

RESPECTING, SUPPORTING AND REMEMBERING OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

REVEILLE

VOL 99, MARCH 2022



**RESULTS
FROM OUR
VETERAN
RESEARCH**

**UNDER
THE HOOD:
MRH90
TAIPAN**



HOMETO THE FAMILY

Veterans' families share their experiences
of deployment, transition & more

THE PRICE OF LIBERTY



IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE

RSL
NSW

Fund the future

Commemoration. Mateship. Advocacy.

As vital now as they were in 1916.

As important now as they will be in 2036.



The future of RSL NSW is not assured. Mobilising the combined resources of sub-Branches is critical to supporting veterans and their families, and ensuring the RSL brand is recognised and respected by the whole community, so the community knows who we are, what we stand for and what we do.

That's why we have launched the RSL NSW Strategic Plan which includes a new funding model for the future. Colloquially called the 'Pooled' funding model, it has two parts: the Aggregated Investment Management Service and the Veteran Support Fund.



“My Future Fund experience showed me the value of alignment of purpose with the pattern of investing and spending to achieve an organisation’s objective.”

David Murray AO, is the Inaugural Chair of the Australian Government Future Fund Board of Guardians.

David acted in an advisory capacity to the selection process of the competitive market tender. He provided insight into the assessment of risk, governance, and other qualitative factors on the selection of the preferred investment manager for RSL NSW and its sub-Branches.

Invest in the future of the League in NSW.

Please contact Patrick Regan at Morgan Stanley on **(02) 9775 2902**

Scan the QR code to read about the funding model on the RSL NSW website.



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**RAY JAMES OAM
PRESIDENT,
RSL NSW**

"Our research has revealed what they are looking for from the RSL ... I encourage you to think about how your local sub-Branch can meet their needs."

The fundamental objective of the RSL is to promote the interests and welfare of serving and ex-serving men and women of the Australian Defence Force and their families. We have work to do to ensure that our sub-Branches and services are accessible, and that we're visible in our communities.

As a member-based organisation that prides itself on mateship and camaraderie, I hope that every member contemplates how they can support their fellow veterans so that they don't slip through the cracks in challenging periods.

With the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide once again in hearings, every member should take this opportunity to consider whether they, their sub-Branch and the League have done enough to help current and ex-service people. My challenge to all members this year is to do more for current serving

members of the ADF, veterans and their families. Our research has revealed what they are looking for from the RSL (see page 10) and I encourage you to think about how your local sub-Branch can meet their needs. Ask your sub-Branch Executive about how they plan to engage with the wider veteran community this year.

We have entered another year of ongoing challenges of COVID-19, and your Board will make challenging decisions about RSL NSW events, including the AGM and Congress, to help protect the health and safety of members and their communities.

Considering the virtual meeting platforms available, outdated technology should not be a barrier to keeping state-wide communication channels open. I encourage sub-Branch Executives whose sub-Branches don't have funds for a new computer to apply to the RSL NSW Support and Assistance Fund for technology support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



JON BLACK
CEO, RSL NSW

If the League doesn't work together to make the proposed changes in the Strategic Plan 2021-26, we won't have a member-based RSL in just over a decade. Strategic Plan initiatives, such as free membership and online applications, are working – younger veterans are joining.

RSL support services provided by our partner charity RSL LifeCare and enabled by sub-Branch donations are also highly valued, delivering pension claims and advocacy, financial and targeted wellbeing support, employment and housing assistance, equine-based wellbeing programs, and more, accessible by all sub-Branch members across the state.

The benefits of the Veteran Wellbeing Centre (VWC) strategy are starting to emerge as the Nowra and Wagga Wagga centres have now been established. Under the Strategic Plan's operating model, every sub-Branch is a hub connecting veterans to the support services they need and

building RSL awareness across many communities.

The sub-Branch is the foundation of the RSL and delivers what we stand for, but we need to ensure the integrity of our plan to make services and support accessible.

I have observed sub-Branches seek veteran centres outside the RSL model that is supported by the Federal Government. On our behalf, VWCs are owned and operated by RSL LifeCare, and operate a collaborative model inclusive of other service providers. This enables us to deliver sustainable centres with full-time professional staff, complemented by the backbone of sub-Branch volunteers.

With the support of several districts, we are currently lobbying the Federal Government for more VWCs in priority locations across NSW.



**THE RETURNED AND SERVICES
LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
(NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH)**

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SYDNEY CBD ANZAC DAY MARCH

The Sydney ANZAC Day March honours those who served in the defence of Australia or its interests. Here's a quick guide to the day.



Who can march

Anyone who has served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is eligible to participate in the March. Veterans' descendants are invited to march with a Unit formation as carers (maximum of one carer per marching veteran), banner parties or flag carriers.

All other descendants are invited to march within the descendants contingent. One descendant of a deceased veteran may honour their relative's service in the March and may wear his/her medals on their right breast.

The March is not a parade - no vehicle, animal (except registered service animals), weaponry, memorabilia (including historic uniforms) or photographs may be included.



Formation

Veterans should assemble with one of the units of which they were or are a member. The choice of where to march is a personal one, however those who served together should march together as an act of remembrance and mateship.

Formations of more than eight should march as close to eight abreast as practicable. Units should form up as follows:

1. Leader
2. Banner party
3. Veterans
4. Carers

The March is three hours long. Veterans who may not cover the whole distance on foot are encouraged to position themselves at the side of their formation so they can fall out independently and proceed to an exit point.



Transport

Veterans are entitled to free public transport on ANZAC Day.

NSW Taxi Council has generously offered to place vehicles and drivers at RSL NSW's disposal for the transport of blind or disabled ex-servicemen and women through the March.

For bookings, please contact the NSW Taxi Council on 02 8339 4644 directly before 9 April.



Watch from home

The March will be televised on ABC TV and can be streamed on iView after the event.

On the day



4:15AM

Dawn Service

at the Cenotaph, Martin Place
anzacdaydawnservice.org.au

9:00AM

Sydney CBD March Commences

12:30PM

Commemoration Service

at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park

5:00PM

Sunset Service Ceremony

at the Cenotaph, Martin Place



AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Congratulations to the following RSL NSW members who were recognised in the 2022 Australia Day Honours with a Medal (OAM) in the General Division, for their service and support for veterans and their families.

Frederick

Francis Denny

Picton Thirlmere Bargo
RSL sub-Branch

Brian Allan Wheeler

Batemans Bay RSL
sub-Branch

Mervyn Stuart Whiting

Forestville RSL
sub-Branch

Edward Anthony Helm

Queanbeyan RSL
sub-Branch

Robert Michael Freshfield

Merrylands RSL
sub-Branch

Edwin Robert Hill

Taree RSL sub-Branch

Major Kenneth John

McKay RFD (Retd)

City of Penrith RSL
sub-Branch

Robert Paul McFarlane

Grafton RSL
sub-Branch

Raymond John Pearson

Huskisson RSL
sub-Branch

Terence Michael O'Grady

Woolgoolga RSL
sub-Branch

Ann Elizabeth Piro

Woonona Bulli RSL
sub-Branch

John Lochwood Kent

Nambucca Heads
sub-Branch

Peter Piro

Woonona Bulli RSL
sub-Branch

Mr Wayne Leslie Maso

Stuarts Point
RSL sub-Branch



Order of March

1. Navy / Army / Air Force
2. Commonwealth Troops
3. Civilians in support of Australian Troops
4. Descendants of Australian Veterans
5. Allies

The Order of March cannot be changed without the approval of ANZAC House.

To find out more and download or request printed copies of route maps and other resources, visit the RSL NSW website or contact ANZAC House.



1300 679 775



[rslnsw.org.au/
commemoration/
anzac-day-2022](https://rslnsw.org.au/commemoration/anzac-day-2022)



RSL NSW also wishes to congratulate OAM recipient **Alice Guay Kang**, Director of Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, for service to veterans and to community health.

SPORT & SUPPORT

RSL NSW sports and recreation pilot program launched.

RSL NSW is currently piloting a sports and recreation program on the lower north coast and in eastern Sydney, to support veteran wellbeing and community connection with mateship, recreation and healthy competition.

The program aligns with what veterans and their families tell us they want from the state's leading ex-service organisation (see page 10), and is a key component of the Strategic Plan 2021-2026. It supports our goal to grow membership, while creating community for veterans and their families.

