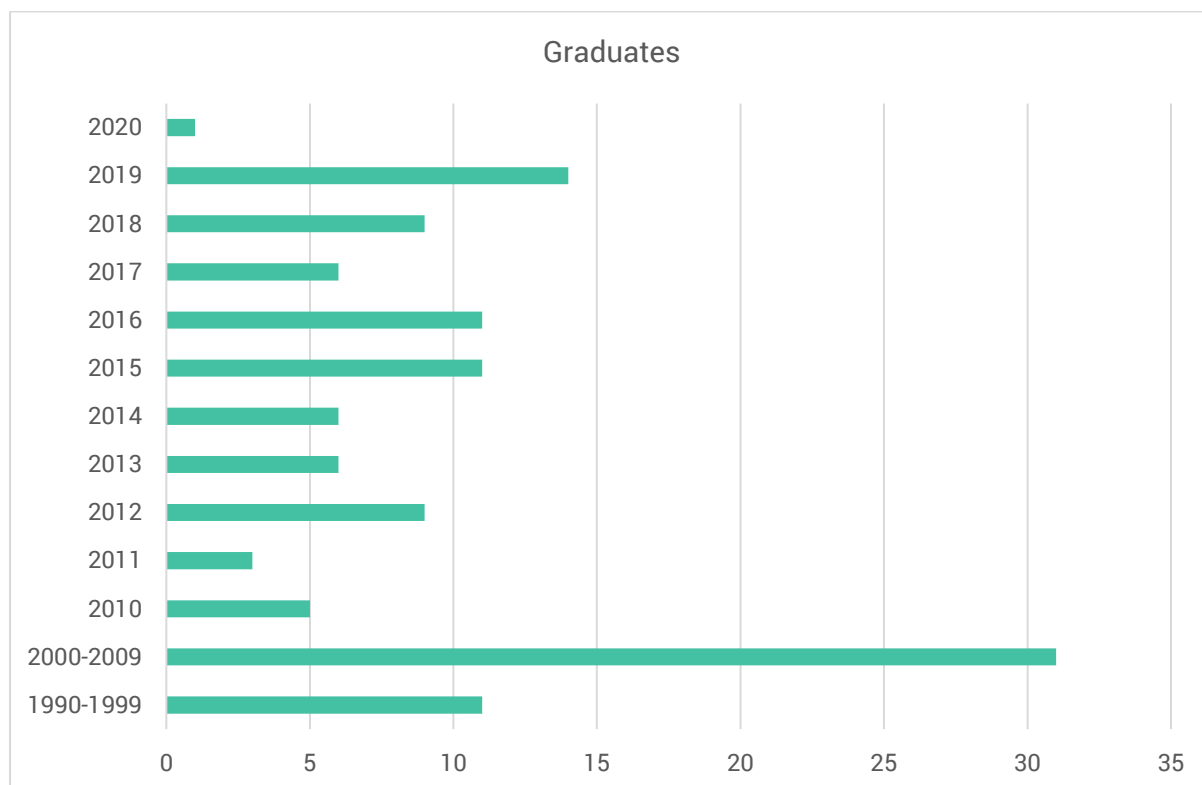
We began collating information including the names and contact details of past scholars from loose papers found in the archive box and combined them with more recent records of completed scholarships.

Data was collated on 1023 past scholars. At this point we had the idea to investigate the possibility of establishing an alumni network, to be named the **AVCAT Alumni Network**.

The earliest records are the Vietnam Veteran's Trust Educational Assistance Scheme (VVTEAS) grants awarded in 1990 and these were combined with the scholarships awarded up to 2015. Some of the records are partial. This data is in addition to more recent scholarship records on AVCAT's database.

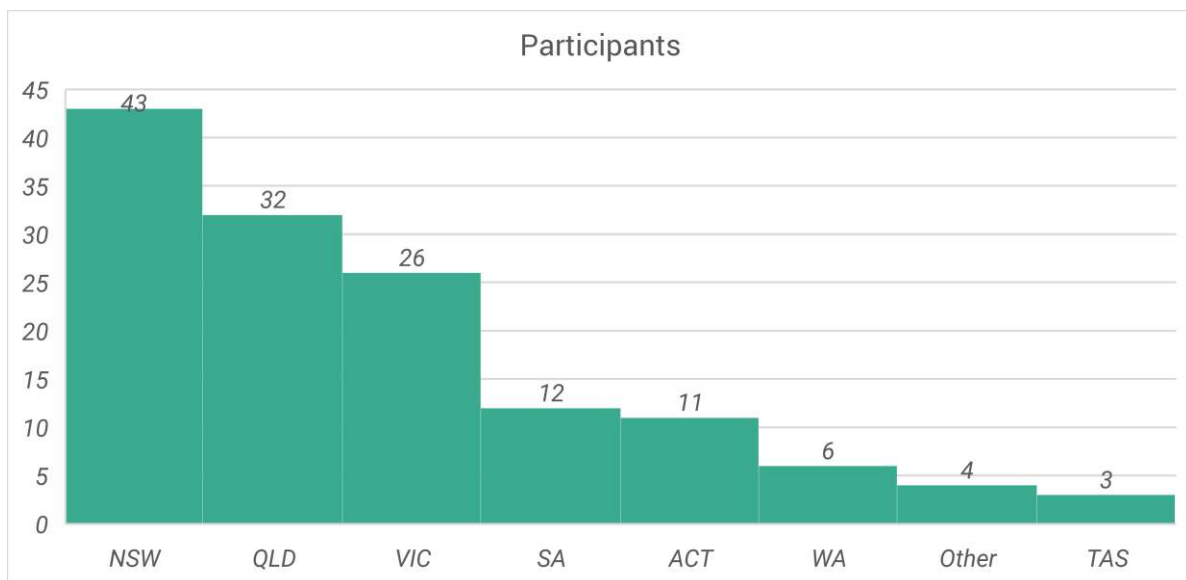
We undertook a project to locate all past scholars using any email address on record, reaching out on social media, and searching on sites including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We used alumni's course of study and institution as a filter to narrow down search results. To date we have located and contacted approximately 300 past scholars in this manner.

In 2019 AVCAT alumni were invited to participate in a voluntary survey online. We anticipated that 20 to 50 alumni would complete the survey. By the time we closed the survey, 132 alumni had completed it. The graduation year of participants ranged from 1990 to 2020, with the majority graduating between 2000-2009. See the following graph:



Recent scholars from 2018, 2019 and 2020, were not invited to participate in the survey. The aim of the survey was to capture data from scholars who had completed their courses of study and were now in the workforce, however one or two found their own way to the survey and completed the questions. We have not excluded this data.

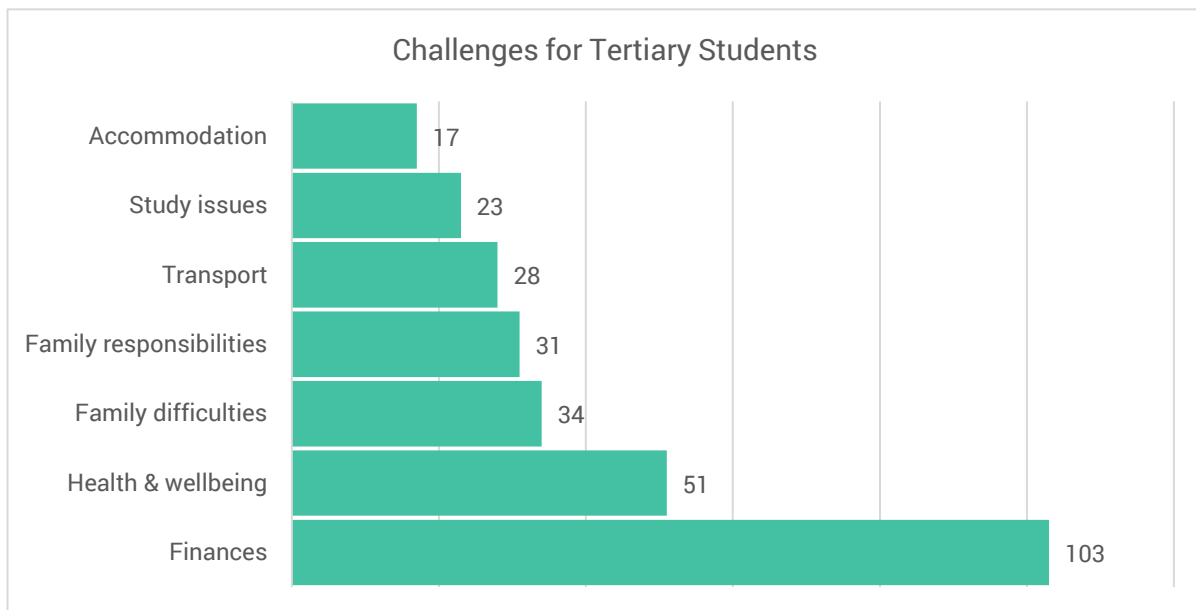
The following graph shows that the majority (32.8%) of participants were from NSW. We do not have records from early scholarship programs to indicate whether this data correlates with the number of scholarships that were offered and accepted in each state.



