

THE LAST POST

KEEPING THE ANZAC SPIRIT ALIVE FOR AUSTRALIA'S
VETERANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

ISSUE 25

THE LAST POST TENTH
BIRTHDAY EDITION

INSPIRATIONAL
AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

CATALINA
RECOVERY MISSION

RSL EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAM

ELDER ABUSE

HOMELESSNESS

TROY CASSAR-DALEY

SALUTING GARRY
MCDONALD

MURRAY WALDING

The Last Post Story



World-renowned photographer Tim Page.

Through bloodlines, The Last Post magazine started at Gallipoli. Its acorn then fought with the 2/10th in Milne Bay, Buna and Balikpapan and trekked the Kokoda in WW2. By the late-sixties, The Last Post magazine was ready to be born.

Raymond Thorsby Ross, who had fought in PNG and the son of Joseph Thorsby Ross, who had fought at Gallipoli, leased a small office in George Street, Sydney. Raymond had decided that a small magazine, designed to help RSLs and their members, should be introduced in New South Wales. To do this he would need advertising to help pay printing and distribution costs. Daily, Raymond would take the train from suburban Chatswood to the city and phone local businesses and sporting clubs, asking for their support. This ex-digger and RSL member worked long hours to get each edition out and was effectively the magazine's editor, graphic designer and distributor.

In 1974, Raymond and his partner moved to Scarborough in suburban Perth and continued The Last Post in Western Australia until his death in 1983.

Twenty-eight years later, Raymond's son and Joseph's grandson, Gregory Thorsby Ross brought his father's magazine back to life. Greg had lived with his father as a 15-year old, when he started working as a copy-boy and cadet journalist at The Sydney Morning Herald. The teenager became a first-hand observer of the early days of the ex-servicemen and women's publication. By 2011 he had put everything in place to re-introduce The Last Post to a public in desperate need of a modern, quality magazine to assist the veteran community. Only this time it would be a national. And this time, it would be for all Australians.

With this humble background, and from a history steeped in the Anzac tradition, the new national TLP was born and is now respected and read by not only Australian veterans but the wider global community.

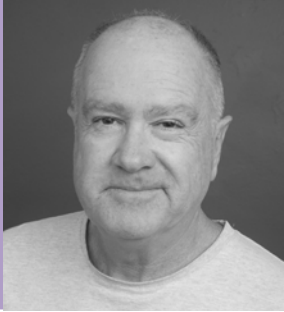
Featuring profiles on contemporary and historical veteran issues as well as honourable Australians, organisations, institutions and companies, TLP has matured to be Australia's most recognised independent online and print veteran magazine.

Acclaimed for its quality and journalism The Last Post is unlike any veteran's magazine seen before.

The reason?

It speaks to all Australians as a reminder that the legacy of the Anzac Spirit is relevant to us all.

With editor Greg T Ross' up-close interviews with famous Australians, stunning layout and production and input from great writers covering relevant topics in history, music, arts, entertainment, sport, travel, gardening, this magazine is so well received by a wide audience that reaches far beyond the veteran community.



from the publisher GREG TROSS

From an office in Hutt Street, Adelaide. To living by the beach on the South Coast of NSW. In between, ten years. Periods of that time have seemed to last forever. Some of that time has flown by. Living with Wendy meant that most of my work was nine-to-five. Or nine-to-three. Then a nap. Then a walk. Then the bar would open. A domestic life.

When Wendy became ill, my focus was taken off The Last Post as a primary. My attention and efforts were directed to keeping my wife alive. I became Wendy's Carer. The loving battle lasted eight months. The Remembrance Day, 2016 edition was the only issue produced during this period. To an outsider, you would not have known anything about the behind-the-scenes tragedy. It appeared a normal edition, with interviews and stories, as had been the case since the first issue in 2011.

The time following Wendy's death signaled a transformation in my living. After the Anzac Day, 2017 edition, I took to the road. And air. I began to travel a lot. There was no going home. I visited all mainland states. In the middle of the year I spent two weeks on the Sunshine Coast and begun seeing a woman, in Sydney, who would change my life again. Her loving friendship reminded me that good will come from bad. It also reignited my love of writing. Something that had lay idle for nearly ten-years, apart from the poetry I had written to help me understand and come to terms with the loss of Wendy.

Around this time, a lot of my travel involved going to Sydney and Canberra. I had friends and contacts in both cities. My decision to move back to NSW was based on the practical and the hope that a new environment would signal a new start. All the time we continued producing The Last Post.

I kept travelling, associating it with a feeling of freedom. I visited Japan. Then the bushfires. Then Covid-19. Then Delta. Lockdowns. Travel restrictions.

The Last Post. Edging closer to ten years.

A lot of my travel during the time in-between editions is now focused on visiting friends in northern NSW.

And so, here we are. It gives me great satisfaction to introduce you to the 10th birthday edition of a magazine that has featured Australia's best and a publication I have called my "loving monster". It feeds me. It houses me. It allows me to travel. But it is demanding. Very demanding. And it will not tolerate being ignored. It asks that I provide it with 24-hour loving attention. I am still a Carer. The Last Post looks after me and the rest of Australia and I look after The Last Post.

Thank you for joining Kirstie and I on this amazing journey.



- The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) acknowledges the central role of the Navy protecting our vital sea lanes and borders, in both peacetime and times of conflict
- The MUA also acknowledges and salutes the role of the merchant fleet in supporting the Navy and pays tribute to the many civilian seafarers who have lost their lives in supporting the defence effort
- The Navy and the domestic civilian fleet remain as active partners in supporting and facilitating Australia's shipping dependency as an island nation
- The MUA looks forward to continuing to work closely with Navy on the many synergies that exist in Navy operations and commercial shipping operations

For more information go to www.mua.org.au

foreword

CATHERINE MCGREGOR AM



The final note of the Last Post echoed in the walled courtyard, then faded into memory, just like the lives of over one hundred of our fellow Australians whose names are recorded on those walls. It was 14 January 2021. Forty-seven years to the day since an old Captain at the recruiting office at 130 Mary Street in Brisbane led a group of us in reciting the oath of allegiance as we were enlisted into the Australian Regular Army. Over then ensuing 47 years it was my privilege to serve in our Army. Only those who have served know that it is a family. Civilians simply don't get it. Corporations mouth platitudes about values and ethos. Soldiers live them. And sometimes die in honouring them.

As I participated in the Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on 14 January this year, the names and faces of so many mates marched past in memory's eye. I did not shed a tear. I needed to discharge my final act in uniform without that. The tears came later as I reflected on the incredible privilege it had been to wear this nation's uniform including on operations overseas three times. In doing so I followed in my father and grandfather's steps, though I never faced the ferocity of close quarter combat they did in New Guinea or on the Western Front. But I shared their pride in having belonged to the only institution in this nation that is unsullied by greed for fame or profit. The Australian Army gave me more than I ever gave to it. Service among some of the best Australians I ever met was its own reward.

Today we know that those names on the wall are not the only casualties of war and service. Only a few weeks ago our final detachment left Afghanistan. Over the two decades that we were engaged in that conflict suicides took many more lives than the actions of the enemy. You leave the Australian Army. But it never really leaves you. At 65 the shadows are lengthening for me. I have already lived much longer than my dad who died from melanoma at 42. My pop barely reached 70. The day when those haunting notes may echo over my final farewell will inevitably arrive. My resolve is that in whatever time I have left to dedicate as much of my ability and talent to helping others who have worn our uniform to find peace and fulfilment in the next chapter after their service.

To Greg Ross, I extend congratulations on this milestone edition of the Last Post. While its haunting, solemn notes are symbols of farewell and loss, I hope that his publication thrives and continues for many years to come. Duty First.

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'The Last Post' magazine is owned and published by GTR Publishing, a subsidiary of B4E Pty Ltd, 42b Broomfield Crescent Long Beach, NSW 2536

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www.magshop.com.au
www.au.zinio.com

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Front Cover:
Pte Raymond Thorsby Ross, founder of the original The Last Post, left, during his time with the 2/10th in Papua New Guinea during WW2.



designer / art director KIRSTIE WYATT

The Last Post Magazine has been praised nationally and internationally since it was launched in 2011 and is designed by Kirstie Wyatt from Wyatt Creative. Kirstie is a freelance graphic and web designer and can enhance your marketing to get the results you want in your business.

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www.facebook.com/thelastpostmagazine

The financial implications of a incorrect discharge



Harry (not his real name) at 15 years of age joined the Navy in 1969 as a Junior Recruit. At the time of joining he was both physically and mentally fit and looking forward to a long career serving his country as a member of the Australian Defence Force.

Alas it was not meant to be. He was discharged after serving only 8 weeks in the Navy, still aged 15, on the basis that his services were no longer in the interest of the ADF. In reality the reason for the brevity of his service was the mental health impact of the physical and sexual abuse that he had experienced. Over the next 52 years Harry lived with the demons. Here was a man who joined the navy fully fit and ear marked by instructors as having leadership potential. Instead at the age of 15 he was broken with limited earning capacity.

Fortunately things have changed and the ADF now recognizes that there were many men and women like Harry who left the service by their own volition or on grounds that they were not suitable for a career in the ADF who were wrongly discharged. In fact, they should have been discharged on the grounds of medical invalidity which would have allowed them to receive superannuation invalidity benefits that they were rightly entitled to.

So 52 years later we assisted Harry to apply for a retrospective change of discharge. Upon considering the application the Delegate of the Chief of the Defence Force found that in 1969 grounds did exist where Harry could have been discharged because of physical and mental incapacity. This decision has been life changing for Harry. Most importantly he has received the acknowledgement of the impact of his service but also he has received a significant sum representing the back pay of his superannuation invalidity benefit entitlements since his discharge in 1969.

Harry is just one example of the many ADF veterans we are assisting to work through the labyrinth of having their mode of discharge reviewed. So many veterans continue to blame themselves for why their careers were cut short where in reality medically they were unable to continue to serve their country. It is our great privilege to be able to assist them to right the errors of the past.

ADAIR DONALDSON

Donaldson Law

RSL Employment

Helping write your next chapter

The right role can give you purpose and direction. It can help you grow and develop in a fulfilling career. And it can help you transition into civilian life or settle in after relocating.

The RSL Employment Program supports veterans and the partners of current and former Defence members in their search for meaningful employment.

Funded by the Australian Government.

LEARN MORE

rslemployment.com.au



RSL
Australia





RSL Employment Program Supports Defence Families

The right support at the right time can transform challenging situations and brighten futures.

As RSL evolves to meet the changing needs of our Defence family, a host of innovative services are being offered to improve the overall quality of life for veterans.

Kate Brauns and her family are an example of how RSL can step in at different times with practical assistance that effects positive change.

“Our family has had a lot of interaction with RSL,” says Kate.

“My perception of RSL prior to all of this was that it was just for an older generation and not necessarily something we could access. But RSL is definitely for young veterans now. It’s somewhere you can go to ask for assistance.”

Kate and her husband Mick live in the Sunshine Coast hinterland and have two children. Mick served in the Army for over eight years, during which time he did one tour of East Timor and two tours of Iraq. Kate met him two years after he discharged.

In 2015, several years after leaving Defence, Mick experienced an incident that triggered his post-traumatic stress disorder. It drastically affected both his home and work life.

“It came to a point where Mick wasn’t able to go to work every day and that was becoming a problem because I was a stay-at-home mum,” explains Kate.

DVA ADVOCATE WAS PATIENT AND UNDERSTANDING

They sought advice and were put in contact with an RSL advocate, who helped Mick get his Department of Veterans’ Affairs claim processed. Mick now receives incapacity payments, which is helping the Brauns move forward with their lives.

“Our RSL advocate was basically a whiz. He put together all of Mick’s DVA claims and even provided us with food and petrol vouchers when we had no income. He was very patient and understanding and he’s become a really good friend,” says Kate.

MATILDA DRAY

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GIVES KATE ENCOURAGEMENT

Kate was then referred to the RSL Employment Program, where staff reviewed her resume, coached her through interview techniques and encouraged her to seek work experience.

She soon found a work placement with the Downes Group, a surveying, town planning and land development consultancy practice.

“It’s been really good working with the Downes Group while I’m still studying. They’ve given me the opportunity to get my hands on the equipment and the instruments and really put into practice what I’ve been learning.”

They have also been very accepting of her home situation – young children and Mick’s limitations – something Kate is extremely grateful for.

Downes Group Operations Director Tony Vella says the business operates with family values and is proud to support the community.

“Being able to help RSL provide support to families that have served is extremely important to our company,” says Tony.

“Kate has fitted in very well with the team and is popular with everyone she’s worked with. She is a very, very bright person and certainly flexible.”

REACH OUT FOR HELP

Kate’s view of RSL has radically changed in recent years. She now strongly encourages other members of the Defence community to approach the organisation if they need assistance or help with other issues.

Learn more about the RSL Employment Program and get in touch at rslemployment.com.au



“I love all the interesting aspects of surveying that I’ve only ever studied, now I actually get to do hands on in the field.”

- Kate, partner of ex-serving ADF member



FIND OUT MORE
rslemployment.com.au



INTERVIEW WITH GREG T ROSS

BE: So I'm here today with Greg Ross, the editor, creator, and owner of The Last Post Magazine. Greg, we've been talking about getting together and doing this interview for a while, but I suppose the 10th anniversary of The Last Post Magazine has given us a fantastic opportunity to make this finally happen.

GTR: Ben, it's been a journey of some worth, and you've been a part of that, mate. And I do appreciate this opportunity to tell a story. It's a change of tech for me to be interviewed instead of interviewing.

BE: Yeah, it is quite different, isn't it? On the other side of the table, you could say.

GTR: Yes. Yes, indeed. And you've got a bit of a name around Adelaide and beyond for your interviewing skills, anyhow.

BE: Well, I like to think I'm a bit of an interviewer at heart, so let's see how we go today. Let me just start by asking the first question. Look, it's been 10 years of The Last Post. Let's start at the beginning. How did you come up with the concept and the idea for The Last Post Magazine?

GTR: Well you know, Ben, I first met you and Kirstie through Business For Environment, when we were doing some environmental stuff with the SA government, and then I started to have an idea because Kirstie's work was so good with the B4E, I started to wonder about the possibility of producing a magazine. And it was going to be The Last Post. And because my father had produced a much smaller version in Sydney, way, way, way back, and a veteran of the Second World War, my father. So I really knew the brief of the magazine or at least how you

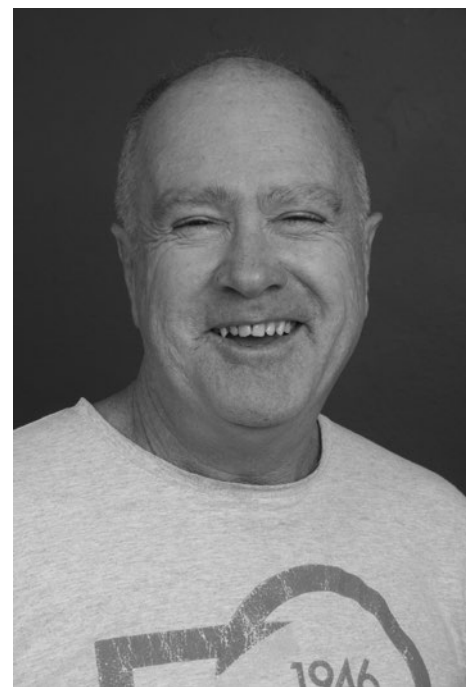
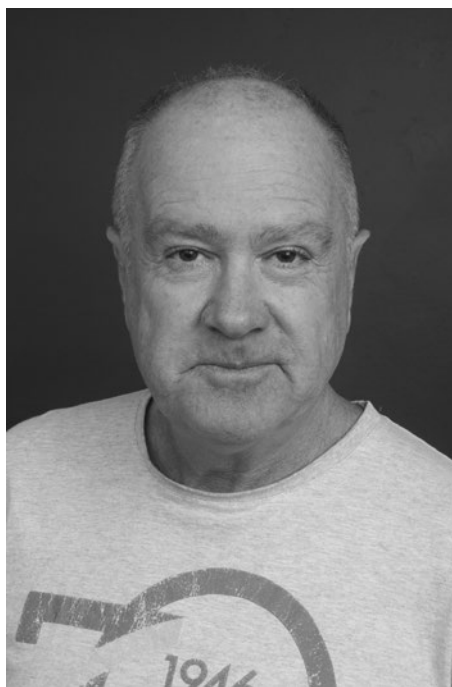
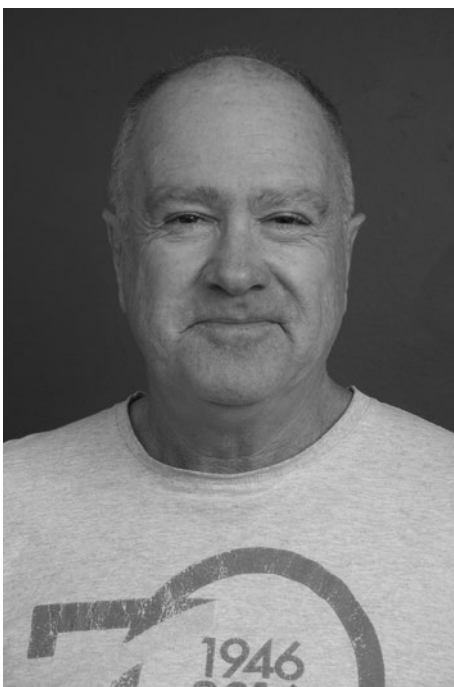
went about talking to people about it. So I thought I feel comfortable with that. So I thought, okay, let's do it, but let's make it more inclusive, Ben, let's make it for all Australians as a connection between the veteran community and the general community. So that's how we did it. And the first edition happened 10 years ago, obviously, and we just keep getting better, seemingly, so it's a wonderful thing.

BE: Fantastic. So tell me, how would you describe The Last Post Magazine to someone that perhaps has never heard of it?

GTR: Yeah. Well, this is the question that I fear. In the early days, I had to do a lot of explaining on this level, and now most people have either seen it or know about it. So it's probably a magazine that, if we go back to the inclusiveness of all Australians being connected to the Anzac spirit, not in a flag waving or flag raising sense, Ben, but as a way of looking at our lives and how we have benefited from the sacrifices of those before us.

BE: Lovely. That was very concise, too. Very nice. So what about... Give the readers and the listeners a quick insight into how you've built the brand of The Last Post over this last 10 years?

GTR: Good question, Ben, and I guess that's not something that's asked often. People assume each edition comes out and it's an easy thing, but of course, and we'll get onto question seven I guess a bit later about the responsibilities of those involved... but I guess it's about trust and about delivering trust. I suppose you have people say, how do you do it? And I guess just by speaking to ordinary Australians. And some of those Australians, Ben, have achieved great



Photos by Paula Alexander.

"SO I THOUGHT, OKAY, LET'S DO IT ...LET'S MAKE IT FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS AS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE VETERAN COMMUNITY AND THE GENERAL COMMUNITY. SO THAT'S HOW WE DID IT."

As an independent publication, The Last Post has reached an admirable milestone by recording its 10th birthday. Here, the national magazine's founder, editor and owner speaks with Adelaide journalist Ben Eames (partner of Kirstie Wyatt, TLP's art director and graphic designer) about the decade-long journey.

things, but they're still human beings that relate to the same things that we relate to. So then it becomes a matter of communication. I think probably over the 10 years, I've had two instances of people not getting the idea of the magazine once it's explained to them. And that's the benefit of... Because of course with Kirstie Wyatt's help, from Wyatt Creative, Kirstie's been able to produce something that you can look at and hold and cherish. And people that get the magazine delivered to their door or through email, understand the beauty of that and the message involved. So maybe it's just a matter of consistency. If we had folded after two additions, it wouldn't have mattered to anyone except us, but it's been 10 years now of producing and reinstating the idea that this is a magazine of continuing and also of worth. Yeah, I guess maybe that's the way you would say it.

BE: So looking back then, over the last 10 years, what is it that gives you the greatest satisfaction?

GTR: Well, as Kirstie will tell you, it's probably the day that each edition comes out. Leading up to each edition is prone to invites of nervous breakdowns and a whole lot of things that a lot of people probably wouldn't understand. But of course, Kirstie and I, in the early days, we would have a few barneys over the phone or in person about where we were going with it or what we were doing. But we, thankfully, have both matured, not only age wise, but mentally, so that we're able to work together even more smoothly than before. And the highlight, I guess, is that moment that we know we've done another edition, or as we like to call it, Ben, when another baby is born.

BE: Fantastic. So from greatest satisfaction to challenges... what's been the greatest challenge for you with this magazine over the last 10 years?

GTR: Two things, Ben, and thanks for asking such an insightful question. Two things, the first edition, I think when I saw that delivered, the first edition, it was almost a crying moment because I realised that all the work that Kirstie and I put in, all the hours, had produced something tangible, and that we would be able to translate this to the Australian public. The second most challenging thing obviously was Wendy's death. My wife, Wendy, who died from pancreatic cancer in 2017. What does one say? A great loss, and obviously, I'd been Wendy's carer for eight months leading to her death. And boy, geez, talk about there you go, there's a punch from Mike Tyson or Muhammad Ali, and you got to get up off the canvas and just get on with it because you can fold or you can get on with it. So we got on with it, we did it, and some of the best editions have occurred since Wendy's death. Because there's been a greater focus from Kirstie and I about achieving a continual message to the Australian people that we're all connected.

BE: Yeah. Fantastic. And thank you for your candidness around those challenges, Greg. Look, I've really enjoyed listening to so many incredible interviews over the past 10 years, and I know this might be a tough one to round out... but could you give me your top three favourite interviews that you've had over the last 10 years, and perhaps why they would sit in that top three echelon for you?

GTR: Another good question, Ben. I suppose the thing I should say would probably be the first interview, but I can't even remember who that was with. But the three that... There's probably four that come to mind, but I'll just go through that with you. Probably Anne Lambert was the first one that struck gold for me, and that eventual adding of

friendship that was of great help to me after Wendy's death, and a continuum of the idea that we are connected. And I guess it's about speaking to people. So there was a lot in common that I was able to establish with Anne, and that was a great thing. I suppose also, Michael Leunig, again a kindred spirit, and again, a friend to this day and someone whose work I respect. I mean, I think that interview went on for the longest. At that time it was the longest interview I've done. So that was great. If we go overseas, we speak about Felix Cavaliere, who was a member of the Young Rascals, the famous group, and Felix and I, again, connected and enjoyed a great time. And of course, if we talk post death, we speak of Rusty Young also. And I have respect of Rusty from Poco, was this great interview that I did shortly before his death. I don't know. It may have been the last interview that Rusty did before his death. I'm not too sure, and I'm not really interested in that, but I do know that he conveyed to me very poetically, his ideas of what had happened with Poco and where that music had come from. There's a whole lot of others too, Ben, and too many to mention. I know Jimmy Barnes struck me at the time as his great honesty in interviewing him. Ita Buttrose also, but these interviews have all formed parts and stages of the journey of the magazine, so yeah, quite brilliant. Yeah.

BE: Excellent. Thank you. And look, like I said, I thought that one might be a bit tough because there has been so many wonderful interviews.

GTR: I must interview you at some stage.

BE: That would be a great honour. So let me get to the famous question number seven. Look, the magazine is always so beautifully presented, as you would agree. And there is obviously someone who cares a lot about this magazine as well. Tell me about this lady.

GTR: Hmm. Well now I'm getting a bit embarrassed because of course my life changed, really, when I first met Kirstie, and it was through my working for a guy who was doing some environmental stuff, supposedly, but he turned out to be a bit of a non-deliverer. So I took over his company or his business, and Kirstie and I started work then on the Business For Environment package all those years ago, Ben, as you know. What is Kirstie? Kirstie is an artist, and perhaps, but she's a great artist. She's a loving, she's more like a sister, I suppose, Ben, to me. And you've become like a brother obviously through your, with Kirstie. And so Kirstie and I shared great openness, great moments of joy with the magazine. And of course, before that, Business For Environment. Kirstie continually surprises me to the point now where I know that I can trust her. Well, I've known for a number of years that I can trust her to deliver a wonderful product. The magazine is the result of Kirstie's work, the look of it, the graphics, everything else. The ideas, the interviews are from me, but then Kirstie grabs hold of that and turns it into something tangible so that everyone around the world, because of course we've been to Japan and we have people in America and England and Canada and beyond West Indies, even, that know of Kirstie's work. She should be... Yeah, top of the pile. She's wonderful. And I think also probably we've had continued comments too, Ben, about the quality of the magazine. And I guess that's down to my resourcing what goes into the magazine, but then of course, more importantly, being able to trust Kirstie, hand that to her, to know that it's going to be turned into something, I think beautiful is probably an appropriate word, really.

“...I KNOW THAT BY TALKING AND COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE ...THE ONLY THING THAT WE REALLY REQUIRE AS HUMAN BEINGS, IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE’RE ALL ON THE SAME JOURNEY ...THE MESSAGE WOULD BE ALREADY UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE THAT READ THE MAGAZINE, IS THAT WE ARE UNITED MORE THAN WE THINK.”

BE: Now, having witnessed it, there is a certain lovely synergy that goes on between you and Kirstie when you’re working on the magazine, but not just when you’re working outside of the magazine. And I think that contributes, from my opinion, contributes beautifully to the success of the magazine, from what I’ve seen, so yeah.

GTR: Well, I mean Kirstie and I know each other very well. I know you very well. And I think it all adds up to a product that is understood also by the Australian people.

BE: Yeah, lovely. So tell me, what’s the vision for the magazine for the next 10 years?

GTR: Wow. Okay. Well, Ben, since Wendy’s death, there’s been more of a focus on the arts as a way of expressing. And I guess we’ve looked at veterans health issues, mental health issues, and I guess the general community too, Ben, that being able to express through the arts, through music, or painting, or acting, or writing. And of course you, also being involved in the arts industry, would be well aware of that. So I guess that will continue to be a big focus for me, in delivering to the Australian people the idea that to express yourself in some way is important to mental health. To not express is probably putting up the red flag. So I would encourage anyone who has any inklings of being able to express their feelings through paintings, through writings, through whatever, even if it’s gardening or meditation or something, get out there and do it, and feel better for it.

GTR: So I guess the idea of The Last Post becoming a platform for people to understand the importance of the arts in relationship to mental health, too. And I think I would add to that, sorry Ben.

BE: Yeah, go on.

GTR: I do believe that post Wendy’s death, when I was approached by her daughters to seek counselling, they were seeking counselling, I declined because I said, I will write. And I hadn’t really written anything for 10 years that we’d been together since. So I evolved then, again, as a writer and mate, I tell you what, that was a great help to me, so much so that it was all I needed, really. So once again, people that are going through these things will find some significance, so I understand, so yeah.

BE: Yeah, lovely. So look, lastly a question without notice... like we’ve we mentioned before, you’re normally on this side of the table. And so it’s wonderful that your listeners and readers have an opportunity to hear from the man behind the idea. So what would you like to say to the people that read and listen to The Last Post Magazine?

GTR: Yeah. Geez, that’s a damn good question too, Ben. I suppose to understand that sometimes good news isn’t sexy. A lot of the commercial media use moments of dramatic to underline their points, be it politically or socially. But I would say that I know that by talking and communicating with people, you become close enough to understand that all that’s BS, the only thing that we really require as human beings, is to understand that we’re all on the same journey. And to confuse that with, I don’t know, to confuse that with negative news is probably... We all have a choice. We can watch what we want on TV, we can listen to what we want on the radio or streaming, wherever, but I guess the message would be already understood by those that read the magazine, is that we



“...JUST BY SPEAKING TO ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS. AND SOME OF THOSE AUSTRALIANS, BEN, HAVE ACHIEVED GREAT THINGS, BUT THEY’RE STILL HUMAN BEINGS THAT RELATE TO THE SAME THINGS THAT WE RELATE TO.”

are united more than we think. And to not understand that probably, well, it means that... Yeah, we can communicate with you and probably teach you that that’s the fact, but yeah, we are more united than we think, even if we barrack for different football teams and political parties or whatever, but it doesn’t matter. The basis of we all have families, we all want that to be the best outcome for everyone. So, yeah. That’s the simple message, I guess.

BE: Well, it’s been an absolute pleasure, Greg. I hope we’ve been able to give the readers and listeners a bit of an insight into the man behind this incredible magazine. I just want to wish you all the best and success for the next 10 years to come.

GTR: You’ve been wonderful, Ben, and I suggest also maybe we can do a series on this and maybe I can interview you again in the near future because you’re a wonderful human being. And obviously, as understanding the magazine, an example of what drives us onwards.

BE: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Greg.

the tlp journey... words+pics...

2017 represented a reminder of the fragility of life, a lot of travel, the serendipitous nature of connection, my first public performance as a singer-songwriter and a return to writing.

In the winter of that year I travelled to Mooloolaba for a 10-day stay with my brother. The purpose was to get some physical space from the tragic events of January. I spent the time surfing and swimming and walking the beaches at evening and joining my brother for the opening of the bar at 5pm.

It was the year I bought Vespa and learned how to ride my motorbike with an Occy strapped suitcase.

After having been Wendy's loving carer for the last eight months of her life, I found life reaching out to me again.

When setting out on an expedition, does one need to know the destination? Does one need to see, beyond the horizon?

One step at a time and the path reveals itself. Along the way, you will be met with challenges. And friends. People who will share the vision and offer help. Some will join you for the journey, for a while.

You will confront obstacles and overcome, or detour. One step at a time.

Great things will happen to you, along the way. And you will weather the good and the bad. You will visit places you never thought of and meet people you never dreamed of. You will find peace. And anguish. And the realisation that everything you need, you have. And that you have never been alone. Kirstie, Coral...

The TLP journey. Like life.



Raymond T Ross (with cigarette), in PNG, with the 2/10th, during WW2. He wore a tattoo on his left arm, with the name of his girlfriend. When they broke up, he had the tattoo reshaped into a heart. Raymond's father, Joseph, fought with the 2/10th at Gallipoli and was one of the first to land. Joseph was granted R + R after Gallipoli and, after failing to return on time, was found living with a nurse in London.

Raymond's battalion, during WW2, was the first to defeat the advancing Japanese, in a ground battle.

Raymond was shot, during battle and returned to Adelaide for medical treatment. It was there, at a hospital in the Hills, that he met my mother, a nurse at the hospital.

After the marriage break up, Raymond moved to Sydney and, from a small office in Pitt Street, started the first version of The Last Post. A memory, on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the national The Last Post.

I was in Adelaide, fresh from completing the latest edition, with Kirstie. Around the country, during the spring of '19 and the summer of 19/20, bushfires were raging.

Back home, in NSW, fires were raging towards the area I lived in. On New Year's Day I flew back to Sydney and spent three days there before a bus was allowed to run to the south coast.

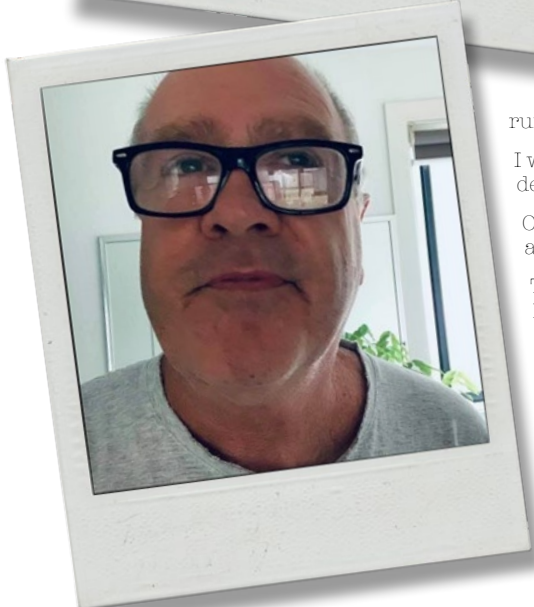
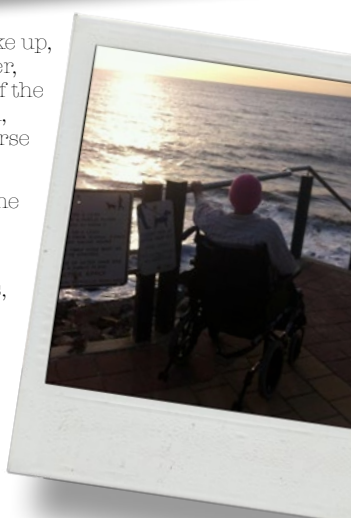
I was picked up at Nowra and the drive south, to Long Beach, is littered with memories of devastation of bush, animals and burnt out cars.