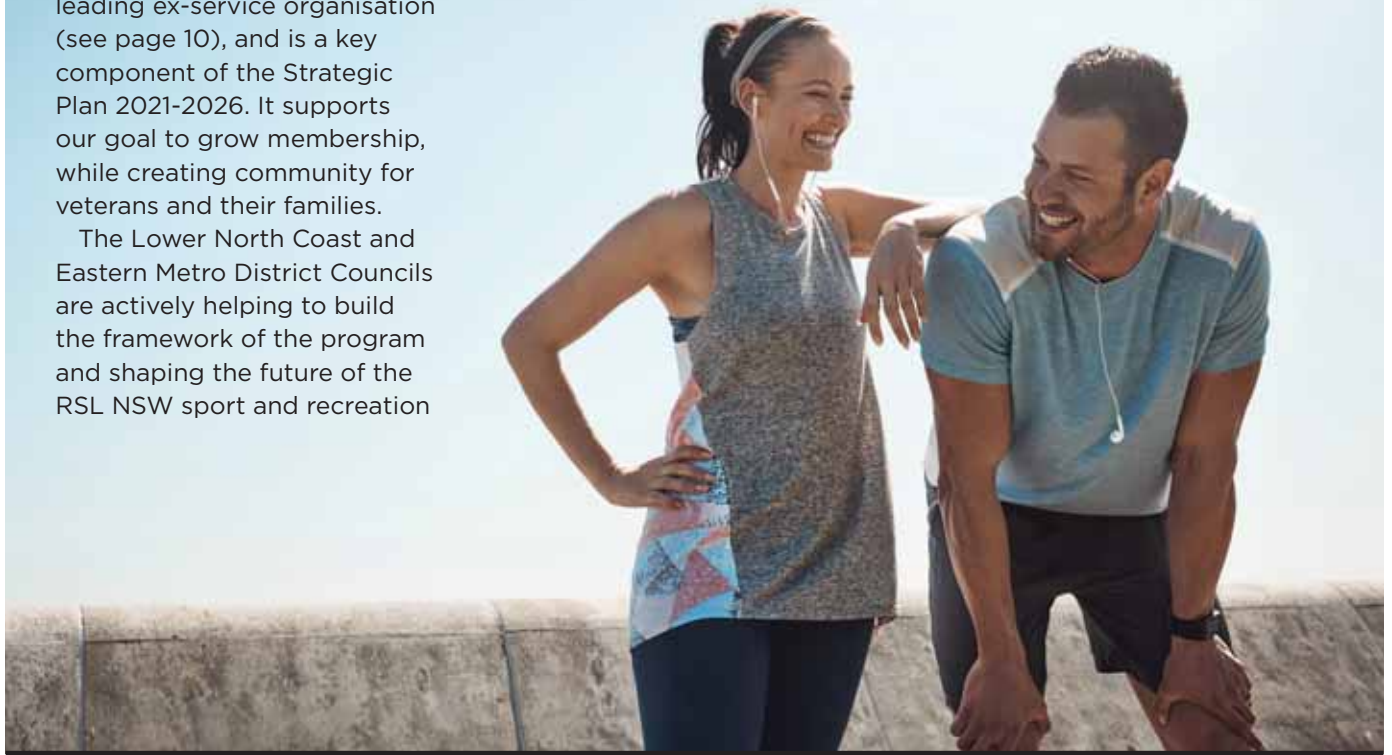
The Lower North Coast and Eastern Metro District Councils are actively helping to build the framework of the program and shaping the future of the RSL NSW sport and recreation

activities state-wide. Lessons and insights gained from this pilot will shape future sport and recreation activities between sub-Branches.

The program is a pivotal step in supporting physical and mental health in our community, as well as developing important social connections.



If you are interested in being a part of this program and shaping the future of RSL NSW sport and recreation, email Jen Reynolds, Sports and Recreation Project Manager at jreynolds@rslnsw.org.au



UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

RSL sub-Branches and ANZAC House contact members with relevant news and community announcements. To make sure your details are up-to-date and manage your communication preferences, please ask your sub-Branch Secretary to log into the RSL NSW sub-Branch portal, or contact RSL NSW member support.



 support@rslnsw.org.au

 1300 679 775

RSL NSW CONGRESS & AGM

RSL NSW's online AGM and State Congress were held at the end of 2021, with all sub-Branches and Districts represented in registrations and voting.

Delegates heard from distinguished speakers including:

- Governor and RSL NSW Patron Her Excellency the Honourable **Margaret Beazley AC QC**
- Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans The Honourable **Natalie Ward MLC**
- Defence Force Chief General **Angus Campbell AO DSC**
- RSL Australia President **Greg Melick AO SC**
- DVA Secretary **Liz Cosson AM CSC**

HONOURED

The Honorable Margaret Beazley presented four members with the highest honour that can be bestowed on a member by the League - the Meritorious Service Medal:

- **Edmund (Ted) Smith**, Caringbah RSL sub-Branch
- **Gary Tompkins**, Belfield RSL sub-Branch
- **Paul Bryant**, City of Fairfield RSL sub-Branch
- **Colin Wilson**, Windsor and District RSL sub-Branch

+ FIND OUT MORE



READ reporting from Congress, including sub-Branch Q&A



WATCH RSL NSW President Ray James OAM deliver the President's Report



VIEW the recordings of proceedings and outcomes from 2021 State Congress and AGM



L-R: Ray James, Andrew Gee, Jon Black and Nicki Young

VETERAN WELLBEING CENTRES

RSL NSW is calling on the Commonwealth Government to expand the roll out of Veteran Wellbeing Centres (VWCs) to key locations across NSW based on demand. RSL NSW President Ray James, CEO Jon Black and RSL LifeCare EGM Veteran Services Nicki Young recently met with Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Andrew Gee to discuss the care model in practice at the Nowra VWC, and how the RSL NSW hub and spoke model will make this care accessible to the large, regionally dispersed veteran community across the state.



Scan the QR code to find out more about how the RSL NSW hub and spoke model will make care accessible across the state.

MEET THE VETERANS



Currently, the majority of RSL NSW members are over the age of 70 years. While online membership, the removal of membership fees, and other strategic initiatives have started to boost the ranks of younger members and tip those scales, we all have work to do to ensure the future of the RSL in the state.

To inform outreach to all veterans at a state level, and to provide insights that will help current sub-Branch members do the same in their local areas, RSL NSW has recently undertaken rigorous and in-depth research into their needs and preferences.

Here's a snapshot of the findings.



The process

The research was completed in three phases:



1 SHORT SURVEY

700 respondents

Set the agenda



2 ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Deep understanding

Veterans and partners



3

FULL-LENGTH SURVEY

Provided empirical data

886 respondents

Scaled insights

UNDER 50s INSIGHTS

24%

of veterans under 50 are optimistic about the future of RSL NSW.

17%

of veterans under 50 say that sub-Branches are welcoming to younger veterans.



Events and activities

We asked respondents what would motivate them to attend an RSL event for veterans. Those under 50 want:



59%

Family-friendly



55%

Good live entertainment



50%

Outdoors



49%

Moderate physical element
(such as lawn bowls)



46%

Alcohol



34%

An inspiring speaker



33%

Game or challenge



31%

Demanding physical element
(such as football)



"To be relevant to younger veterans, RSL NSW – like the Australian War Memorial – will need to create room for the new generation of soldiers and their stories."

1 in 3

veterans under 50 do not know there is a difference between RSL Clubs and the network of sub-Branches that make up the not-for-profit RSL NSW.

35%

of current members under 50 want to play a key role within their sub-Branch. Among members over the age of 50, 19% want to lead.

59%

use, need or are likely to need **mental health assistance**

18%

are currently accessing mental health support

11%

self-identify as needing mental health support now

32%

use, need or are likely to need **education scholarships**

Among veterans under 50 this rises to

47%

"I wish I'd learned a trade to fall back on."

Research participant

71%

use, need or are likely to need help with **DVA claims and appeals**

18%

currently need this help and are not getting it

16%

use, need or are likely to need **short-term financial assistance**

81%

of veterans under 50 would like to hear more about services and support available to them

Support services

Veterans and current serving ADF personnel identified widespread need for DVA claim and mental health support. Less widespread needs for financial, housing and employment assistance are just as urgent.

RSL NSW, RSL LifeCare and RSL sub-Branches connect veterans and their families with these services.

17%

use, need or are likely to need **housing assistance**

Among single veterans this increases to

31%

Among Navy veterans it's

28%

26%

use, need or are likely to need **employment assistance**

"There is a gap for the wives and partners of transitioning ADF. We are no longer part of the club with our husbands away, but we also aren't war widows."

Research participant

Value traditional commemorations and memorials.



1

Hate asking for help: "I hid a lot of injuries to not let my mates down."



