

Thursday, 2 October 2008

## **RECORD ENTRIES FOR VICTORIAN VETERANS' COMPETITION**

More than 700 entries were received in the 46<sup>th</sup> annual Victorian veterans' Story Writing and Art Competition, up from less than 600 in 2007, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin said today.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibition of the works, Mr Griffin encouraged Victorians to visit the exhibition, which is an important part of Victoria's ex-service community activities.

"The competition provides veterans with the opportunity to express their thoughts and experiences and get together with mates to research or share wartime stories.

"As we are increasingly focused on effective rehabilitation of ex-service people and veterans, creative outlets like this are a great way for veterans to express their experiences.

"I hope many people take the opportunity to view the veterans' work," Mr Griffin said.

2008 entries covered a variety of subjects using mediums such as Chinese brush works, oil and acrylics, watercolour and pastel. There were also various craft items including woodwork and ceramics, needlework and photography.

The competition began in 1962 as therapy for returned soldiers at the Heidelberg Repatriation General Hospital and has since grown to include poetry, art, craft and photography.

47 entries were received in a special writing category themed 'The War to end all Wars' to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the First World War.

The Government contributes more than \$50,000 to support the competition, a joint initiative of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Victorian ex-service organisations and the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

The exhibition at the Red Cross Centre, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, Waterdale Road, Heidelberg West, is open to the public from 10am to 3pm until 12 October. Entry is free.