On my first Saturday back, with no power at home, I rode Vespa down to Hanging Rock and saw Hamish and a French crew from Paris.

The sky's began to darken quickly. The fires had merged and were turning back on Batemans. A woman from the ABC suggested I should get on Vespa and get home. "It's getting dangerous," she said.

I rode back along the Princes Highway. Visibility was poor. It was 37 degrees.

Back at Long Beach, we were told to evacuate. There were groups at the beach and at the local emergency centre. Neighbours packed and left. Across the road, John told me, "We're going."





From the balcony, I could see the two fires had joined and were approaching Broomfield Crescent.

I had packed and was ready to flee. Then the wind changed. I lit candles and took a beer from the ice in the esky.

Kirstie and I had scored free tickets to see Cold Chisel as part of the Clipsal races. I had gone to the Parklands on Vespa, earlier in the day, to pick up the tickets and returned home.

Later in the evening, Kirstie turned up at my place in Myrtle Bank. Her mother was driving and we were dropped off at the parklands. Except, we found ourselves a long way from where we needed to be. It was dark. Before us, the natural maze of Adelaide's parklands. We eventually got close. We could see lights. And hear noise. Then Kirstie needed a pee. And I was up for one too. We came across a toilet block.

Kirstie got locked in her cubicle. I thought of calling SES. All good in the end, without outside help. The concert was fantastic. In one of these photos from the journey, I am waiting to be served wine. Kirstie took the shot. By this stage, the police were keeping a eye on me.

My life changed when I bought Vespa. Summer rides to tennis or the beach. Parking on the strip for coffee. Of dogs barking or wagging their tails. Of children waving and people stopping for conversation.

I didn't buy Vespa for most of this. I bought it as a statement of liberation and determination to live. To feel the wind in the face and the luxury of vulnerability that one may normally associate with youth. To negotiate the windy roads of the Adelaide Hills and to strike up talk with the owners of Harley Davidsons. To take to the freeway and to buffeted by passing semis.

Crank it up. Fill it up. \$8 for 200 kilometres.



Over the ten years I've spoken with a lot of good people who, through their craft, have made the world a better place.

In the hours spent away from the desk I have travelled, attended launches and special events and engaged in my own down time. It is in these moments of down time that I have the space to reflect on what I have achieved. And that none of it would be possible without the people I've met along the way.

I'm no media mogul and the support I've gained over the years doesn't come from any flash marketing but through talking and encouraging people to see the dream.

If I look at my period as an independent publisher and the events along the way, then it has been a success. With still more work to do.

To see the world through the eyes of another. Giving of a voice. To the unconventional lights and colours of a good, gonzo life.

...All these things become part of an amazing jigsaw that, in the end, gives a picture of what it's like to be an independent publisher in a world of corporate takeovers of the media sector. There is general recognition that this is an achievement, yet I tend to underplay it, knowing that you're only as good as your last issue...or post... or communication.

Yet, to the army of people who have been part of this incredible story, I say "Cheers", to a martini, at the business end of the day. I did well today, if only because those I spoke with understood The Last Post.

Anita Baker playing. On sheets of paper, a list of things I have to do tomorrow, laying next to the computer. The kitchen calls.

Prior to Wendy's death, in January 2017, I had regularly travelled, as part of my brief with The Last Post. I visited a lot of the country but always kept in contact with Wendy, and always looked forward to returning home... A monumental event, such as happened, will affect you. Then it comes down to you, to turn it into the opposite of what it could be.

It took me three or four months to come to terms with what had happened. The brevity of Wendy's illness helped me to be reminded of the fragility of life. And also, the fact that, with what we have left, we must live. It would be disrespectful to self, to do anything else.



Photo by Jason Ryan.



So, from mid-year 2017, I began to travel again. Only this time, my trips were more frequent and of a longer duration. The idea of returning home no longer appealed as much as it had... I spent many hours at airports. I felt travel as a liberating experience. Breakfast at airports became such a regular that I would mutter; "the same" in favour of inspecting the menu. I knew the names of the staff.

Breakfast at airports became a time of texting, phoning, reading. And writing... Sometime during that period, in 2017, in between, and with, mouthfuls of coffee and eggs benedict, I started writing again...



In 2019 I took a walk through Tokyo and gravitated to the backstreets. It was a sunny Saturday morning. I came across a Japanese Garden of great beauty. According to the plaque at the gardens entrance it was built a thousand years ago on the instructions of the Emperor. The Emperor dedicated the garden to the poets he employed to ease his mind with their writings.

I met an 81-year old, a native of the city who, like me, was visiting the garden for the first time... I fell in love with the garden. The following day, I was due to leave Japan. It was raining. I borrowed an umbrella from The Sheraton and returned to say goodbye to the garden... the rain seemingly added to the Garden of Poets mystique and beauty.



Cooking in the kitchen. Radiohead. An afternoon of shopping, watching my football team lose, in Adelaide and writing a play on a lover's reconciliation in Burton Gate. As an escape from the news, a bubble of sorts. Burgers, as is the tradition... With each sleep, a step closer to the tenth anniversary of TLP and a much needed break in northern New South Wales.

A recall from each photo. A journey recorded. Of airports and the calming excitement of travel. Of road trips and reaching your destination. Of phone calls along the way. Of spots on radio. Of interviewing John Newcombe. Of vegetarian meals with a friend. Of my friend saying, "You don't have to do this for me". Of me saying, "If I felt I had to do it, I wouldn't be here". Of kindred spirits. Of a belief that this whole journey would make a movie. A good movie. Of having the Gatehouse at Fernmount as a home-away-from-home. Of sleeping on the floor at a friends place in Adelaide. Of having a spare bedroom on the ground floor of another friends place in Adelaide. Of joining a trivia team, as a guest, for a night at a pub in North Adelaide. Of coming second. Of the doctor telling Wendy she had pancreatic cancer.



Of nights out with Kirstie. Midnight Oil. Cold Chisel. Of Kirstie getting locked in the ladies loo. Nights out too, with another friend to see Cat Stevens, The Doobie Brothers, Santana, James Taylor.

Of being heatstruck on a summers night in the Adelaide Botanical Gardens when bats were dropping. Of Hyde Park and the Noodle Festival and of skulling a bottle of wine with a friend. Of still holding hands after a disagreement of slight proportions. Of going to the movies. Of discussions of star signs. Of flowing thoughts and having thoughts interrupted. Of paperwork and sending BAS figures to my accountant. Of martini's on Elizabeth Street. Of writing Let it be Love, with Keri McInerney and see it reach number one. Of the Screenplay of Postcards to a Stranger and coffee with Tony in Darlinghurst. Of meeting Barry and Beeb. Of nights near Pretty Beach. Of reading poetry at The Sheraton. Of letting somebody love you. Of buying flowers. Of hanging over the stove, checking on dinner, listening to China Crisis, Lloyd Cole and Prefab Sprouts.



A martini... The Last Post. Ten years. Younger.

Above and beyond the idea of work, comes the feeling that we might be doing something good here. Above and beyond the feeling of being tired and clock-watching comes the fact that I have no memory of clock watching, during this tenure. In search of stimulation and finding subjects to appease that, the discovery of extraordinary feats from ordinary people.

During summer, surfing trips or rides to the beach on Vespa. A preferred clock-off of 3pm. Back in the old days, Wendy and I would go to bed for an hour to prepare for the opening of the bar. These days, I don't go to bed in afternoons anymore. Above and beyond the discovery of new things every day, and the realisation that it's connected to old things.

Now, the opening of the bar is, here at home at least, a solo trip. I still long for what I'm yet to know. Confident that it will be a ditto, with variations, of the last ten years... Great Australians doing extraordinary things without wanting it to be seen that way... We carry on. The Last Post magazine.



Carry a notebook everywhere. Try free writing. Get away from the computer. Surround yourself with creative people. Redefine the word "mistake". Do what makes you happy. Go somewhere new. Meet someone new. Be open to good things happening. Read a poem to a loved one. Whisper in her ear. Embrace intimacy. Don't force it. Have an idea. Write it down. Learn the unimportance of concerns. Notice the small. Wish happiness for a friend. Meditate. Forgive.

Ways to be creative. Art, Literature and Poetry.

Women Work for Victory in WWII



During World War II thousands of women joined the workforce, many working in jobs previously reserved for men. This exhibition explores their story.

From the fields to the factories, the armed services to the home, women produced the food, clothing and munitions that supplied both the Allied troops in the Pacific region and the civilian population. Many of these jobs were difficult and dangerous, but thousands of women responded to the call.

Doctors and nurses were needed in the services. Other women joined voluntary paramilitary groups or swelled the ranks of established charities like the Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Fund. The National Council of Women established a Women's National Volunteer Register and most workplaces had their own Patriotic Funds, raising money for the war effort.

'Women Work for Victory in World War II' was researched and curated by the Old Treasury. It was funded by the Victorian Government's 75th Anniversary of the End of World War Two Grant Program.



FREE EXHIBITION
Women Work for Victory in WWII
Until late 2022
Old Treasury Building
www.oldtresurybuilding.org.au/work-for-victory

FREE EXHIBITION at Old Treasury
ONLINE NOW

WOMEN WORK FOR **VICTORY** IN WORLD WAR II



See OTB.ORG.AU/WORK-FOR-VICTORY to view the online exhibition and for detailed museum opening hours

otb.org.au | 9651 2233 | info@otb.org.au
Women Work for Victory in WWII is supported by
the Victorian Government.

**OLD TREASURY
BUILDING**



Elaine Gallagher

Born in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), Elaine grew up in Perth, Western Australia, and joined the Australian Defence Force after an epiphany that she needed to turn her life around when she finished high school.

Elaine started her 13-year journey in the Army as a Clerk Technical with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and later transferred to the Australian Intelligence. She deployed in East Timor and Bougainville then was medically discharged after being diagnosed with Stage 5 Cervical Cancer. Elaine went on to study her Masters of Occupational Health, Safety & Hygiene and had a successful career in the resource industry, working in oil and gas and mining.

Elaine is passionate about giving back and helping the veteran community. She now works with various ex-service organisations and was a Level 2 Welfare and Advocate within her RSL sub Branch. Elaine is an Enterprise Alumnus of The Prince's Trust, a not-for-profit that inspires veterans and ADF families with the confidence, enterprise capabilities and the networks they need to explore entrepreneurship and prepare for the future of work.

Elaine is passionate about bringing communities together.



My name is Elaine Gallagher; I wrote this on Saturday 5th June 2021 after spending one week with Kapani Warrior in Aurukun.

I was born in Myanmar, formally known as Burma. I arrived in Australia when I was three years old. I have seen what war and poverty has done to my parents. I grew up in a household where my father drank to drown his sorrows from losing his parents at a young age. My father was in the Burmese army and there was no counseling support in Myanmar to help these servicemen. My mother had to support seven children whilst working as a mental health nurse and trying hard to keep her husband alive from alcohol abuse and depression. I witnessed a lot of domestic violence in my culture from relatives and Aurukun reminded me of my upbringing.

I write this, as I want you, the reader to know what it is like to sense sadness, happiness and most of all pride and hope for self, country and culture. I served in the Australian army for 13 years. I enlisted when I was 17 years old and was allocated to the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC). I then corps transferred to AUST Intelligence as an operator. At the age of 29, I was diagnosed with stage 5 cervical cancer after my deployments to East Timor and Bougainville.

I medically discharged after 13 years of service. The army was not going to release me however back in those days of transition; there was not much support, assistance or empathy resulting my decision to leave on a medical discharge. I successfully went on to have a career in the resource industry in oil and gas and mining. I was fortunate to have worked with some credible organisations and grateful that Rio Tinto paid for my Masters in OHS. My passion is working beside people and communities in mental health. I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I replace the

D with a G, as I see growth instead of a disorder. I am always striving for education and growth within myself.

Brisbane:

Before arriving in Aurukun, I had lost some hope. I am a well being advocate for our veterans and families and I believe that to be in this role you have to be thick skinned, have leadership qualities, be able to walk the talk and be a role model. We must have these qualities so that we can spread hope and reduce the numbers in suicide. With the Royal Commission (RC) into veterans' suicide being underway, I believe that there will be people who will be re-traumatised and maybe a rise in suicides. I reached out to Dr Timothy White from Kapani Warrior via LinkedIn. There were telephone calls and a promise to bring me to Aurukun. That promise was made on Friday 28th May 2021 and I know that from day one, I actually belonged.

Aurukun:

Culture to me is such an individual thing as we all identify with various aspects of society and pick elements that we can relate with and we understand from our own unique experiences. It really varies how much each partakes and involves them within the culture that represents us and we are our only benchmark. Culture, like language and faith keeps evolving together with the people who live by it and in it. We create it and is there to serve us. There are no two people of the same culture who are identical with each other no matter how many common things we may share.

My week here in Aurukun has been challenging, rewarding, exciting and fulfilling. I am extremely happy here as I found purpose. I came here to observe and learn. I also came here to add to solutions to reduce veterans' suicide as well as learn about culture and country. I am learning everyday from this community. The people have shared their stories with me and as well

shared their hopes and dreams to move forward and to provide for themselves and for their families. They are hopeful about their future as I am of mine now.

Conclusion:

I believe that Australian Defence Force veterans and the community of Aurukun can work side by side. We all can successfully assist one another to find hope and peace again within our communities and ourselves. Through lived experience, we can all take action to prevent suicide with some understanding. We always have to give someone a reason to hope things will not stay this way; they can get better. The team at Kapani Warrior has welcomed me just like the community of Aurukun.

I believe that if the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) invested in a pilot program for veterans to come and participate in the Kapani Warrior program, I firmly believe that most of the veterans' will not think of suicide ideation whilst out in country and community. I believe that the Kapani Warrior program and the community of Aurukun will save lives. I return back to Brisbane with a different mindset and more educated on our First Nations and country. A wise man once told me that the cookie crumbs that I have been chasing were a waste of time as we are building a biscuit factory! (Thanks Dr Tim).

I know that spending time in country has been a lifeline for me. I am currently waiting for DVA to approve my university studies and looking into various studies regarding mental health. I am hopeful about a psychologist degree or Aboriginal health studies. I am again hopeful and wish to invite anyone of you all to come and experience what I have in Aurukun.

ELAINE GALLAGHER

*Lived Experience
Australian Army Veteran*



Elaine with Francine, a participant of the Kapani Training program, Aurukun.



Keanu and Wilton, two participants of the Kapani Training program, Aurukun.



Elaine Gallagher with Aurukun artists at the Wik and Kugu Art Centre.



Running a marathon in Palestine

BY HOLLY TELFORD

Isolated in your house?
Imagine being isolated in your
country without being able to
walk 42 kilometres freely.

It is 2016 and I am sitting in a local café in Sydney with my Dad trying to understand the conflict between Palestine and Israel. This understanding from the outside is something I never managed to grasp. I was forever curious and asking my Dad, who had been in that part of the world, to explain what is going on. He is very invested in the ongoing conflict and up to date with the latest news. His best attempts to explain it would leave him frustrated at the oppression, and I was left curious and confused. It was settled with a mutual decision the best way to understand - was to go there and see the country first hand.

Two years on and its 2018 when I visited Palestine for the first time, following a holiday in Lebanon and Jordan with Dad and two English friends. Throughout the south of Lebanon we came across Palestinian refugee camps, where we learnt about the war between Lebanon and Israel. It was made clear to me the Lebanese people did not share the same view of the situation as the Israelis. The Lebanese people referred to all occupied Israeli land as 'Palestine', out of respect for the 7.2 million Palestinians who have been displaced and forced to seek refuge in surrounding countries due to the ongoing occupation.

On our first day in Palestine we entered the West Bank and walked through the city of Bethlehem (a tourist hotspot for pilgrims). We were feeling hungover from a big night of sinking beers in Jerusalem. Within the first couple of minutes a sobering and overwhelming feeling came over us with the realization the Palestinian people are not free to leave. They are trapped by eight meter high cement walls (much like the Berlin wall). Along the walls, we saw graffiti from many locals and foreign artists, including world famous Banksy. We read stories of local people sharing love and helping each other out as humanly possible, throughout unimaginable circumstances. These stories of the community coming together made the

whole situation for us as visitors to this city, feel far too privileged in our lives.

One story was about the men coming together at night to build a house outside of the walls, so they could go to their day jobs on the other side. The Israeli Army deemed them unable to work unless they had a house in Israel, so the all the men of the community snuck out and built a house in one night. The Israeli Army destroyed it the following day, which left us wondering about the denial of human rights. We read many stories like this and spoke with the local people. We came to the conclusion these are ordinary people trying to work to support their families and just wanting basic human rights.

We stumbled upon Banksy's hotel, The Walled Off Hotel. It was covered with his art and had a hugely informative museum, which explained the occupation from the local's perspective. The hotel was staffed by locals, and has the best hummus I have ever tasted! I brought a DVD from the museum; a documentary by Palestinian local Emad Burnat called Five Broken Cameras. It was filmed on the frontline of demonstrations, where he witnessed loved ones die or be severely injured; he himself was injured, ended up in hospital and was imprisoned for demonstrating.

That night we found a restaurant near Bethlehem square. We were treated like royalty in the local pita house! The staff were so welcoming.

On our second day in Palestine we headed out in the morning for some local coffee in Bethlehem square and decided on breakfast back at last night's pita restaurant after the service and staff had been so kind. As we were leaving Palestine that day, we hovered by "Jesus' birthplace", and in some ways, were disgusted and offended to see so many tourist buses piling through the city coming to worship, completely disconnected to the surrounding oppression the Palestinian people face.

We walked through the city looking at more art by Banksy. We felt sad

Hi I'm Holly

I am 26 and work as a Registered Nurse with Justice Health.

I grew up in, oh so cold Canberra and relocated to Sydney five years ago to study nursing. I enjoy keeping active and play AFL locally and continue to run along the coastlines of Sydney. I am grateful for the opportunities life has presented me, particularly the opportunities to travel and to better understand different cultures. I hope my story gives you some insight into a country that you otherwise may be unfamiliar with, from a perspective I feel privileged and saddened to have experienced. I also hope you can appreciate the vulnerabilities and hardships the Palestinian people are facing in everyday life, which has been intensified by a pandemic. I challenge you to reflect upon this and find gratitude within your own life.

Enjoy! Hols

because we were able to leave Palestine so freely. It felt completely unfair for us to be able to walk through the gates and to the other side of the walls. We bypassed mums holding babies, with children and families lining up for permits. They may have been waiting for days to get out with a permit, possibly for something as mundane as a hospital appointment. We had the privileged of just walking out, bypassing all the lines. This privilege did not sit well with us.

Our road-trip out of Jerusalem and down to the Dead Sea was quiet and full of reflection. We saw posters about a Palestine marathon; the four of us joked, we should come back and do this next year. Then the joke became reality.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, I took up running! I had never been a runner, it began with three kilometers and then five, then the City to Surf, then Blackmores Half Marathon. Before I knew it, I was running from Maroubra to Bondi and back every weekend, I was averaging about 30 kilometers a weekend. My motivation was Palestine. I was running on 30-degree summer days, baking my skin red, but I felt privileged. I have the freedom to go to the beach. I have the freedom to run near one of the most beautiful coastal



The Palestine Marathon is an annual road running event, including the marathon, half marathon, 21 km, 10 km and 5 km distances. The event takes place on the streets of Bethlehem, Palestine. It was held for the first time on April 21, 2013, and has been held annually since.



OPPOSITE PAGE & ABOVE: Holly Telford running in the Palestine Marathon in 2019. RIGHT: Holly Telford. INSET: From left: Friends Sam Fish and Nicki Fish, Holly's father Peter Telford.

walks in the world. This is my backyard. I would think about the Palestinians training for their run and how many laps of the same track by the cement walls they would be doing. I was lucky, and life in Palestine is unfair.

In March 2019 we arrived back in Palestine. We bypassed going to Jerusalem wanting to spend as long as we could in Palestine where we found the people to be beyond welcoming of foreigners. After checking in to the Banksy hotel, we picked up our marathon packs, trying to learn the track. Maroubra to Bondi had not prepared me for this course. The city of Bethlehem seemed unusually quiet today with many restaurants closed and streets empty, compared to the previous year we were there.

It is race day! We wake up at a ridiculous hour where the sun is hours from coming up. It is cold. The hotel staff kindly make us breakfast at this crazy hour, knowing myself and other hotel guests have a big day ahead of us. I am nervous. I am so nervous!! I had my headphones and smart watch charged and ready to fuel me with music. My pockets are full of energy lollies to give me a boost when I need it most. And then we are off and I'm running.

The streets are empty, and before I know it I am nearing the back of the pack (not surprised). I am looking at everything as I am running; the graffiti protesting freedom, and locals out the front of homes cheering with support "Yalla, yalla" I hear all day. I run through a refugee camp - there are children on the street. I run through another refugee camp, this one bigger than the last - I take a wrong turn and get lost. The locals are yelling at me in Arabic pointing me back on track. There are chickens crossing the street - I run around them. I am at the 20 kilometer mark where I see half marathon runners completing their race, and I continue circling back and begin to complete the same track again. I run past Banksy's hotel where this time around there is a protest; there are news

crews, locals and political leaders. As intrigued as I am, I run on by.

I go through the refugee camps, where children run alongside me. I am 25 kilometers in and I am alone; I consider walking, and skip a few music tracks on my watch. Hellooo yeezus! Energized, I am running again. I run past a water station and a young man hands me a banana. Kids on bikes ride beside me and talk to me asking my name and saying the only words they know in English. They laugh at my lack of communication and I laugh! This is encouraging, I am running for them!

Most runners are ahead and there are few I can see; the last 10 kilometers have been solo! I catch up to the front runners and I think I am close! I am wrecked but I don't stop. Up one last big hill and I make it to the finish line. As I cross the finish line the commentator says, "Number 9 is completing the marathon, out of all the places in the world to do a marathon, you chose Palestine - we thank you!" I feel proud, and my body aches. Bethlehem Square is flooded with people; there is pride and joy in the air and the sense of community is overwhelming. I get a medal and water and feel incredibly sore and grateful this was possible for me.

The next day I can hardly walk, the blisters on my feet are enormous. Steps are painful, and my face grimaces. Dad convinces me to do a walking tour of the Aida refugee camp that I ran through as it is only 20 minutes from the hotel (I think to myself - walking tour after a marathon - insane!).

The refugee camp is mind blowing. We saw a big demolition construction site, which our guide tells us was previously a school. It was destroyed last week by the Israeli Army, just a few days before the children were due to go back to school after a break. We saw memorials to the 231 children killed by the Israeli Army. We were told about one young boy who had been shot the week before, which is why the city was shut down for two days out of respect. We had been

wondering why no restaurants were open the day before the marathon.

We pack up our things and walk out of Palestine again so freely and sadly as we had done the year before. However this time having had the privilege of running amongst the Palestinian people in their fight for their human rights and freedom of movement. The human rights they are deprived of daily.

Back in Australia a week later, I am still following the Palestine marathon Facebook page. Seeing my photos and links to my race time (took me five hours!), I see a post about a 17 year old, Sajid Mizher who had been shot, in the Dheisheh refugee camp, which I ran through. Sajid was volunteering on the day of the marathon at a water station handing out bananas. I passed that station twice and it may have been he who handed me my banana. I know everyone who was doing that job was speaking encouraging words and doing it with pride. Sajid was studying and working as a volunteer paramedic. I am studying to be a nurse. We are of similar age, living a different life in a different world. I have human rights, he did not. It was reported he was shot by Israeli soldiers while helping people. Living your life is a dangerous thing in Palestine. I feel sad to think how unfair this is and how many Palestinian lives are lost during normal daily activities.

I reflect on this now during the Covid pandemic, where I am forced to isolate. By isolate I mean I am living in a modern apartment in the Eastern Suburbs by the beach. I still have the freedom to go to the shops, to the beach, to drive without being interrogated at a checkpoint. Also, to seek healthcare where necessary, to walk as far as I please, to sleep at night without the army waking and terrorising my family. Importantly, to be safe in my community, to not ever fear I may be shot or tear gassed for being outside my home. I have freedom and am not trapped inside eight meter walls. I have freedom and I have human rights. Palestine does not. The United Nations and Israel must work towards achieving a solution.



Scott Warr

— INTERVIEW —

Greg Ross talks with Legacy CEO Scott Warr as they approach 100 years of assisting veterans' families in need.

Greg T Ross: Scott Warr, the head of Legacy Australia. How are you? And welcome to the podcast.

Scott Warr: I'm very well thanks, Greg. And thank you very much for having me along today to have a chat.

GTR: Yes. Well, of course the Last Post and Legacy have a long history together. We've been going 10 years. You've been going a little bit longer than that. And this time of the year, of course, Australians are directed to pay attention to the fact that it's Legacy Week.

SW: Yeah. Legacy Week started on Sunday the 29th and goes through till the following Saturday, the 4th of September. Our main day is our Legacy Badge Day, which is on the Friday, with the timing always being the week leading up to Fathers' Day. A long tradition with Legacy.

GTR: Well, that's easy to remember for everyone. Tell us about Badge Day, how's that been affected by COVID?

SW: Yeah Greg. Well, last year, of course, most states were either in the grips of the COVID lockdowns or had just come out of the COVID lockdowns. Most of our Victorian clubs suffered. Many of them couldn't collect anything

during Legacy Week or Badge Day. Quite a few of the New South Wales clubs, including Sydney Legacy, cancelled their face-to-face badge selling out in public. Unfortunately, this year with much of the country in lockdown we are again facing challenges to run Legacy Week street appeals which will in turn significantly impact Legacy Clubs funds across the country. So, we are really trying to turn the focus to our online donations. We have an online donation portal, which is legacyweek.com.au and listeners and readers can jump on to donate or purchase a badge or a bear.

GTR: Okay. That's fine. And how important is support for you during Legacy Week, Scott?

SW: Yeah Greg, Legacy Week, to every Legacy Club around the country is, it's our signature event. It's our main fundraising activity for the year. We do run smaller fundraising events around Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, but Legacy Week, in that first week in September, in the lead up to Fathers' Day, is our number one revenue raising event around the country, regardless of location, it's important. The ADF personnel, Legatees and volunteer fundraisers get out there, they collect money, sell the badges, they sell the

bears, it's the number one fundraising activity for Legacy. Most clubs would get at least 75, 70 to 75% of their annual revenue. Some of the big capital city clubs, some of the revenue comes from different sources. For the smaller regional and rural clubs, it would be at least 75, some of them it's up to 80, 90% of their annual revenue comes from that week. So, you can imagine, if COVID is going to impact some of those smaller clubs again this year, it could be very difficult for them to get the money that they need to look after our veterans' families, which we've been doing for almost a hundred years. We're coming up to our centenary.

GTR: That's right, yes, the centenary. And I think you and I will speak about that in our next podcast. And I think that's important for people to know the history of Legacy, or be reminded of it at least, Scott, because not a lot of Australians know about it. But, of course, in these days of new challenges with COVID striking a bit of, well, let's just say it makes things more difficult to work through, but of course, we will do that. So, we normally see the soldiers on the streets selling the badges, and the bears now, of course too, and they underline the importance of Legacy's work. But for those areas that now are affected, we recommend you go online to legacyweek.com.au and have a look at that so that you can donate something to this great organization. How do you see it panning out, the week for you, Legacy Week?

SW: In a lot of places, due to COVID, they're not doing face-to-face. One more thing about Legacy Week... this year we've launched a new national fundraising campaign for the Australian Defence Force (ADF), endorsed by the Defence Service Chiefs, called the ADF Battle of the Bases. And what that is, is we're challenging every base in the Australian Defence Force, Army, Navy, Air Force and Joint, around the country, to raise as much money

Legacy Week 2021 Case Study



Heidi is a navy veteran, a single mum to four boys and full-time carer to her sons Finn and Will who are on the autism spectrum. Aside from the significant impact of financial assistance, Heidi notes how important the Legacy camps have been for her boys, especially Finn and Will, who frequently miss out on a lot of things. "Every mum wants to provide for their child. Especially a child with special needs, who needs a little bit more, and they're missing out" says Heidi. Legacy ensures that kids like Finn and Will can now experience independence and greater opportunities on our Legacy camps, something Heidi never expected they'd have. Legacy Week gifts will help fund Legacy camps, so that kids like Finn and Will don't keep missing out.



PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

as they can for Legacy. And we don't care how they raise it. A walk, a run, whatever they want to do. It's been done through a fundraising platform where each of the bases will have their own name, and then they'll have their Units or teams underneath that, to raise funds and compete against each other from the 1st of September to the 1st of October. The timing is to allow all the ADF elements to return from the big exercise they've just had, which was Exercise Talisman Sabre. So, on advice from the Chief of Defence Force, we have moved this to September, that'll allow everyone to get back. Yeah, so we're very excited about that. In 2020 Melbourne Legacy created Battle of the Bases as a way to enable ADF members to support Legacy during their COVID lockdown and it was very successful at short notice, so we're rolling it out nationally. And we're hoping that all the Defence Force members will be proud of their base. We're going to have some prizes for the base, just some trophy mementos, we're calling it the Pozieres Shield. It's a Legacy Promise. The Legacy Promise was started in Pozieres on the Western Front in France, in 1st World War. So we're calling it the Pozieres Shield, and that'll go to the base that raises the most money per capita.

GTR: Oh, good idea. Yeah.

SW: Chief of Defence Force was very keen that it wasn't just the base that raised the most money, that he wanted to make it competitive based on the number of people stationed on the base.

GTR: So, a base with a small amount of people could, per head, actually win that battle of the bases?

SW: Yeah. And part of that is to make sure we engage with the ADF Reserves, so Army, Navy and Air Force Reserves. Particularly, Army have got a lot of Army Reserve depots that certainly got behind the Event in Melbourne last year. So we're hoping that that'll be successful. We are going to have a prize for the overall largest amount raised by a base. We are having a Legacy Torch trophy, bit like the World Cup, if you can imagine. Or a torch relay. So that'll be the prize for the base or depot that raises the most money.

GTR: Oh, isn't that brilliant? So that's very important. And thank you for telling the rest of Australia about that too, Scott. Because the ADF, the Battle of the Bases, during September to raise money for Legacy, and there will be prizes awarded to bases that raise the most money. And also for those that raise the most per number of people at the base. COVID has presented a lot of challenges to us all, and we have engaged in the ability to change and adapt. But, the important message for all is that Legacy is here to help veterans' families and we should all dig deep during this Legacy Week. You can visit the websites of Legacy and Legacy Week to donate and help Legacy further. Thank you very much, Scott.

SW: Thank you, Greg and thanks to The Last Post magazine. We ask all Australians to remember the work of Legacy as we approach our 100 years of assisting veterans' families in need.

LEGACY WEEK 2021

LITTLE BADGE: BIG IMPACT

For almost 100 years, Legacy has kept the promise to thousands of veterans' families - helping provide financial and social support for those in their care during times of hardship and grief. Legacy has 44 clubs, with a dedicated footprint of over 300 locations across Australia. The Australian community will have the opportunity to support their local Legacy Club during Legacy Week, Sunday 29 August to Saturday 4 September 2021.

This year focuses on Little Badge: Big Impact - the notion that even the smallest of donations will have a real and heartwarming impact on our veterans' families.

Last year's face to face fundraising activities were severely impacted across the nation.