2

Want to help and be of service: 35% want to lead in their sub-Branch.



3

Are action-oriented, turning ideas into outcomes rather than debating processes.



4

Value face-to-face contact.



5

Younger veterans: top 10 insights

6



Are open-minded, seeking out new developments in science and innovation.

7



Seek people who share their experiences: "I feel uncomfortable at mates' houses."

8



Can all benefit from involvement in the RSL — whether that's receiving or giving support.

9



May be unfamiliar with civilian employment, housing and medical systems.

10



Seek evidence of an organisation's impact rather than blindly supporting.



Know a veteran who who should be part of our community? There should be no barrier to veterans accessing services and support from Australia's leading not-for-profit ex-service organisation. That's why joining RSL NSW is now easy, online and free.



rslnsw.org.au/get-involved/become-a-member

TOGETHER WE STAND



When Bree Till's husband was killed in Afghanistan, Barry Grant, President of the Woronora River RSL sub-Branch, reached out. Years later, they continue to catch up and serve the Woronora veteran community.

As told to Tess Durack





Barry Grant OAM

Barry Grant has been President of the Woronora River sub-Branch since 2011 and was State President of the Australian Commando Association for 18 years. He was awarded an OAM in 2020 for services to veterans and their families.

When Brett Till, an explosive ordnance disposal technician with the Incident Response Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan in March 2009, I knew Bree lived in Woronora but didn't know her personally. So I got in touch with her to see if there was anything we could do. I didn't want to be too imposing, but I wanted her to know our members were there for her.

She eventually became an affiliate member of the sub-Branch and we became friends. Bree works with Open Arms and runs art therapy sessions from the sub-Branch. Everyone who knows her in the sub-Branch and the community really admires her.

With two stepchildren at home already, Bree was also pregnant when her husband was killed. It was a hell of a situation. But she's done a remarkable job of bringing

them up just the way we'd all like to bring up our kids. Her stepson has turned into a real gentleman, her stepdaughter is beautifully presented, and her son is the kind of young man her husband would be extremely proud of. Bree has another young child now too.

Bree and the kids have appeared and spoken on a few occasions at ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, and it's not an easy topic for her to tackle. But all credit to her — she has done so well.

Around 1,500 people attend our local ANZAC Day service — rain, hail or shine — but when Bree spoke at the service last year, you could have heard a bloody pin drop. Her words came right from the heart.

I gave her a hug when she'd finished.

"That must have been bloody hard, darlin'," I said. "I was waiting for the tears."

"I nearly broke down," she said. And the applause — well, it had to be heard to be believed that morning.

Bree has a lot on her plate, but she copes with all of it. She can't always make it to the sub-Branch meetings, but she gives me a call and lets me know, and sometimes she'll pop by with some beers and we'll have a yarn at the monument.

I don't want to smother her, and she doesn't want to pour all her problems out to me. But she knows I'm here whenever she needs help, just a phone call away. Sometimes it might just be with something like finding help to fix a leaky roof. And the community likes to know that the sub-Branch is connecting with the loved one of a member who served. She has served too — she lost her husband to the cause.

I like to keep things low key, not make a song and dance. But I've got a lot of time for Bree. She's a wonderful lady. And a very strong lady.

"When Bree spoke at the service last year, you could have heard a bloody pin drop. Her words came right from the heart."

— Barry Grant



Bree Till

Bree Till is a Community and Peer Advisor for Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling Service. Previously a school teacher, Bree retrained in art therapy, counselling and psychotherapy, and is currently researching the benefits that art therapy can bring to the broader veteran community.

Barry invited me to the second Remembrance Day service after my husband's death. Barry made it clear that Brett — I call him JT — mattered, that his death wasn't old news after that initial wave of recognition. He was respectful, reassuring and welcoming. I remember his blazer, the green beret, the shine on his shoes and his cheeky giggles — calming and grounding.

If I call, Barry will answer. I'm a fan of reciprocal relationships, so if I need something, I know I can call, and vice versa, bearing in mind we both have some life things that are happening and don't set expectations beyond what would be appropriate or sustainable.

I don't get to knock off from parenting very often, so I miss a lot of the sub-Branch meetings. I'm always on the lookout for Barry's car so I can give him a hello as we drive

past. A lot of our chats have been in the carpark with the kids strapped in the car seat.

Barry is across all the welfare needs of the sub-Branch members and knows us all beyond face value. He represents that 'family' ethos that gets spoken about a lot but is often watered down with formalities or structures. And families are reciprocal, so I'll bring my experiences and support where I can, without going beyond my capacity. If everyone does that, then the 'family' can sustain.

I like to grow opportunities within the sub-Branch rather than depend on it. As much as I've been encouraged to sing out if I need anything, that's not something I'm well versed in. But I do gain a sense of fulfillment

through contribution and service, so that works well with the art-making courses I run at the club. In those sessions, we can connect through our shared experiences and identify as more than widows or veterans, as respectful as I am of those components of our sense of self.

I stumble awkwardly through public speaking! So it matters a lot that Barry has my back when I'm speaking at an event. He isn't judgemental, and his agenda is very compatible with mine, so I feel at ease knowing I can speak freely and it will be received as it is intended.

Our Woronora services are beautiful. Our community spills onto the streets and the park, and I catch eyes with childhood friends, students I've taught, JT's peers and my children's friends — it really is an intersection of all aspects of my life woven together. Service can't be separated from community, nor can it be extracted from my life, it's part of it.

Barry is beautiful. His humility, his dedication and his leadership have shaped our veteran community within our broader community by focusing on what really matters to us all: respect, dignity, humour, compassion, genuine regard, and space to grow and flourish. 🌻

"He represents that 'family' ethos that gets spoken about a lot but is often watered down by formalities or structures."

— Bree Till

Veteran Wellbeing Centres



We're for veterans

More than 1200 veterans and serving personnel have died by suicide over the past 20 years – veterans need our help, and they need it now.*

RSL NSW is seeking Federal Government support for the establishment of permanent Veteran Wellbeing Centres in key areas to connect with a spoke network of 340 RSL sub-Branches.

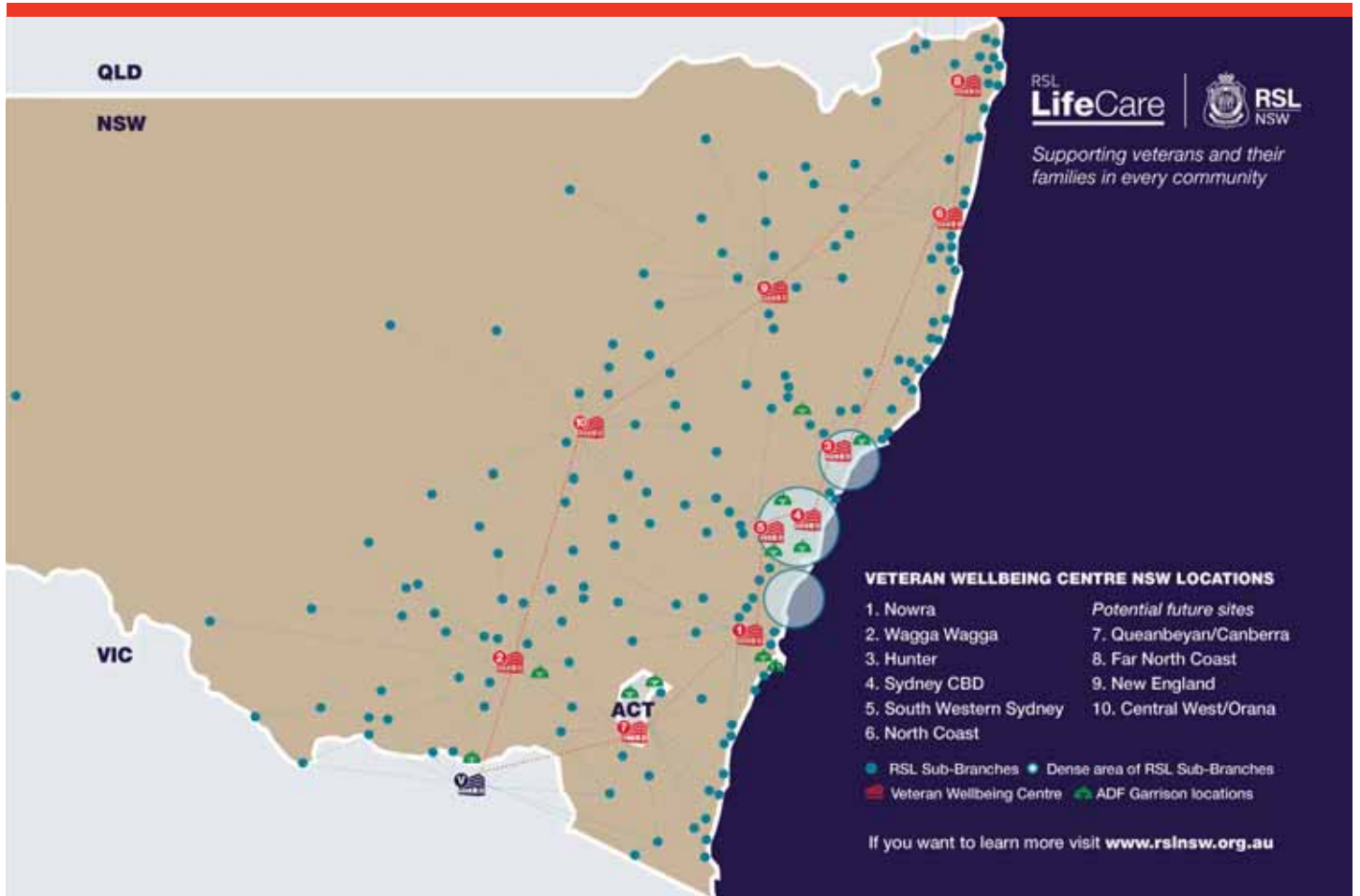
We have already established two Veteran Wellbeing Centres in regional