Challenges and Stressors for Tertiary Students

We asked participants to select the biggest challenges they faced during their time as a tertiary student. As indicated in the graph below, finances were the highest reported challenge with health and wellbeing and family difficulties the next most reported challenges.

Less than one percent (<1%) selected managing both work and study as a major challenge. This differs significantly from anecdotal evidence collected in recent scholarship applications, and in letters written by current scholars in their mid-year and annual reviews.



It is our observation that students are faced with increasing financial pressure and need to work part-time as government allowances such as Austudy are no longer sufficient to meet basic accommodation and living expenses such as food, utilities and transport.

We do not have a specific historical picture of the major stressors on a student's life at different points in time, however we do know that it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet living costs and university fees are continually increasing. We can view the results of this survey knowing that the positive impact of an AVCAT scholarship on reducing financial stress is likely to increase as the cost of undertaking tertiary education increases.

The Study Costs Research report undertaken by AVCAT in 2020 showed that the major stressors for all Australian tertiary students are as follows:

- Housing stress – 49% of students report struggling with rent costs.
- Cost of living – 89% of students report struggling to buy essential items during their studies.
- Combining work and study – Working impacts the completion rates for students. The more hours worked, the greater the impact on course completion outcomes.
- Mental health – A report by the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health lists a range of reasons why students struggle with mental health. These include poor diet, academic pressure, uncertain graduate employment outcomes, financial stress, and poor sleep. This report also found that many students do not seek mental health support within university settings, and when they do, these programs are often limited.

Graduation rates are decreasing over time with only 63% of students graduating overall. Tertiary students are also taking longer to complete a standard three-year degree, with 40%

of students completing their undergraduate degree over the longer four years of full-time study.

Living costs are steadily increasing and government benefits are not rising to meet these costs. It is likely that AVCAT scholars are more heavily impacted than the reported national average. AVCAT scholars are in proven financial hardship as stated in the [eligibility criteria](#) for AVCAT scholarships and the Long Tan Bursary.

Impact of Scholarship

Financial Support, Confidence and Hope

AVCAT scholarships first and foremost give scholars financial assistance, this has always been a known fact. What we have not known is the significance of the impact of this financial support on other aspects of scholars' lives.

The bigger themes emerging from the data are around generational change. AVCAT scholarships are providing scholars with the means to financially support themselves and begin the tradition of tertiary education within their families. Siblings, both older and younger, are being encouraged by an AVCAT scholarship recipient to attempt tertiary education.

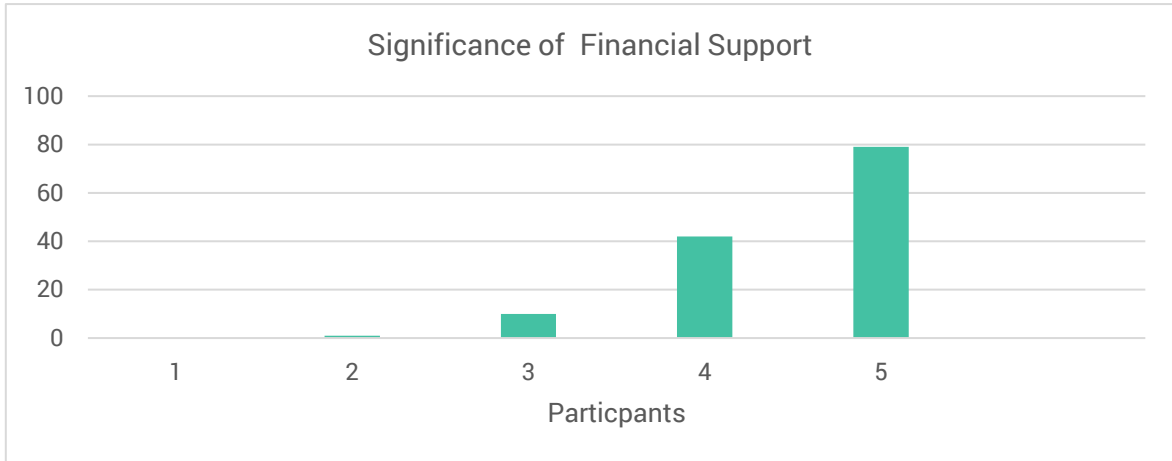
Families are taking pride in the achievements of AVCAT alumni as they enter the workplace as tertiary graduates.

Alumni are reporting they can now support their families and 'give back' to the community through charitable donations. Alumni are reporting their willingness to become mentors to current scholarship holders and 53.2% of participants were the first in their family to undertake tertiary education. Some alumni report their scholarship acting as a source of motivation to do well in their studies.

Financial Support

The question 'How significant was the financial support provided by AVCAT in helping you to complete your studies?' was answered on a scale of one to five, one indicated 'made no difference' and five indicated 'critical'. 91.6% of participants selected four or five, with 59.7% of participants selecting five, the highest on the scale. No participants selected an answer of one, 'made no impact', and only one participant selected the next lowest answer of two.

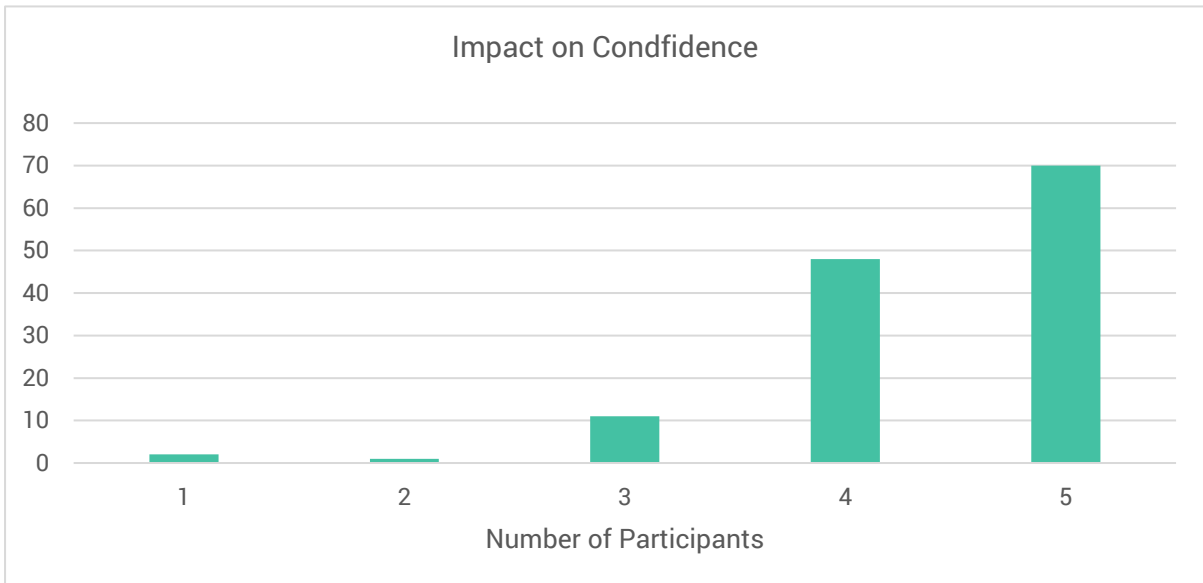
The graph below provides a clear indication of the significance of the financial assistance provided by an AVCAT scholarship. AVCAT scholarships provide critical financial support, assisting scholars to complete their studies.



Confidence

To have confidence is to believe in yourself, your abilities and value yourself as a person; a critical factor in planning and building a good life. We sought to measure the broader impact of AVCAT scholarships by asking ‘Did receiving an AVCAT scholarship have a positive impact on building your confidence?’

On a scale of one to five, where one indicates ‘made no difference’ and five indicates ‘critical’, 89.4% of participants responded with 4 or 5. 53% of participants indicated that receiving an AVCAT scholarship made a critical difference in building confidence, and 36.4% indicated that it made an important difference in building confidence, see below



graph.

Professional Support

Professional support in this context means the support, including advice, referrals, information, guidance, and encouragement from AVCAT staff given to scholars during the term of their scholarship.