Legacy faces difficulties again this year with many clubs unable to fundraise due to lockdown. However, you can still show your support by making an online donation or purchasing a Legacy badge or bear online.

In the trenches of WW1, a promise was made between a soldier and his dying mate. No matter what happens, he said he would "look after the missus and kids."

Heidi and her boys are one of the families that Legacy supports. Heidi is a navy veteran and a single mum to four boys, with her oldest two boys on the Autism spectrum. Before Legacy, she and her boys were doing it tough. Heidi had many sleepless nights worrying about how she would best provide for her family and their growing needs.

Legacy has helped Heidi and her boys by assisting with bills, school fees and uniforms and even speech therapy lessons. As a bonus, Heidi's family has also found friendship and support with the Legacy volunteers and Legatees they interact with.

Nationally, Legacy cares for 43,000 veterans' families, including widow/ers in their senior years, younger families with children, and veterans' dependants with a disability.

For more information visit:
www.legacyweek.com.au



Legacy Week



Little badge **Big impact**

Our Legacy badges may be small, but the funds they raise make a big impact.

Help us support the families of our veterans and buy a badge this Legacy Week.

29 Aug - 4 Sep

legacyweek.com.au





George Petrou with his portrait of Vivian Bullwinkel.

The Opening of the Vivian Bullwinkel Veterans and Families Wellbeing Centre

On Tuesday April 13, the Vivian Bullwinkel Veterans and Families Wellbeing Centre officially opened to the veteran community. Located on the third floor of Legacy House, the Wellbeing Centre is a Melbourne Legacy initiative which will provide veterans and their families with a safe haven to access essential support services such as advocacy, case management and referral pathways, while also inviting them to relax within a “club” type environment equipped with lounging and children’s play areas, and both kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The Wellbeing Centre has been named in honour of an ordinary Australian who did extraordinary things. Vivian Bullwinkel was an Australian Army nurse during the second World War and the lone survivor of the Bangka Island Massacre who dedicated her life to nursing and helping others. Vivian’s compassion and ANZAC spirit embodies the care and support that the centre hopes to offer the veteran community.

At the opening, Melbourne artist, George Petrou, unveiled his exceptional painting of Vivian Bullwinkel, whom the Wellbeing Centre is named after. Petrou’s work, described as the ‘Art of Sacrifice’, is inspired by the sacrifices made by the Australian men and women during the years of war, as this period of hardship, endurance and change had a profound impact on him.

The Wellbeing Centre creates the platform for development of true collaboration between the two major ex-service organisations in Victoria, as it will be jointly run by Melbourne Legacy and RSL Victoria.



ABOVE: Left to right: CEO Jo Moloney, Interim President Hugh Robertson, artist George Petrou, RSL Victoria’s President Dr Robert Webster, and Minister for Veterans, Hon. Shaun Leane with George’s portrait of Vivian at the opening.



ABOVE: Some of the Wellbeing Centre leisure spaces on level 3 of Legacy House.



TROY CASSAR-DALEY

THE WORLD TODAY

Greg T Ross: Troy Cassar-Daley, how are you this morning?

Troy Cassar-Daley: Thanks for taking the time to have a yarn today, mate.

GTR: We have met before, you probably wouldn't remember, but when I was with 2MG, in Mudgee, and you toured and went backstage to say hello after a fantastic performance. So it's a long time ago and you've certainly been doing a lot in the meantime.

TCD: Oh, I love Mudgee and it's the first time I've ever had white port.

GTR: I think I remember something about that.

TCD: Yeah, you probably would. We've never really gotten away unscathed out there but every time I've played there, it's been such an experience.

And I took my daughter through there and played with her in 2019. So it's just lovely to have all the memories of where we've been, you know?

GTR: Yeah. There's so many lovely spots, Troy. And I suppose one of the advantages that you've got in your brilliant career is the ability to tour this wonderful country and see so many wonderful people.

TCD: Oh, absolutely, and I never take it for granted. And after the year we've just had, Greg, there's no way I'm taking playing live for granted ever again. So it's been very trying, but out of trying times, you get a bit of a glimpse of light every now and then that comes through, and that's exactly what this album has been for me. I think I really have used it as a tool for my mental health, mate.

GTR: Yeah, look, I understand exactly where you're coming from, and your album, I guess, *The World Today*, it's a reflection perhaps of a lot of people, but I mean, look, just briefly, you've got a very busy year, with a lot of live performances coming up, and you've still found time to do this album. What's your take on this album, Troy?

TCD: Well, the reason I found time to do this album mate is because I had no gigs and obviously no purpose as well. And I'd lost my dad. I was on the tail end of some things with my marriage that I didn't realize were cooking for about two and a half years. And that was all work-life balance stuff that's very, very hard to get right. And I'm a bit of a hard worker at times and losing my father. I didn't grieve the right way because he took his own life and I had a lot of questions. And

Troy Cassar-Daley is an Australian country music songwriter and entertainer, and author. Cassar-Daley has released thirteen studio albums, two live albums and five compilation albums over 30 years. Troy is highly regarded in the music scene and his 2016 book, *Things I Carry Around*, received acclaim. Here Greg chats with Troy about his live and his new album 'The World Today'.

I think that lack of grieving the proper way sent me into a little bit of a spiral. But this record, I think with the time I spent going down and making it, writing a song a day, trying to get through the angst and the emotion that I was feeling, it all channelled its way from the heart to the pen, you know?

GTR: Well, we know, we look at the connection Troy, between art, creating and mental balance. And you are a living example of that from what you've been through. The loss of your father, must've struck you like a semi-trailer.

TCD: Oh, absolutely. And it came out of the blue, which was even worse. He was very sick, and I'd been down to see him the week and a half before at Liverpool Hospital here in Sydney and I just knew it was not the same dad that would work out with my mum when I was like 10 or 11 and he'd work out that he could come through and surprise me, picked me up and take me to the Gold Coast for a week and we'd spend some time together on a holiday. And it was just this, it was never an organized one. He was such a prankster. And so funny that here I am riding my bike with my best friends down South Grafton as a kid. And my dad rolls along in his HG panel van and says, do you want to go to the Gold Coast? And I've started to cry. And I've introduced him to all my friends and the man that I saw in that hospital bed was not that Dad, you know?

GTR: Great empathy to you there too Troy. Look, the album is magnificent and you've got a connection there with Cold Chisel, but you've also got connection with some wonderful other artists. Like I think Paul Kelly and Shane Howard too. So what's it like working with those guys?

TCD: Well, they're heroes Greg. You know? And isn't it great to think that all the people you've listened to growing up and that you love; if the world turns the right way, you're able to maybe tack in their door and maybe write a song with them you know? And the way I've gotten to know all these people is really organically. I met Paul Kelly at an Indigenous festival up there in Weipa called the Croc Eisteddfod you know? And I met him leaning over each veranda on our motel verandas. And we just started to talk and started to play harmonica on each other's souls, and while we were both sitting out there with the guitar. And that's where I met him. And so to have them involved as songwriters was vitally important, I mean the Chisel thing came from

me writing a song for Chisel quite a while back called HQ454 Monroe.

GTR: That's right.

TCD: And when I wrote that song, and then I wrote Shutting Down Our Town for Jimmy Barnes, those sorts of elements, drifted and bled their way into this record because I really enjoyed writing for that band and for Jimmy so much that I thought I'd never, ever explored that side of what I do. I've always been pretty true to, staying in the country box. I'd start to write songs for this record and I felt I need to investigate that street. I need to turn up that street. And as I did, I found myself really enjoying playing electric guitar and being in a band and playing the lead guitarist role again. And most of the lead guitar on this record's me. And so I had a chance to explore areas while I was getting out of my grief. I found myself going, I can do this. And the one Paul Kelly song that got me through was that the first song I started to play drums and bass on, when COVID first hit, two weeks in, it was a song called How You Fall. And, the lyrics are really simple. What it says is can you show me how you get up? It doesn't matter how you fall down. And when Paul came up with that line, I looked at him and I said "I think we've got a song here." So we continued to write that song. And it became the turning point for me Greg; got me out of some really, really terrible places.

GTR: What a brilliant philosophy. And we know that tragedy strikes each and every one of us at different stages. And it's how we react to that tragedy that makes us who we are, Troy.

TCD: It really is. And we all have a different way of dealing and processing it and everything. And I understood that. But because I've never had any mental health issues at all, and I've always been able to pretty much deflect a lot of stuff, but I've never had two or three or four things land on me at the one time. And I guess that's when you really do have to have a look at yourself and go, okay, am I grieving the right way for my father? No. Did I get on the phone to Beyond Blue halfway through 2019? Yes I did. Now, I've never done anything like that before in my life. It was only basically after getting off the phone and having a big fight with my wife, that I did get on the phone to them and call them from the road. It was very helpful. And I have to say to anyone reading this, that if there's any doubts in your mind about the stability of your mental health, it is okay to talk about it. It's not weak. I've been raised by men who would never

do that. And that's just the way I was brought up. But I did find myself and I never even told my wife, you know?

GTR: I guess the generational thing too, Troy, of course, as you just mentioned, surrounded by men who wouldn't talk about such things. And I think we're evolving as a gender where we will be able to speak about things and that will be to the betterment of all of us.

TCD: Oh, of course. I mean, they say it's not weak to speak. I've heard that before. I'm by no means a poster boy for depression. No way. All I am is someone that has lent on the things that I know other people should be utilizing. I've lent on them. I've been on the cusp of this. I've grown up in a generation where I never saw my dad cry until we were grown men. Until I was recounting things that happened between he and mum, and me being taken from him. That's when I saw my father cry. And that was a really, really personal moment. Obviously we'd gone on a cruise together. We were about to spend 10 to 12 days together on a cruise ship and I was playing and he was just the person I decided to take to spend more time with him. And we did many, many of those cruises because they were quality time with no phone interruptions and it was just him and me and my kids. And the first time I saw my dad cry was him explaining the night that I was whisked away from his house in Sydney and taken away.

GTR: Isn't it brilliant that you're able to have that time with your father too, because this is the quiet time and away from distractions that we all need with loved ones and indeed, even with ourselves too Troy. So a wonderful thing. Back on Country. Now, what drove you to writing that song? I think, I'll get onto some other issues in a moment, but tell us about Back on Country?

TCD: Well, during the COVID time, when the bubble opened for me to get back to my country, which is Mungallala and Bunbanga country. Yeah. I'll use that time to go back and I always have to go and heal. When I have my feet in the water of the rivers where I grew up, I tend to heal like I'm nowhere else in the world. And that is to us, a very sacred thing. And I used that time to take the sun back. We get a men's camp. We get a lot of debriefing around the fire, did a lot of talking with each other and I use that time to heal. But then I heard a story about a young bloke who got a tattoo on himself. He was not indigenous, of

“MY BIGGEST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS FROM PEOPLE WHO COME TO ME, WHETHER THEY’RE BLACK OR WHITE AND THEY SAY, I REALLY LEARNED SOMETHING FROM YOU.”

his surf spot in North Morton Island in Queensland and it moved me so much to hear this story. And it was while I was just fishing with a mate and just candidly said, this young bloke sees this part of the world as his part of the country. He said, he feels is the most sacred. I wanted to write a song of unity that sent me home, that fishing trip to write a song about unity, where it says, you might be black, you could be white, but come and join the choir. This feeling in your belly means you’re welcome at this fire. I’ve just finished a tour with Midnight Oil where they really do focus on fire. There’s a fire analogy of being able to say, I don’t care what your politics are. We’ll beat them over there in your car and walk towards this fire and sit down as a human being and let’s talk. And I just was so moved to write that song after hearing that story, because I realized then, it’s not just an indigenous thing. It’s all our responsibility to be a part of this country and to look after it as well. That’s exactly what this young bloke does.

GTR: Yeah. How brilliant, because of course, I do remember myself going over the Nullarbor when it wasn’t even bitumen and I guess to Mount Remarkable in Victoria and feeling a loneliness, but feeling a unity at the same time. So I guess it’s, it is not just indigenous people, bless them and bless you for your connection there. But I think this is available to us all. If we open up.

TCD: Oh, we have to have open hearts and minds. I’d still be showing Howard just outside of where he lives at a place called Tower Hill. I’ve been going there for years, but I’d never stood at this one place. And I said to Shane, I said, you’re an Irish, the sender’s Australian. I said, and I’m standing next to you feeling this electricity coming off you. And I’m an indigenous man. Why am I feeling this? He said, look at where you’re standing. And I looked out and he said, this is an incredibly sacred place here. And he said, what you’re feeling is what everyone feels. Even the Irish descendants sort of stood on that hill, all feel the same thing. And I totally got it that day. And I’ve just finished writing a song with him about hearing my river, calling me, which I book ended with some of the first song to the last and to write that song with Shane was ever so special to me because he’s had an open heart and open mind for many, many years, trying to bring people together. And if that’s not the sort of person you want to aspire to be like then I don’t know who is.

GTR: There’s so many reasons that this is a great album. And I guess what you just detailed there too Troy is the importance of nature when it

comes to these times, when we need to reflect and we need to re-energize and we really need to stand up for that, more than ever these days.

TCD: I think we do, in the world I come from me, they’re trying to put mines in, in different parts of our country up there. And you know, it’s already been cleared, Greg and cattle run up there and that’s okay. But when you start poisoning a river, that’s been sacred to us for a thousand millennia, it’s sacred to all the young non-indigenous kids that go there camping too. They want to go out there and catch a fish to eat and feel its power. And I know they do because I’ve run across some young, non-indigenous blokes fishing off the bridge where I did the film clip for this particular song. And they all say, they feel exactly the same as me when they catch a catfish off that bridge and they go and cook it and they do a frying pan at their campsite. It connects them to somewhere like nothing else does. And we have a responsibility now as a nation to be able to look after our places.

GTR: As a respected entertainer and one that’s been around for around 30 years, Troy, correct me if I’m wrong. I think you started busking when you were around 12 or something?

TCD: Oh, I did. Yeah. My mom and my aunties and uncles took us up to Tamworth all of my first cousins. We all played country music and we wanted to go to Tamworth. We didn’t have to nag our parents very much for them to take us up there. We got up there and had all spoken. It was incredible. I mean, you know what we did though, Greg, we found our tribe in Tamworth. We found people who loved country music as much as us and that town now has been special for the last 35 years.

GTR: Yeah, you’re well-known there as you are around the rest of the world too Troy. What’s it like growing up as an indigenous entertainer and an indigenous person? What has struck you, and are things getting better? What’s the story?

TCD: Look, I truly have felt a shift. I sat next to an old uncle of mine over the Christmas break and he was sitting there with me and he said Troy, as your elder, he said, we watch you from a distance and what you do and what you say, everyone is watching. And he said they were watching not to be critical. We’re watching with pride because you represent us in the best way possible. And I have never felt so proud in my life. You hear words from an uncle to tell me that. And then he said, and you know what? He said in my lifetime, from the days of the old camp embassy and trying to get sort of Aboriginal rights noted and things like

that. I felt a shift in this new generation and I totally get it Greg. I felt the shift to in a new generation. Hearts are warming to bringing people together. It doesn’t matter about whether you get four arias or 37 golden guitars. I love the fact that I get acknowledged like that. My biggest acknowledgement is from people who come to me, whether they’re black or white and they say, I really learned something from you. How good is that? I really loved your story. It really made my heart sing.

GTR: Yeah, isn’t it beautiful.

TCD: They’re the awards mate. They’re the ones that really make me feel like we are on the right track.

GTR: For your story to be able to enrich others is the blessing of all blessings.

TCD: It really is. And I got in touch with a young teacher who played the song called the freedom ride for everyone. And it was about the late Charlie Perkins and to have the kids learn the song on NAIDOC week and for them to sing it at assembly and then to study the meaning of the song and break it down in their indigenous studies. I think that to me, meant a lot as well, because I never ever thought I’d be an educator only went to year 10. To get messages like that through about what you’ve done or something you’ve written with Paul Kelly or something you’ve written with Shane Howard or Don Walker, if I’m going to be ever classed as an educator as far as indigenous issues are, that would make my grandparents, my late grandparents very, very proud.

GTR: And I think just finally from me from the audience listening, you just keep getting better and better and better. You articulate concerns very well. You’re above politics. You speak from the heart and this is what encourages us all to do the same.

TCD: Oh, I think you’re absolutely right. I always ask people to leave their politics wherever they’ve picked it up. And I’ll take you as a human being. That’s our only way out and there’s no less than right with me. I just accept people as they come to me. And I don’t want to be some sort of preacher to say that I’m perfect. I have many imperfections but I can tell you now that when you do take people like that, we all learn about each other and it’s all very inspiring.

GTR: Yeah. Thanks so much. Troy. Troy Cassar-Daley speaking with us here at The Last Post, your brilliant new album, The World Today. Brilliant new single Back on Country and listened to the message and the beautiful, the harmonies, everything in Troy’s music. It’s been a pleasure, Troy.

TCD: Thank you very much Greg.

Legong Pencil Poem

for Asiah

Oh
 hell, yeah –
Gamelon music, banana 'cakes,
 two sips of java ...
 Take it down a thousand, as waves hit –
 wet jean bottoms on shoeless sand ...

This is where you fix your freezer
 and put your head in.
Santai is the word.

We laugh at a 'slipping' Buddha
 on Monkey Forest Road,
 watch kids splash in the garbage
 at Kuta Beach,

Just after Iggy Pop's leather jacket
 while slurping a vanilla thickshake at the
 Hard Rock Café,

and observe orange *koi* fish in charcoal water –
 framed by silver and lime moss.

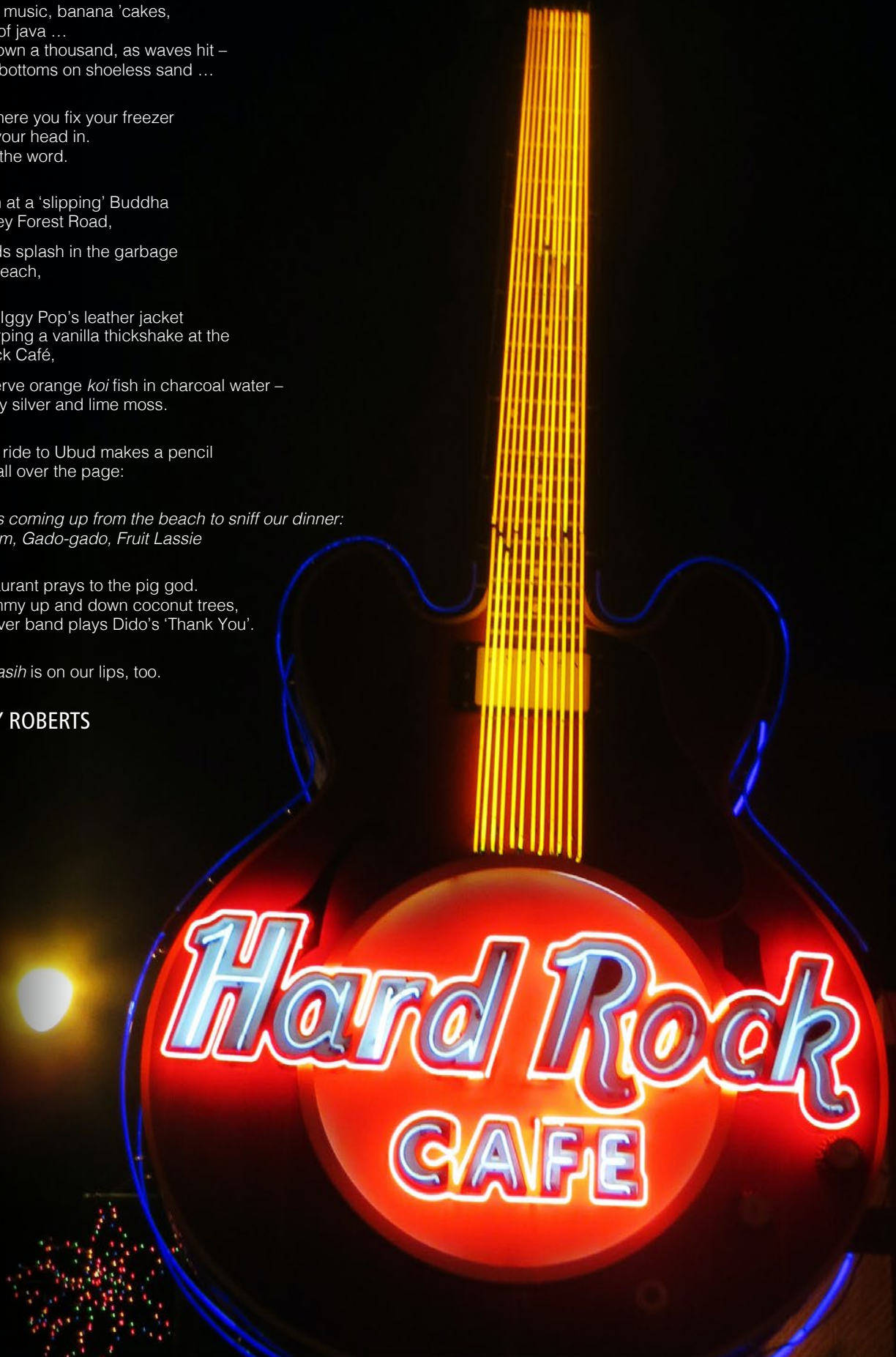
The *taksi* ride to Ubud makes a pencil
 wobble all over the page:

wild dogs coming up from the beach to sniff our dinner:
Soto Ayam, Gado-gado, Fruit Lassie

The restaurant prays to the pig god.
 Men shimmy up and down coconut trees,
 and a cover band plays Dido's 'Thank You'.

Terima kasih is on our lips, too.

JEREMY ROBERTS





The Newsreader

New drama series on ABC TV and ABC iView.



Set in the tumultuous world of a television newsroom, *The Newsreader* takes us back to 1986 – when Halley’s Comet was a must see, the AIDS crisis was taking hold and the Challenger explosion shocked the world. Amongst it all, newsreader Helen Norville (Anna Torv) is determined to build her credibility, while her colleague Dale Jennings (Sam Reid) is desperate to become a newsreader.

From messy beginnings, they will form an unlikely bond that will transform the very fabric of the nightly news bulletin.

The Newsreader also stars Robert Taylor, William McInnes, Michelle Lim Davidson, Stephen Peacocke, Chai Hansen, Chum Ehelepola and Marg Downey.

ABC Head of Drama, Comedy & Indigenous Sally Riley says *“This is an impeccable drama from an exceptional creative team. We know our audiences will relish the journey back to 1986 with the News at Six team.”*

Supporting Aunty ABC FRIENDS

ABC Friends welcomes the interest and support of the veteran community and is pleased to see new members joining us.

We believe it is important to support independent public broadcasting at a time when it can be hard to find unbiased news and information, particularly in times of health and climate emergencies.

As part of our recent National Planning Meeting in Canberra we were able to meet members of the ABC Friends Parliamentary Group. We were especially pleased to meet the Hon Darren Chester who is a Co Convenor of that group. He understands the importance of the ABC in regional Australia and was interested in our work on developing more reliable transmission services so all Australians have access to reliable broadcasting.

During our visit to Parliament House we had the opportunity to meet with other ministerial staff to discuss the detail of our transmission options.

We also sat in on a Senate Estimates Hearing when Managing Director David Anderson was answering questions with several being on the importance of next years funding of Enhanced News Gathering in Regional Australia.

Currently we have concerns about ongoing rumours that the ABC could be privatised and lose its role as an independent voice for all Australians. This proposal was last raised officially in 2018 when then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his Minister for Communications Mitch Fifield denied privatisation was government policy, but ABC Friends need to continually remind their local members and senators that no such guarantee has been made by the Morrison Government.

ABC Friends continue to work in support of ABC Board Chair Ita Buttrose because we know she is a strong advocate for 'Our ABC' and wants to see it maintain its strong and independent communication with the Australian community.

At a recent event to promote media freedom in Tasmania Ms Buttrose reported that *"84% Australians considered the ABC to be important to the nationand this was the highest level of citizen support among several comparable countries"*.

Best wishes to you all.

MARGARET REYNOLDS

ABC Friends National President



TOP: From left: Cassandra Parkinson, President NSW Minister, Margaret Reynolds, ABC Friends National President, Sue Pinnock, President SA.

BOTTOM: From left: Margaret Reynolds and ABC Board Chair Ita Buttrose.

The Strength of Midnight

There's always a need for connection,
It's in our DNA.
Everything in our lives is about that.
Yet, sometimes I walk away from situations
That aren't familiar or similar to what I'm going through,
But I have found myself never wanting
To walk away from you.
It's the smallness, intimacy and amplification of beauty
of being with you,
And the feeling of ease,
at pursuing goals.
You, a connection to creativity
You, an understatement of everything.
You, a discovery of youth -
While
some
may grow old.
Being with you is a singular experience,
it all happened so quickly,
I was not prepared for this or had time to raise the moat or to put on armour.
You remind me
of a night sky, full of stars...
While heavens bloom and
produce a hue
so sweet,
I feel the strength of midnight whispering
whenever we meet.

GREG T ROSS

Photo by luizclas.

Saluting Garry McDonald's comedy icon



Norman Gunston was a gutsy creation that pushed comedy and anti-comedy into the mainstream on Australian TV, and paved the way for so many to come after. The Norman Gunston Show debuted on ABC TV on 18 May 1975.

A pure comedy character

Australians over the age of 35 would know Norman Gunston. For a period on the box, Gunston was television. And in the 80s, when I was growing up in the suburbs, television was Australian culture.

Norman Gunston, the character, was the antithesis of a TV host: panicked, seemingly underprepared, unprofessional, naive, nerdy, sexually repressed and famously bleeding from cutting himself shaving.

Norman Gunston was like giving a 12-year-old Catholic schoolboy his own TV show. Well, as someone who used to be a 12-year-old Catholic school boy, I genuflect to the genius of Garry McDonald. Norman is a pure comedy character, designed meticulously to undercut everything around him, and prick the balloon of importance and elevate what was real.

How was this hilarious simpleton allowed on telly?

The character got its start as a minor player on The Auntie Jack Show (1972–73). Gunston was a hapless parochial TV reporter from Wollongong, an industrial city on NSW's southern coal coast, the region being the butt of many of his jokes.

But soon Gunston was hosting his own delicious subversive satirical version of a Tonight Show, called The Norman Gunston Show (1975–76, 1978–79, 1993).

In the early episodes, you can see a fledgling character finding his feet. The big jump from sketch slot to hosting an entire variety show is hard work. That's a lot of pressure on Garry McDonald and his team, with only special guests

as foils for Norman to play up against. There wasn't an ensemble, and there weren't teams of people cooking, renovating or building models. It was Gunston, a few packages, and a TV studio set. It was loose, and strange, but Gunston also brought clarity to TV audiences about the world around them.

The artifice of television has a way of obfuscating reality, even when it's designed to highlight it. Reality TV shows are anything but real. But when you see Norman Gunston in the 'real world', the audience is taken to a place through his eyes. Gunston's blunt and naive line of questioning tore away any facade of grandiose distortion of a constructed media world. Gunston, for all intents and purposes, was the audience. He called bullshit, and was always on the audience's side.

Garry's commitment to his character's naivety was probably why some people didn't know if it was indeed a joke.

Celebrity interviews: from the sublime to the absurd

The average bloke in extraordinary circumstances paid dividends for comedy.

The game of playing the naive reporter was at its best when he was in front of phenomenally powerful people. When Gunston was in press conferences, the reverence that other journalists allowed him was incredible, giving ample space for Norman Gunston to get a run of jokes as quickly as possible to a visiting dignitary or celebrity.

Chevy Chase, Guns N' Roses, Paul and Linda McCartney, Muhammad Ali, Malcolm Fraser and Keith Moon are some of the highlights you can see scattered across the internet today. They still hold up, they're still funny, they're still every bit as subversive, silly and innocent as they were when they were broadcast.

Gunston was also an endearing celebration of television as an artform. He had a long-running joke about aspiring for a Logie in almost every episode. Remind anyone of Tom Gleeson? He had me laughing my head off as he explained to Sally Struthers, who had just won an Emmy, what a Logie was: 'It's the biggest thing to happen to you in Australia, or maybe the world; it's television's answer to the Nobel Prize'. Sally, to her credit, was steamrolled by Gunston's Logie bit. 'It's terrible', she blurted out laughing, 'it sounds like a disease!'

Celebrities who could play along with Gunston and managed to keep the ball in the air with their own jokes could find themselves in an improvised sketch that went on a journey to the sublime and absurd.

Bamboozling the CIA

On 11 November 1975, Garry McDonald's producer called him out of the blue and told him to drop everything and get to Canberra, because they had a feeling that Gough Whitlam would be dismissed as prime minister.

And so Garry McDonald and his crew hightailed from the ABC in Gore Hill, Sydney to Canberra to arrive at a rally of Labor party faithful out the front of Parliament House. This is arguably the most important moment in the failure of the young Australian democracy. Gunston is at his best, making something out of nothing. Only having the world around him to play with, and his character to rely on, made what many people say is the only reliable record of that day. If you've ever seen footage from that day, you've seen Gunston's footage.

Ray Martin recounted this incredible story about that day on my podcast. According to ABC Archivist Wendy Borchers and journalist Tim Bowden's book about the 50th anniversary of the ABC (Aunty's Jubilee!, 2006), the 3 ABC TV newsreels of Gough on the steps of Parliament House making his infamous speech ('Well may we say God Save The Queen, because nothing will save the Governor-General') went missing.

But not just at the ABC. The newsrooms at Nine and Seven also had missing reels from that day. Some suggest it was the CIA, others like Ray Martin blame Gunston.

Because there was one reporter at the momentous event who wasn't allowed in a real newsroom. He was in the entertainment department – Norman Gunston.

The Little Aussie Bleeder bamboozled the CIA.

Norman Gunston led the way for Australian TV comedians to come and play in the space of anti-TV anti-comedy: Andrew Denton, Elle McFeast, Brad Blanks, Roy and HG, The Chaser, Tom Gleeson and Hard Quiz, Rebel Wilson and Shaun Micallef.

As TV still takes itself so very seriously today, I can't wait for the next Norman Gunston to come along and make their mark. There's plenty of talent raring to go: Aaron Chen, Vidya Rajan, Jenna Owen, Steen Raskopoulos, Susie Youseff and Laura Hughes are just some with shoulders strong enough to carry a show that challenges what we all think TV should be.

DAN ILIC

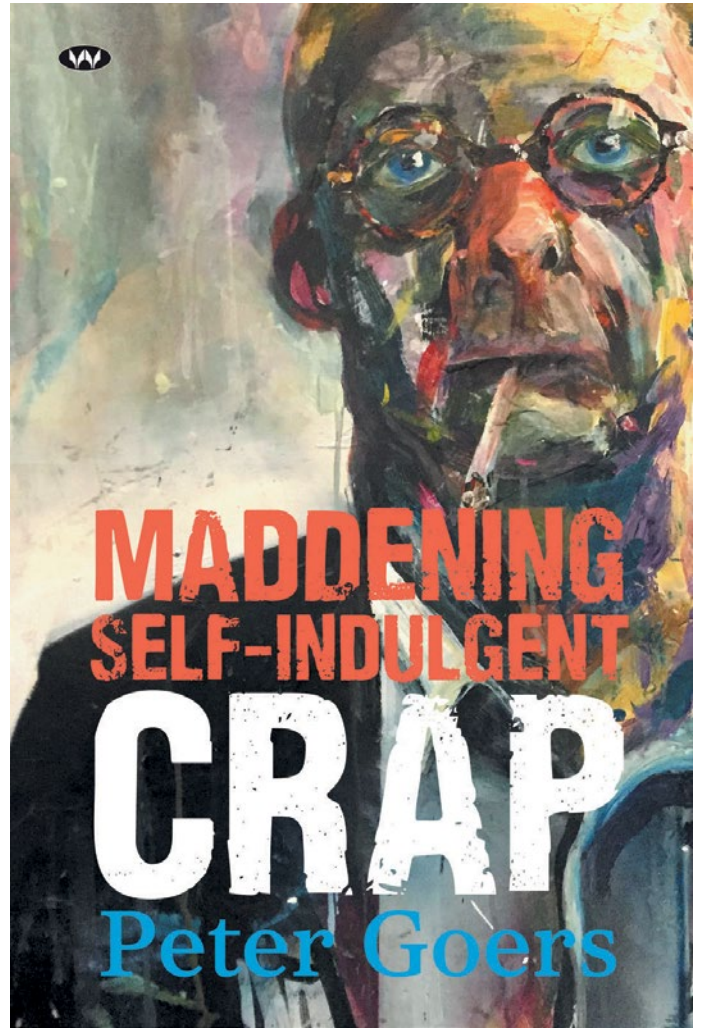
Investigative humorist Dan Ilic is a TV producer, writer, performer and director. He is also the host of the comedy podcast A Rational Fear.