areas, and more are in the planning stages. To support the establishment of these centres in your region, please contact support@rslnsw.org.au to find out how you can get involved.

Veteran Wellbeing Centres are a joint strategic initiative of RSL NSW and our charity partner, RSL LifeCare. Find out more in the RSL NSW Strategic Plan 2021-26.



Scan code to learn more about the Veteran Wellbeing Centre model.



HOME TO THE FAMILY

Families are a major part of Defence careers and veteran lifestyles, with many joys and challenges.



Story Chris Sheedy

A few weeks after we speak for this story, Amanda Curby's submariner husband Shayne, a member of the Epping RSL sub-Branch, is being posted interstate for 12 months. Many challenges will appear during his absence, including simply missing him.

"The submarine field is quite secretive," says Amanda, who volunteers as Secretary of RSL NSW Young Veterans Committee alongside her role as a Defence Community Relationship Officer with Defence Health.

"As a partner, you don't know much about what's going on. You just have to trust that you'll see them when you see them. While they're gone, there won't be a lot of contact. That's the nature of being a submariner's wife or partner."

There are a lot of deployments, too, leading to a great deal of time when Amanda is on her own with their two young children.

"The main challenge is that you can't do anything about it when you miss someone," she says. »

Amanda Curby with submariner husband Shayne and their two children. >





This article discusses veteran suicides and other issues that may impact veterans. If any of this raises issues for you, don't go through it alone.

Open Arms 24-hour Support Line
1800 011 046

Suicide Call Back Service
1300 659 467

Lifeline 24/7 Crisis Support
13 11 14



Kirstyn Smart Photography



AMANDA'S TOP TIPS

Amanda has a foot in each camp — her top tips focus on building relationships and mapping resource networks before they are needed, and ensuring they are reciprocal.

1

“Sometimes we really do need help. Our partner is on deployment, one child has broken their arm and has been raced to the hospital, and the other needs to be picked up from school. Who can we reach out to for help?”

2

“Speak with family members of servicepeople or veterans and let them know that if they really need it, you are able to help. That’s really important, especially for people who are posted away from their families and friends. Defence families are very resilient, but a little help goes a long way.”

“You just have to miss them. That’s the hardest part.”

There are also the positives — Amanda counts among them experiencing different places when Shayne takes up new postings.

“Also, I’m extraordinarily proud that my husband serves his country,” she says. “ANZAC Day is a big event for us. There’s a real sense of immense pride and patriotism that goes with it.”

Her job with Defence Health links Amanda to support mechanisms available to servicepeople and veterans, and she spends time on bases among current and former Defence personnel.

Being able to access resources and services is vital for any family connected to the Defence community, she says — whether they are still serving or not.



Kirstyn Smart Photography



Family offers vital support

Those services are not always accessible, as was the case for Belinda Davis and her Navy diver husband, Ryan.

Prior to Ryan’s sudden transition out of Defence, Belinda was thankful for her experience and knowledge as a nurse. Ryan had been injured at work and could no longer perform his physical duties as a Navy diver, so was downgraded and given various desk jobs to keep him employed. His mental health quickly and sharply deteriorated as medical procedures led to more physical problems, further surgeries and a need for prescription pain medication.

One day, overwhelmed and distraught, Ryan texted Belinda from the HMAS Penguin Royal Australian Navy base in Sydney. His message was as simple as it was frightening: “I can’t do this anymore.”

Belinda burst into action.

“I’m a nurse, so I’m used to talking to doctors and ruffling feathers to get patients what they need,” she says. “But he was on a secure naval base

◀ **Belinda Davis with her children and veteran husband Ryan. As a nurse, Belinda was able to recognise the red flags in Ryan's demeanour, but finding the right help wasn't easy.**

and in an environment I didn't understand. Originally, I didn't even know how or who to tell that he really needed help. He was trapped at work and I was an outsider."

Belinda did web searches and found a phone number for the Submarine and Underwater Medicine Unit (SUMU) for Navy divers. She rang and told them they had to do something immediately.

"Luckily, I got on to one of the senior doctors, Lieutenant Tenille Chapman, who was lovely," she says. "She recognised the urgency and that something had to be done. That was the first action I took. After that, I was allowed on base, so I marched on down there and started getting his physical and mental health addressed properly."

Belinda says that, in her experience, family members outside Defence are too often

stumped about how they can help a partner, child or parent access the services they need within Defence systems.

"Support people often don't know what to do and don't know who to call. They might call Open Arms," she says. "They might consider calling their partner's superiors, but you don't know how it will end up if you call your partner's boss and tell them something is wrong. Maybe they'll be downgraded or lose their job, or not be deployed. I was just lucky enough to know my way around the medical world."

Since Ryan transitioned out of the Navy in 2018, the challenges have continued. A lot of Ryan's success, or otherwise, with various programs correlates with the competence and energy of his rehabilitation managers.

The management of the transition, by the contractors employed to assist with the process, felt like an exercise in box-ticking, Belinda says. While it wasn't a negative experience, nothing useful or helpful came out of it.

Ryan was sent on a TAFE course for software development, which he was interested in, but the specific »



BELINDA'S TOP TIPS

Belinda's advice focuses on how family members can balance their own wellbeing while being in their loved one's corner.

1

"Family members must remember to take time to be kind to themselves. Sometimes you can get overwhelmed in running other people's lives because of the extreme mental load, so take time to look after yourself too."

2

"If you get assigned a DVA advocate or work/rehab person and they're really not helping or meeting your needs, don't be afraid to demand someone better-suited."

"Support people often don't know what to do and don't know who to call."

— Belinda Davis

course was chosen for him by a rehab manager. It involved several project management subjects that he didn't enjoy or find useful, but he nevertheless completed the diploma.

This experience taught Belinda an important difference between veterans and civilians.

"I realised he was so institutionalised that he didn't understand that he could say no," she says. "He didn't realise he could make his own choices. He was struggling so much with some subjects but felt he had to go on because the [Department of Veterans' Affairs] was paying for the course."

When Belinda was 37 weeks pregnant and Ryan was spending three weeks in hospital while still employed by the ADF, she contacted a DVA-based veterans' assistance program and asked if there was any support that could be offered to simply have their lawn mowed. She was told there were options.

"But the paperwork they wanted me to fill out, the financial statements and forms that had to be completed, and the hoops I had to jump through..." she trails off.

Belinda let the grass grow – she'd picked the important battle already.



Looking after the kids

Damien Schofield's father served during the Vietnam War as a machine gunner in the Royal Australian Regiment's 7th Battalion.

Born after that war, Damien describes his dad as a "beautiful man" who suffered PTSD as a veteran.

"Being a young boy and growing up on a family farm, watching your father go from a strong man to someone who had to be hospitalised for months on end was pretty confronting," he says.

"Later in life, I was working in drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and I saw a lot of issues that people had in their adult life

▲ **Damien Schofield with his family. Having grown up with a veteran father experiencing PTSD, Damien was motivated to launch the Younger Heroes program.**

that stemmed from their childhood. Then I lost a few mates to suicide."