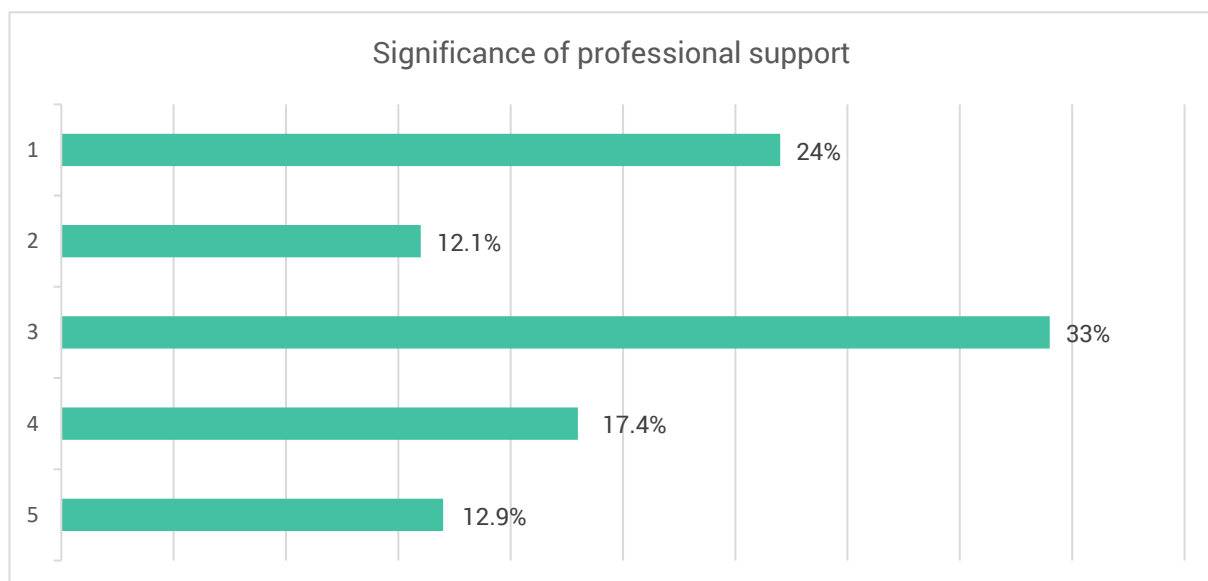
In the past three years AVACT has developed a watchlist program as a means of increasing contact and encouragement for scholars showing signs of struggle with their studies.

In particular, scholars are placed on the watchlist program if they are struggling to pass their academic requirements, experiencing significant life events and challenges, such as the death of a parent, unstable accommodation, or mental health issues.

Scholars in the watchlist program are offered additional contact and support from AVCAT staff. We also provide scholars with additional information regarding food options, accommodation, counselling, or other support. One scholar in crisis was offered immediate assistance from an outreach program operated by the sponsor of their scholarship.

Participants in the survey were asked to indicate 'how significant was the professional support provided by AVCAT?' on a scale of one, no impact, to five, critical. As indicated in the graph below, the largest response was neutral, with 33.3% of participants selecting an answer of three. 12.9% indicated professional support from AVCAT staff was critical to the completion of their studies.

Some participants responded that they were unaware of any available support and indicated that they would have welcomed more contact from AVCAT staff. Providing counselling and career guidance services are outside the scope of AVCAT's operations, however we can offer information on where to find support. With the launch of our new website in 2020, we have included a new page specifically for current scholars. On this page we have provided links to organisations offering relevant support including DVA's Open Arms counselling service and youth-oriented mental health organisations like Headspace.



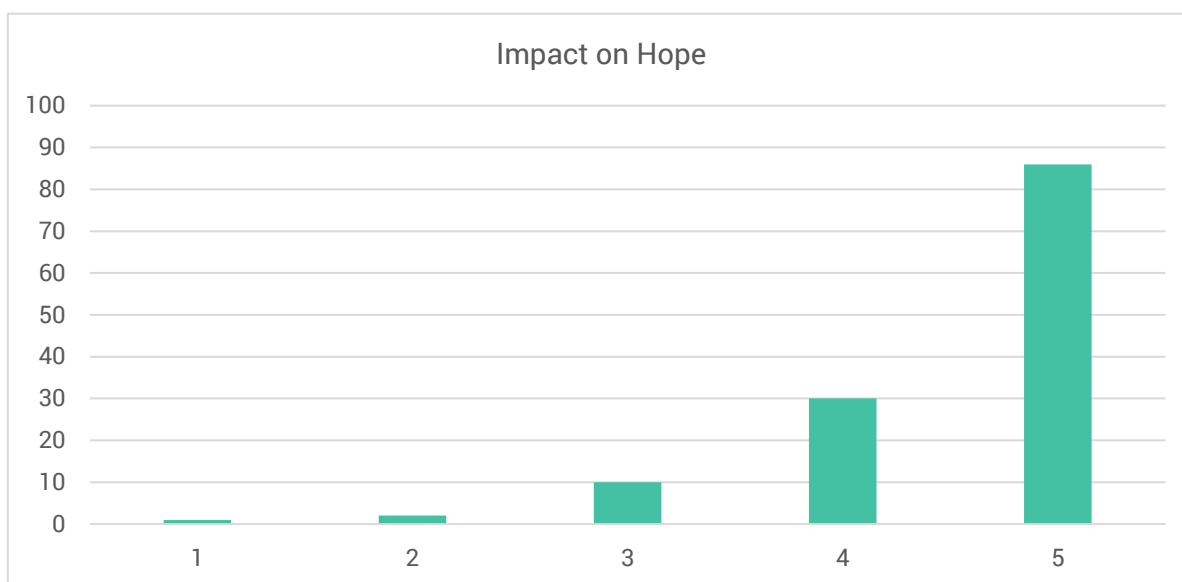
Life After AVCAT

Hope

To have hope is to believe a good outcome in your life is possible, that your efforts will have a positive effect in your life.

'When you have no hope, you see any efforts to change your life as futile. You may blame yourself. You might say that you cannot manage life, cannot make friends, and cannot succeed in getting a job. You accept whatever happens as beyond your control. You may begin to despair.' – Dr Karyn Hall

We asked, 'Did you feel more hopeful about your future after completing your studies?', and the answer was yes! Scholars feel more hopeful about their future after completing their studies. Survey results below show that 87.9% of participants indicated feeling more hopeful about their future.



Current Employment

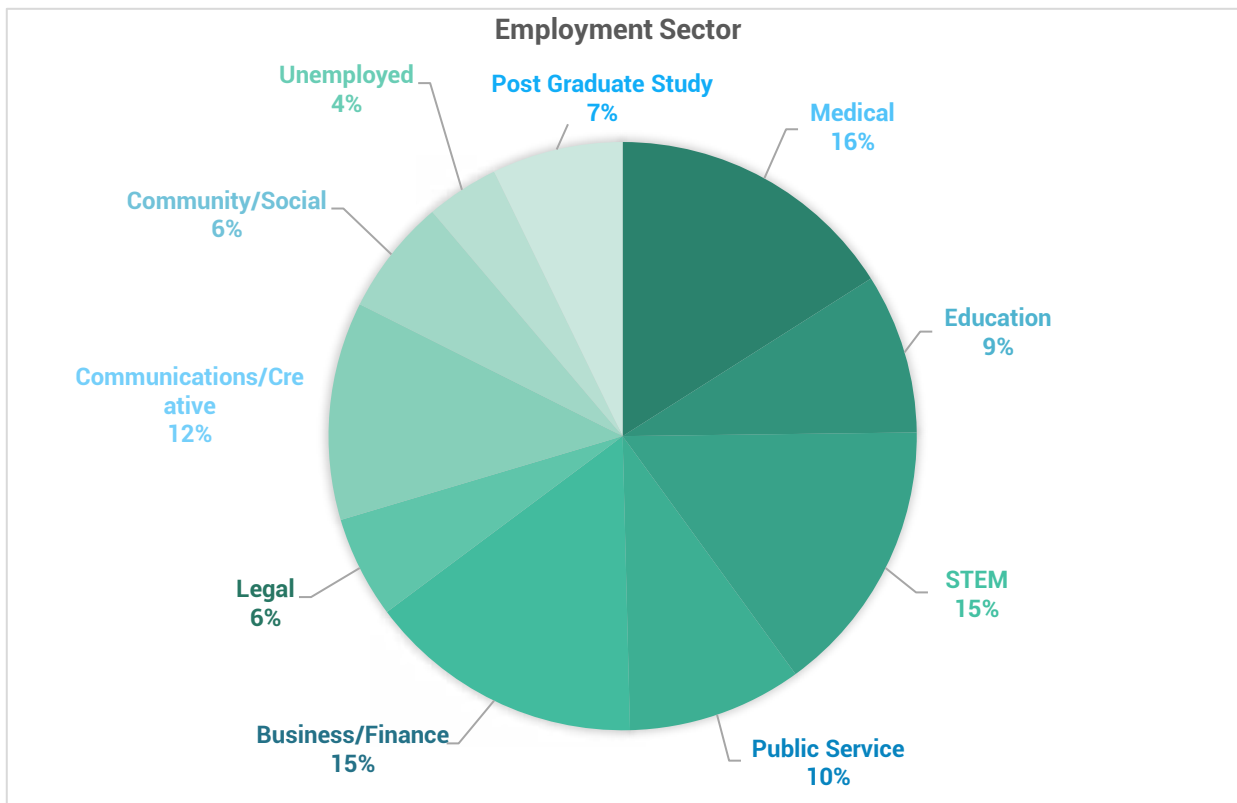
Up to 80% of survey data was collected prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

AVCAT alumni are working in a broad range of fields and positions, including an Assistant Director at the Department of Defence, a CEO, a partner in a major law firm, a visual artist, a high school teacher, a nuclear medical scientist, a paramedic and an opera singer.

As indicated in the graph below, we divided current employment into broad sectors; medical, education, STEM, public service, business/finance, legal, communications/creative, community/social, postgraduate study and unemployed.

For a full list of the current alumni employment, see Appendix A.