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Moon Martin

– Doctor! Doctor! Gimme The News!

On May 11, Moon Martin was found dead on the floor of his Los Angeles home studio by a visiting friend. A notoriously private person, Martin had apparently been suffering in silence from lung cancer - a cruel fate for a non-smoker and under-indulger.

Since the mid-1980s, the overlooked and underrated Martin, who hadn't released an album of new material in over twenty years, had been unfairly relegated to a footnote in American Rock n Roll. Nonetheless, he's the author of a hit song that has refused to fade away – in 1979, UK's Robert Palmer took Martin's *Bad Case Of Loving Of You* high into the charts and made it into such a signature tune that it's continually misled many into thinking it was a Palmer original. However, Moon Martin will always be much more than a one song wonder – Dave Edmunds, Willy DeVille, Johnny Rivers, Nick Lowe, Alvin Stardust, Boz Scaggs, Michelle Phillips, Frankie Miller, Hanoi Rocks, Bette Midler, Jo-Ei Sonnier, Rachel Sweet, The Association, Koko Taylor and The Searchers have all borrowed from the Martin songbook which, if nothing else, reinforces his remarkable accessibility as a songwriter. As a solo artist, Martin was equally convincing and, for a brief period, was one of the true believers hell-bent on returning Rock n Roll back whence it came.

Born in the Air Force town of Altus, on Oklahoma's southwest edge, in either 1945 or 1950, John David Martin fed himself on a diet of Rockabilly and 50s R&B before forming his first band, The Disciples, with singer and second guitarist Jim Pulte and drummer Erik Dalton (later a member of the Rick Roberts model of The Flying Burrito Brothers). Mixing originals with R&B covers, The Disciples cut three regional singles and took gigs up as far north as Michigan. While playing in and around Detroit, The Disciples hooked up with local band leader and Del Shannon cohort Fontaine "Dugg" Brown who was about to relocate to Los Angeles together with Shannon and manager Dan Bourgoise. Phone numbers were exchanged and when Brown reached LA he called either Pulte or Martin and invited them to bring The Disciples out west with the promise of producing an album.

When The Disciples finally reached Los Angeles, they changed the band name to the more contemporary sounding Southwind at the suggestion of a record company exec and released their first album on the short-lived Venture label, usually an outlet for Soul and Funk acts, under Brown's guidance who also contributed two songs of his own. The debut LP was a witch's brew of Folk Rock, white boy Soul, Psychedelia and down home Blues mostly written and sung by Pulte. Producer Brown's investment in the band extended to full-time member status when organist Phil Hope gave notice. In 1970, Southwind were signed to the Bob Krasnow and Tommy LiPuma founded Blue Thumb label and released two albums, *Ready To Ride* and *What A Place To Land*, full of rugged Country Rock with an extra helping of bar band muscle. The bulk of the songwriting was shared between Pulte and Brown and fleshed out with souped up covers of Johnny Cash and Hank Williams.

At the same time, Martin's guitar chops had progressed way above and beyond journeyman fare and he was able snare some fairly prestigious studio work. His guitar can be heard on Del Shannon's final Liberty LP *The Further Adventures Of Charles Westover* and he guested on albums from Linda Ronstadt, Jackie De Shannon and fellow Okie Jessie Ed Davis. Martin's growing LA connections almost made him an Eagle when a pre-Eagles Don Henley and Glenn Frey asked him to fill in for an unavailable Bernie Leadon one night. After he'd finished the one-off assignment, Martin was asked by the pair if he were interested in



joining a new band they were about to form. He politely declined for two reasons – he didn't feel he was the right player for what Henley and Frey were proposing and he wanted to remain loyal to his Southwind compadres. Ironically, Southwind disbanded some weeks later.

"Anyway, Bernie Leadon was a much better player than I was." Martin told friend Ron Balliet in 2000.

No longer part of a working band, Martin felt that the time was right to go solo. He started writing his own songs and was soon mingling with many of the cosmic cowboy hopefuls who were drifting through the canyon communities of Los Angeles during the early 70s. To pay the rent and put food on the table, he drove a truck and worked in a flower shop. An opportunity to record an album in 1974 with famed producer Jack Nitzsche stalled but three years later, Martin signed on with Capitol Records as Moon Martin and was ready to rock. The name change to Moon came about from the word itself featuring in many of his song lyrics and to avoid confusion with English singer/songwriter John Martyn. Finally, in 1978, Martin had his first solo album, *Shots From A Cold Nightmare*, sitting in the racks.

The antithesis of the then current 'LA Sound', *Shots From A Cold Nightmare* was packed with radio friendly, punchy Rock n Roll gems that owed far more to Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry than James Taylor or Jackson Browne. Lyrically, Martin worked the same territory as Del Shannon – concise tales of infidelity, heartbreak, revenge, love lost and love that never was, all offset by a yearning vocal and

RIGHT: John 'Moon' Martin, 1992.
 FAR RIGHT: Southwind: From left: Erik Dalton, Fontaine Brown., Jim Pulte & John 'Moon' Martin early 1970s.
 LEFT PAGE: Moon Martin & The Ravens late 1970s.



a spiky lead guitar. Martin also had a flair for hardboiled imagery that effectively lent songs like *Hot Nite In Dallas* and *Cadillac Walk* a sharp narrative edge. A year later, Martin delivered the sophomore *Escape From Domination* that offered ten more examples of his trademark straightforward guitar rock including the chugging *Rolene* which became a medium sized hit.

After years of the hard slog, Martin was suddenly hot property – he was receiving ample radio rotation, excited critics were touting him as the next big thing in New Wave and skinny tie Punk circles and, more importantly, artists from other genres were beginning to dig into his catalogue. New York R&B outfit Mink DeVille found room for *Cadillac Walk* and *Rolene* on their first two albums and, in 1979, the urbane funkster Robert Palmer took *Bad Case Of Loving You* high into the worldwide charts and gave it another life of its own. Meanwhile, Martin quietly delivered his third album, *Street Fever*, which, instead of putting him up there with Graham Parker, Dave Edmunds and Tom Petty, locked him up in cult artist prison.

In theory, *Street Fever* should have consolidated Martin's place in the big league - stacked with more hook laden, no-nonsense Rock n Roll, the album was a wonderful antidote to the bombast and excess that had crept into a lot of Rock music throughout the 70s. There was the aural love note to Chuck Berry (*Rollin' In My Rolls*), a charming throwback to Merseybeat (*Whispers*) and the Power Pop tour de force *Signal For Help* that should have been blaring out of car radios all across the world. Inexplicably, *Street Fever* yielded no hits and gained only moderate sales.

Either chosen by Capitol or Martin himself, Robert Palmer got the job of producing Martin's fourth album *Mystery Ticket*. What seemed like a good idea at the time resulted in Martin's poorest selling album. Rather than stick with Martin's brand of guitar based Rock n Roll and retain his dependable rhythm section of Denny and Rick Croy, Palmer opted to go the full synth-pop route and bury most tracks under a thick layer of keyboards and the obligatory gated reverb on the drums. Very much a product of 1980s studio sheen, *Mystery Ticket* alienated or confused most of Martin's fan base, uncomfortable with all the sonic window dressing, and failed to chart in the US. However, the album wasn't a total misfire and had several redeeming features- *Don't You Double Cross Me* was flat-out guitar driven Rock N Roll and later covered by Dave Edmunds, the Andrew Gold produced *Aces With You* was given a lush Spectorpop feel, *She's In Love With My Car* acknowledged Martin's Rockabilly roots and the languid *Paid The Price* sounded like the best song Arthur Alexander never wrote. Sadly, *Mystery Ticket* was the end of Martin's association with a major label.

Although Martin's popularity was beginning to falter in the US, he still had a rabid European fan base, particularly in Sweden and France, who had no intentions of writing him off. Subsequently in 1985, Martin's fifth album, *Mixed Emotions*, was released only in France although still on a Capitol imprint. *Mixed Emotions* remains an album of its time – Martin was still continuing his flirtation with synth rock and some strong originals, like *Johnny Get The Handcuffs* and *Short Skirts*, were sabotaged by an overload of programmed keyboards and drums. A synthed-up cover of *The Zombies She's Not There* offered more of the same. Long out of print, *Mixed Emotions* has never been reissued on CD and is often overlooked in some discographies.

Martin was, more or less, invisible for the rest of the 1980s and going into the new decade he seemed in danger of becoming a has-been. Then, in 1992, France's Fnac Music issued *Dreams On File*, his first album of new material in seven years. Limited distribution and a label that went belly up two years later doomed an album that was Martin's most satisfying since *Street Fever*. Although remnants of 80s synths and big drum sounds lingered on one or two tracks,

Dreams On File was mostly pedal to the metal, guitar-is-kicking Rock n Roll. Also, Martin's songwriting had lost none of its appeal – the dreamy Barry Goldberg co-write *What's She Doing With You* would have been a perfect fit for Roy Orbison and the self-explanatory *Let It Rock* shaped up as good fodder for rootsy outfits like *The Paladins* or *The Skeletons*. In different circumstances, *Dreams On File* should have made Martin ripe for rediscovery.

Nashville's newly established CORE Entertainment Corporation was one of the new breed of independent labels prepared to support cult favourites like Martin and added him to their roster while Fnac Music was still in its death throes. For the first time in over a decade, Martin was once again on a domestic imprint. Within two years, CORE's wheels started to wobble but the label was able to squeeze out one album, *Lunar Samples*, in 1995 which was primarily *Dreams On File* under another name augmented with a few live tracks. By 1996, CORE had ceased to issue product and *Lunar Samples* fell into cut-out bin oblivion.

Although now labelless, Martin continued writing and recording in his home studio and after a four year absence his final album, *Louisiana Jukebox*, was released on the French label Sonodisc and then, later in the year, issued on the UK based Eagle Records. For reasons unknown, *Louisiana Jukebox* was never given a US release. Had a roots-centric label like Hightone or Yep Roc gambled on the album, Martin could have cornered some of the Americana market. Finally free of synthesizers and drum programs, *Louisiana Jukebox* pushed the guitars high up in the mix and went deep into Martin's tangled root system of Rockabilly, R&B and Blues. The album's ten originals ran the gamut from gutbucket Country (*Rockin' Little Honky Tonk*), moody Swamp Rock (*Voodoo River*), Rockabilly (*Get Hot Or Go Home*), roadhouse Blues (*Good Mornin' Policeman*) and arse kicking Rock n Roll (*Took Me To School* and *Pictures Of Pain*) through to the Cajun stomp of the title track. Too bad that *Louisiana Jukebox* just bounced off the wall and went nowhere, a sad fate for an album that could still touch a much larger audience.

For the next two decades, Martin, reclusive by nature, avoided the public arena. His best known songs, *Bad Case Of Loving You* and *Cadillac Walk*, both attracted over a dozen cover versions which was enough to give him a comfortable financial ride for the rest of his life. Although not necessarily part of the music business but more in the business of music, Martin never stopped writing songs and cutting demos. Every now and again there was a whisper of a new album in the works but nothing more than that. Martin, in his lifetime, never received the recognition and acclaim that he really deserved, he should be remembered, and even admired, as a genuine rocker who was able to combine the unvarnished spontaneity of 50's Rock n Roll with the more self-aware proficiency of 70s Power Pop and make it into something all of his own.

"I always loved Moon's knowledge of pure Rock n Roll." remarked Martin's former bass player Denny Croy.

Next time you hear *Bad Case Of Loving You* coming over the airwaves, stop and acknowledge the guy who wrote and first recorded it. Moon Martin deserves much more than a moment of your time.

MICHAEL MACDONALD

Special thanks: Ron Balliet, Denny Croy and Erik Dalton

Keri McInerney

World famous Australian singer Keri McInerney shares her story as part of our Inspirational Women series.



As life goes, things, at times, have been difficult.

I was born in Sydney. But almost wasn't. My grandparents wanted me aborted. I was a 'bastard child', and an embarrassment to the family. They almost succeeded.

My early childhood was spent with my extended family, and interluded with their drinking. Too much. I witnessed fights, brawls almost. During one of these drink-infused examples of violent chaos, my aunt threw a pot of cabbage across the room at my uncle, hitting the wall where I had been hiding. The boiling water fell onto me and burnt my skin badly.

As a small child, I also suffered beatings from my father. He who would use his belt buckle. Full force. On the night of my 6th birthday party, he came home drunk. He was angry, and aggressive. He beat me again, all because I was happy about my birthday party and my presents. My mother saved me that day, she got between me and my dad's belt buckle and was also injured.

The joy of my childhood was music. My mother taught me to sing and I adored everything music. I would enter talent quests with my mum and dad, and I won a few. I knew then I had to be a singer (or a schoolteacher, I couldn't make up my mind)! I sang at home, at school, learnt jazz ballet and eventually auditioned for Junior Bandstand. I was fortunate to score an opportunity to be a part of the show and worked with Geoff Harvey. I sang my heart out.

My parents separated when I was 12. It was a traumatic time. We moved. I was taken away from the music opportunities that I had worked towards. A tough time for me. With that move, I left my music career and my best friends.

After a period of living with my grandparents, we moved to Inverell, in NSW.

My school years there saw me striving to be somebody. I loved Inverell, it had a homeliness about it, and I went into a brand new school at

Macintyre High School. It was wonderful. We were all new kids, so this time, I fitted in perfectly.

I began gaining school and sports awards, and becoming involved in Student Council. I ended up becoming the President of the Student Council in year 11.

That year, my mother abandoned me, to be with the new man in her life. She moved back to Sydney, and I stayed in Inverell in our unit, using her pension money to pay the rent, buy food and continue my schooling in Year 12. I had also found love, so I wasn't wanting to go anywhere.

It was a scary time, living alone, independent, making my own decisions and paying all the bills. I couldn't tell anyone that my mum had left me, as if it was discovered, I would probably be taken into government care, so I hid the truth and pretended my mum was still living with me at home.

The next two years, I made a life for myself and began succeeding at school. I started a dance school, teaching 100 students and began performing as a dancer professionally at age 16. I was becoming strong and capable and for once, I finally began believing in myself.

Then, my Mum returned, after breaking up with her new man. She arrived home unhappy, depressed and she seemed angry with life. She also became angry with me...all of the time.

Our relationship became very toxic, as she was emotionally and mentally abusing me on a daily basis. It got so bad, that during my higher school certificate, she threw me out of home. I found places to stay and still attended school. Nightly, I would talk my way into staying with a different friend. I was couch-surfing. I was homeless.

I found it hard to study and the distress of the situation impacted me. I couldn't focus.

Somehow, I still achieved a wonderful accolade, and I was never so proud. In year 12, as I topped the state in practical art and had my painting purchased by the NSW Education Department for their State Exhibition, a lifelong honour. But, due to failing my exams, I missed out on any university placement.

After schooling, my dreams put on hold, refocused and went to TAFE, got a part time job at the meatworks and moved into my first unit with an old school friend

We had the time of our lives for a while. I ended up getting a more secure job as a typist receptionist in an office and eventually left that to become a barmaid. I loved being a barmaid, as I always enjoyed



people and my friendly, empathic nature, made me many friends. This was the happiest time.

When I turned 19, I started falling ill and was diagnosed with Stage 4 Endometriosis. On my 20th birthday, the doctor told me I would not be able to have children. I was heartbroken, but my boyfriend, asked me to marry him. The following year, we did so.

We then moved to Hervey Bay in Qld, built our first home. I continued to struggle with Endometriosis and became sick. Then, a miracle. I fell pregnant! My beautiful daughter Kandace-Lace was born, a ray of sunshine entered our lives, our miracle baby!

I wanted to sing again. I auditioned for a band in Hervey Bay. I got the job and began gigging around the town. 5 years after my music career began, I started song writing, entered a song contest and won three of the major categories. I then sent my songs away to a record company and to my amazement scored a record deal. It was the most exciting time for me, that dream of becoming a singer, was coming true.

I scored a Top 20 hit single, and went on to achieve chart hits, major awards and toured throughout Australia and internationally. I worked with some of the finest musicians. I was living my dream.

I had illness continue, and appear. Endometriosis and Adenomyosis. Surgery. Many times. In between, I continued with music, my life. I was chosen to represent Australia, in America. In the end, I did so 3 times, winning a world championship in performance and a 7 Gold Medals, 5 Silver and 2 Bronze. I continued writing and recording my own music. Chart success in Australia and overseas.

After further health issues occurred and were settled, or so I thought, after 2011, life was going so well. My music was still amazing, I was achieving some great awards in my song writing and performing in venues all over Australia and overseas. My personal life was happy and life was good.

I began co-writing with a lovely man, Greg T Ross, whose wife had passed away due to Pancreatic Cancer. The year prior to meeting Greg, I had had a scan on my tummy thinking it was Endometriosis again, but they found an IPNM in my pancreas. It was benign but always has the possibility of turning into a cancer. When I met Greg, he had planned to do a charity concert in honour of his wife and to raise funds for Pancreatic Cancer Research. I offered to perform. Greg shared a song he had written for his wife Wendy and asked me if I would like to co-write with him. I said yes and began helping him with the song. Unfortunately, our little project was about to be waylaid. Life had other ideas.

In 2019, I was began having vision issues. I was diagnosed with brain aneurysm. In a moment my life had changed forever. I cried. A lot.

I had brain surgery.

Just before falling ill, I had released my first single which went to #1 and gained a platinum and gold record! It was the strangest of timings. I was so proud to achieve such a great thing and I believe it make me work even harder to get well, to enable me to ride the wave of success.

In the following months, I released my second single worldwide, a song written with my co-writer, Greg T Ross, 'Let it be love – Song for Wendy', immediately gathered support and airplay worldwide and raced up the world charts to #1. The track also was awarded Gold and Platinum status. A beautiful project which all took place at a time of challenge for me personally, but a promise kept to a dear friend became the boost I needed to keep going.

After that I gain four more #1's on the Global charts and more Gold and Platinum records. It was the best of times. I was very grateful.

These days, I'm performing, touring, and living my best life. I don't waste a moment anymore. I am also raising brain aneurysm awareness and now work with the Brain Aneurysm Australia group in supporting other victims. My life experience helps others every day and that's a beautiful thing.

My life has been a difficult and challenging one. There have been times I have been broken, alone, abandoned, and afraid, but I learnt from the very beginning, that no matter what you face, never give up.

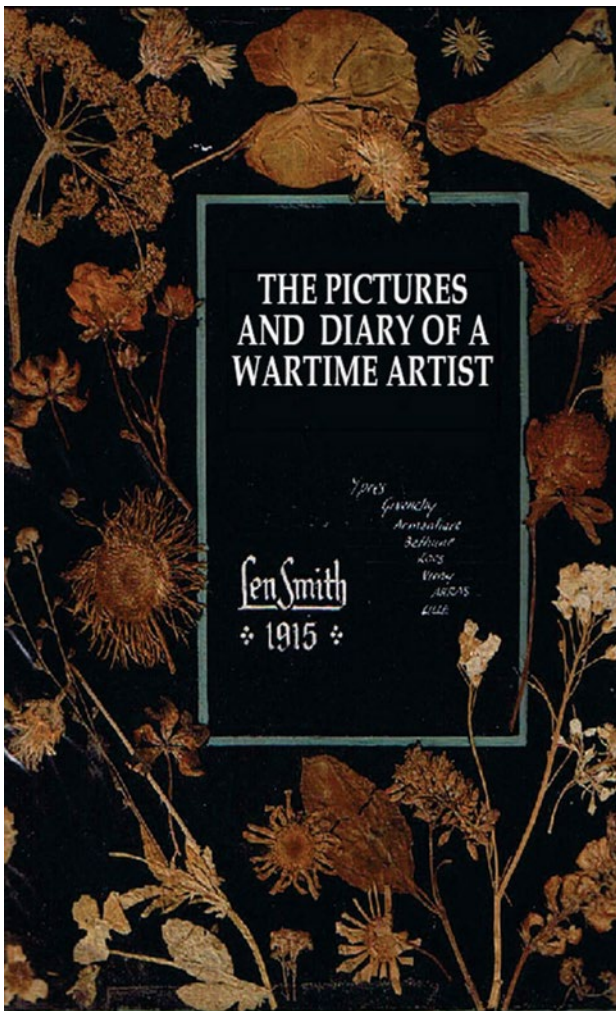
I have learnt that whatever hits you and knocks you down, you can never throw in the towel, you must refocus your mind and find an inner strength to keep going. I know now that its faith that gets you through, belief in something greater and it teaches you that you must also belief in yourself and know that all things are possible.

I have so much I want to do in my life. Music, spiritual teaching, seeing my daughter and my grandsons grow into beautiful human beings and sharing more of my life with my wonderful man.

My life has taught me resilience and I guess from the bad always comes the good. But its what you focus on, your mind is your most powerful ally.

I'm alive. And living my best life. Don't ever give up. There are no more 'what if's' in my life, only a zest for life in every sense of the word.

KERI MCINERNEY



Published by Forgotten Titles

As an accredited War Artist the work of Arthur Leonard Smith in the First World War was an early form of espionage. His remarkably accurate and detailed drawings were used to report enemy troop positions in a time before cameras were readily available.

Len Smith born in 1892 grew up in Walthamstow, London. He enrolled in the 7th (City of London Battalion) as an infantryman on September 19, 1914 which happened to be his birthday. He sailed for France on March 17, 1915.

He took part in battles at Loos, the first time the British used gas. In March 1916 he was drafted to the 140th Brigade Sharpshooters as a sniper. He wrote his diary on tiny pages of paper torn from a notebook and hidden down his trousers or puttees.

In a note to the reader he says: "I preferred to retain a faithful copy of the diary as written on the spot" - 'the spot' being sometimes sordid, noisy, terrifying, wretched and utterly uncongenial to clear thought and orderly writing. Remember too there was always the persistent thought in the back of one's mind, that it was all too foolish anyway and that no effort was very worthwhile, there might never be a 'tomorrow'.

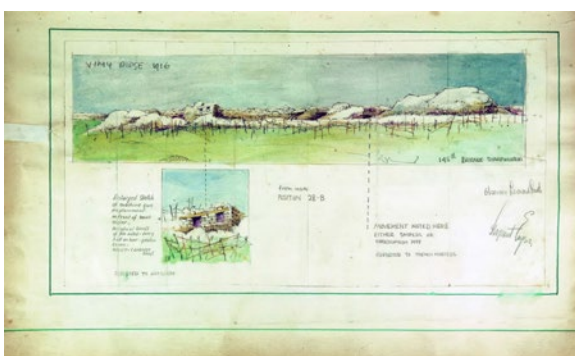
The deadliest weapons he possessed were his pencils and pad. He would crawl into enemy lines – and draw. One of his most amazing sorties was to draw German positions at Vimy Ridge, later to be one of the most significant battles of the war.

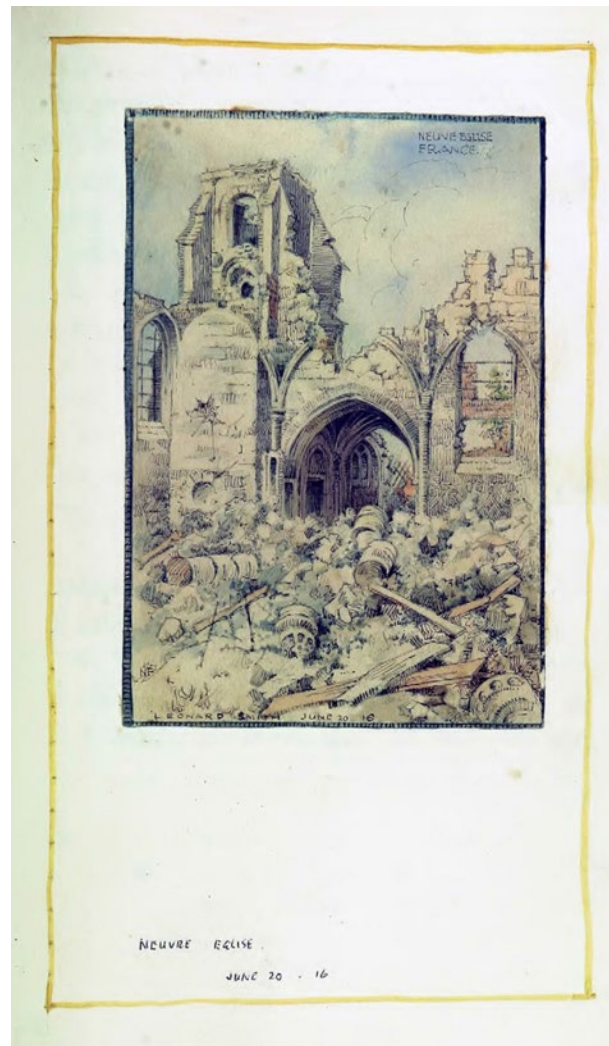
Len Smith transports the reader to the midst of the conflict. He writes: "What a game getting breakfast is in a trench – the wide extensive search for wood, the joy of finding some old bit of farm wagon, breaking it up with the entrenching tool, then the hunt around for paper, usually ending in one using the precious little letters from home – the real sacrifices for a drop of something hot." Elsewhere he comments: "The Germans were very near us in this area. We could actually hear them singing and oftimes they'd shout something rude in German and we in excellent English asked for various food dainties to be brought us by the waiters opposite, only instead of ringing the bell for them we pulled our triggers."

Another extract: "I was detailed to do a special job up in the trenches almost as soon as we arrived. Brigade Headquarters issued instructions for a panorama sketch of the German line – embracing their whole section that faced our 140th Brigade front, with all useful observation notes attached. This was a far easier job to command than do, it was quite too utterly fierce to attempt to draw up there at this period – the Huns' shelling was almost incessant – so I had to scramble 'all over the shop', making rough pencil notes over a period of four days – real, hard risky work – and at dusk pulling back to the billet cellar to prepare the whole thing as a finished coloured sketch by the aid of one candle. A Panorama that when eventually pieced together was some two yards long."

He also served in the camouflage factory in Wimereux where his artistic skills again served him well. He wrote: "One's special job would be to go to a stipulated section of the front line trenches – and by means of a carefully drawn map – find the exact spot indicated where an observation post or listening post was needed (always as close as possible of course to the enemy) in this case it was a tree which was standing among the Hun's barbed wire. I would make a careful sketch showing all necessary detail which when completed would be sent down the line to the workshops where they would proceed to make a facsimile tree in iron and steel, hollow, with a ladder running up the centre to the top. It would then be painted in natural colours and afterwards dispatched to its destination, the spot where the natural twin tree stood – now would commence a job of much daring danger and need for caution – the old tree would be brought down – the new steel one takes its place – all in the darkness of one night – praying Jerry will not tumble to the game and it all went well."

Len married his sweetheart on leave in 1917 and survived the war.









If we're brave enough

Too much barking at the moon,
Too much wanting to be with you.
Too much spreading myself
Rice-paper thin.
Too much I missed you.

Let them whisper about us
Let their stories be true,
Let them think we've done everything
They ever wanted to do.
Let's give them something to talk about,
Let's do things until we shout
Out loud
Like a siren.

If we're brave enough
We'll draw a line in the sand,
And do things with each other
That some think should be banned.
If we're brave enough,
We'll cry out loudly
And sing sweetly
And talk so intimately,
It's like things
We might say to the stars.

GREG T ROSS

PETER REES & SUE LANGFORD

author of the bestselling *ANZAC Girls* and *Lancaster Men*

A WEEK

A STORY OF ENDURING LOVE

IN

FROM THE BURMA RAILWAY

SEPTEMBER

A moving account of love, war and the extraordinary resilience of POW Scott Heywood

A story of enduring love, resilience and survival on the Burma Railway from bestselling writer Peter Rees and psychologist Sue Langford.

Doug Heywood was a teenager when he discovered, in a shoebox hidden in a wardrobe, hundreds of letters, all written by his father, Scott Heywood. As a POW on the infamous Burma Railway, Scott wrote almost daily to his young wife, Margery, on scraps of paper that had to be hidden from guards. These letters tell of an enduring love – and also, intriguingly, of how Scott dealt with the most brutally testing circumstances.

Scott's story has echoes of another story happening 7000 kilometres away at the same time. Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist, was rounded up with his family and sent to Auschwitz in September 1942. Frankl later wrote in his classic book *Man's Search for Meaning* that the last of the human freedoms was the ability 'to choose one's attitude in any set of circumstances'. Scott Heywood and Viktor Frankl, on opposite sides of the world, found their own ways to survive that were uncannily similar.

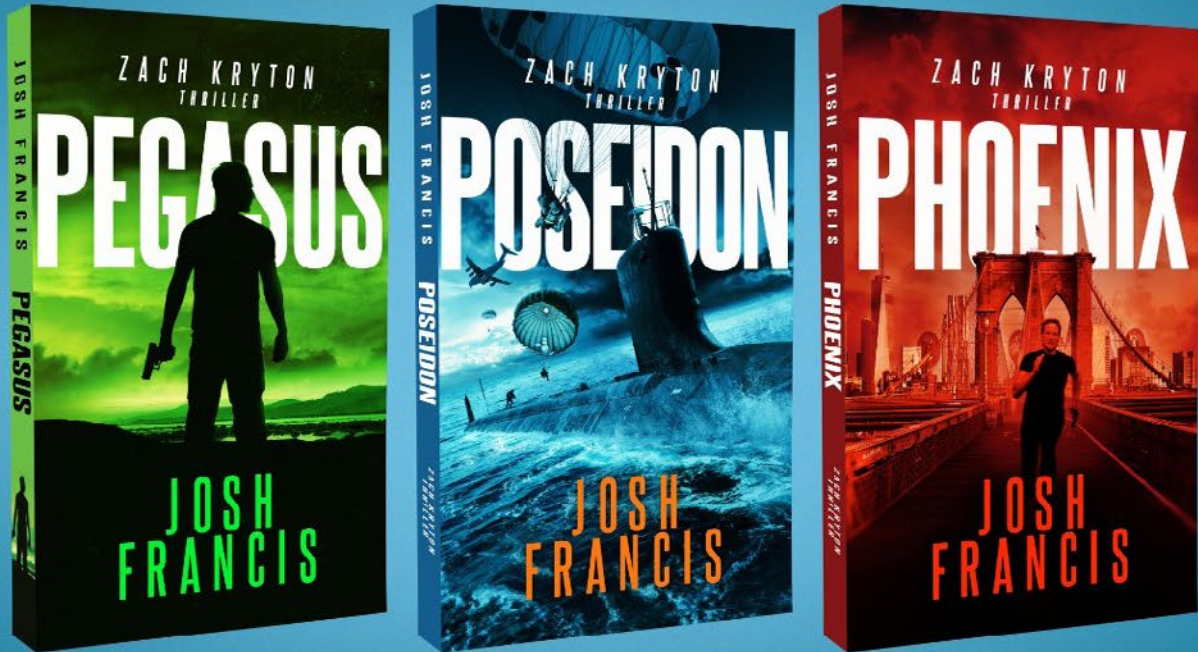
This is the untold story of one man, one ordinary man, and his war. Woven through it is Margery's story, as she waited anxiously with their two young children in rural Victoria, trapped in an emotional rollercoaster, unaware that he was writing letters to her that could not be posted. This is a powerful and moving story of love, resilience and survival.