On his way home from a friend's funeral, during a seven-hour ride on a Harley-Davidson, Damien considered what might be done about the problem of children scarred by their childhood experiences. He realised that if you could access the child and their parents, encouraging them to speak up about what they're feeling might be powerful.

From this idea he launched the Younger Heroes, a

family relationship-focused program (for which he is currently seeking sponsorship to ensure another year of service). It helps support parents and children affected by long periods of time away from each other due to their employment.

Damien's father had simply been shipped home when he returned from active duty. There was very little support offered at the time, particularly in rural areas. Veterans were simply expected to get on with their lives. Many of those veterans and their families suffered for decades afterwards.

"These days I still hear similar stories over and over again," Damien says, describing the transitions he's heard of as "pretty old-school".

"Things are changing very slowly," he says, explaining that people who've been through a poor transition or affected by one, and who've had enough, are creating programs like his.

"I think things are going to change, but it's still a good five to 10 years off."

What needs to change for families of servicepeople and veterans?

First, Damien says, there has to be greater awareness of the intensity of the stress caused to all family members by military life.

Then, there must be more knowledge built around the issues that arise when people who have been deployed, potentially several times and into war zones, return to home life.

Finally, this awareness and knowledge must combine into a clear and tangible support framework for veterans and their family members. That network must be openly communicated and equally and easily accessible to all stakeholders. »



"I think things are going to change, but it's still a good five to 10 years off."

— Damien Schofield



DAMIEN'S TOP TIPS

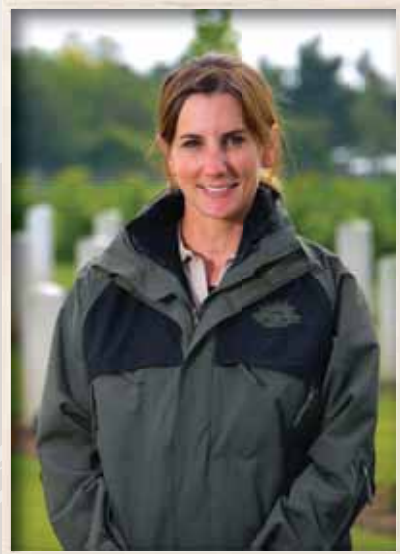
Damien offers tips for those supporting veterans' family members — caring for the carers.

1

"Always remember that every individual is different. So find out what family members of veterans require, how you can help them, and let them know you're available if they ever need you."

2

"Just check in, make sure they have support and if they want to talk, just listen. Don't try to solve all of their problems — just be there for them."



◀ Elena at the Australian National Memorial, in Villers-Bretonneux, France, on 24 April 2014.

Together, but alone

Not being able to connect as a couple, plus the knowledge that one day your partner could be very seriously harmed, was a poisonous pill for her relationship, says Army veteran Elena Rowland. Her time in Defence was shared with commando husband Dave, but the relationship would not survive.

“Anxiety was huge in the relationship,” Elena says. “It was a constant readjustment when he or I were away. Then we would come back, try to

get to know each other again and adjust to how we did things in the household.

“You learn to live without them, and when they come back, they are different, so you almost have to learn to love that side of them. There were so many stresses when you’re both in the Army. You need to learn to deal with those stresses, and when one person is struggling, the other has to pick up the slack. When you both can’t deal with the stress, you fall apart. That’s what happened to Dave and myself.”

“I felt pretty alone during that time. If it wasn’t for the veterans I knew who helped support me, I would have been much worse off.”

— Elena Rowland

There were also great things about serving in the Army, Elena says. There was the adventure and the challenge, the fact that you’re paid to keep fit and that you’re part of a system that mostly looks after you very well as you serve. No two days are the same, and you feel as if you’re part of a family.

“I liked posting to different locations, and just growing as a human through deployments, combat training and being disciplined,” she says.

Outside of the service side of the Army though, and particularly during and since transition, there hasn’t been a lot of support.

“Was there support for the family to help make the transition a smooth one? I’d say not really,” Elena says.

“I felt pretty alone during that time. If it wasn’t for the veterans I knew who helped support me, I would have been much worse off.”

There should be a transition team allocated to each person that leaves Defence, Elena says. Individual veterans should never be “left alone in the wild to die”.

“It’s common knowledge that Defence isn’t that great at transitioning its soldiers, and I was basically let free with no direction,” she says. “It taught me a lot, though. I’m stronger for it.”

Unless you are proactive and seek help, it’s unlikely that anybody will check up on you, she says. Stronger vocational and career help, and support for both partners, not just the one who served (when that is the case), would be particularly valuable during the transition period.

All family members live the Defence life while their husband, wife or partner, or father or mother, serves — they have no choice but to do so. Therefore, it’s only fair that all family members receive some sort of structured support during and after that service.

“There was no support for me, and I was a single mum, so it was tough,” Elena says.

The lesson for RSL NSW members? There’s a vital role for sub-Branch events and networks. Invite local veterans and their families into your community, and connect them with support services. 🍷

EVENTS & COMMUNITIES: STRIKING A BALANCE

Social and professional networks help veterans to transition successfully, so as part of RSL NSW’s latest veteran research, we asked veterans and serving members what would motivate them to attend a community event. The top response was “family friendly”, with 59% of respondents under the age of 50 and 53% of those over 50 selecting it.

Events for servicepeople, veterans and their families are a great source of information about support services, Amanda Curby says.

But it may be equally important to broaden the networks of veterans, rather than keeping them strictly connected to the military family, says Damien Schofield.

He also prefers mixed events with people from related fields. This way, he says, veterans begin to see pathways down which their own experience and skills might take them.



“I find the veterans that broaden their communities really excel, whereas those who remain in their Defence community can have a tougher time,” he says.

Belinda Davis says any kind of community is important — and it doesn’t have to be a community of veterans.

“Ryan has moved around so much due to the ADF, so he only has a small network of friends,” she says.

“There are no sporting groups or school friends or anything like that to socialise with. Some veterans have lived their working lives like a single person, not able to commit to team sports or maintain old friendships, so community is very important. Find a team, join a group, get involved.”



There are many ways that family members of veterans can get involved with like-minded people at their local RSL sub-Branch, and access services and support. Join online for free to be part of your loved one’s post-service community and connect with other members of the Defence family.



rslnsw.org.au/get-involved/become-a-member

IN BALLINA, THE FUTURE IS FAMILY



Families are part of every plan for the future of the Ballina RSL sub-Branch — and a key pillar of its recruitment of younger veterans.

Story Tess Durack





TOP TIPS FROM BALLINA RSL SUB-BRANCH

“We won’t get them in with the promise of endless meetings. We’ll bring them in with sport, social activities, family-friendly events and the opportunity to leverage the resources that they need.” — Harry Jarvie

“We want young veterans to know we are not about pokies and alcohol — we are veterans who’ve been through the same things they have and can support them and their families on their journey.” — Tony Tartaro

“High-profile events like ANZAC Day are an ideal opportunity to connect with veterans who are not members and spread the message about why it’s worth joining.” — Harry Jarvie

“There’s a very cooperative community FM radio station that always helps out with announcements and publicity.” — Dick Wills

Surfing, of course, is the quintessential Ballina pastime. So it’s appropriate that a day on the waves and a beach barbecue should be among the first of many family-focused events supported by the Ballina RSL sub-Branch.

“Service is a team effort,” says Tony Tartaro, Vice President of the sub-Branch. “While we’re serving, our families are taking care of children, getting the bills paid, keeping things on track.”

Harry Jarvie, Secretary at the sub-Branch, agrees. “To exclude families from RSL activities is counterproductive. They serve with us.”

Together with the rest of the sub-Branch committee, Tony, Harry, President Richard ‘Dick’ Wills and incoming secretary Ben Haime are driving efforts to connect



Association of Veteran Surfers VP Luke Stewart with his daughter. The Ballina RSL sub-Branch holds family surf days with the AVS.

younger veterans and their families with the sub-Branch.

The introduction of affiliate membership in 2021 has gone some way to helping with this so that veterans’ spouses and families can attend official functions together.

“If I turned up to my first ANZAC Day lunch and was told my wife couldn’t join me, you’d never see me again,” says Harry. “Times have changed. And if the RSL doesn’t include families at those kinds of events, they will lose members.”

And while affiliate membership was not available for ANZAC Day 2021, the sub-Branch had already amended procedures to »



further relax attendance at post-commemorative functions.

“The number of families that turned up to the last ANZAC Day lunch was fantastic,” says Tony. “And that was largely thanks to the support of our President Dick Wills and the rest of the committee. It’s an important step forward for the sub-Branch.”