Most alumni reported commencing employment within three months of graduation with a high proportion reporting gaining immediate employment. A small number of alumni reported commencing employment between six months and one year after graduation.

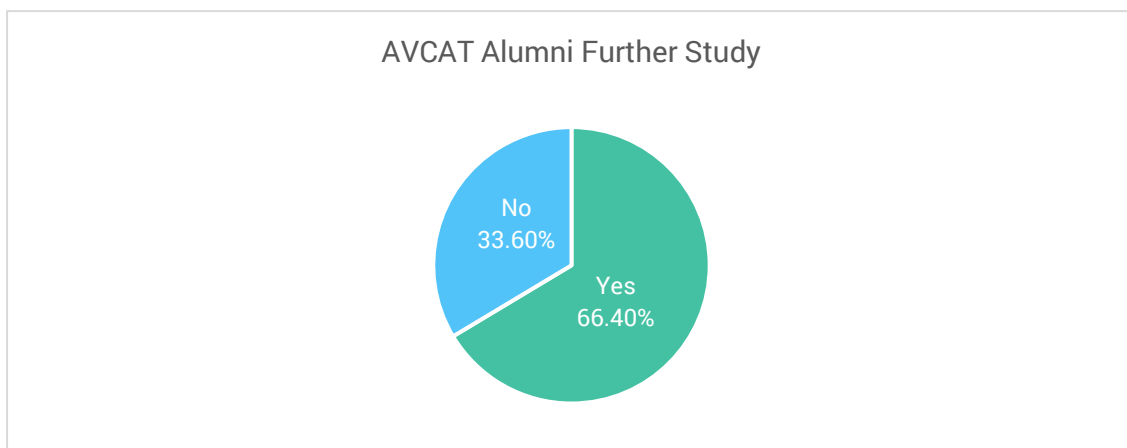


Further Study

More than half of survey participants went on to further study. AVCAT alumni are pursuing a wide variety of postgraduate qualifications from graduate certificates to post-doctoral fellowships as shown in the below graph.

A full list of further study that the alumni are doing can be found in Appendix B.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that out of 2,882,838 Australians with a Bachelor level degree 921, 029 went on to complete a postgraduate degree. The AVCAT alumni survey group indicates that postgraduate study is higher for this group compared to the broader Australian population.



Impact of Graduating on Family and Network

We asked scholars to indicate whether, in their opinion, finishing tertiary education had a positive impact on their family or wider network. More than 80% said completing tertiary education had a positive impact on their family or wider network.

We asked for further details. Participants reported a strong sense of family pride, providing an example of what is possible to other family members and setting themselves up for the future. Statements included a sense of pride that the Veteran's service has provided this opportunity.

Below are sample responses, see Appendix C for a full list of comments.

'Instilled a belief in other members of my family that they could do tertiary education.'

'First to graduate, my brother has since followed suit and working on his final year at UC.'

'My family felt that the scholarship gave us validation - that it recognised the difficulties that my Dad's service had brought to our family.'

'Proud achievement, and made me set an example for younger family members'

'My dad, who served in Vietnam, is really proud that I was able to go to, and successfully complete my uni degrees.'

'My niece said I was a role model to her when she this year decided to begin the process of commencing University and I assisted her in receiving support through DVA and I think she may also have received a scholarship with you guys too (I'm not sure).'

'Older siblings went back to do more study'

'Me completing tertiary education encouraged my brother to enrol in tertiary education course as well, which he has since completed and has now excelled in his field.'

'It made my family members, especially my kids, believe that they could also complete tertiary studies.'

The Impact of AVCAT Scholarships on Life

We asked participants to describe how the scholarship impacted on their life.

The comments made by participants are wide-ranging and sometimes very honest and frank. Some participants credit AVCAT with making life itself possible.

'I completed my course without living roughly. It helped with my mental health issues. It had a crucial impact on my very survival.'

'Whole family is visiting for graduation ceremony and completing my studies has encouraged my sister to go back to university.'

'My parents are very proud. My dad, who is a veteran, is particularly proud of my achievements given the level of his education, his service, and the financial difficulties we have faced as a family. My sister has also completed her tertiary studies now, and I believe that I have had a positive influence on her to keep her pursuing further education, regardless of age.'

'Completing my degree has had a positive impact on my siblings and parent in many ways. It has had a positive emotional impact on my single mother as she takes pride on the things I have been able to achieve since graduating. I also believe that graduating has helped encourage my younger sibling to do his best to succeed in his own studies, and his future. I am also able to contribute comfortably in terms of financial aid to both my mother and brothers if the need arises.'

'Support - just knowing that I had to work hard to make value of the scholarship you're given. It motivated me to finish and keep going when things were tough.'

'I would not have finished, or even started my degree without it. I'm now in my dream job, helping others and paying forward the help I received.'

'I felt like I finally 'could'.'

'I'm not sure I would have a job or permanent accommodation without the help of an AVCAT scholarship.'

'It gave me a leg up, that's for sure. It's humbling, and a reminder of where I and my family have come from and the sacrifices others have made so that I can go to school'.

Improvements

Survey participants were invited to provide suggestions for improvement. Many suggestions centre on the level and frequency of contact between AVCAT staff, scholars, and alumni. Many participants would prefer more contact and a greater sense of community and support.

We have already taken steps to increase the frequency of contact with scholars with the watchlist program and the establishment of an online forum for scholars on Facebook, the forum is mediated by AVCAT staff. Some suggestions:

'Perhaps have more networking opportunities and someone designated to supporting students and touching base with them regularly.'

'More check in with the recipient, so we know and feel the support is more than monetary.'

I don't remember anything that needed updating.'

'A support network for the recipients would be great. A way to support each other!'

'One of my previous answers was about the support services which came along with the scholarship. I don't recall anyone getting in touch with me to see how it was going. I recall receiving the scholarship, the funds and that was the end of it. If there were ancillary services to help along the way, I unfortunately missed that.'

'Perhaps through this work of contacting alumni a group could be formed of alumni who may be happy to engage in networking/mentoring (formal or informal) opportunities for current students?'

Several suggestions have been made to establish an alumni group and a mentorship program for current scholars.

'Create a network of alumni to support current students and further the impact for recipients'

'I think AVCAT should consider how to better link up with recipients during their study. For example, as an alumnus I would be happy to be in touch with current students with similar interests and backgrounds.'

See Appendix E for a complete list of suggestions for improvements.

Conclusion

We cannot underestimate the positive impact of a scholarship on a student in need. We have found that AVCAT scholarships help children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans with the financial costs of study and living costs while studying. We have also found that being awarded an AVCAT scholarship and graduating builds confidence, hope and pride. It also contributes to financial independence and a career path. Family members including veterans are also impacted. They feel proud and many scholar's younger siblings follow in their footsteps and undertake tertiary study.

This report illuminates not only the significant impact of the scholarships on the individual but the positive role they play in ex-service families and communities. The survey results also provide evidence to support and increase government funding and fundraising efforts to provide more scholarships and Long Tan Bursaries for the children and grandchildren of veterans. To be given an opportunity to study, to persevere, to be supported by AVCAT and to graduate allows our scholars to achieve financial independence, be proud, be confident and contribute to society.

Appendix A - Employment

Business/Finance

Accountant
Assistant Director
Assistant Restaurant Manager
Associate Consultant
Branch Manager
CEO
Chief of Operations
Commercial Manager
Consultant
CTO
Digital and Events Manager
Executive Assistant
Facilities Coordinator
Guest Service Agent
Leader Formation
Maternity Leave
National New Business Manager
Project Manager
Sales Assistant
Sales Manager
Senior Claims Specialist
Senior Consultant
Senior Inclusion and Diversity Consultant

Communications/ Creative Industries

Artist
Artist Manager
Arts Worker
Creative Arts Professional
Design Manager
Freelance Designer
Multimedia Developer
Opera Singer
Video and Animation Producer
Visual Arts Professional

Community/Social Work

Care Worker
Children's and Youth Library Assistant
Disability Support Worker
Duty Manager
Group Manager
House Supervisor Youth Residential Care
Social Worker

Education

Assistant Principal
Centre Coordinator

Early Years Teacher
High School Teacher
High School Teacher
Lecturer
Musician and Teacher
Primary School Teacher
Principal
SEF Student Ambassador
Swim Instructor
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher

Legal

Barrister & Solicitor
Lawyer
Lawyer
Legal Officer
Partner in Law Firm
Senior Associate/Solicitor
Senior Lawyer
Settlements Supervisor
Solicitor

Medical

Acute Care Paramedic
Allied Health Assistant
Doctor
Doctor (General Practitioner)
Exercise Physiologist and Clinical Educator
General Practitioner
Graduate Paramedic
Intern
Nurse Manager
Optometrist
Registered Nurse
Registered Nurse Perioperative
Registered Psychologist
Respiratory Scientist
Senior Medical Officer/GP
Speech Pathologist
Speech Pathologist

Postgraduate

PhD Candidate
PhD Candidate
PhD Candidate
PhD Candidate
PhD Student
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow
Research Assistant & PhD Candidate