Published by Harper Collins

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Peter Rees has had a long career as a journalist covering federal politics and as an author specialising in Australian military history. His books include *Anzac Girls*; *Desert Boys*; *Lancaster Men*; *Bearing Witness: The Remarkable Life of Charles Bean*; and *The Missing Man: From the Outback to Tarakan, the Powerful Story of Len Waters, Australia's First Aboriginal Fighter Pilot*.

Sue Langford has been a practising psychologist for more than thirty years, the past twenty of which have been in private practice, working in both clinical and organisational roles. She has provided consultancy services to the Department of Defence and other government agencies over the years. Her particular interest is in trauma management.



Discarded by his own country, former soldier Zach Kryton thought the days of risking his life hunting bad guys in the dark corners of the world were over. Called back into action, Kryton soon finds himself surrounded by intrigue, espionage and action as he discovers that a routine operation exposes a conspiracy with global ramifications.

Finally, an Australian protagonist for modern times, with a story that could be taken straight from the headlines!

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Visit Matt's business:
www.mxmmadebymatt.com.au

Register for the Enterprise programme **here** or email:
events@princes-trust.org.au

Greg T Ross interviews Matt Lewis in the TLP Podcasts:
PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

BEYOND SERVICE: DIGGERS HELPING DIGGERS

Australian Army veteran and PTSD survivor Matt Lewis attended this year's Anzac Day for the first time in six years, thanks in part to a therapeutic hobby he has turned into a business.

Last September Mr Lewis began creating Guardian Lights, timber and resin 'night lights', to help his fellow veterans and trauma survivors.

"If I help one person, then I have achieved what I want to achieve. And I suppose that's what's important to me," he said.

Having served his country as a soldier and a police officer, the 42-year-old has his own battles with PTSD, anxiety, and alcoholism.

Mr Lewis said he turned to woodworking as a form of therapy after hitting one of his lowest points.

"I was reclusive, I wouldn't leave the house, I wouldn't do anything," he said.

At the suggestion of his DVA caseworker, the Queensland veteran signed up for a woodworking course.

"It was very therapeutic in the sense that I could just concentrate on what I was doing and the attention to detail," he said.

"It ignited something inside of me. I never had any ambition to start a business, it was just that I enjoyed working with the timber."

When COVID-19 struck, Mr Lewis signed up to Prince's Trust Australia's free Enterprise Online programme,

which supports serving and ex-serving ADF members and their partners to start their own businesses. Through the programme, Mr Lewis was inspired to start creating his Guardian Lights.

The Ipswich father said he had been thinking it would be great if someone else created the lights, but Enterprise Online "lit a fire" inside of him to do it himself.

Mr Lewis started "tinkering" and before he knew, he had registered a business name, set up a website, and created his first Guardian Light.

"It was after one of the first sessions with Enterprise Online when they asked us 'what is your product?' I thought, this is what I want my product to be, so I better see if it works. And it did."

And while Mr Lewis created the lights with other veterans in mind, he was shocked to discover how much he benefitted from having one in his room.

"Before, I'd wake up and have that moment of panic. I'd be searching the shadows, I'd be so hyperaware and vigilant," he said.

"The Guardian Light allowed me to still do that threat scan, but because I could see, I would calm down quicker and go back to sleep."

Mr Lewis said bad nights were often due to flashbacks and nightmares of things he had seen as a soldier and a police officer.

Mr Lewis joined the Australian Army at 18 in 1996. He deployed to East Timor in 1999 and again in 2002 as an infantryman with the 5th/7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

Mr Lewis discharged from the Army in 2003 and served in the Queensland Police until 2019.

He said this year he was "very determined" to attend Anzac Day for the first time in six years.

"I have real problems with crowds and loud noises," he said.

"But with a bit of confidence and lessening of my symptoms, I wanted to make that effort to get into town and march in Brisbane.

"It's about respecting those that couldn't come home, those that can't march. And then bringing awareness to other people, by us marching."

Since then, Mr Lewis continues to create Guardian Lights to stand watch over his fellow veterans and find peace in creating handmade items out of timber.

WRITTEN FOR PRINCE'S TRUST AUSTRALIA BY COURTNEY SNOWDEN

Australian Defence Force partner and freelance copywriter

"BEFORE, I'D WAKE UP AND HAVE THAT MOMENT OF PANIC. I'D BE SEARCHING THE SHADOWS, I'D BE SO HYPERAWARE AND VIGILANT."



All photos courtesy Prince's Trust Australia.

About Prince's Trust Australia

Prince's Trust Australia is a national charity that helps young people prepare for the rapidly changing world of work, inspires veterans and their families into entrepreneurship and self-employment, and champions resilient sustainable communities.

Our work is inspired by our Founder and President, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, and is driven by his vision for a more sustainable future.

We also work in partnership with our colleagues across The Prince's Trust Group, a global network of charities transforming lives and building sustainable communities in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and across the Commonwealth. Together, we promote, support, and inspire people and their communities to flourish.

Since 2015, Prince's Trust Australia has been inspiring veterans and their families with the confidence, skills, and networks they need to explore self-employment through the Enterprise program.

The programme is guided by an Advisory Council, chaired by the Governor-General, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) and attended by Major General Natasha Fox AM CSC, Head of People Capability at Department of Defence.

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Proof of life: The Headstone Project

Among West Terrace Cemetery's sea of headstones, it's the monuments that draw your gaze. Epitaphs of names and dates with short biographies memorialise the fact that a person once lived. And yet, among the sea of headstones, there are many patches of bare earth; unmarked graves of names long forgotten.

Surprisingly, a number of these graves belong to men who served their country during the First World War, yet they are not honoured like many of their peers. These diggers returned home to a very different country to the one they left, perhaps to fall on hard times, suffering from undiagnosed post-traumatic stress and often dying young. Many were survived by families who struggled to put food on the table, let alone afford a headstone.

Today, a small group of volunteers known as The Headstone Project is undertaking a colossal detective project to locate and commemorate the final resting places of these World War I veterans across some 900 cemeteries in South Australia.

Endurance and ingenuity are two of the qualities embodied by the Anzac Spirit, and are qualities shared by the group, which has been operating in South Australia since 2017. So far in SA, the project has commemorated more than a dozen veterans with newly-made headstones and official ceremonies attended by family descendants.

The Headstone Project SA president John Brownlie says the initiative is ramping up this year, and by the end of 2021 will have held a further 30 commemoration services at Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Cheltenham. John says there could be as many as 2500 unidentified WWI diggers buried across South Australia.

"A man's bravery should be recognised and our view is that anybody who's been brave enough to put on a uniform for their country should be recognised in death. They deserve to be remembered," says John.

Many of these men died quite young. They came back to a period of economic uncertainty, culminating with the Great Depression. A lot of men were badly broken by what they'd been through and were suffering from what they called shell shock, but what we recognise today as PTSD.

"Very frequently, a grieving family was faced with the choice of either putting food on the table or putting a marker on a loved one's grave, and you can understand that the welfare of the family would win every time."

The group investigates cemeteries systematically, walking row-by-row with a burial map to identify and mark every unmarked plot. They look for men who fit a time-frame that means they would have been old enough for service in WWI and then check the National Archives to see if the person had completed military service.

When the group gets a hit, the real investigation work begins to track down a descendant. "We can't just walk into a cemetery and erect a headstone, it's imperative that we find the relatives. And, of course, the reason that we're doing it is for the relatives. It's not for us, but it is immensely satisfying on a personal level," John says.

"We're hoping to restore the identities of these people who were so long forgotten."

To date, commemorations have included one at Port Pirie, where an unmarked grave was determined to belong to war veteran who had been awarded a Military Medal, and one at West Terrace Cemetery for an Indigenous soldier who fought in the infamous Battle of Messines.

The project is yet to investigate West Terrace Cemetery, but anticipates there are likely to be many there.

The Headstone Project seeks new volunteers, as well as tips from people who suspect they are related to a digger in an unmarked grave. The project also desperately needs further funding to continue their work as each headstone costs about \$800 and are constructed by prisoners of Mobilong Prison at Murray Bridge.

Vice president Jane Mitta-Alderson says South Australia is particularly challenging because of the hundreds of cemeteries scattered across the vast state.

"Many of these cemeteries are in rural areas, so it's quite a challenge, but we are determined to find them all; that's our goal. For many of the families, it has been an emotional experience and some have been brought together by a man none of them had ever met," says Jane.

"These soldiers have fallen through the cracks, through perhaps misadventure, illness, or mental or emotional distress and it's just as important to recognise them as anyone else. If you look in a cemetery, you see everyone who's got an identity, and these people are worthy of that as well."

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BEN KELLY

This story first appeared in SALIFE

A Cemetery of Firsts

One of the most well-known cemeteries in South Australia, as well as one of few metropolitan cemeteries within a Central Business District, West Terrace Cemetery in South Australia has been in operation for more than 180 years.

Home to many of South Australia's notable figures, particularly in the early settlement of the South Australian colony, West Terrace has a rich history and provides a fascinating cross-section of Australian culture across the generations.

Since its inception in 1837, West Terrace Cemetery is home to more than 150,000 burials and is now administered by Adelaide Cemeteries, a State Government entity. Approximately 20 burials still take place every year across the 27 hectares each year, with a limited number of premium areas offered.

West Terrace Cemetery was home to the first Crematorium in the Southern Hemisphere, with the first cremation taking place in May 1903, and has paved the way for a series of innovations throughout the next century.

The most notable of these is the establishment of the Australian Commonwealth's first War Cemetery in March 1920. The AIF section is now home to more than 4150 veterans and their families with the upkeep and maintenance undertaken with care and pride by Adelaide Cemeteries staff.

The section contains the graves of four Victoria Cross recipients from World War One. Arthur Seaforth Blackburn

VC (1892-1960) was among the first 50 Australian Soldiers to land at Gallipoli, Turkey and was a founding member of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League (the RSL). Philip Davey VC (1896-1953) single handedly capture an enemy post in Merris, France, and earlier that year in Belgium, Davey crawled under heavy fire into no man's land to rescue a badly wounded comrade. Reginald Roy Inwood VC (1890-1971) was awarded the VC for his gallant actions at Polygon Wood, Belgium where he seized an enemy stronghold alone before disarming an enemy machine gun nest with the help of a fellow soldier. Joergen Christian Jensen VC (1891-1922) captured an enemy machine gun post near Noreuil, France, causing two enemy parties to surrender.

The Cross of Sacrifice which is the focal point of the ground, was the first Cross of Sacrifice to be erected in an Australian burial ground. A gift from the Federal Government, it was unveiled on the 12 October 1924 and underwent a refurbishment in 2015. The Cross stands 10 metres tall and is made of white Angaston marble.

Adelaide Cemeteries are proud to host a Remembrance Day Service each year at West Terrace Cemetery to recognize the sacrifices made.

West Terrace Cemetery 2021 Remembrance Day Service

For information and to register your attendance
contact events@aca.sa.gov.au

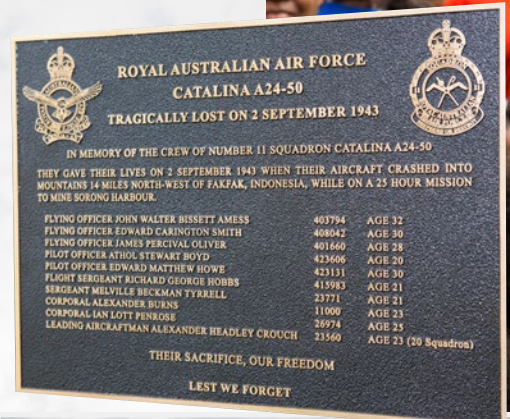
*The event will run in accordance with
Government Restrictions at time of event.*

Catalina Recovery Mission

BY WING COMMANDER (DR) MARYANNE WHITING

On September 2nd, 1943, No 11 Squadron Catalina, A-24-50, failed to return from a mine laying sortie to Sorong, in then Dutch New Guinea, and was reported missing with a crew of 10. Searches carried out along the route the aircraft was to have taken proved negative, and there was speculation the aircraft might have come down in the sea.

RIGHT: Cairns Catalina Memorial maintained by the Cairns Regional Council and the Cairns RAAF Association.



ABOVE: The commemorative plaque unveiled on the 18 Jul 21 by the Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld and Mr David Oliver representing the families of the aircrew of Catalina A24-50. Photo by WOFF Ian Gosper.

Director-General History and Heritage - Air Force, Air Commodore John Meier and Chief of Staff Air Force Operations Command in Biak, Marsma Erwin Buana Kaskoopsau III (centre front) hold a piece tail wreckage from Catalina Flying Boat A24-50 which was salvaged during Operation Catalina Recovery. Photo by CPL David Said.



ABOVE: No 11 Squadron aircraft technician, Leading Aircraftman David Singleton views the wreckage of Catalina A24-50 during Operation Catalina Recovery in Indonesia. Photo by CPL David Said.

LEFT: Former Air Force Assistant Attaché in Jakarta, Flight Sergeant Mark Harvey is swarmed by locals farewelling him from their village after a visit to receive a blessing for the recovery of Catalina A24-50. Photo by CPL David Said.

However, in 2018, local people from the Fakfak region of Papua, Indonesia located a wreck at an elevation of 460 meters on top of a small mountain in rainforest. In April 2019, a joint RAAF/TNI-AU (Indonesian Air Force) reconnaissance mission to the site positively identified the wreckage as RAAF Catalina A24-50.

The then Deputy Director, Wing Commander Greg Williams, OAM and his Deputy, Wing Commander Grant Kelly (the current Deputy Director) from the Air Force Historic Unrecovered War Casualties, History and Heritage Branch, put together a team to locate and recover any remains of the 10 crew.

The team included forensic dentist, Squadron Leader Alistair Soon, and Archaeologist, Squadron Leader Ash Matic; explosive ordnance disposal and removal experts, Flight Sergeant Luke Troy and Leading Aircraftman Zachary Anderson; Medic, Leading Aircraftman Matthew Parker, and Imagery Specialists, Sergeant David Gibbs and Corporal David Said. Leading Aircraftman David Singleton represented No 11 Squadron. Mr Nick Fletcher from the Australian War Memorial accompanied the team.

The team assembled in RAAF Base Amberley and left on July 14th, 2019, on No 35 Squadron, C-27 aircraft captained by Flight Lieutenant Adam Darcy, stopping off at Darwin. The next day, the team travelled to Ambon, where senior TNI-AU representative, Lieutenant Colonel Usriyanto, and Flight Sergeant Mark Harvey, then the Assistant Air Force Advisor Jakarta who provided in-county support and acted as interpreter, met the team, before flying on to Fakfak and joining TNI-AU Special Forces and Army personnel.

A reconnaissance task to the crash site was conducted on July 16. The terrain and conditions required a compressed recovery task over the following days.

Wing Commander Williams said:

The only major recognisable pieces of wreckage were two sections of the wing, engines and propeller, and the empennage [the rear part of fuselage] across the top of a ridge.

He went on to say:

One section of the wing ended up on the northern face of the ridge. The remainder of debris, including one propeller, is spread across the southern face of this ridge. The southern face is characterised by large rocks, with debris spread across a 10-meter square area. The southern slope and the top of the ridge was cleared of debris and

rocks and searched where practical. A number of small artefacts were found; however, further investigative work is still required in order to confirm the origin of each item.

We are very grateful for the excellent support we received from the Assistant Air Force Advisor Jakarta and particularly the TNI-AU personnel who accompanied us on the mission, and the local people of Fakfak who were generous in their hospitality and support.

After 14 days in Fakfak, the team returned home on No 37 Squadron C-130J aircraft captained by Flight Lieutenant Andrew Morgan.

The crew of A24-50:

FLGOFF James Percival	Pilot and Captain of A24-50
FLGOFF Edward Carrington-Smith	2nd Pilot
FLGOFF John Walter Bissett Amess	3rd Pilot
PLTOFF Edward Matthew Howe	Navigator
PLTOFF Athol Steward Boyd	Wireless Operator Air Gunner
FSGT Richard George Hobbs	Wireless Operator Air Gunner
SGT Melville Bickman Tyrrell	Armourer (Air Gunner)
CPL Alexander Burns	Fitter/Air Gunner
CPL Ian Lott Penrose	Fitter/Air Gunner
LAC Alexander Headley Crouch	Fitter/Air Gunner – No 20 Squadron

Prior to the recovery mission, the families of all the crew of Catalina A24-50 were contacted and advised about the recovery mission.

WGCDR Whiting said,

Air Force History and Heritage Branch very much appreciate the assistance provided by Marg O’Leary and Royce Atkinson from the Fromelles Association who traced and located the families, all of whom expressed their gratitude for the work carried out by the Air Force Historic Unrecovered War Casualties.

RSL – Steeped in History, Even More Relevant Today

The history of Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) dates back for well over a century and the organisation is perhaps even more relevant today than when it was established at the height of the Great War.

The RSL was founded in 1916 to address the lack of organised repatriation facilities and medical services available to those returning from service in the First World War.

Today, this remains our motivating force, but we are working hard to modernise our organisation to ensure that it is well-resourced and available to assist all veterans and their families. Our core mission has never changed but has continued to evolve to meet the needs of each generation of servicemen and women and their families, as well as the promotion of a secure, stable, and progressive Australia.

Current issues like the pending Royal Commission into Veteran and Defence Personnel Suicide, the alleged war crimes in Afghanistan and most recently the collapse of the Government in Afghanistan, the evacuation of Afghan nationals who assisted the Australian mission and the impact on veterans who served in that theatre are being addressed and assistance provided.

The RSL is acutely aware that our Afghan veterans will be dismayed by recent events in that country and must be assured that their effort and sacrifice is appreciated by Australia and was not in vain.

Yes, the RSL's traditional roles of veteran welfare, advocacy and commemoration continue, while new roles have been implemented and evolved such as the recently announced national program of mental health support and training courses for veterans and their families. RSL Australia will be working with Open Arms over the next year to deliver Mental Health Literacy workshops across the country to the veteran community. The RSL Veterans Employment Program is another new key initiative, to provide veterans and their families improved options for employment opportunities, including resumes, counselling and employment placement assistance.

With a membership of approximately 150,000, supported by 3700 Women's Auxiliary members, all managed through State Branches and some 1154 Sub-Branched, the RSL is the oldest, largest and most representative ex-service organisation in Australia.

Since its origins, the League has had a particular concern for the

welfare of veterans, widows, and their dependants. This includes practical support to those in need, the management of aged-care facilities, and programs and the promotion of commemorative activities across the community.

The RSL plays an important role in providing the Australian Government, through the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defence, with a direct line of consultation with the veteran and serving communities in both the setting up and reviewing of policies and practices impacting on our community.

The RSL provides input to Government inquiries and reviews. Over the past few years, we have provided submissions to important reviews and inquiries on military superannuation, injury compensation and rehabilitation, disability pensions and recognition of families and members of the Australian Defence Forces, injured, wounded, or killed while serving.

Currently, we are preparing input to the review by the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal of unit recognition for Australian Defence Force personnel who served in the Somalia conflict.

Our deep concern at the incidence of suicide, attempted suicide and the mental health issues confronting veterans is well known. This is a very real and present problem that must be resolved.

For this reason, the RSL has been prominent in its representations to Government in the development of terms of reference for the forthcoming Royal Commission and will be presenting a detailed submission to hearings when they get underway. Our submission will represent the voices of all RSL members, veterans and their families and we are ready to provide all possible assistance during the operation of the Commission

We are also encouraging and will assist veterans to make individual submissions and representation to the Royal Commission, as well as providing access to mental health support, counselling, and further assistance both during and after the Commission hearings and outcome.

The Royal Commission provides the opportunity to determine all the factors contributing to the poor mental health experience of veterans and the alarming incidence of suicide and attempted suicide. It provides a clear pathway for better outcomes for our veteran community in the future.

The RSL is committed to providing whatever support necessary to find



solutions that deal with this crucial issue which impacts severely on the entire veteran community.

Importantly, through all our representations and activities, the RSL is apolitical, but we do work to ensure that governments meet their obligations, to veterans, defence personnel and the broader Australian community.

Our State Branches and National Office engage with governments at all levels to enhance support and remove inequities for all veterans. Recognising there will always be limits on what is possible, we seek fairness and greater support for those in need.

RSL plays an important role on behalf of veterans, giving a voice to government on national security and other issues of the day on behalf of veterans.

We actively promote our policies on national issues, particularly the defence of Australia, conditions of service of serving members of the Australian Defence Forces and the development of a national defence infrastructure and defence industry.

The RSL has a strong and committed membership spread throughout the length and breadth of Australia. As an organisation, we work hard to ensure that our members' needs, and expectations are met and that we all share a strong sense of belonging and pride in our service and involvement in the RSL.

For well over 100 years, the RSL has served its members, our nation's veterans and their families and strongly supported the defence and wellbeing of Australia. The needs may have changed, our role and responsibilities evolved, and our approach modernised and expanded, but our commitment to the veteran community is unbroken and our resolve to serve stronger than ever.

At its heart, the RSL is a service organisation. Our future remains in the hands of our committed members and the effective contribution we all make.

Lest we forget.

**MAJOR GENERAL (RETD) GREG
MELICK AO, RFD, FANZCN, SC**

*National President Returned &
Services League of Australia*

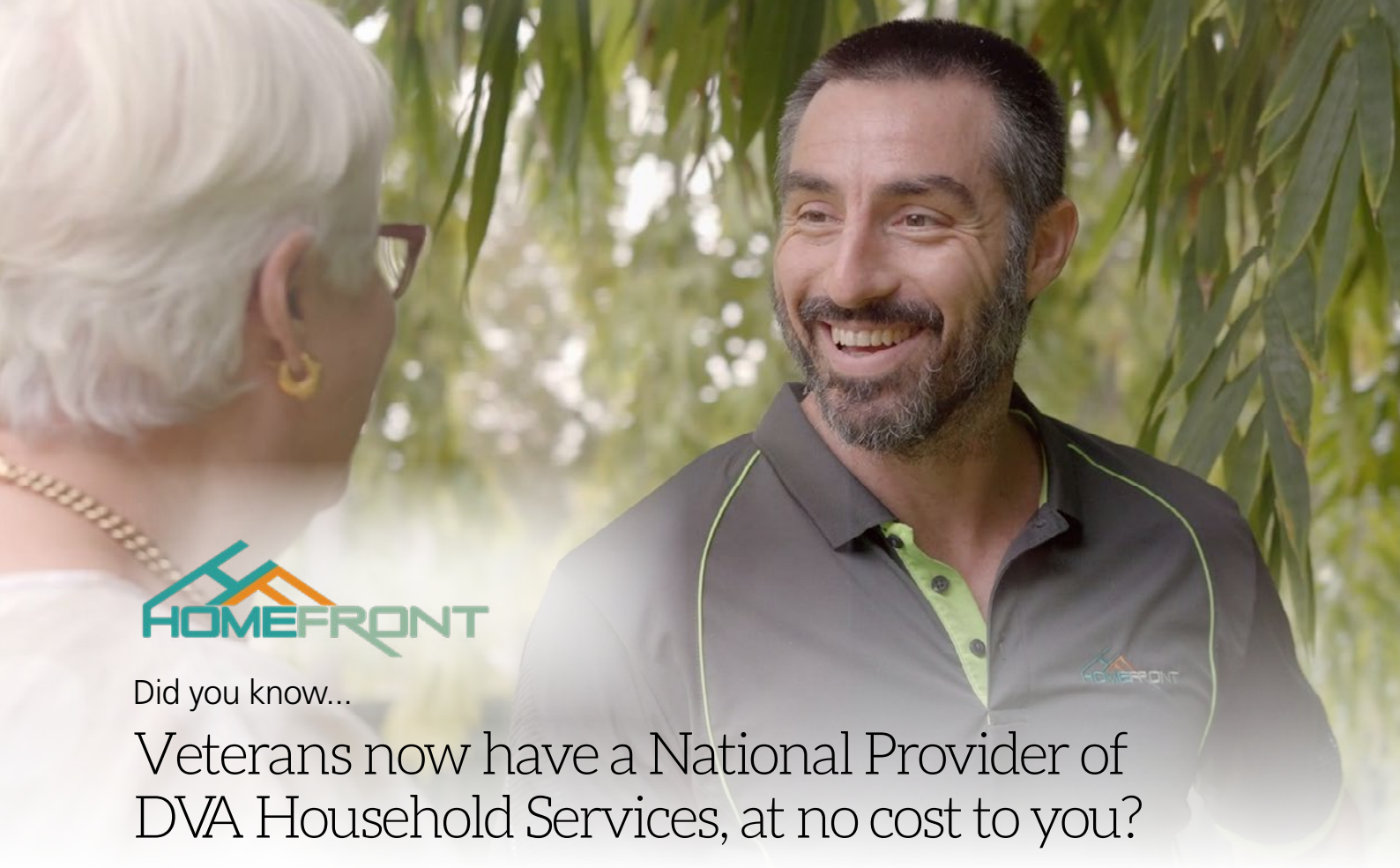
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Under the Medical Rehabilitation Compensation Act (MRCA) and the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act – Defence (DRCA), the Department can then approve those services required for the proper running and maintenance of your household. This includes domestic cleaning, mowing and gardening, gutter, window and solar panel cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, dog walking and more.

With the help of your GP, medical information and evidence regarding the practical implications of your condition should be detailed in your **Claim Form** to help DVA make a positive determination about your eligibility.

Once your entitlement is approved via a Determination letter from DVA, HomeFront Australia steps in to take care of your service delivery quickly, easily, and without hassle, anywhere in Australia and at no cost to you.

To find out more information about your eligibility for these services ring

DVA on 1800 838 272

and say **“Household Services”** when prompted by the voice recording.

To apply for Household Services, fill in the **Claim Form** with the help of your GP, and forward it to **HHS@dva.gov.au**

To commence your services with HomeFront, or to find out more information about the services HomeFront delivers:

scan the **QR Code**

visit us at **homefrontaustralia.com.au**

write to us at **info@homefrontaustralia.com.au**

or call us on **1300 20 60 40** Monday to Friday.



Access your Claim Form here:

www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/dvaforms/d9319.pdf

HomeFront is a Veteran-run organisation providing premium DVA Household Services to other Veterans everywhere in Australia at no out of pocket expense, under the MRCA and DRCA legislations.

12 Virginia-class nuclears now!

Our submarine acquisition program has spent several billion dollars and not seen a metre of steel cut yet. That's not a bad thing. Abandon the project now, and buy 12 Virginia-class nuclear vessels from the USA.

With regional tensions increasing, then building our own one-off type submarines which will arrive in the early 2030's is not good enough. We have no guarantee they will work.

When we built the Collins class submarines (at exorbitant expense) they did not work properly for several years. It is only now – after decades of operation – that they are reasonably functional.

Submarines are the ultimate deterrent and attack weapon: their location is hopefully unknown, and they can strike at targets without warning. But we need

to expand beyond the capabilities of the Collins, and also the French Attack boats which we should abandon.

Instead we should buy 12 of a proven design which is already in the water. We want long-range hunter-killer vessels. We also want them to be able to stay submerged for long periods to avoid detection. Nuclear does this in spades. The propulsion system also offers tremendous speed underwater – much more than does diesel-electric systems. This is an attack advantage.

What problems would there be in acquiring nuclear-engined submarines from the USA? Using American technology is not as difficult as might be thought. The Americans facilitated the British Navy's entry into nuclear boats – a submarine is called a boat

– back in the 1960s. The Royal Navy's HMS Dreadnought was launched in 1960, five years after the US Navy's first nuclear, USS Nautilus. Its propulsion system was American.

The Virginia class is a proven vessel. They are designed by General Dynamics's Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries, and are expected to be within the US Navy until 2060. Nineteen have been completed so far.

The Virginia-class would be a step up for us: they are a bigger vessel, and would require more crew. But if the relationship with the USA was deepened by purchase of such vessels, why not, with America's permission, embark on a campaign to bring some US submariners down under?

	Tonnage (surfaced)	Length	Range (kilometres)	Endurance	Complement
Collins	3,100 metric	77 metres	21,300	70 days	58
Attack	4,500 metric	97 metres	33,000	80 days	60
Virginia	10,200 (Imperial tons Block V)	460 feet (140 metres)	Unlimited	Unlimited	135

The step-up in requirements also comes with a twin reward of unlimited endurance and range at sea. The nuclear engine can provide the ability to stay submerged and at sea indefinitely, as its never-ending supply of electricity means the boat can stay down rather than surface or snorkel to obtain air for engine and crew requirements. The range too is theoretically unlimited, for again the nuclear electricity can drive the vessel for decades. But the nuclear engines also provide very high speed of movement – ideal for pursuing targets or for getting into position for a firing solution ahead of them.

The main obstacles in the way of acquiring Virginia-class seem to have been man-made and somewhat specious. Critics argue that we would need a "nuclear industry". What this is exactly never seems to be made clear. The nuclear engines of such boats are a sealed unit. The US Navy maintains four of its own nuclear vessels in Guam, showing that the maintenance needed is no more than the usual requirements for hull, living and weapon systems – which we do anyway for the Collins-class. Anything needed on the nuclear engines could be done by sailing a vessel temporarily back to the USA. The nuclear original fuel of each vessel will anyway last the life of the boat.

Another objection is that Australians don't want nuclear power, and therefore nuclear-powered naval vessels. But no extensive national poll seems to

have been done on this question, and indeed in 2014, in a series of public meetings known as "Guarding Against Uncertainty: Australian Attitudes to Defence" nuclear submarines were continually raised positively by members of the public. It seems more that the two main sides of politics fear some slippage of their vote if they introduced it as policy. And in fact Australia has had a nuclear reactor operating in a Sydney suburb since 1958 at Lucas Heights.

Another objection is that the Americans would not "sell" Australia such nuclear technology. I can't see why not – it is now over half a century old, and many countries apart from the USA operate small nuclear reactors in driving submarines: Britain, France, India, China, USSR, with Brazil currently developing the technology. How such systems work is hardly a secret. And it is likely the USA would want to assist its biggest Pacific partner to become more capable. The Virginia-class is indeed more powerful in areas outside its basic submarine capabilities: it fires both Tomahawk and Harpoon missiles, as well as launching torpedoes and mines.

The Tomahawk is a land-attack weapon, and with its long-range is an extremely capable stand-off weapon – more capable than anything else in the Australian Defence Force arsenal. Australia has crept towards such capabilities over the last few years, but 12 sets of Tomahawks – the Virginia Block V boats carry 40 – would

massively increase Australia's attack capacity – and therefore its deterrence – capability. In other words, we would become a lot more scary – a good thing – for "if you want peace, then prepare for war". By being very strong we may indeed deter potential enemies from being engaged in battle against us.

As can be seen, the Virginia-class would present a lot of advantages for Australia. Ironically, such an improvement in our defence systems would also be cheaper than what we are preparing to spend on the French submarines. \$80-\$100 billion has been much talked about, for vessels which would arrive in the early 2030's onwards. The cost of the Virginias is said to be around \$3-4 billion a boat – a total cost of around half of the present proposition. And it would give us a weapons platform that would work – rather than one which is an unknown voyage into an uncertain future.

The Americans have a useful expression for such an outline as given above. It's called a "no-brainer". It means this solution is so obvious and simple and straightforward it's obvious. But why not add something else that we may gain. With the American's designer's permission, build our own Virginia class boats number 9-12 under licence. Even if the USA supplied the complete engine package, that would represent another remarkable step-up for this country. As the Americans also say: "don't ask, don't get."

TOM LEWIS

Dr Tom Lewis OAM was a naval officer, primarily an intelligence analyst, for nearly 20 years. He is a military historian whose latest books include Atomic Salvation – how the A-Bombs saved the lives of 30 million, and Teddy Sheean VC, an analysis of the delayed award of a Victoria Cross to Australia's only naval VC hero.