A sporting chance

It’s just one step in many the sub-Branch is taking to build membership among younger veterans. These veterans may not want to or be able to attend scheduled meetings to discuss governance, but they may attend a social event if they can bring the kids.

“To be honest, the meetings are boring, and the younger veterans



To engage with younger veterans, the Ballina RSL sub-Branch holds family surf days in conjunction with the Association of Veteran Surfers.

might only come once or twice, then we don’t see them again. So we have to find other ways to connect and engage,” says Tony.

One way has been through sport, with the sub-Branch supporting a range of activities, including the family surf days, which are held in conjunction with the Association of Veteran Surfers. The sub-Branch has contributed to funding boards, gazebos and training sessions.

“That’s been a terrific way to connect with other younger veterans in the area,” says Tony. “There are guys I’d never heard of six months ago and now, thanks

to those get-togethers on the beach, we check in with each other and see how the kids are doing. It’s brought a couple of new members to the sub-Branch, and it’s really helping to get the word out to those younger veterans about what we can offer them and their families.”

And those younger veterans are driving connections and spreading the message via social media — something Tony has his sights set on for 2022.

“The sub-Branch has its own Facebook page and we get good coverage for our activities from Invictus Australia, but we are really looking to build our social media presence this year.”

A touch football team is next on the agenda, and Tony is keen to get the sub-Branch in on the local dragon boat racing action as well. For those members a

“Service is a team effort. While we’re serving, our families are taking care of children, getting the bills paid, keeping things on track.”

— Tony Tartaro

little less fleet of foot, a walking soccer team presents an age- and ability-inclusive option.

“We are mindful not to ignore or alienate our older veterans,” says Dick.

Painting a new picture

“The image many younger vets have of the sub-Branch is that it’s an old people’s home where you go to play the pokies,” says Harry, pointing out that the sub-Branch’s co-location with the RSL Club doesn’t help correct the perception that the two organisations are related, or that the sub-Branch owns poker machines.

“Educating younger veterans [about] the sub-Branch through sporting and social events helps them understand ... the advantages of membership. A big part of that is introducing them to RSL LifeCare’s veteran services like advocacy to help manage [Department of Veterans’ Affairs] claims,” Harry says.

“Veterans are often discharged for medical reasons, and it can be hard to find resources to support you. I joined the RSL 16 years ago to help deal with my DVA claims. It’s tough, and a lot of young people give up. They need someone on their side.”

Looking back and moving forward

“We shouldn’t ignore the past,” says Dick, “but we should learn from it and move forward. So for us, nothing is off the table when it comes to considering changes to traditions or old habits that don’t serve us

anymore. The increased inclusion of women ... is very important, for example, and is a high priority for the sub-Branch.”

As is cutting down the time members are expected to spend on those governance discussions.

“We need to migrate to a minimum of meetings and empower the committee to make most decisions,” says Harry.

The sub-Branch also wants to help veterans regain a sense of pride in their service, especially those who served in Afghanistan.

“For some of us, what happened in Afghanistan last year was soul-destroying,” says Harry.

“And to a degree, that feeling of pride has been lost. We want to encourage veterans to be proud of their efforts, and something like joining a sports team and wearing a uniform that identifies you as a veteran or the family of a veteran can help with that.”

Tony, Dick, Harry and the other members at Ballina know this better than most.

“We want young veterans to know we are not about pokies and alcohol,” says Tony. “We are veterans who’ve been through the same things they have and can support them and their families on their journey.” 🍷

TOP TIPS FROM BALLINA RSL SUB-BRANCH

“We are mindful not to ignore or alienate our older veterans. We want to bring in those younger vets, but also balance things out by providing the social opportunities and the ongoing care that are paramount to the older vets.” — Dick Wills

“Times have changed. And if the RSL doesn’t include families at [its] events, they will lose members.” — Harry Jarvie

“Educating younger veterans and spruiking — for want of a better word — the sub-Branch through sporting and social events helps them understand what resources are available and the advantages of sub-Branch membership.” — Harry Jarvie



Veterans and affiliates in your community can now join RSL NSW online for free.



rslsw.org.au/get-involved/become-a-member

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Home of the Veteran

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RSL LifeCare operates 28 Retirement Living Villages and 27 Residential Aged Care homes and offer Home Care services across NSW, ACT and South East QLD, empowering you stay independent in your own home or one of ours.

RSL LifeCare remains true to its mission – to provide peace, security and care to veterans and all seniors.

Call 1300 232 564 or visit rsllifecare.org.au

Retirement Living

At our communities, you're empowered to continue to grow, make new connections, cultivate new skills, follow personal passion and be your best self. You can choose to do as much or as little as you like knowing that you are secure, surrounded by warmth and companionship – with the reassurance of knowing that staff are available if you require emergency assistance. Our villages are happy, friendly places with a genuine sense of community – a real heart, where your friends and family are always welcome.

Home Care & DVA Nursing

Our friendly and experienced local team are dedicated to providing you with a choice of home care services. We deliver tailored services to meet your specific needs, allowing you to maintain your independence and a healthy body and mind. We specialise in caring for particular needs of veterans in our community, we understand their, service their sacrifice and the impact both may have has on this lives and the lives of their loves one. RSL LifeCare at Home is a registered provider of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). Our specialise team are here to assist you in navigating the aged care funding system and are committed to assisting you to co-design the best plans to meet your needs.

Residential Aged Care

In our homes, we give you personalised care and attention, we get to know you and your individual needs. We seek to make your experience warm and inviting, from our homelike designed homes and bedrooms, to our comfortable community areas and exceptional outdoor gardens. We understand the process of entry into Residential Aged Care can be very daunting, our customer care team are here to help guide you through the process and ensure your needs are met.

Veteran Services

We support retired veterans across Retirement Living, Residential Aged Care and Home Care services, we now have extended our support of veterans to all ages and their families who require wellbeing services like financial assistance, employment support, housing and DVA claims expertise.

MRH90 TAIPAN HELICOPTER

It was supposed to be 'one of the most advanced tactical troop transport helicopters of the 21st century'. Instead, the MRH90 has been retired.



Story Jonathan Bradley

A multi-use craft capable of everything from troop transport to search and rescue missions. A range of 800km and a top speed of 300km/h.

The MRH90 Taipan helicopter seemed full of promise when it entered service in 2007.

However, the Army announced in December last year that it would retire its 41 Taipans, following a Royal Australian Navy announcement that it would replace its six Taipans with 12 US-built Romeo Seahawk helicopters, worth \$1.3 billion.

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton said the Army was looking to acquire up to 40 UH-60 Black

Hawk helicopters from the US to replace the Taipans.

“Subject to government decision, Defence is assessing options to replace the MRH90 Taipans that are suitable, expedient and affordable,” said Director General Army Aviation Colonel Tim Connolly in a statement to *Reveille*.

“Initial analysis shows that the UH-60M Black Hawk, the US Army’s latest version, is combat-proven in comparable roles, and is a mature, off-the-shelf capability supported by a robust supply chain; and it will be supportable into the 2040s.”

Early trouble

According to Colonel Connolly, the Taipan was originally acquired

to provide a common helicopter fleet to support battlefield airlift and air assault capabilities for the Australian Army — including support to Special Operations — and a Maritime Support Helicopter capability for the Royal Australian Navy.

But in 2010, just three years after entering service, the fleet was grounded while an investigation was carried out into engine troubles that afflicted one of the craft while flying near Adelaide.

In 2011, the helicopter was listed as a project of concern, a status it has maintained, with poor performance of support systems one aspect of the trouble.

According to Colonel Connolly, there has also been an »



Built by
Airbus
Australia



Ordered
2005



Entered service
2007



Length
16.13m



Service ceiling
5,640m



Maximum speed
300km/h

"During its service, Defence has used the Taipan for 12 operations, including in support of Operation Bushfire Assist and in response to North Queensland floods, as well as in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea."
— Director General Army Aviation Colonel Tim Connolly



Range
800km



Empty weight
6,400kg



Max. Weight
10,600kg



Fly-by-wire



All-composite
construction

Carries
**2 pilots,
2 loadmasters
& 18 combat
troops**

increasing risk that the aircraft would not deliver the full scope of capabilities in a Special Operations role.

“It is not providing sufficient availability to support Army’s conventional land combat and amphibious capabilities,” he says.

High costs

Colonel Connolly cites poor availability rates and unsustainable cost of ownership, which he says negatively impact Defence’s ability to deliver on its responsibilities to shape the region, deter actions that would be against Australia’s interests and stand ready to respond with force.