Public Service

A/Chief of Staff
Assistant Director of Housing and Homelessness Policy
Director Human Services
International Policy Adviser
Parliamentary Counsel
Police Officer
Policy Director
Policy Officer
Policy Officer
Principal Policy Officer
Project & Policy Graduate

STEM

Adviser - Geology
Chartering and Scheduling
Digital Content Editor

Digital Content Specialist
Ecologists
eDiscovery Business Architect
Engineering Manager
Food Technologist
Graduate Engineer
Information Manager
Infrastructure Designer and Project Coordinator
Instrumentation and Electrical Engineering Team Lead
Manager - Information Systems
Marine Scientist
Nuclear Medicine Scientist
Process Engineer
Research Officer
Research Officer
Research Officer
Safety Systems Engineer
Senior Hydrologist
Senior Software Engineer
Senior Software Quality Engineer
Senior Systems Programmer
Technical Sales Agronomist

Unemployed

Unemployed
Unemployed
Unemployed

Appendix B - Further Study

Business/Finance

Australian College
Awaiting to confirm Bachelor of Business
Certified Practising Accountant, CPA Australia
Diploma Facilities Management University of New England
Graduate Diploma of Finance
Harvard, Executive Leadership and Australian Institute of Company Directors
Graduate Diploma in Industrial Relations in 1997 and plan to do an MBA soon
Completed my MBA. I also undertake short professional development courses.
Master of Business Administration, Macquarie University (graduated 2008)
Master of Business at QUT starting 2020
Master of Medical Statistics, University of Newcastle
Master of Science in Agriculture by course work through the University of New England
Master in Health Economics
Small Business course at TAFE

Communications/Creative Industries/Humanities

Apprentice Tattooist, Soul House Inn
Bachelor of Creative Writing (Honours) at University of Canberra
Certificate 3 in live events and production - NIDA
Completed a Master of Philosophy, currently undertaking a PhD
Doctor of Philosophy
Honours in Visual Communication Design
Honours in my BA. Starting a Master of Philosophy end of this year/start of next year.
Master of International Music Business, Box Hill Institute
PhD
PhD Australian Catholic University
PhD by research
PhD Fine Arts (performance) at Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. I graduated from the Royal College of Music in London during 2010.
Visual Art at Perth Central

Community/Social Work

Graduate Certificate in Arts Health
Master of Social Work through Monash University
Accepted into a Master of Counselling, starting in 2020
Master of Social Work
Various PhD courses, usually in Sydney
Education
Graduated Bachelor of Arts majoring in Sociology and Mandarin, completed my Bachelor in Sociology Honours and then my Graduate Diploma in Education.
Cert 3 and 4 in Fitness, Grad in RE, Master in Education: Special Education
Completed a second bachelor degree: Bachelor of Education, Primary
Graduate Diploma of Teaching
Master of Educational Studies - University of Newcastle
Master of Library and Information Studies

Legal

Advanced Diploma in Legal Studies, UNE (completed)

Bachelor of Laws

Bachelor of Laws and Master of Business Administration

Completed a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice in 2014 and was admitted as a solicitor of the Northern Territory Supreme Court in 2015.

Grad Certificate (with a view to completing the Masters) in Dispute Resolution through Charles Sturt University)

Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice

Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice

Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (ANU) - completed 2019

Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (completed), Master of Laws (due to complete in Jan 2020)

Graduate Diploma of Legal Studies - Admission as a Solicitor

I completed a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice in 2016 and was admitted to the Supreme Court of WA

Master of Law, The University of Melbourne

Master of Laws, La Trobe University

Medical

Bachelor of Psychological Sciences (On hold)

Fellowship Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Graduate Certificate of Perioperative Nursing

I had the AVCAT scholarship during my Bachelors, and then undertook an Honours and then a Doctor of Philosophy at University of Melbourne. I have also just enrolled in a Doctor of Medicine at Griffith University.

Master of Exercise Medicine (Oncology)

Master of Medical Radiation Nuclear Medicine

Master of Public Health

Master's degree in medical statistics

Occupational Therapy

Public Service

Anticipated: Grad Dip Public Policy / Governance, UQ

Diploma of Government

Intelligence Analysis

Masters of National Security Policy

STEM

Advanced Japanese Language Course (2010), Master of Medical Radiations at Monash University (2011-13), Doctor of Philosophy - Science at University of Melbourne (2019-)

Completed a Bachelor of Science (Honours) at Flinders University in 2014

Honours of Computer Science

Completed a PhD in engineering at the University of Adelaide

Master of Sustainability

PhD - CSU, MBAX, UNSW

PhD by Research - Electrical Engineering (Microwave Communication)

Appendix C - Impact of Graduation on Family and Network

Sense of pride and achievement. Now in a position to financially support family members.

Not sure how to answer this one.

My sister is now studying psychology. My work helped to financially support my family.

I suppose this would have been a fair boost to my parents. Stopped me begging them for money they didn't have. Especially whilst mum was dealing with cancer. They had enough on their plate...

Family sense of accomplishment.

My mother never finished primary school, being from a poor family in Thailand. My dad completed his Engineering Degree in the 70s when tertiary education became FOC, but otherwise would not have been able to afford it. Up until that point, and aside from my dad, I was the only person who got into University.

Financial security increased for my future wife and children.

I know it would have made my Dad proud of me. My whole family knew that my dad would have been proud of me, so when I graduated it made everyone in my family cry and remember my dad and how my experience at the University of Wollongong was only possible because of AVCAT's financial support.

Allowed me to get good employment to fund my own family and mortgage.

I was able to become financially independent much more quickly after graduating, and therefore being able to work in my chosen field and keep progressing.

It gave my parents confidence I would be financially independent.

My dad, who served in Vietnam, is really proud that I was able to go to, and successfully complete my uni degrees.

My niece said I was a role model to her when she this year decided to begin the process of commencing University and I assisted her in receiving support through DVA and I think she may also have received a scholarship with you guys too (I'm not sure).

Provided fantastic career opportunities.

Me completing tertiary education encouraged my brother to enrol in tertiary education course as well, which he has since completed and has now excelled in his field.

My family was proud and felt comfortable that I was moving towards a job and more financial security.

Older siblings went back to do more study.

Being the first one to complete tertiary study, I hope that I have been able to set an example for my Nieces and Nephews. Education was never had an emphasis in my family, it was always about

working, even if the job was crap or the conditions were bad. But I hope I have been able to break that thought process with the younger members of our family and show that higher education is not just for wealthy people and that education is important.

Better able to provide support to my family.

My family were very proud of my efforts. It has encouraged my friends to do the same.

It has put me in a financial position where I can assist my parents if they need it.

Completing my university degree gave my family the satisfaction of knowing I completed the study and knowing it would support me in my future of starting my new career.

I don't regret my studies, it made me a more open-minded person. I am able to reasonably see both sides of a position and it honestly helped to mature myself and I don't think I would be the person I am today without having completed my studies.

Inspired others to study.

It made my parents happy as they didn't have the opportunity to attend university.

My brother finished his degree, and I feel like my sister and I motivated this.

Eldest child in my family, sister and brother were influenced by my actions.

I am the only person in my immediate family to hold a Bachelor's Degree.

My sister was more motivated to complete further education and it has financially assisted my family.

Completing my degree has had a positive impact on my siblings and parent in many ways. It has had a positive emotional impact on my single mother as she takes pride on the things I have been able to achieve since graduating. I also believe that graduating has helped encourage my younger sibling to do his best in order to succeed in his own studies, and his future. I am also able to contribute comfortably in terms of financial aid to both my mother and brothers if the need arises.

My parents are proud of me.

My brothers were proud of me.

I was the first on my father's side of the family to get a tertiary degree and the financial independence I was able to get with a degree/career had a positive impact on my family
It made my family members, especially my kids, believe that they could also complete tertiary studies. Finishing my degree definitely allowed my parents to have some confidence that I would be able to secure a job that would allow me to support myself and ease the burden of them having to look out for me (plus, my mum has bragging rights now).

I believe graduating university provided hope and a glimpse of insight into what both my and my siblings potentials truly were and how graduating with tertiary education could effect our future prospects.

My brother was the first to undertake tertiary studies and we are the only two to have done so, including amongst our cousins.

Seeing that I was able to get through a difficult degree was motivating to others in my family to pursue higher education.

Helped my sister believe that going to university was possible for her also.

Encouraged my cousins to go to uni and showed my family that it's possible to get good professional jobs at the end of uni.

Encouraged family to undertake further study.

Instilled a belief in other members of my family that they could do tertiary education.

First to graduate, my brother has since followed suit working on his final year at UC.

Proud achievement and made me set an example for younger family members.

Obtaining my degree, proved to ME personally, that I was capable of achieving greater 'things'. Other people believed in me, but I had to discover and achieve MY own 'self-worth'.

Through the skills and abilities, I have learnt in my study, I have been able to help support and guide my network through many complex issues relating to diversity and inclusion.

Brother enrolled currently.

Family proud. But no impact.

They were proud.

Whole family is visiting for graduation ceremony and completing my studies has encouraged my sister to go back to university.