Glenn Kolomeitz

Glenn, a veteran, has also worked as a Defence Policy Adviser at Parliament House. Glenn's work has also included pro bono in mental health-related criminal cases, successfully diverting more than 200 Veteran clients into treatment, and has appeared before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in Veterans' Appeals from decisions of Department of Veterans' Affairs. Glenn is now a Director of GAP Veteran + Legal Services.



Greg T Ross: Glenn Kolomeitz, welcome to the Last Post Podcast series. We're honoured to have you along. Today, we'll be speaking about the GAP resource management, your role there, and what they offer veterans around the country.

Glenn Kolomeitz: Good day Greg and thanks for having me on board.

GTR: Yeah, it's always a pleasure to catch up. We've known each other for a few years now and we've exchanged had many meetings. What's so exciting about what's happening now at GAP.

GK: Look, GAPs a great firm. It's a veteran owned multi-disciplinary law firm, if I can say. It covers a very broad spectrum of veteran and legal services, from human resources, veteran employment, through to broad veterans' welfare issues to, to veterans legal work. So great firm. Canberra based. It's a boutique firm, but when we say boutique, we don't necessarily mean tiny, we mean specialised. And it's a really good set up based in Canberra, so nice and centrally located.

GTR: Yes, that's right. And it must be some great feeling for you that your journey has been a good one. And you've been up there representing veterans and giving them a voice really for some time now. How excited are you about your role at GAP?

GK: Look, GAP gives me the chance to do what I've been doing previously with a support base, really. So with all the administrative, managerial support, marketing support, people to bounce ideas off. And plan through our strategies, our veteran's support strategies. We have a Chief Operating Officer, Tracy, who is amazing, who was an ex copper as well. So she just, just gets it. Great team. And it really helps me focus on the legal work, and the advocacy and lobbying, with that back of house support. They had operational support to enable the work that I do. So it takes the pressure off me enormously. And it means I have a support base other than my family, my professional support base behind me to do the work that we do so well.

GTR: I guess that's exciting in itself, but of course, the veteran community generally. And when you say boutique, I understand of course, specialisation in this area for you, particularly and Tracy, et cetera. What I guess particularly now we look at the state of things with veterans, and there has been a lot of focus on this recently about them needing assistance in various areas. How do you think you're able to assist in this area?

GK: All roads lead to defence. Veteran's affairs, DVA have been blamed for a lot of the issues confronting veterans and deservedly so in a lot of cases. But, when I say all roads lead to defence, defence has a lot to answer for. Defence abuse, systemic abuse, and maladministration. Then the use of administrative processes as weapons against defence's own people. We have inherited the fallout from that. And DVA of course, inherits a fallout from that. But we're now picking up a lot of, we have for some time, picking up a lot of people who were at the receiving end of defence organisational abuse, and we're helping them through the, legal redress processes. So getting something, taking up defective administration actions, or taking other legal pathways, or indeed going to the police. Helping people go to the police and complain about, or report the way they were mistreated. So sadly, and I had a long time in defence, and I enjoyed the vast majority of my time, but sadly, we're seeing some very negative outcomes affecting individuals and their families, and we're helping them through that. So it's good to see that we can help these people achieve some sort of redress against their abuse in defence. And it also goes to the suicide piece too, which, as you're aware, for some time I, and many others have been involved in pushing for a Royal Commission into the veterans' suicide. And we see how defence abuse has contributed massively to the veterans suicides statistics. I hate using that word, but that's the reality, the numbers. So now as a part of that work, a number of us worked together to contribute to

the terms of reference for the Royal commission to focus the commission on organisational, institutional, and systemic issues within defence, which have contributed to these adverse mental health outcomes and therefore to suicide or attempted suicide.

GTR: This is a major issue in Australia right now. And you're right at the centre of this, of course, with GAP Resource Management in their service to veterans. I guess what you spoke about then Glen was partially when you said about the legal system being used against veterans in the hope that I guess they would tire or run out of money and income, GAP is a position to offer some hope to these veterans. How important in reducing the suicide rate, is the involvement of people like yourself and GAP.

GK: Look, I've, I've known for a long time that the importance of legal support, but I can see it expressly, and see it tangibly, now. When I see these people, these veterans and their families speaking with, for example, Our Chief Operating Officer or other members of GAP and the sheer gratitude they show. When they're speaking with Tracey, and others at the GAP team, how grateful they are to now be able to voice their issues and to have somebody behind them, or your organization behind them to help them take their fight up. But they're getting a voice, they're getting some sort of redress, and they have this team behind them to support them through what is a very traumatic stage of their lives. Having had to leave defence, and in pretty adverse circumstances as essentially as victims of defence abuse. So, we see tears. We see people in tears of gratitude and relief, if I can say that. In being able to now tell their story, and have somebody in their corner. I think the point you raised Greg too is good about the fact that defence has traditionally, and still does, lawyer up. So, loads up their cases with a battery of senior counsel, junior counsel, battery of solicitors, to take on these individual defence claimants., wearing them down, exhausting them, threatening

them with losing their house or losing everything, if they do lose and have costs awarded against them. Very poor attitude. Very poor approach to litigation on the part of defence. But nonetheless, it's tactically abused. And we saw that in a federal court case just last year, where defence was smacked for that sort of behaviour. But now these people here, they have a firm behind them, which will take the fight up. And we've tried to find ways of underwriting their legal costs if we do happen to lose their case. So they're not faced with the prospect of losing their house, just for trying to preserve their rights, trying to defend themselves against this defence machine. So, we're out there actively finding people who can underwrite these cases. And we're working with RSLs and other organizations, and hopefully, benefactors to come in and say, "look, we'll help you with costs." And that's great if you win, and you get cost from defence. But, if you lose, we will underwrite the loss. So we're taking on the machine, and I think it's about time that, the machine was taken on and it's having a good impact on our clients and their families, knowing that there's a support mechanism behind them.

GTR: Well, it would be tempting to say that Australia needs not only more people like you and the team at GAP, but GAP itself, in being able to assist in this area. Because of course it becomes a human rights issue and we are working with the human rights commission for this edition. So I do believe myself and I suppose, many others might also that there is an attachment to the understanding of human rights in regards to this. Because of course, with veterans, as we focus on veterans in this chat, there is a homelessness concerns. You just mentioned about losing homes in legal battles, or the potential for. We talk about homelessness. Unemployment obviously is a by-product. And then mental health too. So there are many layers to this. How do you get on top of that with your work? There must be so much there to address

GK: You're right. It's a big picture. It's a big piece. And I think, again, we're pretty fortunate at GAP to have been able to break it down into its component pieces. And I'll give you an example. We're acting for a number of former, and serving ADF members now in some pretty sensitive matters. And we've been able to so provide their, wives and their families with family counselling services. So, mental health type support services, peripheral to the legal support we're providing and peripheral to the employment support that GAP is providing to some of these veterans and their families. So it's almost a one-stop shop for ex-defence members, veterans, and their families, who come upon hard times for whatever reason and need

this whole of persons holistic support. And I think GAP is doing a pretty good job providing that service and from pretty humble beginnings as a human resources, employment type provider for veterans to providing this bigger support, a holistic support mechanism. It's a good model.

GTR: Yeah. One that we're happy to have in Australia. I guess you spoke about has COVID, have lock downs and COVID affected the work itself. I mean, we all know face-to-face meetings are far better, or at least were, prior to COVID. We've come to accept and learn to work and live with Zoom, and meetings, team meetings, et cetera. But how do you think the veteran community is adapting to the zoom, as opposed to the face-to-face, or how is that working out for you?

GK: Well, many of our clients, many of our cases are very sensitive matters. The defence and national security type matters. So we need face to face consultations, face to face meetings, take instructions face-to-face in a skiff type environment. So a Secure Information Facility type environment where we have no phones, we have phones secured away, and turned off. Where we have very tight controls on information in and out. It's hard to do that via Zoom and Skype. And in fact, we can't take proper instructions in many cases, by Zoom, or Skype, or Teams. So that could have an impact potentially, but because we've been in Canberra, to date, we haven't had that issue. We've had, we've been able to take our instructions face-to-face in all cases, which has been very good. We'll adapt, we'll adapt to that. And we can work our way through that, and make ways of taking instructions, sensitive instructions without exposing their information and their clients to any risk. We'll work through it. It's got its challenges, but we'll work through that. I think the face-to-face piece is important broadly anyway. I think part of the thing that our veterans and their families appreciate is the ability to come in and speak with us in a boardroom, or a relaxed boardroom environment, and not some stuffy legal office. Sit down with the team with myself and whoever else we're working with on that particular job from GAP, and talk through things face-to-face, in a nice open relaxed, but yet very professional manner. Being able to cry, if necessary. Being able to shed a tear, or just stop and take a deep breath. And just get on and tell the story, and help us help them. That face-to-face is invaluable. So look, undoubtedly, the lock downs will have an impact and to date with us, they haven't been fortunately, but potentially that they may. So we'll work through that though, we're pretty flexible. I'm working with the team now by Zoom, or by Teams, rather.

GTR: So it's important obviously to install in veterans that knowledge that they're going to be amongst others who are colloquially on the same page, from the same background, potentially have the same experiences so that they do feel comfortable. And that's a great thing when you're dealing in such matters. So what would you say Glenn to the veterans listening to this, and indeed readings interview through the text version, what would you say to veterans who are considering approaching GAP.

GK: Just be comfortable in the knowledge, as you quite correctly said Greg, comfortable in the knowledge that you're dealing with people who have come from similar backgrounds. So we are veterans, one of the other directors is former air-force. Myself, of course. It's very much a veteran centric organization still with that professional, non-military, so outside practice experience. But be comfortable in the knowledge that you're going to be treated fairly, with us fully cognizant of the veterans backgrounds, and their family issues confronting their families, and themselves. Your information and your data is secure with us, obviously. We fully respect privacy, confidentiality. We're not going to expose them to risk. And look, we work with them to take up their fights and address their issues as best within lawful bounds as best we can, and using our broad spectrum of tools. As you're aware, we've used the media strategically in a number of occasions to advance our cases. When you're taking on a big machine like defence, you need to use other strategic tools to advance the case. And we've done that very successfully on a number of occasions, and many other occasions, we haven't done that. We've made the forensic decision not to, but using the media as a mechanism. Using the political processes as a mechanism. I've briefed senators and others to take up some of our cases on the floor of the Senate or the House, and advance our cases in that way. Let the government know, and let defence know that we're watching them, and we know what they're up to. And we want a fair, and equitable outcome for our clients, our veteran clients and their families. And if they won't play by the rules, then we'll use mechanisms to encourage them to play the game by the rules.

GTR: Appropriate for many of Australians to know now that you are part of the GAP team, to assist veterans at their most vulnerable, perhaps. And we thank you so much for being part of this interview. And pod, we would suggest veterans get in contact with GAP. If need be, and that they can reach out and address that by viewing the website, and knowing that you are there to assist.

GK: Thank you so much, Greg, it's been a pleasure.



GAP LEGAL SERVICES, is a Veteran owned boutique legal firm led by Greg Badcock and Glenn Kolomeitz.

The powerhouse team behind them at GAP Legal and Veteran Services, is managed by Tracy Muddle, Chief Operations Officer, Douglas Grierson, Head of Migration, Bronwyn Archer Dawson, Business Operations and Grace Tosic, Senior Audit and Compliance Manager.

The team's combined knowledge, expertise and rich experience is paramount for those we so proudly support.

KEY SERVICES

Legal Representation including Migration Services (MARN 1796927)

Mediation services

Royal Commission Submissions

Internal Auditing and HR Support



QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES OF THE TEAM INCLUDE:

Masters of: Justice (Intelligence), Defence Studies, Fraud and Financial Crime, Business Administration, International Law, and Dispute Resolution

Bachelors of: Laws (Hons), Arts (Hons), Health Sciences, and Management and Professional Studies

Graduate Diplomas in: Investigations Management, Military Law, Legal Practice

Company Directors Diploma plus Diplomas of Intelligence Analysis and Policing

Registered General Nurse and Psychiatric (Mental Health Nurse)

Graduate Certificates: Management, and Strategic Intelligence

The College of Law: National Assessment & Training, Mediators

Additional: Certificate IV in Training and Assessment,

SAI Global qualified Internal Auditors, Mental Health First Aid Australia



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open



door

VETERAN
TRANSITION,
INTEGRATION
AND
WELLBEING

Open Door's mission is to undertake research towards the successful transition of people from the military to the community.

We believe the best source of evidence on veteran issues are veterans themselves, and so adopt a co-design approach that draws upon the lived experiences of veterans across the services. Our team includes veteran researchers and policy experts.

We aim to become an Australasian research hub for:

- information dissemination
- researcher collaboration and teaming
- researching, planning and problem solving in the veteran and first responder domains
- advice and consultancy for Defence, DVA, and government/industry engaged with veterans.

**FIND OUT MORE
FLINDERS.EDU.AU/OPENDOOR**

RESEARCH INITIATIVE OF



PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

Catch Greg's interview with Ben Wadham in our online podcasts. Ben is the Director of the Open Door: Veteran Transition, Integration, Wellbeing research initiative in the College of Education, Psychology, and Social Work.

Open Door is an Australasian research hub that brings together veterans, scholars, and practitioners together around key research, service provision, and policy/legislation initiatives. Open Door is connected to other veteran research hubs across the five-eye nations.

As a Veteran, Ben's research is focused on the health and wellbeing of serving personnel and Veterans. He conducts sociological and criminological research on the ADF and DVA including institutional abuse in the ADF, veteran suicide, and veteran transition into higher education. Ben also researches men's violence toward other men and is using Virtual Reality as a pedagogical tool for education for violence prevention.

Ben writes about the cultural history of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Of particular interest is military culture and crime and the military. He is currently Chief Investigator on an Australian Research Council Grant titled "Institutional Abuse and Organisational Reform within the ADF" (1969-). Ben is currently the lead CI on 2 grants investigating veteran transition and education. These studies explore how effective tertiary education is as a transition pathway, The second grant funded by the NCSEHE studies the ways universities understand veterans and govern their place in the university.

LOCKED DOWN AND SHUT OUT

The spate of lockdowns across Australia has limited our scope to move about. For many, we are legally restricted to only leaving home for essential purchases (food, drink, medical services). "Non-essential" businesses are closed, as too are museums and galleries.

Not all of us with collections have them at home. For some they are on loan to a local institution, kept at our place of work or in offsite storage. In most instances, all of these options would mean that under lockdown conditions we are prevented from accessing or checking on the status of our collections.

Sadly, damage (flood, fire, insects, hail, vandalism) and theft do occur, and frequently the impacts are greatest when there is a delay between the event and the damage or loss being discovered. In lockdown there's not a lot we can do about this, but it makes collection management all the more important.

When next you have the opportunity, take some steps to secure your collection to increase its safety and security.

Documentation

For insurance purposes, you want a good inventory of your collection. Documentation should include photographs clearly showing condition and all pertinent details that might be required should it ever be necessary to submit an insurance claim such as valuations, serial numbers, up to date lists of any modifications or pre-existing conditions which might impact on worth.

Keep multiple copies of your documentation in more than one place so as to increase the likelihood that it will survive any adverse event.

The busy day to day of life generally means that we often just pay whatever the incoming bill is on our insurance. Lockdown provides the perfect time for you to actually think about your collections and to have a discussion with your insurer, making sure that your coverage meets your collection's needs.

Housekeeping

Store precious items off the floor so that any moisture ingress is less likely to cause corrosion, wood rot, staining or mold outbreaks.

Store items under covers to prevent moisture from above. This may be Tyvek sheeting, polypropylene or polyethylene plastic sheeting or plastic tarpaulins, or storage in plastic tubs with lids.

Good pest management with suitable pheromone traps and keeping collections well away from food sources like grain or stock feed.

Wishing you and your collections safety during this challenging time.

ANDREW PEARCE



Last Post readers can write in with concerns or queries about the artefacts they have in their family collection. Letters will be answered by a qualified conservator from Endangered Heritage Pty Ltd. Endangered Heritage is a conservation business in Canberra, endorsed by the National RSL for conserving our military history. Both Victoria and Andrew Pearce have years of experience at the Australian War Memorial and with other military collections.

Write in to LastPost@endangeredheritage.com to get a response in the following issue.

What the Australian government should do to help protect human rights in Afghanistan

The Australian government should urgently help protect Afghan civilians who are at heightened risk under the new Taliban authorities, Human Rights Watch said in a letter to Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison. The government should also increase assistance for refugees and civil society groups, and support resolutions at the United Nations for ongoing monitoring and reporting of human rights violations in Afghanistan.

Safe passage and international protection for fleeing Afghans

We urge the Australian government to prioritize providing safe passage and travel documents for Afghans at heightened risk of persecution from the Taliban because of their past work or status, along with their immediate family members, whether inside or outside Afghanistan. Many in need of assistance are not at the Kabul airport, but may have already left the country, or are in the process of doing so, and may require documents and assistance in third countries.

Civilians feared to be at particular risk include those who have worked to promote human rights, democracy, women's rights, and education; academics, writers, journalists, and other media workers; and people who have worked for foreign countries; among other at-risk categories. Members of ethnic minorities and Shia Muslims, especially Hazaras, are also at greater risk.

The Australian government should announce an urgent relocation and resettlement program for Afghans at high risk. This should be in addition to the regular annual humanitarian intake. So far, the Australian government has allocated 3,000 places to Afghan refugees within its existing annual humanitarian intake of 13,750 per year. This means Afghans get priority, but only at the expense of people fleeing other countries. Additional humanitarian intakes are possible – then-Prime Minister Tony Abbott offered 12,000 extra places to Syrians in 2015, during the height of the Syria crisis.

There are at least 4,200 Afghans on temporary visas in Australia and 53 in detention who doubtlessly are terrified of being sent back to Afghanistan. The Immigration Minister has said “no Afghan visa holder currently in Australia will be asked to return to Afghanistan while the security situation there remains dire.” But the Australian government should immediately place a moratorium on all deportations and forced returns of Afghan nationals. In light of the fact that temporary visas are subject to applications for renewal, we urge the Australian government to create a pathway to permanent residency for all those on precarious temporary visas. Citizens of Afghanistan transferred to Papua New Guinea or Nauru should be relocated to Australia and also afforded international protection.

ELAINE PEARSON

Elaine Pearson is the Australia Director at Human Rights Watch. Follow her on twitter @pearsonelaine.

Humanitarian assistance and civil society support

We urge the Australian government to increase humanitarian assistance to neighboring countries to which Afghans are fleeing and support those countries admitting them. The Australian government should also pledge new support for nongovernmental groups inside and outside of Afghanistan that assist with refugee resettlement, and otherwise promote humanitarian and human rights needs, including for women, children, internally displaced people, and others, as well as education, health care, and other vital needs. The participation of Afghan civil society groups in discussions of assistance and resettlement is vital.

The United Nations: strengthening reporting and fact-finding

We urge the Australian government to support calls at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to create an international mechanism to collect and preserve evidence of violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan and prepare files to facilitate fair and independent criminal proceedings, with the assistance of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We ask the Australian government to call on the UN Security Council to immediately adopt a resolution demanding that all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan abide by international human rights standards and international humanitarian law, notably the humane treatment of civilians and combatants in custody. It should reiterate that the International Criminal Court, to which Afghanistan is a party, can prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The resolution should call on the new authorities to ensure that everyone, including internally displaced people, have full and free access without discrimination to humanitarian assistance from UN agencies and humanitarian groups.

The Security Council is set to renew the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in September. UNAMA's mandate should be expanded to explicitly include collecting information and evidence of serious violations and abuses. The council should instruct UNAMA to publicly report on its findings and share information and evidence with the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court as well as other international or domestic bodies investigating war crimes and other abuses in Afghanistan.



Veteran Pete Evans with Sharon Claydon MP.

A moral obligation

Like so many Australians, I have struggled to find the words to describe the situation unfolding in Afghanistan.

When I woke to news of the Taliban entering Kabul last week, it felt like I'd been punched in the stomach.

I could not imagine how devastating it must feel for our Australian Defence Force personnel who served in Afghanistan or for the families who have lost someone they loved, to turn on their televisions and see it all unravelling.

Over the past week, so many people including the local Afghani community in my electorate of Newcastle, have reached out to me to express their deep concern about the safety of their families and loved ones left behind.

For our own veterans, the toll and moral injury they feel is especially shocking.

The idea of leaving your mates behind is abhorrent to Australian soldiers.

And not knowing if those who served alongside you, often wearing the same Australian uniform, are safe is devastating.

Pete Evans, a veteran from my community, felt so strongly about the government's failure to protect Afghan interpreters and their families that he took to burning his service medals as a final act of protest.

I shared the stories of veterans Pete Evans and Stuart McCarthy in Parliament and presented their burnt service medals to the Prime Minister.

For many months, veterans, former Prime Ministers and Labor have been pleading with the government for urgent action to bring the Afghan interpreters and their families back to safety.

Time and time again, we heard lofty assurances that support was coming.

But we also heard reports of interpreters and civilians being entangled in a bureaucratic nightmare, unable to leave Afghanistan without visas.

At the time of writing, the government is now scrambling to do what it should have done months ago.

News of rescue flights successfully landing in Kabul and returning safely back in Australia is welcome, but I fear for those still waiting on visas, that this may be too little, too late.

These events could have been foreseen. Our allies in the US and UK began evacuating their Afghan supporters weeks ago.

And here we are in Australia, pining our hopes on a last-minute, high-risk operation.

It's nowhere near good enough. The Afghani people who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our troops deserve so much better.

Australia has a moral obligation to provide safe haven for those Afghans who risked everything to support our mission. That's what our veterans expect, it's what the Australian people want, and it's what the Morrison Government must deliver.

SHARON CLAYDON MP

Federal Member for Newcastle

Taking care of those who serve



Between 2001 and 2016, 373 Australian veterans took their lives, and male veterans under 30 had a suicide rate more than twice the national average for men the same age.



The Newcastle Beacon's drop-in centre is based upstairs in TPI House in Wallsend.

Visit newcastlebeacon.org.au to find out more.

What's more, the largest-ever survey of emergency workers released by Beyond Blue in November 2018 found that one in three emergency responders had high or very high psychological distress, and one in four former responders had probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Navigating support services alone can be overwhelming for anyone in crisis. But for veterans and first responders there are several barriers to support such as fear of a lack of confidentiality, stigma, impact on service record or career progression, and being seen as the weak link in the team.

To break down these barriers, and simplify the process of getting help, the Newcastle Beacon was established. It brings together a network of organisations, professionals and volunteers to support first responders, emergency department personnel, veterans and their families across Newcastle and the Hunter.

"First responders are the ones sitting with people on the worst day of their lives and that can't happen without a cost," says Wendy Waldron, founder of the Newcastle Beacon, social worker and daughter of a veteran. *"They've had our backs. And the Newcastle Beacon is about the community saying, 'we've got your back now.'"*

A specialised team of volunteers

Combining both peer and professional support services for veterans, first responders, and their families, the Newcastle Beacon's team of specialised staff and



highly-trained volunteers include social workers, welfare officers and advocates, veterans, first responders and family members of those who serve or have served.

"This combination of professional skills and lived experience enables us to understand and meet the needs of veterans and first responders with the right resources, knowledge, skills and compassion," says Wendy.

"The Newcastle Beacon is independent of government and employers and is unique to Newcastle and the Hunter. We have a strong understanding of local issues and through lived experience, we can offer support that's

solution-focused and based on the available resources in our region."

Providing a safe space for the community

At the heart of the Newcastle Beacon is its drop-in centre in Wallsend.

"We wanted to create a place for people and their families to connect with other veterans and first responders and access information on available resources as they relax and unwind in a safe space," says Wendy. *"We believe in giving back to those in crisis with the same dedication and commitment they've shown the community every day at work."*

Kim Waldron

A shy girl, growing up, Kim stepped outside her comfort zone and the rewards followed. During the recent bushfires, Kim's work with Fire + Rescue NSW, put her in good stead and earned the respect of many. To see her now and her confidence is a message to all. And Kim has recently been given a promotion within Fire + Rescue NSW.

I was 19 when I moved from Esk to Mullumbimby, hoping to get a new job and to push myself out of my comfort zone.

I did get a job in the local newsagency and I also started playing netball again and began training in Muay Thai at a Martial Arts gym in Byron Bay. Working at the newsagency opened a lot of doors for me. My boss encouraged me to try different things such as entering the local showgirl competition, which along with my physical training really helped build my confidence. My boss's husband is a local on-call firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW and when I heard they were recruiting I spoke to him about the job and felt like it was something I could do.

I applied for the position and after going through the interview, medical and physical I got the job. I have gained experience on different types of jobs like hazmat situations, motor vehicle accidents, structure fires, bush fires, flood deployments and other related jobs. The training I have received has been amazing, I have done training on first aid, hazmat, different types of fire, pump operating, road crash rescue, land-based flood rescue and much more. My favourite part of the job is getting to drive the fire truck.

The 2019/20 summer bush fires myself and the rest of my station went out on deployments daily for months. There was one day where it had been non-stop all day and I had a chance to breathe for a minute and I looked around and everywhere I looked I could see fire. It was a crazy time, but I feel extremely grateful I got the chance to be out there helping. Being a Firefighter at Mullumbimby 388 is something I am proud of, and I feel so lucky to be a part of such an amazing crew full of some of the best people I have ever met.



KIM WALDRON



Disasters are our business

Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) unites the skills and experiences of military veterans, emergency responders and civilians to rapidly deploy disaster relief teams domestically and around the globe.



Listen to Greg's recent interview with Disaster Relief Australia's CEO Geoff Evans in the Podcasts section of our website:

PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

www.disasterreliefaus.org



The scourge of homelessness raises as a serious issue for an increasing number of Australians. Veterans and women, showing an increasing quota of this heartbreaking trend. Here, The Last Post features comments and suggestions on the problem and ways to address it.

homelessness

Warning: Lil rant I guess...

When I found myself homeless... all those years ago now. It was a terrifying experience... one I could have done without... But there I was... I had walked out of the Hospital where I had been a Jane Doe ... and with only a track suit pants on and a white gown... there I was completely on my own in Sydney.

I had no I.D. or money and with cool nights starting to set in... I needed clothes. As I walked from the Hospital around down towards all the charity areas... I met a guy name John... he took me to a Vinnies shop where I got out fitted with new clothes including... shoes and socks, and brand new underwear. Within days I was introduced to a Women's only shelter and day care. From there it was only about 4-5 months later I managed to get my I.D. together and then got onto Centrelink... At last money.

For almost 6 months I lived on the Streets with no identification or money. I went to different food places or churches and other charities who feed our growing homeless.

And Thank God for them. On the Streets, as a homeless person, I took regular showers with clean toiletries and got clean clothing given to me each time. A couple of times I needed medical assistance and it was given to me as well... again by these charities.

The nights were terrifying... and at times I was that scared my back would freeze into a burn because I would shiver with the cold... I was that afraid. I was given a sleeping blanket which I still have today ... lol. But on the Streets as a female there was always the fear of being raped or reraped as in my case. I always felt sleep deprived ... and why wouldn't I, I could never really sleep at night.

As time went on and I made a few friends these homeless men would look out for me... for which I was very grateful.

But still I was set on fire a few times and vomited on or urinated on weekly. Being spat at was the most degrading ... as if you were a waste being alive... totally worthless.

Sadly I was not alone with these feelings ... of being a second class human being... the other homeless folks felt exactly the same.

I was never a smoker or could I even think about taking drugs... social drinking was out as most homeless folks get kicked out of pubs or Bars... as soon as they find out you are homeless.

In my past life, my occupation was a Nurse... I had trained both in the Hospital System and had gone to Uni... and even during that time I never really understood why anyone took drugs or became an alcoholic.

My time as a homeless person taught me more about people and endurance than I could have ever learnt at a University.

One thing I learnt and it kind of haunts me still is the amount of homeless guys who opened up and told me of their abusive childhood. At least 90% of homeless guys told me of the most deplorable childhoods you could ever imagine... it was as if these guys never stood a chance in life.

These homeless guys also had an array of mental health issues... which were hard to work out which came first... their drug abuse or child abuse.

What I learnt the most was that these escapism... of drugs and alcohol... all gave these homeless folks respite from the fears they lived with.

I personally still do not smoke, drink or use drugs... and I thank who ever is in charge above for that... but I totally get why some do...

But day after day... Monday to Friday... charities opened there doors to the growing homeless... Not for profit charities who gave and gave to the many homeless. All I can say is thank God these NGOs, NFP charities and even some of the churches were there.

It is definitely not an easy life surviving as a homeless person...

So now and again as we go into a lock down for covid... Please give a thought for our homeless... as churches are the first to close their doors... slowly the NFP charities come out... out of necessity to feed our growing homeless.

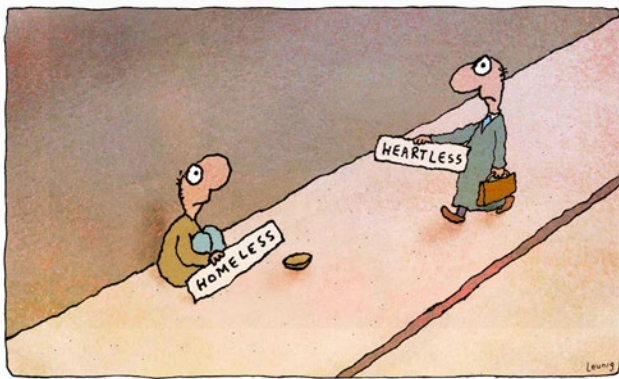
So please as we all start to go into a lock down again... give a thought to how bad all these lock downs must be on our homeless... The cold rain and freezing winds...

Somehow a covid lock down doesn't seem so bad from where you are reading this does it? Being homeless taught me endurance and tolerance...

A look into the realities of homelessness for Australian women. The author wishes to remain anonymous.



Photos supplied with thanks to Michael Leunig.



Single mums and affordable rentals

I don't always ask for much but this time I want to talk about a problem and then ask something :

We are currently experiencing, in Australia, a situation where many single parents and especially single mums, particularly those on welfare, or with disabled children, are finding it impossible to get a rental place.

This is happening in a first world countries due to greedy property owners and a system that somehow is pushing prices of rentals up so much that prices are out of reach of many disadvantaged tenants.

We have public houses and government houses but not enough and certainly the system is not adequate to cope with demand.

I know many famous people donate to charities and donate a lot but the money is mostly absorbed by bureaucracy such as is the case for the fires in Australia where the many millions donated by famous people was supposed to go directly to the people. But little and almost nothing

went to the people. The money was kept by the bureaucracy and used for things like technical equipment for fire brigades and all of that, things that the government should provide and should not be taken from money donated by the good American people to the disadvantaged Australian.

Hence I ask one thing: could please some of the famous people of any country pay a bit of attention to our internal third world that is largely disregarded because we assume that first world countries are better off. Actually we can be worse off in some cases. And it is our children that suffer. Our disadvantaged single mums, both in Australia and in America, need help for they can no longer live in peace and are at the mercy of a system that is unforgivably cruel.

Lady Gaga Nicole Kidman Oprah Winfrey and the many other famous people. We need help and as the world is shaping into a new system, due the Coronavirus. Lets make this system a better one. Money is not the only thing, we can also expose the

problems so that something is done. In Australia in particular we have a tremendous problem of domestic violence that leads to homelessness for many single mums. Let's stop being judgmental and start to help.

It is very easy for the older generation to criticize but here is the thing: you were very lucky for your world was a much better place and many of us older people have stuffed up due to greed, selfishness and ignorance. The world is not the same for our young people they simply do not have the same opportunities .

Lets do something directly that we can see rather than giving money that most time does not go to those that need it.

We have a third world crisis in America and Australia (of course other country as well). Let's help our mums and our children, the children belong to all of us because, after all, we have not inherited Earth not from our ancestors but borrowed it from our children.