“Defence has engaged its industry and foreign partners consistently about its concerns regarding lack of progress in resolving availability and cost of ownership,” he says.

“Numerous remediation projects by industry have failed to achieve substantial improvement. Excessive and increasing cost of ownership is of significant concern to Defence.”

One final nail

Adding to these woes was a 2020 revelation that the Taipan’s doors were not wide enough to

allow its gun to fire while troops were exiting the aircraft.

During its service, Defence has used the Taipan for 12 operations, Colonel Connolly says, including in support of Operation Bushfire Assist and in response to North Queensland floods, as well as in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

Nevertheless, the Taipan’s service is ending.

“The performance of the MRH90 Taipan has been an ongoing and well-documented concern for Defence, and there has been a significant effort at great expense to try to remediate those issues,” Mr Dutton told media in December.

Colonel Connolly says the Taipan is not delivering the capability and capacity required, and that Defence is looking to “limit further expenditure on a platform that is providing limited capability and low value for money”.

Looking to the future

“Defence has learned valuable lessons over the past 20 years acquiring and sustaining

helicopters, and the associated risks,” he says.

“These lessons of the past and present have informed decisions to assure a relevant capability with proven, reliable and affordable systems to enhance the Joint Force.

“Defence remains committed to ensuring that a capable, reliable and affordable utility helicopter fleet is available to support both conventional Army and Special Operations into the future.”

The Army intends its mooted replacement for the Taipan, the US-designed Black Hawk, to support Defence operations as a utility helicopter for 20 years.

“The UH-60M Black Hawk has been in service with the US Army and other nations for over a decade, operating in the same roles that Australia requires,” Colonel Connolly says.

“And it offers enhanced interoperability with new and existing Army capability (AH-64E Apache and the CH-47F Chinook).” 🚫





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HMAS Sydney II 75th Anniversary Commemoration

19th November, 1941. Patrolling the waters off Western Australia, the Light Cruiser HMAS Sydney II engaged the German Auxiliary Cruiser Kormoran. Disguised as a merchantman, the Kormoran's act of deception resulted in the loss of the HMAS Sydney II and all 645 lives aboard. Called Australia's Titanic, the sinking of HMAS Sydney II was the worst naval disaster in Australian history. The headlines of the day could only hint at the devastating effect the sinking of HMAS Sydney II would have on the Australian psyche. Never had the war touched us so profoundly and with such a total loss of life. The loss of the HMAS Sydney II brought the treachery of war perilously close to the home front.

The sinking also remains one of the most enthralling mysteries of the sea. Historians and shipwreck hunters alike scoured the Indian Ocean for close to

seventy years searching for a clue as to its location. Discovered in 2008, the wreck of the HMAS Sydney II remains a symbol of the heroism which defines the Anzac legend. Over 75 years after the sinking, a crown coin has been released to honour the HMAS Sydney II, her crew and the families who ensured their story would never be forgotten.

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➤ Ken Young OAM with his 'Thank you for your service' quilt presented by RSL NSW Auxiliaries State Coordinator Pauline James OAM.

➤ L-R: Mayor Jamie Chaffey, Deputy Mayor Councillor Rob Hooke, and veterans Peter Capp, Neville Steele, Peter Ritter, John Atkin, John Commins, Malcolm Robinson, Brian Howes, Bill Tibbs, Peter Clarke, Michael Hennessy, Phillip Miegel, Dennis Buck and Peter Kannengiesser.

GUNNEDAH NEW RAMP'S OPENING

Gunnedah RSL sub-Branch members and friends gathered for a morning tea during Mental Health Month, which coincided with the official opening of an access ramp at the sub-Branch's

headquarters overlooking the local war memorial, Eighth Division Memorial Avenue.

Members gathered to watch Gunnedah Mayor Jamie Chaffey cut the ribbon, with former sub-Branch president Peter Clarke given the honour of being the first to walk up the ramp.

The current sub-Branch President Peter Kannengiesser said members were very grateful for the opportunity to improve access while having a place to gather and store files and other historic items.

The buzz at the event was tangible as members caught up after months of separation.



MEDOWIE & STOCKTON COFFEE CLUB

The Medowie and Stockton RSL sub-Branches have launched a social coffee club, with coverage in the local newspaper, *News Of The Area*.

Medowie RSL sub-Branch President Ian Harding told the paper the weekly social events are a "no-pressure experience"

— both an opportunity for casual conversation with ex-service personnel and those currently serving, and a chance to seek assistance and advice on veterans' issues.

Event organiser Peter Stephenson made a particular point of welcoming the young families of veterans, with a play area nearby for children.



**FAIRFIELD
WARM THANK YOU**

Ken Young OAM, a member of the Fairfield RSL sub-Branch, was recently recognised for his hard work within the RSL movement providing his time and support to the sub-Branch and the Auxiliary. A Vietnam veteran, Life Member of the League and recipient of the RSL's Meritorious Service Medal, Ken was presented with a 'Thank you for your service' quilt by RSL NSW Auxiliaries State Coordinator Pauline James OAM.

**70
AUXILIARY**

**KEMPSEY MACLEAY
70 YEARS OF
SERVICE**

Members of the Kempsey Macleay RSL Auxiliary celebrated 70 years of service in late 2021, with a collection of photographs and the meeting albums from the early '50s providing a trip down memory lane.

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021

On Remembrance Day 2021, longstanding membership and service to veterans, their families and the community were recognised.



MAITLAND

Vice President and Hon Secretary Graham Solomons and Treasurer Henry Meskauskas received Certificates of Appreciation at a luncheon, and John Partridge was awarded a 75 Year Membership Certificate in a ceremony at his home.



Top, L-R: Henry and Caroline Meskauskas, Maree and Graham Solomons, Hunter Valley District Council President Brian Boughton, and Maitland RSL sub-Branch President Fred Goode OAM.

Bottom, L-R: Graham Solomons with Daphne and John Partridge.



CITY OF PENRITH

With 50 members and guests in attendance, the City of Penrith RSL sub-Branch marked Remembrance Day at Memory Park, Penrith, finishing with a flyover of a C-130 Hercules from RAAF Base Richmond.

AUXILIARY

LEETON

REMEMBERING A PRESIDENT

Late last year, Leeton RSL sub-Branch Auxiliary President and Patron Heather Whittaker passed away. Having served in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force from 1944, Heather had long worked to support local veterans and their families and will be missed by her fellow Auxiliary members.



AUXILIARY

**CASTLE HILL & DISTRICT
INVIGORATING
AN AUXILIARY**

Ahead of the Centenary of ANZAC 2014 to 2018, groups around Australia began making knitted and crochet poppies to contribute to a target of 5,000 flowers.

Despite the Castle Hill and District RSL sub-Branch's Auxiliary having been disbanded in 1993, sub-Branch members and their wives pitched in.

"We made so many poppies and had hundreds of poppies donated," says Welfare Officer Cheryl Hill.

The poppy-making project is ongoing and has now produced so many flowers that Auxiliary members have created a wall-hanging, featuring thousands of poppies, which is hung at memorial services.

The original initiative, however, also started a reinvigoration of the Auxiliary.

"Care packages were prepared and sent to Afghanistan," Cheryl says.

"Invictus Games came along and our ladies were involved in making totes for the teams."

During bushfires, members made pouches for injured animals, and recently they have turned their attention to making masks.

"All the while, we continued to make poppies, which we sell to raise funds for RSL DefenceCare and the sub-Branch," Cheryl says.

In December 2020, the Castle Hill and District RSL Auxiliary was formally reinstated. Membership now stands at 25, after a successful recruitment drive coinciding with the Auxiliary's first anniversary.

Members have raised more than \$6,000 for RSL DefenceCare and the Auxiliary's welfare program.

AUXILIARY

LAMBTON

**60-YEAR MEMBER
HONOURED**

After a unanimous vote of sub-Branch members, Patricia McMahon has been made a Patron of the Lambton/New Lambton RSL sub-Branch.

Patricia has provided outstanding service to the community of Lambton/New Lambton in voluntary roles for more than 50 years, and this May will mark 60 years of RSL Auxiliary membership.

The RSL has previously honoured Patricia's service with Life Membership in 1985 and a Certificate of Merit in 1996.

"Nothing is too much trouble for her ... She is always the first to put her hand up," says RSL sub-Branch President Warwick Budden.

◀ The Castle Hill and District RSL Auxiliary has knitted and crocheted thousand of poppies, and worked on the memorial gardens outside the RSL club.



▶ Patricia McMahon, Patron of the Lambton/New Lambton RSL sub-Branch.