My parents are very proud. My dad, who is a veteran, is particularly proud of my achievements given the level of his education, his service, and the financial difficulties we have faced as a family. My sister has also completed her tertiary studies now, and I believe that I have had a positive influence on her to keep her pursuing further education, regardless of age.

It gave my parents peace of mind knowing that I have good career options available to me.

My brother has now completed year 12 and is following my footsteps to university.

Overall positive vibes.

As a role model to my children.

My siblings undertook tertiary education after me.

I have built up a huge network of friends and colleges due to completing my tertiary education. The work I was able to undertake while still studying also greatly impacted my family and wider network through me gaining more experience in my field.

Encouraged my sister to go back to uni.

Improved health and finances.

I was heavily involved in the blindness community at the time. What I learned allowed me not only to provide effective technical support to blind people in the information technology industry, but also to encourage others to step up and attempt further education themselves by acting as a successful role model.

It was motivational, but further assistance to family was not possible.

Children, and knowledge base.

Finishing my degree has been one of the keys to my career success to date - opening opportunities I might not have otherwise had. To this end it has been able to help me financially support my family.

Siblings continued on to complete tertiary education.

Job prospects.

Every sibling has now completed tertiary studies (I have 8 surviving siblings).

Both my parents were very proud.

Family were proud and use it as an example to nieces.

My older brother went onto complete his Masters in teaching as a mature student.

My father was very proud of me and still talks about how happy he is for me.

Yes, my older brother enrolled and completed his law degree.

Gave me the opportunity to assist my brother and start my own family.

Made it easier to get a job.

2 brothers and 1 niece enrolled in uni!

My younger sisters went to university.

My family felt that the scholarship gave us validation - that it recognised the difficulties that my Dad's service had brought to our family.

Able to be a good role model to my younger sister.

Role model to child, she has now graduated from same University with BPharmacy.

Allowed me to earn more than siblings without tertiary education.

My parents were happy I had higher education.

Took the stress from Mum and Dad in a financial sense.

I think it continues to have a positive impact on my children's view of education and the impact it has on finance, jobs, and our role in society to contribute something good.

I was able to get a good job in software development and save money to move out.

Provided financial support to my family and children through my income.

My family would not be the same if I did not study - I met my husband at uni & adopted my daughter while working as an engineer overseas.

Completed Certificate 4 in Tertiary Adult Education at TAFE (Southbank QLD in 2016).

Cannot identify a specific impact, but everyone was certainly proud of my achievements.

Appendix D - Impact of Scholarship on Life of Scholar

Enabled me to complete prolonged studies that I would otherwise have struggled to do due to financial constraints.

Enhanced my gratitude towards my father for the sacrifices he made throughout his life.

The scholarship allowed me to independently work my way through university while allowing more time to work on achieving to a high standard.

It helped me get through the course and onto a better adult life.

It helped me complete my studies.

It helped me to complete my studies at a time when my family was really struggling financially and as mum became disabled and required extensive care.

Allowed me to purchase a new computer. Honestly, I saved most of the money until right before I graduated. That gap between finishing study and starting work was more brutal than any other time. Even with the money I saved I got down to \$200 between me and my fiancé. In short, there were a few issues (dental, car, etc.) that this money made a huge difference with. I have no idea how we would have got through that period without this money now that I think of it.

I am not sure I would have been able to complete my studies or would have taken a lot longer to complete.

It gave me a leg up, that's for sure. It's humbling, and a reminder of where I and my family have come from and the sacrifices others have made so that I can go to school

The Scholarship gave me support when I needed it most. I was thrilled to have been able to focus on my studies, and this helped get the grades I needed to segue straight into paid professional employment upon graduation.

It gave me more independence and financial freedom.

It helped me pay for books, computer software and other items necessary for studies.

Without this assistance I am not sure I would have been able to afford to study at University at all, so in that sense it has made professional life as a lawyer possible through which I can now give back to the community by offering my time. I am also now able to use the bachelor's degrees I have earned to pursue further study in the law; completing a PGDip(Legal Practice) and LLM (due to complete in Jan 2020). It has helped me to work on my relationships with my family as well because having completed a psychology degree I can now understand better the trauma both of my parents have dealt with in their lives; how being a migrant away from your family can impact; the extent that military service affects people; and have developed an appreciation for psychological interventions such as CBT.

Gave me the ability to buy relevant textbooks and took a financial pressure off, especially as a student living out of home with no local family support.

It's made everything possible. I would not be in the position I am today without the emotional and financial support of AVCAT.

Enabled me to study that bit easier and increased my likelihood of completing my bachelor studies. It brings fond memories that I was a part of such a special thing, and without the support from Helen Manning I wouldn't have been able to complete what I have, had extra trips home to see my family, pay for transport, books etc, much of which I would have had to have go without.

The scholarship had a positive impact in a number of ways. Firstly, it took financial pressures off, it gave me confidence and it also made me feel like part of a wider community of people who understood my circumstances to some degree.

I have a successful and fulfilling career. My grades at uni were impacted by the amount of time I spent working. When I received the bursary, I was able to reduce my work hours which saw my grades improve. It also enabled me to participate in the compulsory unpaid student placement which is a requirement of the social work degree.

It gave me peace of mind knowing I could financially support myself. I still worked a part time job, but I always had money for accommodation, textbooks, and other critical study costs.

I don't know if the scholarship was ever actually paid towards my degree. We never received any notification of receiving any payments towards my HECS. So, I don't think the scholarship had any positive effect. The award ceremony at Government House was a great memory for the family.

The financial assistance through the payments was crucial in helping support myself through my undergraduate studies and allowed me the time to study.

Not only did receiving the scholarship boost my confidence, the financial help is what really got me through University. Moving to a different state and not having financial support from my parents meant funds were extremely low. The financial support meant I literally could have food on the table and a roof over my head. Without it, I would not have completed University and I would not be in the job or have the life I do now.

My scholarship gave me a safety net and a support network that I definitely needed after my father passed away in my 2nd year of university.

I received the scholarship during my final year of study (I only became aware of the scholarship in my second last year). I was on exchange in Denmark during the first semester, and the supported provided by AVCAT was critical to enable me to be financially secure while studying abroad and took the stress of finances away such that I could focus on my studies and enjoy the cultural experience. It was also beneficial for my final semester of university, as I was unemployed for a brief period on return to Australia. I also felt an immense sense of pride in being awarded the scholarship (same as my brother who received the scholarship the year prior) and think my late Father (who served in the Air Force) would have been pleased to see AVCAT looking after children of servicemen and women.

It enabled me to complete my studies. I found financial difficulties to be a major issue during my studies and it enabled me to focus more on the task of completing my education instead of working and worrying about finances. I worked a little for board where I lived also but it meant I didn't need to get an additional job.

I felt like I finally 'could'.

With the scholarship I was able to work less and study more and buy textbooks instead of waiting for them to become available in the library. It was also a massive confidence boost and I felt that my pursuit of further education was valued.

Reduced the stress of finances and enabled me to concentrate on my studies. Also made me feel like I deserved to be at uni

It helped me afford to go away on placement, providing critical financial support.

It allowed me to have balance during my studies, to get the best results and job prospects as possible.

The scholarship has had a significant positive impact. I pursued many extra-curricular activities I would not have been able to do for financial reasons. I also worked less and studied more.

The support both mentally and financially has assisted in taking the pressure off financially and providing the peace of mind that the support is there to assist in completing my studies.

It meant the difference between leaving a week early and coming back a week late every time, because I needed to go home and work to afford that last bit of rent and food to last me the semester. Before I got the scholarship I wasn't sure if I was going to afford the outstanding that year and wanted to pack up and go home. I'm so glad I was able to receive support and I'm glad I was able to finish my studies.

I'm not sure I would have a job or permanent accommodation without the scholarship.

It enabled me to purchase textbooks for uni, my first interview suit, and generally took pressure off myself and my parents at the time. It also gave me something to be proud about and a more positive association with being a child of a Vietnam veteran.

Having a scholarship gave me the financial security to be able to afford to do my degree and work extra hard on gaining the marks I wanted.

I struggled in my first year of university, failed a couple of subjects, and subsequently lost the scholarship, which was quite demoralising. I was able to get my studies back on track, picked up another degree and did well enough to be offered a place in the Honours program, and managed to secure a graduate position with my current employer prior to completion. Unfortunately, I was not reinstated as a scholarship recipient after losing it in my first year. The scholarship was a significant factor when I initially received it. I was able to purchase a laptop to take into Uni and use whilst studying.

The timing of the scholarship was impeccable. I was about to go on major practicum to Tasmania and had a number of health issues arise at the time. It alleviated the need to work as hard to provide for myself as my parents were not in a position to support me.

It meant that I could focus on my studies and not have to work as much outside of university. This further helped me develop relationships at university as well as enjoy university life.

The scholarship has ultimately had a positive impact long after I have graduated from my degree. Apart from the financial aid, I was more motivated to try to perform the best as I can during my studies knowing that I was extremely lucky to have received this privilege.

It made me grateful and honoured to have a program that was helping me pursue my studies.

Allowed me to complete my degree with less stress/worry.