ALFREDO ZOTTI

Major reforms needed to fix Australia's ailing housing system

A new UNSW report recommends a Royal Commission and broader RBA remit to address the effect of soaring house prices on productivity, economic instability and inequality.

Australia's property market is a threat to the nation's economic future with soaring house prices driving inequality and damaging productivity, according to a new report from UNSW Sydney's City Futures Research Centre.

The report released today recommends immediate institutional reform to stabilise Australia's dysfunctional housing market, including a Royal Commission on Housing Future Australia, a new national housing strategy and agency, and a permanent housing committee as part of the National Cabinet.

Housing: Taming the Elephant in the Economy presented to the Housing and Productivity Research Consortium, highlights informed opinions of 87 leading Australian economists and other housing market experts on the impacts of housing system outcomes on Australia's economy. The report advocates far-reaching changes to re-shape Australia's housing system and remedy damage to economic productivity, reduce exposure to financial instability and stem rising inequality.

Australia's dysfunctional housing system

According to the report, national household debt has more than doubled over the past three decades, from 70 per cent of GDP in 1990 to almost 185 per cent in 2020, exposing a ticking economic time bomb should interest rates rise in future. In addition, house prices, which have increased by 10 per cent in the year to April 2021, are forecast to rise up to 14 per cent in the coming year, putting homeownership further out of reach for many.

Report lead author, UNSW City Futures Research Centre Honorary Professor Duncan MacLennan, said the current housing system is dysfunctional at all levels and is an inherent risk to the Australian economy. He said the report affirms that Australia's housing system is failing increasing numbers of young people, and an immediate overhaul is needed.

"Australia's approach to housing policy has fuelled income and wealth inequality and created significant economic instability," Prof. MacLennan said. "This is becoming a huge drag on productivity, and warping Australia's capital investment patterns."

"The scale and complexity of the problem demands [in particular] that a Royal Commission be established to investigate how to defuse the time bomb and create a more effective and equitable market for all Australians."

The recent explosion in house prices, in particular, brings a fresh and troubling dynamic for younger Australians who are being locked out of the market in growing numbers, Prof. MacLennan said.

"Surging property prices have left some wealthier and older Australians better off, but younger and poorer Australians, who are the future buyers, are much worse off," said Everybody's Home national spokesperson Kate Colvin.

"It's time to shine a light on the fundamental flaws in our nation's housing policies and create a concrete plan of

solutions that work to address growing housing inequity, like building more social and affordable housing."

The report also recommends switching housing stimulus efforts to support the social rental sector, which would also have potentially lesser inflationary consequences in the immediate term. It also calls to expand Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) formal accountabilities to include housing market stability to help maintain a more rational housing market.

"The Commonwealth Government's policy actions are boosting inflationary pressures, and the RBA has effectively washed its hands of responsibility for house prices, arguing higher prices are good for the economy," Prof. MacLennan said. "But when people are paying more and more for rent and to service their mortgages, they have less and less to spend on other goods and services."

Shifting to housing supply policy

The report also highlights the economic case for building more affordable housing and shifting from policies that inflate the demand for housing to ones that expand supply. The report noted that housing stock is valued at an estimated \$8.1 trillion, while housing construction accounts for five per cent of Australian jobs, and more focus needs to be put on securing the sector.

"The Commonwealth is right to highlight sluggish housing supply but wrong to assume that State and local planning is the cause. Shortages of infrastructure, skilled labour and raw materials all matter too," Prof. MacLennan said. "States do need to audit housing supply chains and bring all their powers to bear to make them faster and more flexible."

"Short political time horizons and cross-border and cross-sector blame games will not help younger and poorer Australians."

Key recommendations





- The establishment of a Royal Commission on Housing Future Australia
- The expansion of RBA formal accountabilities to include housing market stability
- The establishment of a permanent Housing Committee as part of the National Cabinet
- The development of a national housing strategy by the Commonwealth Government, including a housing market strategy
- The establishment of a national housing agency under Commonwealth Treasury with specialist policy capability to champion actions to achieve effective housing-economy outcomes, to promote affordable housing development and to re-create the analytical capacity of the former National Housing Supply Council
- In the immediate term, Australian governments should give consideration to switching housing stimulus efforts from market housing to the social rental sector with potentially lesser inflationary consequences

Peta Brady
Mary Helen Sassman

Some Happy Day

Truth is just the start

SOUP KITCHEN PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS "SOME HAPPY DAY" A FILM BY CATHERINE HILL
PETA BRADY, MARY HELEN SASSMAN, JAMES O'CONNELL, CAMERON ZAYEC
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: CAMERON ZAYEC
EDITED BY ALICE BISHOP
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: ADE POGOS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: SHANNON MICHAELAS
"SOME HAPPY DAY" IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY LITERATURES AUSTRALIA AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AUSTRALIA THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL FUND

AICI*    

Check the Classification



Dr Samantha Oakes brings 20 years' experience of breast cancer research to the role of Director, Research Investment at the National Breast Cancer Foundation. After beginning her scientific career in 2001 at the Garvan Institute, Sydney, she was awarded her PhD in 2007, funded by NHMRC and NBCF fellowships and received the 'Garvan Institute Best Thesis Prize' for her work understanding the role of the pituitary hormone prolactin in basal breast cancer.

In 2008, Samantha was awarded an NBCF Early Career Fellowship to further her studies at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. Her work focussed on understanding how specialised signals in breast cancer cells prevent them from dying. She later showed that by turning these signals off, triple negative breast cancers could be sensitised to routine chemotherapy. In 2012, Samantha returned to the Garvan Institute to establish her own laboratory and together with her team, discovered a new dual therapeutic and anti-metastatic strategy for triple negative breast cancer.

In 2019/2020, Samantha established and led the Long Term Follow Up Unit of the Molecular Screening and Therapeutics Program based at the Garvan Institute, an essential part of Australia's largest Genomic Cancer Medicine Trial. Samantha has contributed to peer review for the NHMRC, NBCF, CINSW and is a peer review committee chair within the New Zealand Health Research Council project grant system. In addition to her science,

Samantha is a passionate advocate of breast cancer research in the community and a mentor to scientific and non-scientific staff. Samantha is now Director, Research Investment, National Breast Cancer Foundation, a position which enables her to facilitate, promote and support the very best research in Australia. After dedicating her entire career to breast cancer research, Samantha is committed to helping National Breast Cancer Foundation reach their mission of zero deaths from Breast Cancer.

Dr Samantha Oakes

— INTERVIEW —

Greg T Ross: Welcome to The Last Post, Inspirational Australian Women's Series, Samantha, how are you?

Dr. Samantha Oakes: Oh, hello, Greg. Thank you for speaking with me today.

GTR: That's fine. I'd like to introduce you to readers and listeners, Dr. Samantha Oakes. I guess you've brought 20 years experience of breast cancer research, when you're now director of research, obviously investment at the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Sam.

Dr. Samantha Oakes: That's right. Yes. So, I'm a committed scientist and researcher in breast cancer research. I started my career in breast cancer research in 2001 at the Garvan Institute. I was fortunate enough to receive funding from the National Breast Cancer Foundation when I was a junior scientist, which really kick started my career, to understanding the ways in which women develop breast cancer, and the ways which we can treat them better. And I'm delighted to say that I've had a successful 20 year research career at the Garvan Institute and also at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. And I was employed at the National Breast Cancer Foundation this year to become the new director of research investment. And really that position now enables me to ensure that we can fund the very best breast cancer research in Australia. And I will do that through oversight of our very rigorous peer review process.

GTR: Yes, well, that's the beauty of having such a system in Australia. We're able to do things at a high standard. What have you found during this 20 years of research Sam, into breast cancer?

SO: Look, my personal story has included a personal touch with breast cancer. My auntie passed away when I was very young and she was in her mid-fifties and I watched her unfortunately suffer a terrible death due to breast cancer. And we didn't know very much about breast cancer back then. In fact, survival rates back then were worse than 76%. And we've seen the survival rates go from 76% to 91%. And really that's over the last years since NBCF came into existence in 1994. So we're seeing a 15% improvement in the five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with breast cancer, and that's largely thanks to research. I know that in my personal research, before coming to

National Breast Cancer Foundation, I was focused on finding new ways of treating the most aggressive forms of breast cancer. And I was able to discover a few different types of ways to do that. And I know they're now going into clinical trials for women with breast cancer. And that's the thing with research. You can make discoveries many, many years ago that really make huge inroads and huge impacts on the survival of women and men, we shouldn't forget that men are obviously diagnosed with breast cancer too, huge inroads into understanding the ways which we can treat these patients better and ultimately have many more people survive longer and live very long healthy lives.

GTR: Well, that's the aim, and you're certainly taking positive steps towards that being achieved here in Australia. I guess, for a lot of people, your focus in many ways, or part of your focus at least I should say, has been on understanding how specialised signals in breast cancer develop and prevent them from dying, et cetera. Could you just explain that a bit to listeners and readers?

SO: Yeah, sure. So, the focus of my research and my laboratory for many years before I came to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, and I should say that I was funded to do this by the National Breast Cancer Foundation, so it's been a lovely story of being funded and then joining the organisation, is that I was like a cancer cell terminator. In every cell in the human body, there is a life and death switch. You think about your skin, lots of skin cells are dying all the time, or we're replacing them all the time. Every cell in the body has to live and then it has to die because it gets diseased and dies. And unfortunately cancer cells work out ways of preventing themselves from dying. And this is why tumours keep growing in the body. And so the focus of my research was really trying to work out ways in which we could reactivate that life and death switch and make sure that the cancer cells die because ultimately if we can make them die, we get rid of the cancer. And so that was largely the focus of my laboratory.

SO: And I made several discoveries into that aspect of breast cancer life and death, breast cancer cell life and death. And I had made several discoveries that showed that I could create a combination therapy that

could make triple negative breast cancers die. And what was really awesome is that not only could I make triple negative breast cancers die, but that particular therapy had relevance into other cancer types like pancreatic cancer and prostate cancer. So what we learn from breast cancer, we can actually translate to other diseases as well.

GTR: Isn't that amazing? Pardon me. Because of course, prostate too and pancreatic. My wife, obviously, probably a lot of people know this by now, but lovely Wendy died of pancreatic cancer in 2017, and that was an eight month battle, but of course they're very aggressive too, pancreatic cancer.

SO: Oh indeed. And, I guess bringing it back to breast cancer, we've done really well so far. We've seen the survival rate go from 76 to 91% in the last 24 or 27 years. But the problem now is that we're dealing with the really tricky breast cancers. We've done pretty well with the ones that are early breast cancers, and really we've got to stop the women and men from dying. We see the statistics this year, that over 3,100 women and men will die from breast cancer. We know that they're the really tricky ones to treat because we haven't got therapies for them. Now, if we can find better ways of treating those breast cancers, better ways of detecting breast cancer at earlier stages so that those patients might survive better. We fund all aspects of breast cancer from prevention and risk, so that looking at who may develop these breast cancers, detecting the cancer earlier, because if we detect it earlier, we know that stage one breast cancer has a hundred percent chance of surviving five years. And we're looking at ways of finding new and improved treatments as well. We are looking at ways of improving quality of life for patients who are diagnosed and treated with breast cancer. So you can see National Breast Cancer Foundation funds all aspects of the breast cancer journey. And ultimately we're trying to reach that goal of zero deaths.

GTR: Okay. So, I guess there's lots of ways that breast cancer patients are treated through the help of the National Breast Cancer Foundation. In all your years of research, Sam, have you found, is there a typical, or is there a constant theme running through people that are more likely to develop breast cancer?

"...EVERY RESEARCH PROJECT THE NATIONAL BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION FUNDS, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO OUR GOAL OF ZERO DEATHS FROM BREAST CANCER."

SO: There are a number of studies looking into, I guess we're talking about risk here. What are the risk factors for someone who might develop breast cancer? There's quite a lot of research. We know that there is a small proportion of people that have a genetic component of their risk. So we know that there are genes that can have mistakes in them, like the BRCA one, BRCA one and two genes. If a patient has a mistake, a mutation in one of those genes, they have a higher risk of developing breast cancer. And we have identified over the last 10 or so years, a number of other genes that contribute to overall risk. We know there are lifestyle factors that contribute to overall risk, but the research is ongoing and that's why we're here. We're here to find out how can we prevent cancer breast cancers from forming in people. And we've got a large focus on prevention research, because we do know that the incidence of breast cancer is increasing. This year, it's expected that over 20,000 patients will be diagnosed with breast cancer. So, not only do we have to stop them from developing breast cancer, but we need to find ways of detecting these cancers earlier so that we are better equipped at treating them.

GTR: Yeah. Why do you think it's on the increase, Sam?

SO: Look, I think there are a number of factors, and I've read several papers, looking at the possible reasons why there is an increase in the overall rate of breast cancers. We do know that the increase in incidence in breast cancer is outpacing population growth, so it's not just about our increase in population, but that's certainly a contributing factor. We know that there are lifestyle and environmental factors that may contribute to risk, but we also know that we're getting better at detecting them. When my auntie was diagnosed with breast cancer, many, many years ago, when I was only a very little girl, and that was many years ago, but she developed breast cancer that was emerging out of her skin. She wasn't screened for that breast cancer. She just found it, and it was found at far later stage than it ever should have been found. And she unfortunately succumbed to that disease. Now we're really much better able at finding breast cancers. We've had funded researchers in some of our grant schemes that are working on ways of finding better screening methodologies, incorporating 3D screening

methodologies to the standard two dimensional mammography, and improving our ability to detect cancer. So, I think that our ability to detect cancer is also contributing to the increased incidence.

GTR: Okay. And so I guess, how is Australia and I guess the National Breast Cancer Foundation standing, because obviously you'd be working with overseas people too, but how are we standing on a worldwide forum on this? Are we doing some good work here compared to other countries?

SO: The National Breast Cancer Foundation, and I'll just speak about our organization for the moment, has invested nearly \$200 million in close to 600 projects that are all aimed at reaching our goal of zero deaths from breast cancer. And that's pretty extraordinary from an organization that is a hundred percent community funded. And I always like to say that Australia per se, if you think we're only about a country of 25, 26 million, we punch well above our weight internationally, in our ability to make huge discoveries and inroads, into understanding how we can better detect and treat breast cancer. For example, the research that I did actually was discovered earlier in the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, and I adapted the technology for a treatment that was used in leukemia and adopted that triple negative breast cancer and showed that it worked. Now that treatment, which turned off the life and death switch, was actually discovered here in Australia. So I think we do very, very well.

GTR: That's reassuring for a lot of Australians, obviously with breast cancer or the figures there that suggest there will be more suffering, I guess, from the disease. Is it exciting for you to be working in such an environment where you're on the cusp perhaps of achieving something great?

SO: Look, I'm thrilled with the career that I've had so far, 20 years as a research scientist. And it was with mixed emotions that I shut my lab and moved over to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. But I'm absolutely excited. As director of research investment, I can really facilitate and see that the very best breast cancer research in Australia is funded. We know it works. We've seen an improvement in the survival rates since NBCF's inception in 1994. And I get to see and read the very best research in Australia. That just makes me really excited. We're currently,

next week in fact, we will be starting to do our peer reviewed panels, where we take the very best scientists in Australia who will review all grants that have been submitted to the National Breast Cancer Foundation through our rigorous peer review process. And I will be facilitating the discussions as chair of those panels. And I get to really see that the process is the best that we can be, so that we can fund the very best research. And that makes me really excited because it means that every research project the National Breast Cancer Foundation funds, will contribute to our goal of zero deaths from breast cancer.

GTR: Well, I'll tell you what, Sam, Australians are very honoured to have you as one of us. And I guess on the world stage beyond that also, as a working scientist whose work will affect women worldwide, it must give you some great achievement feeling there, and I guess also through the National Breast Cancer Foundation. How can people help?

SO: Well, obviously, we are a hundred percent community funded organization. So we rely wholly on the generosity of the public and those interested in donating to breast cancer. So we have a number of ways of donating, but one of our really most important ways of donating, is via not only just personal individual giving, and you can go to our website to donate, but we also have a bequest process, and bequests are really important for us because it enables the National Breast Cancer Foundation to plan ahead with research projects, with a sense of security. We can then look to the future and say, "Well, great. We're going to have that pot of money and we'll be able to invest in that piece of research into the future."

GTR: That's totally brilliant. I'm honoured to speak to you and we welcome you to The Inspirational Australian Women. You do a lot of us proud, and we thank you so much for your time and also for the work of the National Breast Cancer Foundation, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and Garvan beyond that, because this has all been part of your education and journey, and we're pleased to share it with other Australians.

SO: It has, and I'm proud of every step of the journey. And I'm even prouder now to be the director of research investment at National Breast Cancer Foundation. I feel that I'm at the cusp of seeing something really great happen.

Stopping breast cancer in its tracks

The National Breast Cancer Foundation's (NBCF) community ambassador Kate shares her story in a bid to inspire others to support breast cancer research.



At the age of 49, Kate was diagnosed with breast cancer after a routine mammogram. Mammograms were crucial for Kate due to her strong family history of breast cancer. Her mother died from breast cancer when she was eight and her two older sisters were also diagnosed.

Over 20,000 Australians are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. Only about 5-10% of breast cancer cases can be explained by an inherited mutation.

"When I was diagnosed I was in shock – even though I had been fearful about getting breast cancer my entire life due to my family history with the disease," she explained.

"At the time of my diagnosis much work had been done in discovering the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes and their predisposition to breast cancer. However, doctors couldn't pinpoint the genes that caused my familial link, highlighting the need for further research to be conducted in this area."

Kate made the difficult decision to remove her breasts, and today she remains cancer-free and enjoys an active and healthy life with her family.

When the time came for Kate and her husband to make their Will, leaving a gift to NBCF to fund vital breast cancer research, was a natural and obvious choice.

"Because of my own experience I want to make a difference to breast cancer research both now and in the future. Today's discoveries lay the foundation for new treatments and medical advancements that will benefit future generations," said Kate.

"I encourage Australians who are passionate about making a difference to breast cancer to consider the National Breast Cancer Foundation when they are making or updating their Will."

The National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) is Australia's leading national body funding game-changing breast cancer research with money raised entirely by the Australian public. Their mission is simple: stop deaths from breast cancer. How? By identifying, funding and championing world-class research - research that will help to detect tumours earlier, improve treatment outcomes, and ultimately – save lives.

**TOGETHER
WE CAN BEAT
BREAST CANCER**



1 in 7 Australian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.

Support the National Breast Cancer Foundation and help save thousands of lives each year.

A charitable gift in your Will to fund innovative research can improve survival rates, transform detection, treatment and care.

With your support we can stop breast cancer taking the lives of those we love.

For information please contact our Gift in Wills Manager on **02 8098 4848** or bequests@nbcf.org.au

Less stress for women who know their genetic risk for breast cancer

Women who found out their genetic risk for breast cancer had fewer regrets than those who opted not to find out.

No-one likes to receive bad news, especially when it's related to health.

But a recent study of women at risk of developing breast cancer suggests knowing your genetic risk profile does not lead to long-term distress and leads to fewer regrets than not wanting to know about it in the first place.

The research led by UNSW Sydney looked at how the communication of breast cancer risk affected women who had undergone genetic testing.

Lead author Dr Tatiane Yanes says the study focused on women who had undergone genetic testing to determine their polygenic risk score (PRS) – an analysis of 62 genetic variants on top of the two usual indicators of breast cancer found in the genes BRCA1 and BRCA2.

"PRS is a new type of genetic testing and genetic information that we haven't been able to offer before because we've only been focusing on single genes," says Dr Yanes, who conducted the study as part of her PhD at UNSW, and is now with University of Queensland.

"The vast majority of women who get screened for the BRCA genes come back negative, but that doesn't always mean there's no breast cancer risk. PRS looks much more broadly at variants in your DNA."

A genetic variant is a small change to the base molecules that make up the DNA. On their own, they don't necessarily mean greater risk. But the more variants found in the DNA, the greater the PRS.

"Past studies have shown that getting a PRS for breast cancer

has the potential to improve health outcomes," says Dr Yanes.

"But this is the first time that we have looked at how women who receive this information react. Does it cause more stress, or does it reduce it, and can it bring about positive behaviours in women who have either already been diagnosed with it or have a family history of breast cancer?"

Of the 208 study participants, 165 women (80 per cent) agreed to receive their PRS while the remaining 43 participants declined to be informed.

Among the women who agreed to be told their scores (dubbed 'receivers'), 104 were given a high-risk score, while the remaining 61 were assessed as low-risk.

Not surprisingly, the study found that women with higher PRS experienced slightly more distress and anxiety upon receiving their result than those with a low PRS, *"but it wasn't really that big a gap to actually warrant additional psychological support,"* Dr Yanes says.

Regrets

But surprisingly, when the researchers compared the psychological outcomes of the women who opted to receive their PRS with those who declined, more women in the latter group reported regret about their original decision not to find out.

"Those who had received the results reported basically minimal regret. In fact, more than half of them actually had a score of zero, which means no regret at all," says Dr Yanes.

"But the average regret score for those who didn't receive that PRS result was around 38 out of 100 when compared to an average score of just 9 in the 'receivers' group."

The researchers gathered the results in follow-up questionnaires at two weeks and 12 months after calculating the PRS scores, and they measured the regret using a validated method known as the Decision Regret Scale.

Among the women who declined to find out their PRSs, reasons included being *"happy with their lives right now"*, or that they were *"already aware of breast cancer risk"* and that the *"test will not tell them when they will develop breast cancer"*. Other reasons included not being able to attend the appointment in person and concern over how they would handle it emotionally.

Dr Yanes says the results will help clinicians and genetic counsellors to equip women with the tools to make an informed decision about whether or not to get a PRS result.

"We want doctors to be able to provide women with clear information outlined in decision aids that explains what the PRS is and the type of access women have to these genetic services," Dr Yanes says.

"What we don't want is that people decline information out of fear, or aren't able to make an informed decision because they may not fully understand the information or what the implications for them are."

Following on from the study, Dr Yanes will provide clinicians around the country with best practice guidelines on how to deliver personalised cancer risk management to women undergoing PRS genetic testing.

LACHLAN GILBERT

UNSW Sydney. Research published in Genetics in Medicine.



adelaide **CAD**
Centre for Advanced Dentistry

Do I need Dental Implants (Or other dental procedure)?

Of the many questions' patients ask about in a consultation is "Do I need Dental Implants?" or another dental procedure. Often it has been suggested to them by a friend, relative or even a fellow dental colleague. However, the answer is almost never clear cut and there are many things I consider when I make my recommendations.

There are many dental conditions that can affect us, but most dental treatment occurs because decay and gum diseases have not been prevented or managed. Many of these are often neglected because they are usually painless until it's too late, and complex dental treatment is required. Prevention involves reduction of sugars, and good oral hygiene. Gum disease and decay, including your risk of gum disease and decay is a factor for your suitability for complex treatment.

Dental services are not products or commodities. You expect a product to behave the same in most circumstances, however every mouth is different. Dental treatments behave differently in each person. What this means is that not everyone is suitable for more complex procedures such as dental implants, or other procedures may have a better outcome for a certain complaint. For example, in some cases a removable denture can have a better appearance and provide a more natural look than dental implants.

Another factor is called "oral health quality of life". It is how things like our teeth, mouth or dentures affect daily functions such as eating, speech and self-confidence. Often there are multiple options, and each treatment option will have their benefits and limitations. Different options contribute to your oral health quality of life in different ways.

Ongoing maintenance is also a factor. Just as you would service your car every 6-12 months, there is always monitoring and maintenance that needs to be done at regular intervals (even for people with dentures!) to ensure that they continue to function well for you. Remember most oral problems are usually painless until its too late to prevent a tooth breakage, denture breakage or toothache.

In summary:

- Prevention of dental disease is crucial to maintaining oral function
- Regular check-ups and monitoring can help assess the state of your mouth and teeth
- If complex dental care is required, there is often a few options available, and these are the questions you should ask your dental professional.
 - » Am I suitable for complex treatment?
 - » What option may be most suitable for me?
 - » What are my risk factors that can affect the outcome of treatment?
 - » What are the benefits, risks and limitations?
 - » How will this improve my "oral health quality of life" issues?
 - » What sort of ongoing maintenance should I expect?



Dr Sravan Chunduru is a registered specialist prosthodontist who works in Adelaide, South Australia. He works in his private practice, as a clinical tutor at the University of Adelaide, and as a visiting consultant specialist at the Adelaide Dental Hospital.

Dr Leo Lander, a registered specialist periodontist, also practices in our dental practice providing gum specialist services such as management of gum disease and surgery for dental implants.

Together we can assess and prepare applications for DVA Gold Card holders for management of missing teeth including dental implants. Applications for dental implants usually require two specialists to prepare.

**Disclaimer: DVA has strict criteria for complex dental treatment including dental implants. These are not automatically approved. A consultation is required to assess you and to see if it is suitable for you, and if you are eligible to apply for treatment to be funded by DVA.*

Contact us on (08) 8212 5294 for a consultation today

Suite 11, Level 6, 55 Gawler Place, Adelaide SA 5000

www.adelaidecad.com.au



Australians unite to give hope to those diagnosed with upper gastrointestinal cancers

Each week, 223 Australians are diagnosed with an upper gastrointestinal cancer (pancreatic, liver, stomach, biliary and oesophageal) contributing to a total of more than 12,400 Australians diagnosed each year. Collectively, they have some of the lowest survival rates among all major cancers and claim more lives than other more highly publicised cancers such as breast, prostate, or brain cancer.

In a show of support for those living with the disease and to remember lost loved ones, thousands of Australians will unite virtually on Sunday 24 October to raise much needed awareness and funds for upper gastrointestinal cancers at Pancare Foundation's Unite for Hope. Participants are encouraged to undertake the event in their local community and choose from the family friendly 5km walk or run or take on a more challenging 10km run.

Doug Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer of the Pancare Foundation, an Australian not-for-profit organisation committed to supporting families and funding research for upper gastrointestinal cancers, said that despite the challenges of navigating the changing COVID landscape the charity was hopeful to still raise \$250,000 to help support its vital services and research.

"At the Pancare Foundation, we support medical research that aims to accelerate advancement in early detection and new treatments that can help improve outcomes for Australians impacted by these devastating cancers," he said.

"Funds raised from our Unite for Hope event allow us to continue to support research as well as our support services and programs for patients and their families which includes dedicated cancer resources and webinars, support groups and access to our support team, including a Specialist Upper GI Cancer Nurse," he said.



Registrations are now open for Pancare Foundation's Unite for Hope. Register today at www.pancareuniteforhope.com.au.

PANCARE FOUNDATION

UNITE *for* HOPE

UNITE IN HOPE – YOUR PLACE, YOUR WAY SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER

Unite for Hope across the nation and show your support for Australians impacted by pancreatic and upper GI cancers.

No matter where you live, you can get involved and help raise vital funds and awareness for the cause.

REGISTER NOW!

pancareuniteforhope.com.au

or scan the code!

5km walk | 5km run | 10km run





Geoff Rowe

— INTERVIEW —

Geoff Rowe has occupied the role of CEO of ADA Australia since September 2014. Geoff's career in the human services sector spans more than 30 years, including fifteen years in senior and executive positions in the Queensland Government, and more than 20 years in the not-for-profit sector. In November 2018 Geoff was awarded the prestigious Paul Tys Churchill Fellowship to study world's best practice in preventing and responding to Elder Abuse in aged care and the community. Following the Royal Commission on Aged Care, Geoff speaks with TLP Editor, Greg T Ross about the federal government's response to the commission's findings.

PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

Greg T Ross: Geoff Rowe, welcome to The Last Post podcast. You're CEO of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia. How's your role at the moment in light of the federal budget?

Geoff Rowe: Hi Greg. Look, the federal budget has made us busy in some ways, and certainly in the not too distant future, very busy. As you know, the Aged Care Royal Commission recently handed down its report on its findings in Aged Care and provided to government something like 148 recommendations for improvement. In summary, what they were saying is that the aged care system is broken and needs a complete overhaul. The federal government since the release of that report has been saying we will provide our response to the Royal Commission in the context of the budget. We were all waiting anxiously to see what the budget might have, and as governments often do, they certainly have provided a response, have packaged it up to look rather spectacular. And, you know, in a lot of ways it is spectacular increased funding for aged care, but in the context of what the Royal Commission was asking for, it's really the first step in a long journey. So, hoping that it's not a one-off cash splash.

GTR: I suppose you've really answered this question with your introduction there too, the thoughts of has the federal government delivered with this budget. It's a very complex argument Geoff in regards to a lot of issues, I guess, wages for workers being amongst them. Look, absolutely. I think if you asked the average punter in the street, they'd say, 17.7 billion is a lot of money. But, I recall an old saying that said "some people use statistics like a drunk uses the lamppost" for support rather than illumination. Potentially this is an example of that. 17.7 billion is to wrap up a five years funding, you divide 17.7 by five and you get about three

and a half billion. Seeing that there needed to be a spend of something like 9 billion a year to fix the aged care system. And as you indicated, one of the clear omissions from the budget was anything to address the poor wages in aged care and also staffing ratios in aged care. We've heard many times that aged care providers find difficulty getting staff and particularly getting good staff. It's not a very sexy industry to work in. I guess particularly the last couple of years, I really feel for staff who are working in aged care because of how they've been portrayed. The reality is that there are a lot of very good providers. There are a lot of very good staff and very committed staff. Clearly we need to do more to make sure that we're not talking about many, we're talking about all staff being good and being well trained, and being appropriately remunerated as well.

GTR: Yes. I think on that point too, Geoff with wages and attracting a decent standard of worker, we go back to the need to make sure that they are looked after, wages included, and perhaps that hasn't been the case in the past. Greg Hunt's declared this, Geoff as the centerpiece of this financial years federal budget. So, they're hoping obviously that the numbers, as you say, with the drunk and the lamppost, they use those numbers as, a way of convincing people that they're actually doing something about aged care. Do you think the proof will be in that materializing in the future rather than getting too carried away about it now?

GR: Yeah, look certainly if this is the first step in a journey, then it's a great first step. If it's the only step in the journey, then we've missed the mark. I think, there are a number of really good initiatives within this budget, and I'm certainly not wanting to take away from that, but I'm really just wanting to say this budget doesn't fix a system that's

broken. I think it's important for people listening too, to actually understand when we're talking about aged care, often we think about nursing homes or residential aged care facilities. Something like 1.3 million Australians access aged care services each year, and only about 240,000 of that cohort actually use nursing homes or residential aged care. So a lot of aged care is provided in the community and people may have heard about the home care packages or about the Commonwealth Home Support Programme. There are a number of schemes that are designed to allow people to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible, and I think none of us ever think, "when I get old, I want to go into a nursing home." We think, "when I get old, I want to be able to continue to live at home and to be as independent and as well as I can be." So, the recent inclusion of 80,000 new home care packages, and those packages are designed to be attached to an individual for them to be able to employ people to come in and provide support in the garden, support with showering, with meals or whatever it is that you individually need to continue to live at home, that's a massive step forward. Over the last few years, we have heard story after story where someone's been approved for a package, but they'd been on a waiting list. I think last year, something like 16,000 Australians died on the waiting list before they actually got a service. That again reinforces how the system wasn't working, and I could use the story of my own parents who had low level home care packages. Dad had a fall, it was assessed for a high level as with mum who had dementia, but because they couldn't access that, they ended up in a nursing home. That was really a poor outcome for them personally, even for us as taxpayers that was a poor outcome because

the nursing home place costs about \$95,000 a year. So, \$190,000 to keep mom and dad in a nursing home for 12 months. If they'd had a home package or the packages they'd had been assessed at, that probably would have come in at about 80 to 90,000. So, we as taxpayers have paid \$100,000 more than we needed to, to support my parents in not their preferred type of support. My parents' stories are one of many 1000s of stories that are out there. Home care packages, absolutely big tick. The suggestion is that people will, once assessed, need to wait less than a month to access a home care place once the scheme rolls out properly, and that's a fabulous outcome. There's been a commitment to rewrite the Aged Care Act because it's really just been a funding instrument, and the Royal commission has recommended that it be rights-based. So, it actually acknowledges that older people have rights, and particularly users of aged care have rights. Many times advocates describe, as people are asked to check in their rights when they're checking into aged care, they don't have a say in their care, they don't have choice and control. A new legislation that underpins the funding that says older people need to be front and center. They need to have a say in what their service looks like and their rights need to be respected. Again, a huge step forward. One of the other standouts for me was the increased hours for nursing staff, and the Royal Commission was certainly very critical of the fact that the availability of nursing care within aged care has been really limited. We've heard some pretty shocking stories about one nurse supporting 120 clients, and we all know that's fanciful the thought that someone can do that. So that increase in nursing care, particularly... I did a talk a couple of years ago which was talking about growth and change in the aged care industry and looking forward, and it gave me the opportunity to look at those who were coming into aged care, residential aged care, nursing homes, 10 years ago versus now. And 10 years ago, something like 20% of people who went into residential aged care had high or complex medical and health care support needs. Over that 10 years, we're now looking at 80% of people coming in who have high and complex health and medical support needs. So, there's complete turnaround. We used to talk about.. And I can talk about again, my grandparents who went into aged care, they went there to live. And if I'm, perhaps a little callous sounding, people nowadays go into residential aged care as part of that end of life process. If we're funding a model that doesn't see that the support needs of people who are in aged care have become more complex, then we're getting it wrong.