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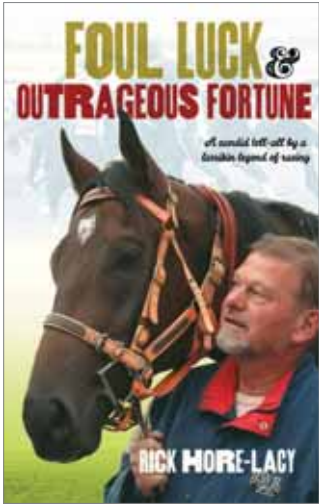


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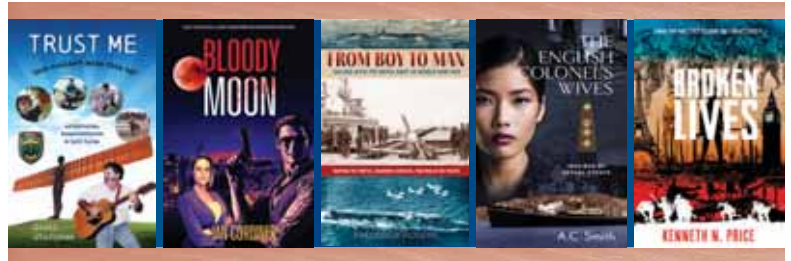
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A photograph of a field of red poppies at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that illuminates the scene. The poppies are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a soft, out-of-focus field of more poppies.

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**Remembering the service and
bravery of those who
have served our country.**

NAVY

AINSWORTH, WC R52732
ARDERN, RW R49155
BACON, ML 58572
BELLERT, KA R39436
BUSHELL, KA S125141
BYRNE, WK R45741
CHALLENGER, AK S5749
CLEARY, BE 32032
CLIFTON, CO 1443
COPPING, PC R49014
DANGEL, AJ R64826
DEACON, CLA R57232
DEES, DA R64681
DOHERTY, JT R52043
DREW, DJ R53505
DRIVER, T S113871
ECKFORD, PE R37023
FIELDER, RC R36774
GIBSON, LR R35391
GOSLING, RM PA4401
HOURIHAN, MJ R51100
HOWIE, RA 215944
JOHNSON, GC H2427
KEYWORTH, CS S9509
LEE, TG R62967
MANSFIELD, RJ R65315
MCDUGALL, WA R63281
MCLEAN, J 28875
MILLS, AM 167636
MUGGLETON, BJ R58507
NEVILLE, AN S9861
O'BRIEN, RJ R65898
O'CONNOR, LK R62782
O'GRADY, R R107106
PAGE, WA B4656
PETERS, GJ R53128

PHARO, RK S8807
PROSSER, PA R64134
SASS, WH R62913
SCHMIDT, G R59727
SPARSHOTT, D R57423
SPIBY, PN R104053
STEVENS, EV 1109
TAYLOR, TA 66685
TURNER, VW R35222
WATERS, DS R51147
WILCOX, TA R128631
WINNER, WA R64893
WOMERSLEY, ND S10175
WRIGHT, KC R49260

ARMY

BARKER, KE 216868
BELL, KJ WF90467
BLAND, RF 242606
BRIGGS, GW NX500477
BUTTON, F 214697
CAHILL, BE 214724
CALLAGHAN, BF NX145278
CARLE, AW N466610
CARRIGAN, CP NX125198
CLEERE, JC 210403
CLEMENTS, KN 2783581
CLUNES, RW 213386
COFFEY, WM NX44092
COLEMAN, DF 61859
COLLINS, LA NX18386
COSTLEY, KW 310862
COWIN, G 2109641
CRAVEN, RSJ NX206458
CURTIS, DC NF454119
DE LEMOS PIRES, ON 556362

DESTRY, C VX63501
DICKSON, ML 365503
DOBSON, CJ NX100772
DONOGHUE, TJ NX180298
DRINKWATER, WV 2795533
DUFF, EG NX171446
DUNCAN, AD 2791422
DYE, NA VF397757
EASON, KL 216433
EDWARDS, KW 203546
EVANS, G 23846593
FARLOW, F NX123236
FILEWOOD, SJ 2787030
FROST, HJ NX150232
GRAHAM, LA 2792422
GRANT, KO NX115997
GRAY, KD N366576
GRAY, RWJ NX134551
GREEN, RC NX43184
GREEN, J NFX181220
GREEN, EA NF465332
HACKING, AM 218683
HADDEN, RJ 1733109
HADSON, RB A277906
HALL, PR 2749058
HAMILTON, RP
 4/1602; 43262
HASSALL, RG 29428
HAYES, AW NX174450
HAYMAN, MW 215417
HOLLOWAY, GR 6708248
HUTTON, JC 28672
JACOBSEN, AC 1 3381
JORDAN, DP NX84564
KELLY, FC NX163749
LAWRENCE, IR 1202180
LE MERTON, AL NX17371
LONGMORE, JW N481658
LOVE, G 295998

LYONS, KB NX190241
MACASKILL, M NX78759
MANSFIELD, RJ
 228982; Navy R65315
MANUEL, RC WX16833
MARKHAM, E 2/762735
MARSH, DC NX79103
MASTELLO, LC 2/400440
MCCLOSKEY, EA 237679
MCDONELL, JC 223107
MCKILLOP, J 311282
MITCHELL, EM NF447118
MORRIS, TN N480287
MORRIS, AR 2786401
MURDOCH, AL 223344
NEYLAN, JE
 235008; NX203753
PEARN, LC V330431
PHILIP, ER 57019
PLANTE, DG NX90177
REAY, NH NX131818
ROBINSON, G NF446257
RYAN, LJ VX500951
SANDFORD, HL NX204632
SCHNEIDER, RG 1410448
SCOTT, W NX206483
SEARANT, PJ NX202900
SEARLE, G VX103963
SEE, RA 2/13522
SHANAHAN, GC 2793634
SHERLOCK, DE NX176828
SHIELLS, WT 317105
SHORT, DG 2789747
SIMPSON, NW 2788138
SMITH, HE 2781980
SNELLING, EW 2 5732
SPENCER, CG NX132597
STEPHENS, HA NX170793
STIFF, R 21763881 »

TESSIER, SH 230429
TICKLE, KM
 N214261; Navy S8220
TISDELL, RG 2/769534
VEALL, RJ 410789
WALKER, G 4721574
WALKER, DHS NX121559
WEDDELL, S F425385
WEILEY, GO N22475
WILLIAMS, FW 24823
WILLIAMS, KEJ 215551
WILLIAMS BM, L 2245511
WILSON, HG 2/401236
WINNER, FE X191693
WINTERS, NS NX170422
WISE, DE 235088
WOODLEY, GN NF482938
WOODS, EJ 36517; VSS2943
WOODWARD, KJ 15965
WYETH, KM 2788214
YEE, J 2128650
YOUNG, RJ 242563
ZILIOOTTO, E N436327

RAAF



ANDERSON, DM
 8135739; Army 2257942
BARKLEY, HA 128222
BATEMAN, E 33859
BELLAMY, EW 11995
BENSLEY, KN 441219
BURKE, FC 68364

BUTLER, LD A130118
CAREY, JC 413166
CARTER, AM 139658
CHAMPION, JL
 O319877; A49266
CLARK, LW 424371
CLIFFORD, KT 167441
COWIE, WJ 428907
CROWE, T 443737
CUMMINS, MJ A111856
CUMMINS, JM 52604
DAVIDSON, NP 167208
FERRIER, BJ 176020
FITZPATRICK, EMD 91635
GRIFFITH, AP 8178874
GUTHRIE, RD 022139; 439513
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JONES, RC A229059
KNIGHT, TM 70059
LAMOND, WG 432006
LEVI, AJ 164379
LIMBERT, SN 140567
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LOCKE, GM 445506
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REES, L 20856
RODGIE, KW 445405
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ROTHE, JW 432574
ROWE, AT 443437
SMITH, RH 164481
SNEESBY, SC 433667
SPROUL, CE A25344
STANLEY, SE W117754
STEPHENSON, HB A216621
STUART, WM 131208
TAYLOR, HJ 67952
TAYLOR, GN 8169028
THOMPSON, L 97834
UDY, RS 423947
UMPLEBY, PN 132526
VALLIS, AE 168131
WEEKES, BJ 108884

WHITTAKER, HM 176458
WILSON, MF
 432387; Army N442301
WILSON, RL A221408
ZAMEL, MM
 70251; Army N74384

MERCHANT NAVY



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KEATS, W QSWP0290
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