Veterans ashes will be interred in a vault in perpetuity in the memorial wall at Springvale Botanical Cemetery.

Honouring our soldiers

PRESERVATION OF ASHES 'FITTING TRIBUTE' TO WAR HEROES

Melissa Townsend

SURROUNDED by the picturesque gardens of the Springvale Botanical Cemetery, the names of 32 returned service personnel are inscribed on a memorial wall honouring their courage and sacrifice.

In a specially-constructed underground vault, their cremated remains will rest forever. Last November, the cemetery unveiled the new memorial for servicemen and women whose ashes had been interred at Springvale for a limited tenure of 25 years.

Previously, if families elected not to renew fixed term memorials, their remains would be scattered.

But a proposal by former Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust member John Saddington culminated in SMCT making provision for veterans from all wars be transferred into perpetuity.

And now, with laws recently passed in State Parliament, veterans' ashes will be forever protected in Victorian cemeteries.

"This is a fitting tribute, in a fitting location: the world-class garden surrounds of the Springvale Botanical Cemetery," SMCT chief executive officer Jane Grover said.

"The memorial is SMCT's gift to the Victorian community, a gift that will recognise our returned servicemen and women for their courage, sacrifice and honour."

Dandenong RSL president and Vietnam veteran John Wells (pictured right) welcomed the legislative changes and thanked SMCT.

"I think it's an important mark of respect and I'm extremely pleased that it's happened," he said.

"I'd like to compliment (SMCT) and the State Government on their initiative."