The scholarship was extremely helpful during my studies. I was unable to work full time because I wanted to concentrate on my studies, The scholarship relieved the financial burden this created. Without it I probably wouldn't have been able to complete my degree with high grades that made me eligible for direct entry into the PhD program I am now undertaking.

It meant I could focus on my study rather than having to have multiple part time jobs to pay my way, and being able to keep my horses - which was a critical part of my initial course and a huge mental break/confidant etc moving 1000km from home as a 17yr old.

The scholarship allowed me to complete my study with significantly less stress. I was able to move forward into the working world with significantly more confidence, which I believe translated well into the interview process, allowing me to find work that I find both fulfilling and enjoyable.

It greatly helped me complete my degree which has now landed me an amazing job, lifestyle and it has given me the ability to assist others with their financial difficulties.

Gave me confidence and alleviated the financial pressures, but most importantly it really strengthened the bond between my Dad and me. I felt that it made him feel like his service had a very real and direct impact on my future. He definitely stood taller and had a look of pride when I spoke of my scholarship. That was worth more than any amount of money.

The scholarship increased my confidence in achieving my academic aspirations. It gave me the financial flexibility to concentrate on my studies first and foremost.

It took so much financial pressure off myself and my parents as I had to relocate to attend uni. It would have been much more difficult for me to complete my degree as I would have needed to compromise on my studies in order to work more just to get by.

The scholarship meant I had some money to use during unpaid placements when I had no other income

I simply would not have been able to complete my studies without this scholarship.

My financial costs were very serious during uni, this scholarship alleviated some of the intense pressure.

I could not have completed my degree without it. The degree has got me to where I am now, studying for a PhD.

The only HECS debt I have is for my honours year. I was able to live on campus for six months, and I had less to worry about during my three-year degree.

Support - just knowing that I had to work hard to make value of the scholarship you're given. It motivated me to finish and keep going when things were tough.

It enabled me to take on overseas learning opportunities with the university that I would not have had.

I would not have finished, or even started my degree without it. I'm now in my dream job, helping others and paying forward the help I received.

I was able to study a course of interest to me; not just a degree for the sake of getting one. I was able to move to Brisbane to undertake my chosen course. I received financial security which reduced mental, emotional, and physical pressures whilst I adjusted to life in the 'big smoke'. Your scholarship enabled me to 'do my job' of being a fully committed tertiary student. I was able to focus on my subjects and achieve 'distinctions & credits' not just a 'pass the piece of paper'. Because of my excellent results, I was offered acting parts in various amateur performances and this fed my desire for the stage. My dream is to act, and the scholarship provided access to the qualifications to verify that I can be an actress. The scholarship supported my aims and desires, and facilitated my maintenance of strong principles, such as 'hard work pays off'.

The scholarship enabled me to excel in my tertiary studies by lifting some of the anxieties around receiving a stable liveable income.

Made university a possibility for me.

Helped with paying accommodation which was all over Australia.

I could not have completed my degree without it! With my Austudy after rent I had \$55 a fortnight for all expenses. You can imagine what my scholarship money did you me... not only fed me, fuelled my car... I had stable mental health and money to buy food...which previously I didn't, as couldn't afford medications etc.

It has helped me to connect more with my grandfather and eased the burden while studying at university for the first half of my degree.

The scholarship from AVCAT meant that during my final undergraduate year and honours year, I was able to devote 100% of my attention to my studies. This was invaluable, because psychology is competitive, and I needed very high grades to be able to get into honours, and then be accepted into a PhD program. This meant that I was also awarded a postgraduate scholarship in 2015, which is given to high achieving students. The results from my undergraduate and PhD have also helped me to achieve a place in a medicine program at Griffith University. Overall, the support from DVA and AVCAT has enabled me to succeed academically, where without the support I would not have been able to devote as much time to my studies. Coming from a family with no tertiary background, the support I received made something that seemed impossible, possible.

It took the stress of having to work a lot to financially support myself and study at the same time. I was able to purchase textbooks and a new laptop to assist with my courses.

I was able to focus more on studying and being involved in communities and societies within uni. I was able to gain value experience outside my degree which is considered heavily when applying for graduate jobs.

Removed financial stress and provided me with equitable access to required course materials. Made it possible for me to focus on the unpaid internships required of my degree.

Saved my life, helped my study, especially in an area I enjoy.

Alleviated a lot of pressure in some ways.

It has assisted me in reaching my personal and academic goals.

Without the support of AVCAT, I wouldn't have been able to study full-time while living away from home.

The Scholarship provided me with the financial aid I was in desperate need of.

Attending University with this financial support dissolved many worries and concerns over how to pay the living expenses during the time of undertaking my tertiary level education. Having this financial aid reduced the number of hours I needed to work, therefore I could devote more time to my university studies. During two occasions the scholarship payments provided me with the funds to attend the Australian Youth Orchestra's National Music Camps. These opportunities to be involved in what is considered a world class program will have ongoing positive benefits to my career and musical journey.

It helped me financially with rent, groceries, and textbook costs. It also increased my connection and knowledge of my grandpa's service in the war.

It has provided me with support and assistance with managing time and workloads that is irreplaceable.

Gave me confidence and allowed me to purchase resources for study.

My scholarship made it easier for me to obtain high-quality adaptive technology, which was key to my successful completion of my higher education. Without my scholarship, my technology options would have been much more limited, and it would have been more difficult for me to achieve what I have.

It meant that part time work to support my degree was no longer required, which meant the focus was 100% on study. This resulted in a completion with honours.

It allowed me to go to university and hence work in my field.

The scholarship provided me with additional funds to help me get through university, along with assistance in other areas, allowed me to be under less financial pressure during University which is stressful enough without having to figure out how to pay for food/accommodation/bills etc.

Enabled me to complete university and be financially independent until I was able to join the workforce.

Helped me finish University.

The scholarship was critical in allowing me to complete my studies. I was able to be a person for others, to advocate for those whose voices were silenced (homeless, marginalized).

Graduation made possible a professional career with income to provide well for my family and give them a better education and upbringing.

Yes, as it allowed me to be independent and earn a good income.

The scholarship made it possible to largely support myself financially throughout university whilst completing a difficult course. Without the scholarship, I would have had to work more.

I completed my course without living roughly. It helped with my mental health issues. It had a crucial impact on my very survival.

It provided me financial stability which made a huge difference in my ability to complete my studies.

Major impact, I was in a very poor financial position at the time and I was studying an expensive degree.

It gave me more confidence in myself and that I can achieve anything I set my mind to, it also helped with my HECS debt.

It provided a means of staying in the city (2 hours from home) so I could complete my study. Without the scholarship, it would not have been possible.

It gave me the confidence and financial means to complete my studies. My father who served in Vietnam has also had some pretty serious health issues (cardiac/prostate cancer) during my time at university and the scholarship took some financial pressure away from me and so I was able to help support him during this period.

Allowed me to complete my studies and move forward with my career and family.

It allowed me to fund items for study outside of items covered by HECS such as text books and materials and successfully complete the course.

It helped me financially, especially with things like rent, textbooks etc.

While it was a long time ago now (>10 years), I do remember that the AVCAT scholarship absolutely helped out while I was an undergraduate, particularly with many costs associated university education (e.g. student fees, textbooks and stationery) and cost-of-living expenses (e.g. transport). Had I not received the scholarship I doubt I would have done as well as I did.

Relieved financial stress.

Major financial assistance during my study. My degree has provided me with a successful and satisfying career.

Earning the scholarship gave me confidence that I still draw on. It's something that cannot be taken away.

Gave me confidence that I was worthy of studying and having a career. Supported me financially and allowed me to focus on my studies.

It has been critical in my success, as it provided resources I didn't have otherwise to complete my study.

It slightly alleviated the intensity of my financial struggles at the time.

It has had a significant impact on my life and the opportunity I have had.

Allowed me to get through university with transport.

At the time, it built confidence especially with the development of a professional network which was paramount to future employment opportunities. The financial assistance was extremely important in continuing to graduate.

I didn't have to worry quite so much about my finances while studying. I didn't need to get a loan or have my parent pay for my textbooks.

Helped with funding of my first degree.

University was a time of change for me, a lot of things happened. I was a new father, moved out of home, had to learn to drive, get my first car, get my first computer, and had to study at university while looking for work (and at times working up to 3 casual jobs at once).

The scholarship not only helped financially, it made a big difference in my drive to do well and finish my studies, which consequently lead to work before I graduated and the lifelong benefit that flows on from that.

It was crucial in helping me financially to live away from home during my tertiary studies. My home situation was causing me stress as my father suffered major depression and PTSD from his service in Vietnam and my parents' marriage was constantly suffering and tenuous because of this. Watching my father suffer and witnessing the effect this had on my parents relationship was very difficult at the time and being apart from this situation helped me focus on the study I was required to do and helped me keep good mental health during this time.

I would not have been able to undertake tertiary education which has given me significant job opportunities and a higher standard of living.

Without the scholarship I would had to work many more hours while studying. This would have reduced time and energy available for study likely reducing my scores, and extracurricular activities that landed me a highly competitive job straight out of uni.

Enabled me to leave university with little to no debt.

It helped my confidence a lot and also helped my relationship with my parents which was a bit precarious at the time.

Whilst I did not complete my studies, the scholarship enabled me to study and form my future pathway. Financial stresses associated with moving out of home to study were reduced though this assistance.

It helped to reinforce my sense of self and purpose. I was very grateful.

My scholarship made the first few years of my degree significantly easier. I was required to work less, and it helped me pay for things like textbooks and technology so get through my degree. It eased the burden on my mother, and it was nice to know that there was a team of people at AVCAT who recognised the sacrifices my family had made for our country and were supporting me. Towards the end of my scholarship I gained my current position, and now I work a 30 hour week while also studying full-time, and I think AVCAT really helped me focus on building the foundation of my degree in the first few years so I can do what I am doing now.

Been an open pathway into university, gave me confidence and support to enhance and improve my ability to study.

It made me gain confidence in my writing abilities as I was recognised for the essay

I submitted my application. It made my father proud and considering his background in the Vietnam War enabled this for me, that meant the most.

The Long Tan Bursary allowed me to fully participate in university life instead of just merely scraping through or having to work a large number of hours alongside university. Because of AVCAT I had the means to participate in law society programs, varsity sport and international affairs society activities. The bursary took significant financial pressure off me in first year especially, allowing me to more easily excel at my studies.

Appendix E - Suggestions for Improvement

Keep up the great work!

I don't know.

Create a network of alumni to support current students and further the impact for recipients.

Nothing. Honestly, the biggest issues most students are going to have are money related. From what I hear the only group that needs to do more is the people responsible for freezing youth allowance and rent assistance. Also Vet Affairs never cut my payments randomly like Centrelink did with my friends at uni. In short, I've had nothing but good interactions with Vet Affairs. Keep doing what you're doing and don't ever become like Centrelink. Poor bastards seem like they've had their budgets cut to the extent they can barely function anymore...

I know that was a bit of an unrelated rant, however they're the benchmark Vet Affairs is competing against.

No suggestions, very positive experience.

One of my previous answers was about the support services which came along with the scholarship. I don't recall anyone getting in touch with me to see how it was going. I recall receiving the scholarship, the funds and that was the end of it. If there were ancillary services to help along the way, I unfortunately missed that.

I have no suggestions I think it was great the way it was.

Honestly, I can't. The scholarship program was a pinnacle part of my life and I cannot think of any ways to make it better. Thank you for everything.

Perhaps through this work of contacting alumni a group could be formed of alumni who may be happy to engage in networking/mentoring (formal or informal) opportunities for current students?

None.

I think AVCAT should consider how to better link up with recipients during their study. For example, as an alumni I would be happy to be in touch with current students with similar interests and backgrounds.

A support network for the recipients would be great. A way to support each other!

Mentor program?

I think your program is wonderful and I am so pleased you have formed this alumni group. I was always especially impressed when we had personal visits. I was in Wagga which was a way away and there was never an issue with a visit. you were instrumental in my successful studies and I will be forever grateful for your support. Even when the Agent Orange fund ran out, you worked really hard to place me with another scholarship. Thank you.

It was quite a while ago - I am not sure I could really remember any specifics? I can say as I had chosen a visual arts field - there was definitely a lack of resources across the board, not just from AVCAT on job prospects. This is partially because jobs in the arts ARE incredibly diverse. I am a 'Visual Artist' and I work as a visual artist but I also work several other roles in the creative arts. Visual arts degrees generally are not do the degree get the qualification and get that one specific job type of thing.

Perhaps have more networking opportunities and someone designated to supporting students and touching base with them regularly.

Nothing - keep it up!

Everyone was so accommodating and I'm so grateful for everyone who helped me along the way.

I'm not sure, website development may help, it was a while ago now

I would have benefited from perhaps 'pausing' the scholarship funding rather than discontinuing me as a recipient after not going well in my first year. I was the only student in my year at my school to attend Adelaide University and struggled to adjust to Uni life without a familiar network. The burden on my family would've been lesser if I were able to resume financial support when my success rate picked up, which it certainly did.

Only to encourage you to continue to gather together for an awards ceremony and with the Minister of Defence. I felt so proud and happy, as did my father, to attend and see that his time in service had provided assistance beyond his time in active duty. It was a relief to discover this scholarship existed; a means to help me in my studies when he was struggling to find work following recurrent redundancies.

I loved everything about the program and cannot immediately think of anything I can suggest for improvement.

Keep up the good work.

I could only recommend potentially providing for checks/insight into how life is not just at university but how it is at home and how the general wellbeing of your home life is (in particular relation to looking after/assisting family members/veterans).

Remembering that some of us have not had the opportunity to do tertiary study until in our 40's and that it is no less valuable than the studies of a young adult. As mature students we battle much discrimination yet have our life experiences to bring to the table, making our studies towards our future career full of as much, if not more, value to society.

I didn't know professional assistance was available through AVCAT. It would be good if this service were better advertised to scholars.

More check in with the recipient, so we know and feel the support that is more than monetary.

I don't remember anything that needed updating.

All I can say is 'thank you' for the support I had during my university studies.

One of your questions referred to 'professional support' that AVCAT provided. Perhaps this came after I was a recipient of the scholarship. Nonetheless, I felt quite disconnected from AVCAT as an organisation. I would write letters letting people know how I was going (as this was encouraged by the organisation), but ultimately it felt quite impersonal and solely focus on financial aid. I thought perhaps AVCAT would have maintained an interest in how I progressed beyond the scholarship timeframe, yet this wasn't the case. Admittedly, this was quite disappointing, especially when so many of us excel in part due to the support we have received. I have never received any sort of follow-up (apart from this survey which I only found accidentally through Facebook). For example, I never met anyone face-to-face again since the day I received the award. I understand resources and funding can make this difficult, especially given the number of people AVCAT has helped over the years. However, I think maintaining an interest in the recipient's life beyond the scholarship's time frame is mutually beneficial as it demonstrates a commitment beyond three-year financial support. In turn, AVCAT 'alumni' can feel proud to advocate and represent the organisation and perhaps become a donor themselves if they are in the position to be so. Nonetheless, thank you for the financial support you provided when I was an undergraduate. It was an important contributor to my many academic successes and enabled me to orient my attention towards my father in times of need.

The only thing that was annoying was filling out those forms every single year with the same information. It was so time consuming and expensive to get the passport pictures. Maybe only fill in the form if something has changed.

First, it would have been easier to have had the money go into my pre-existing Commonwealth bank account and not have had to set up a Westpac account. I had difficulty closing it too. Second, in writing the compulsory letters to our donor (National RSL), I was hoping for a response, but nothing came.

I really appreciated that AVCAT was available for three years but since my degree was five years long it would have been nice if I could have had that help the whole way through. Meet-ups organised for AVCAT award winners current and past to network and meet up to share experiences with people experiencing similar situations.

There is no area I can think of that requires any form of improvement. The program has gone above and beyond meeting the needs of students through their support -financially and otherwise. The team is so kind and considerate, these extraordinary people truly made me feel like part of the AVCAT and the Dee Why RSL family and I will be forever grateful.

Perhaps not require students have a Westpac account to access scholarship funds. It was a real difficulty for me to set up and close it.

Financial education.

My younger sister could not get a scholarship as it was only one allowed per family and had to stay at home and study at the local campus, not her first choice of course.

It's been over 20 years since I received the Scholarship, and I haven't kept up with any changes so I'm probably not the best person to ask sorry.

Nil

Introducing a mentorship program- formal or informal with alumni for current recipients.

I had no problems at all with my experience with AVCAT.

Continuing to stay in touch with recipients – I'd always be happy to help out with any requests, support I can offer AVCAT.

Doing a great job, thank you for support during my undergraduate studies.

I found the support was predominantly monetary.

More advertising so students know about the availability of the scholarships.

Increase awareness of the mental and emotional support services available.

This alumni idea is great it would be good to hear from others.

Some counselling services may be helpful for children and grandchildren of Veterans to help them understand the impact that service may have had on their parent and how this may change their health and their ability to act as a stable influence and guardian. Also, some mentorship in the field of study that the student is involved with may help provide some guidance in their chosen field and encourage good connection to important positive influences in their chosen career.

I did not realise what the professional development was as part of the scholarship. I did benefit from giving a speech at the awards ceremony the year after I received the bursary which was a great experience.

Continued support of veterans' children, for they are the true legacy of those left everything else behind on the battlefield.

My only suggestion is a little more leniency with regard to the submitting of documents because most students collapse in exhaustion at the end of the semester, so submitting the paperwork can take longer than anticipated. Other than that, a little more encouragement and check ins would be nice to build a community of AVCAT scholars (like you are now doing on LinkedIn).

Open to older ages and give the opportunity to gain more assistance in the future after 3/4 year if more financial assistance is urgently required to continue through studies into completing university

None

I would have liked more check ins from the AVCAT staff to make the bursary feel more personal. I think that it was also unclear to me what 'satisfactory academic progress' that I had to prove each semester was, so sometimes I was afraid I wasn't doing well enough or would somehow not meet this threshold and have my financial lifeline taken away.