GTR: That's fair enough too. I guess with what you do at ADA, has your workload increased over the recent years?

GR: Has it increased... Absolutely, Greg, absolutely. I had the honour of being a witness at the Royal Commission hearing in Brisbane now almost two years ago. The focus of my conversation was about the access to advocacy services. Advocacy services for those who are not quite sure... Basically the role of an advocate is to support a user of aged care who has a concern or a problem that they're unable to resolve, or not confident enough to raise. Our role in short is about giving the older person a voice. Helping them resolve the issues, whether it's around the quality of meals, quality of care. It's whatever the pressing issue is for the older person, and to stand beside them and help get that resolution. I talked to the Royal Commission about, despite our best efforts here in Queensland, we're only seeing about 1.5% of aged care users. And was that a suggestion that 98.5% were happy? Absolutely not. That was that we were stretching things and our waiting lists were getting up to six weeks in some cases. Six weeks for anyone is a long time. For an older person who is captive within the aged care system, that's a very long time. To the credit of the Commissioners, I asked at the time, "what was a reasonable figure in an ideal world." We've been so busy responding to people's needs, we hadn't given that a lot of thought. I did say, look, if we're able to see 5% of the aged care population, I would feel really we're responding better. They used the figure of 5% from July, 2021. That was an absolute delight to see that recommendation, and I guess the response to that recommendation has been captured in that commitment of 17.7 billion. So effectively, by the 30th of June, 2022, we will see the funding to aged care advocacy increased threefold. That will allow us to support more people, it will allow us to do more work around education, so educating users of aged care or potential users about their rights, their responsibilities, and also about how to access the system. We know that aged care is complex, and again quoting someone else, because they're always more intelligent people than me. I was at a conference a couple of years ago where one of the presenters talked about... Or here's the statement, "We all want to live a long life, but none of us want to get old.", and I think that really sums that up in terms of people's preparation for entry in to the aged care system. We want to see ourselves having a long life being well, being independent, and it doesn't always work that way.

GTR: I'm not the only one, then.

GR: No, no, no, we're all in denial.

GTR: So I guess it comes down to that belief. I think there was some discussion

on that the other day about one of the problems with this may be that none of us see ourselves getting old. Of course, as it creeps up on us with the realization that it does, then you're advocating for those people that need that help. It's a complex argument, Geoff. I heard on television the other night, there was some discussion about how the providers, the aged care, the people that look after the housing, et cetera. It's no good just to throw cash at them and hope that they do the best. You were talking about education there too, which is another important factor. So, can we merge that education factor in with the providers and is it happening now? Is there any educational...

GR: There has been education provided to staff in aged care about older people's rights, about what's quality care. It's a really complex one. I've certainly heard government say if we just threw cash at the providers, there's no guarantee that anything will change. Perhaps my comment about this as a first step, it's the getting some reforms in place, about getting legislation in place and intention in place, and then we throw more money at it. There were a \$10 a day increase in the government subsidy for people within aged care. The optimist in me would say there is a strategy behind this. I do fear that just throwing money at the problem's not going to deal with it. One of the bits of feedback that I'd really like to share with your listeners is when it does come time to look at aged care, particularly residential aged care, whether it's for yourself, for your parents. Because I know for veterans they'll be looking for themselves, but young veterans. As many of us are, we're forced to support our parents entering into aged care. Very much what the message is, beware. Do your research. I know it often happens at a point of crisis, but time and time again, we see people being seduced by beautiful buildings, that five star approach and being put off where the facility is a little bit older and looking a bit more tired. Certainly the experience of advocates has been that there's no correlation between the quality of care and how beautiful the place looks like. Indeed it's potentially an inverse if I've got my mathematical terms, right. An inverse correlation that sometimes it's the really flash looking places where the quality of care isn't great.

GTR: The more makeup, the less reality of that.

GR: I don't know if I'll follow that line any further Greg, but it is about doing your research. Normally when we make a major life decision, buying a house. I won't throw getting married in there because I think there are a few other factors that sort of run in. When you're buying or buying a house or making a significant investment, you do your research. You talk to people who have bought or built in the area. You talk to

people who've got one of those cars or you read reviews, and I guess it's that same thing within aged care that I'd being encouraging all of us to do our homework. To not take things on face value. I'm optimistic that we'll see some change going forward on that one.

GTR: Yeah. Well, all the best to you in that regard, Geoff. It's a strange thing to say, but of course, in my regards to have a magazine about veterans, it would be better if there were no veterans, meaning there would be no wars, et cetera. And I guess the same for you in the regard of needing to advocate for those elderly people that can't assist themselves in that regard, it would be better if this wasn't needed. But we strive on and we work to get a perfect outcome, or at least a better outcome. You're doing that.

GR: Indeed. I'm absolutely an optimist, and I try and find the best in people. People don't always show you that, and I'm sure you've had that experience in your life as well. I think as a society, if we can call out the bad things that we see is really important. I had the opportunity as you know two years ago now, I was in Vancouver talking to people around preventing and responding to elder abuse in aged care as part of my Churchill fellowship. The fellowship took me across the US, the UK, New Zealand and a little place called Alaska. I got to meet this extraordinary older woman by the name of Dr. Gloria Gutman, and Gloria was actually one of the co-founders of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The comment that she made that sticks in my mind is that when ageism happens... Her statement was, ageism supports elder abuse. So if we don't respect older people, if we don't see older people as having rights, older people are abused. It is that, not seeing people as individuals. Even where people have cognitive decline, we often see systems that will say they've lost their marbles, so therefore they can't make any decisions about anything. Even reflecting my dad's experience in aged care who was cognitively very well, he was continually frustrated with them saying, "Look Frank, it's not like that." Even when a doctors appointment was changed with him, he tried to say it to the staff. They would turn around and say, "you can't possibly know what you're talking about because you're old." He knew exactly what he was talking about. As individuals, we make decisions every day, and the filter that's in there is around our capacity. For someone with dementia, they can make decisions about what they wear, what they want to do. They don't need to have all decisions taken from them, but you know, a complex health decision or a complex financial decision might be beyond them. As a society, I think we need to encourage that respect, that need for people to continue to make decisions because as you pointed out, we all hope to be an older person one

day, living independently and having a good life. Part of my optimism is that... I hear staff talking about the current generation of aged care users as the grateful generation, and their generation doesn't generally complain, but we know the baby boomers are coming into aged care. They're just starting to knock on the door. No one's going to describe them as grateful. They see something they don't like, they change it. If the sector doesn't change, if government is unable to change the sector, I think the users that are starting to knock on the door of aged care will change the system to make it something that meets their needs.

GTR: Very well said, Geoff. I was on a cruise in Sydney on Tuesday, and there was a lot of baby boomers on board. They're grey-haired men with ponytails and it's for a charity. Everyone was having a lot of fun. So as you say, the nature of the baby boomers will be to change things that need changing. Perhaps it's an appropriate time, and good on you. We've known each other via phone calls since the Elder Abuse Conference in Sydney in 2019 or, February, 2019.

GR: I think so. About three years, yeah.

GTR: Of course, and we've enjoyed and had many long chats on the phone regarding the subject matter, and it's been a pleasure to meet you via Zoom. We hope that it can be a physical catch-up in the near future to further discuss, because I don't want to drop the ball on this as a magazine, I want this to keep this going. So we maintain the awareness for as long as I'm around to do that. Thanks for being part of the magazine since we first spoke those years ago.

GR: Thanks for the opportunity. Veterans are an incredibly important cohort from our perspective as advocacy agencies. Being able to support them is key. Perhaps my closing comment will be to pass on our phone number, which is possibly the easiest 1800 number in the country. It's 1800 700 600. No matter which state or territory you're calling from, it will put you through to the OPAN service delivery organization in your state and territories. If calling from Queensland, you'll get ADA Australia. If you're calling from New South Wales, you'll get Seniors Rights Service, and so it goes. Our services are independent of government, independent of aged care, they're free and they're confidential. I'd really encourage your readers and listeners to use our services if they're having difficulty either they're accessing or with aged care, either for themselves or for their family members.

GTR: We'll support that on social media with that 1800 700 600 number for aged care advocacy around Australia, and Seniors Rights Services do a great job in New South as well. Thank you so much for your time, Geoff.

GR: Thanks Greg. Cheers.

Top Tips for older people to avoid financial abuse

1. Stop and wait. If you feel you are being forced into a financial situation, stop and wait and get advice before you sign a document.
2. Know your finances. Keep in regular contact with your bank, credit, financial institution, financial planner or accountant and review statements.
3. Always seek advice. Seek independent advice before signing any documents, co-signing loans, or signing over ownership of your home.
4. Enduring Powers of Attorney. Think carefully about who your Enduring Power of Attorney should be – a mix of family and friends give a balanced view.
5. Keep records. Keep copies of important financial documents in a safe place which you can find easily.

"THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS BEEN A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO AN INCREASE IN FINANCIAL ELDER ABUSE WITH INCREASED FINANCIAL PRESSURE ON FAMILIES."

Don't cross the line: Financial elder abuse is more common than you think

Research shows that financial abuse is the most common form of elder abuse. It accounts for around 68% of elder abuse cases and around 10 to 15% of these cases involve wrongdoing or mishandling by an appointed enduring power of attorney.

We have seen a range of ways in which financial abuse occurs, including:

- emptying bank accounts
- intercepting regular payments, such as pensions
- accessing a person's accounts for their own use
- selling the person's home and keeping the proceeds
- controlling access to finances and limiting a person's spending
- not meeting the costs of health and wellbeing for a person
- limiting access to information regarding the person's financial situation
- mixing finances and not keeping appropriate records of expenditure.

Sometimes these are a result of bad intentions but can also be a result of poor management.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a contributing factor to an increase in financial elder abuse with increased financial pressure on families. It is also particularly steeped in ageism. Financial elder abuse generally shows itself as 'inheritance impatience' or 'best intentions'. The misguided notions that older people no longer have a need for wealth and that family or those closest are entitled to access it, or that older people can no longer manage or make decisions about their own money and assets.

As advocates, we see how this way of thinking can lead to crossing the line.

Taking action against financial elder abuse is everyone's responsibility. For older people, loss of financial security is likely to be permanent and has serious

implications for their health and wellbeing such as homelessness or admission to hospital. This also means a greater cost of care to the community.

That is why the Australian Government is moving to develop a national register of Enduring Power of Attorneys. This will allow financial institutions and others with the ability to check if an attorney and their power to act is current and valid, before making any transactions.

It is hoped that this will also be rolled out with sector and community education about the role of an Attorney and how the person must be included in all decision-making. If you are an Attorney looking after a person's financial affairs it's important you know your role and responsibilities.

So how can you make sure you don't cross the line?

You may be appointed as an attorney under an Enduring Power of Attorney or are simply helping someone you care for with day-to-day finances. Here are the principles to follow.

- Keep your money and the person's money and assets separate
- Keep proper accounts and records of how you spend money or manage assets
- Encourage and maximise the person's participation – they have a right to have a say and it will help you make the decisions that they would have made
- Make decisions that are least restrictive for the person
- Work with other decision-makers. There may be more than one attorney or consult with family and friends
- Act within the limits of your role, and most importantly, keep the person's views and wishes at the forefront.

For more information and resources visit www.adalaw.com.au or if are worried that this could be happening to you or a person you know or care for, contact the Older Person's Advocacy Network on **1800 700 600** for advice and support.

Geoff Rowe is the CEO of Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia, a not-for-profit, independent, community-based advocacy organisation that provides free advocacy support to older people and people with disability across Queensland. ADA Australia is a member of the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN).



ADA Australia

Your aged and disability advocates

- Aged care *Advocacy*
- *Advocacy & legal support* for Enduring Power of Attorney
- Elder abuse *Advocacy*

Free, Confidential, Independent

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Taking action against elder abuse

On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Griffith University in partnership with ADA Law, launched a new suite of resources to assist taking action against elder abuse.

The resources have been developed following research into elder abuse published by Griffith University in January this year, showing that family conflict and isolation are the top risk factors for financial elder abuse.

Financial elder abuse is the most common form of abuse, accounting for 68.7% of cases in the study, and there have been reports of an increase in cases during the COVID-19 pandemic. CEO of ADA Australia, Geoff Rowe, said that this increase is not surprising.

"We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the top risk factors for some older people, with more time

being spent at home and increased financial pressures on family members.

"The question is, and the focus for these resources is, what action can we take? "We" being the key word – recognising and standing up to elder abuse is everyone's responsibility," Mr Rowe said.

Dr Tracey West, Lecturer in Griffith University Department of Accounting Finance and Economics says there is information aimed at helping finance and wills and estate planning professionals such as financial advisors and planners and solicitors.

"It's important that these professionals are aware of what financial elder abuse looks like, when their older clients are at risk, and how to take action to help them understand their rights and to provide support.

"The research shows most cases can be traced back to family members

and most common contributing factors are when there is a history of giving money or loans, or delegating financial matters," Dr West said.

The resources are the outcome of the study and provide practical tips and relevant contacts for referral.

"It's important that people understand the types of assistance available. Victims generally will not want to prosecute family members for wrongdoing, however, there are mediation, advocacy and family counselling services that can assist with negotiating a healthier arrangement. These services are confidential, and most are at no cost," Mr Rowe said.

Griffith University are currently working with ADA Law to expand the study and to publish data mapped to local government areas.

Taking Action on Elder Abuse resources are available at www.adalaw.com.au/elder-abuse-awareness
Griffith University / ADA Law / ADA Australia

About ADA Law and research partnership with Griffith Business School

ADA Law is Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia's community legal service. ADA Law provides a human rights law and advocacy service to support adults who capacity is in question, and information and individual advocacy support for older people living in residential care who are experiencing or are at risk of elder abuse. We can provide legal advice, representation and non-legal advocacy with guardianship and administration matters, including support before the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), and enduring powers of attorney and advance health directives. ADA Law's services are free, confidential and client-focused.

ADA Law contributed to research conducted by Griffith Business School into Risk Factors Associated with Elder Financial Abuse. Funding support was provided by the Financial Planning Education Council, Financial Planning Association of Australia and ADA Law.

The Report, Risk Factors Associated with Elder Financial Abuse is available at www.ssrn.com/abstract=3856751

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Why should a terminally ill adult who wants to die peacefully be told they have to suffer instead?

**Andrew Denton, Founder
Go Gentle Australia**



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Janna Voloshin

Janna Voloshin was born into a Jewish family in the Soviet Union in the days of communism. As young children, her parents narrowly escaped the Holocaust, thanks to their parents uprooting their families and travelling hundreds of kilometres to evade the approaching Nazis. Many of her extended family did not have such foresight and perished in the mass exterminations that took place in her birth city, Rostov-na-Don. In 1989, while part-way through a degree in medicine, Janna visited cousins in Melbourne and her life changed direction completely. Throwing away her return ticket, she started afresh, learning English, meeting her husband, and living the reality of democracy and freedom. Janna's career has taken her from working as a Personal Care Worker while studying nursing, to leading Vasey RSL Care and standing up for the people who have served our country, and through their service, have maintained our freedom. She is passionate about quality care and support for our veterans and war widows and leads the organisation by example, expecting of staff only what she herself would do. She is highly respected for her pragmatism and humanity. Janna is married and has two adult children and two dogs.

PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

Greg T Ross: Janna Voloshin, welcome to The Last Post podcast series, and indeed you're part of our Inspirational Australian Women's series. You have such an amazing story to tell. And I guess your journey started a long time ago in Russia?

Janna Voloshin: Yeah, so I was born in Russia, or I would say probably I was born in the former Soviet Union, lived there until the age of 20. I finished my school there, and then I went to do a medical degree. Was halfway there, that was actually a Perestroika and they opened the gates and I went to visit my auntie. And during the visit, I met my husband and married. So that's what happened, that's how I end up being in Australia. But my childhood and the first years of my life was in Russia.

GTR: And how did that shape you as a person for who you have become today? What are your memories and how did you feel about leaving your homeland?

JV: My background is also Jewish. I am the child of the children of Holocaust survivors. Both of my parents, my city, was occupied by German twice, and there's a place where I've seen about 27,000 Jews were killed in a very short period of a couple of days. My parents were able to escape with their parents, they were children at that time. So how did it shape me I suppose, I was brought up on stories of war. My parents didn't want to share too much about it, but it was always something that I knew that I don't know about my heritage. It was also not very popular being Jewish in the Soviet Union, or definitely was not allowed to follow any traditions of your heritage in the Soviet Union. ... as a religion, as any religion but Jewish was not. So I had information about my heritage from my grandparents and from my parents. I knew that number of relatives had been lost during the war, on those couple of days, in my city. I knew my grandmother would always trying to give me some information about who I am by giving me this special bread on the special day. I had no idea what it is, and she would give me a piece of that matzo bread during the Passover and would say to me, "Just have it, but don't tell anybody that you had it." These pieces, I couldn't put it together and also, my parents as well would say when I was already a bit older, that as far as dating goes. they wanted me to date somebody Jewish, but then I couldn't understand why, because nobody wanted to know that you are Jewish. So there was bits of it that I couldn't really understand. I knew some of the songs, I knew some of the words, I knew some of the pieces of the heritage, but I didn't know what it was. So, when I came over here and I obviously have made a formal decision that I'll find out more about who I am, my

heritage. So, I did it through my children. I put them in a Jewish school and I said, "Well, you'll learn, and you tell me?"

GTR: Ah, just learning through children...

JV: Well, yes, because I'm busy with getting my career and supporting your private school education. So that was one way. And the other way, just recently I actually have done it. I actually went on a tour to Israel. The tour was organized specifically for the Jewish woman, Jewish mothers, and to learn about your heritage for those who couldn't learn. I was actually given my Jewish name because I was never been given a Jewish name in the Soviet Union. I was lucky because I was able to choose my Jewish name. It's a second name, it's your Hebrew name.

GTR: So I guess, with your role now, as CEO of Vasey RSL Care, who do an amazing job, particularly there in Victoria. Did you grow as a person through an awareness of the underdog status, or those that could be more privileged do you think, in a quest for equality? Is that something that happened to you?

JV: I think, it's more the freedom. I just recognize how much those certain people have done for what I have today. It doesn't matter what for, it doesn't matter. Those people who fought it for the right cause, of course on this side, whether it was for the freedom out of the German occupation that we had in the Second World War. Whether it's for the freedom in the Vietnam War, and I experienced what the communism was, so I know what they've fought for, even that it wasn't in this land, but I know the impact with it, if it spreads. So, this acknowledgment of people putting their life in danger, because they're fighting for us and our children and our grandchildren to grow in a free environment, I think that has a big part of me feeling very passionate about what I'm doing, because I really feel they deserve the best. I suppose that's the biggest part of it. And, the other part obviously, I was brought up on the stories of war, so it was very relevant to what I'm doing. I was also brought up in, it's interesting, I was very also brought up brainwashed on the patriotism, okay. But the fact was that I couldn't feel patriotic towards the country I was born from, but when I came in here suddenly this really triggered to me what it means feeling patriotic about the country that you love. Some stuff was there in my head about what it means being patriotic, but I didn't experience that in Russia, everything was forced on us, in the Soviet Union. But here, I feel teary when the flag is getting raised, and it's interesting, but I wasn't born here, but I do feel very patriotic about it.

GTR: I suppose in many ways Janna, it's the polar opposite to the Soviet Union's experience, or your experience in

the Soviet Union, because of course, Australia, and it's a successful, multicultural society, where heritage place-of-origin is respected and encouraged in many ways. I think it's a beautiful thing to bring people from all over the world. Fran's (mutual friend, Fran Ludgate) an example of that, you're an example of that, and to merge, and take bits and pieces from culture to make what Australia is today. Of course, we could always do better, we know that, but that's the beauty of a democracy, where we are in a position to do better. How do you think we can improve? I know that Vasey RSL Care and you, in particular, you've done work for the homeless. And I guess we also bring into the mixture, the picture too, we bring into the fact that women are represented more than they should be regarding homelessness and disadvantage, let's put it that way. How do you see that being directed by you as part of that, to help the homeless and women in general?

JV: Look, obviously you have to feel very passionate about the issue, and you have to understand the issue. I think part of my clinical background understand that homelessness, it's on the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It's the basic needs what people need, people require. So, I understand that you can't do stuff about... Counselling and all of this is great, but if person has to come back and sleep on the street, it's just doesn't make sense to deal with all of this other stuff until you give them a home to sleep, and home of feeling safety and security. So, that's my big driver for the homelessness. In the last two years we've done quite a bit of reading and research about the homelessness, and there's so much services available. But sometimes I feel, well how do you bring that service to person who sleeps on the street, and then they go back on the street? So I think the housing, and getting the easy access to the housing is such important. And the way we're trying to move on with our program, we saw different ways, we said, okay, well, maybe we should go on a partnership with somebody. Maybe we should go on that. But all of that creates a different steps for person from the street to come to us. It's important for me that we create a very simple entry to our services. And then what we also have, where I saw a huge advantage of Vasey RSL Care, is that we already have a long-term accommodation. Lots of homelessness services, or emergency housing, what they have, first they attended to that person, but then they have to move that person somewhere. And again, that person is in limbo while we already have the long-term accommodation. Unless they want to go somewhere else where we don't have it, we would develop that very easy transition to the person. That's sort of regarded our strategy and the passion for how we could create this solution for people. We all say it came from stories of the people, they all real. We just even recently had the meeting with the exec and we said, well have we planned it well enough? Have we done enough research about it? That we are ready to move on with the V Centre. But you can only do so much research where you don't have so many services available. Do you know what I mean? At one step you got to say, well, no, I don't have that information so I will make assumptions and I'll move on and try. If you never try, you never going to make it just because you don't have. I'm a strong evidence-based research person, but sometimes you just don't have enough. It doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. A little bit like vaccination, you might not had enough research on that, but you have to do it because otherwise, you see what's happening.

GTR: That's exactly right, well said too, Janna. And what have you found out during your work, about Australia's attitude to the homeless?

JV: I think everybody... Well, can I... Maybe not everybody, the people that I'm surrounded with very much want to help the people. And we saw that on example of currently we were closing Ivanhoe facility, our aged-care facility, for the purpose of creating the V Centre, which is the homeless centre for the veterans.

GTR: Certainly your work and the work of Vasey RSL care, and for veterans, is something that should be a high watermark for all other institutions around Australia. I guess

the Inspirational Australian Woman that we're... I guess, looking at your experiences, helping to have an impact on the Australian life, the life of Australians, and we all thank you for your work. What is the plan for the future? Do you want to keep helping these people, Janna, and how will you go about that by your work with Vasey? What's the future hold for you?

JV: Yeah, so we've got a 10-year plan. I had the opportunity to be part of development of that strategic plan, so I actually want to see it happen. So I'm not planning to, not to go anywhere. I will actually make it happen. And I think we will create something that hopefully could be looked at and used at other states, and something that we will be very proud of. It's also now very current with the issue of the veteran suicide, and we do know that the housing is very important. We hope we could save one, two, three, four lives of the people who's done so much for us. It's so important. So with what we will create, we can provide that safety to those people who are in trouble at the time.

GTR: Yes, that's good too, and I guess you touched on a subject too there Janna, with suicide and of course, the issue of mental health that comes into suicide so regularly, and a lot of that is caused by displacement and homelessness. So, that is a big factor too, and an increasing factor in these times of what we're going through at the moment. Has COVID affected the intake, or the increase, in your mind, of homelessness around Victoria, for instance?

JV: Yeah, I think it's more an urgency. The data is not that great, none of us have a good data. Probably some cases were more urgent during the COVID time, but the other thing what COVID has done is, a lot of people that we have in our accommodation, a lot of them live by themselves. So what it means for the COVID during those lockdown, they are really by themselves at their homes. Our organization provide accommodation for those people, but we're trying to reach out them during those lockdown and do a welfare checks on the phone, and talk to them because they just haven't got anybody at home. Hard to imagine how to do it by itself.

GTR: Yeah and so, as part of the Inspiration Australian Women series, we've been looking at women that have contributed to society through their craft, or practice, or employment. What's your message to women, and to young girls growing up in Australia, about achievement? What would you say to girls and women growing up at the moment, and of course all affected by COVID to a degree, but beyond that, what is the future for women in Australia? Is it limitless?

JV: Yeah, I think we live in such a great country, where it's totally everything depends on you and how much you want to achieve. I know back to my country in Russia, you got to know somebody, somebody has to know somebody for you to get somewhere. Even to get to university, or whatever. Now I could not imagine, I could not believe when I got the CEO position at Vasey RSL Care because, while I've been here already with the organization for about six years, and absolutely I did a lot of good work and everything. But when I went through the interview and I was successful, in my picture I thought, that's not the person that the Vasey RSL Care would employ. It has to be a man. It has to be Australian. It has to not to have an accent. And here I am with the accent, and the woman, and was not born there and I am working as a CEO of the organization that represent Australian values, and culture, and the heritage. Okay, so I think it's a good example of you can achieve if you really want it and you passionate about it.

GTR: How wonderful to hear that Janna, and of course, accents are wonderful because if we all spoke the same and dressed the same, it'd be a very boring world. It's been an absolute pleasure speaking with you and learning more about you as a person behind your role as CEO at Vasey RSL care. Thank you for being part of the series, and I'm sure that Australians that read and listen to your wonderful words will be educated in many, many ways. So thank you once again.

JV: Thank you.

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Alfredo has here written a wonderful book on the topic of music therapy and its benefits for a range of emotional difficulties. As a talented musician and appreciator of music of various genres, Alfredo is very familiar with the therapeutic value of music in managing his own emotional state. As a sufferer of Bipolar Disorder, Alfredo has found great solace in the creation of music and appreciation for music.

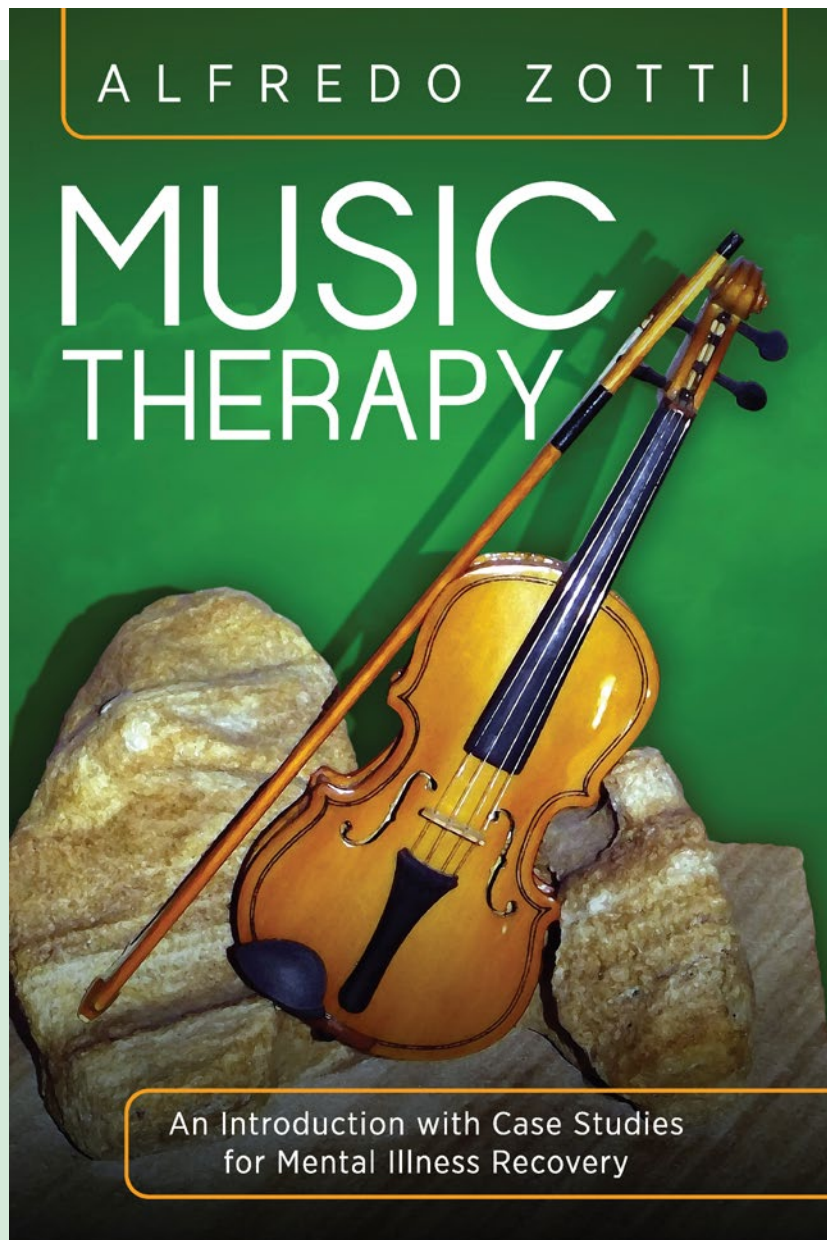
We can all of us appreciate the power of music to shift our emotional state. Consider your favourite movie moments and the impact of the musical score in bringing on powerful emotions. Many of these scenes simply would not be the same without the power of music behind them. In addition to the impact of music on our emotions, there is also the profound impact that music can have in re-igniting old memories and connections in the mind. Consider the last time that you heard a song that immediately took you back 10 or 20 years, with all the emotions connected to these experiences. As Alfredo highlights in this insightful book, a systematic intervention with the use of music can be effective in regulating a range of cognitive and emotional processes, producing therapeutic benefits of many kinds.

As a clinical psychologist, I often encourage my clients to have a song or a playlist that they can turn to when dealing with various challenging emotions. I am not a trained music therapist and the use of music was never a part of my clinical training. However, time and again in working with clients I have seen that people will have discovered for themselves the use of music as a self-soothing activity, a means of motivating themselves and a way of improving mood, among many other functions that music can serve. Music therapy brings a more structured and systematic means of harnessing the value of music in people's emotional health, as Alfredo so effectively captures in this succinct and clear book on the topic.

I congratulate Alfredo on this terrific summary of the ways in which music therapy can serve a complementary role in the treatment of a range of psychological difficulties, a book that can be enjoyed by anyone who is interested in promoting his or her wellbeing or the wellbeing of loved ones.

PAUL CORCORAN

Psychologist



Published by Loving Healing Press

A photograph of Peter Chambers, a man with short brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt, sitting in a chair and smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a home or office setting.

Peter Chambers

Greg speaks with Motor Neurone Disease champion, Peter Chambers.

For many, the MND journey can be a rollercoaster and for Peter Chambers, his journey was no different.

Pete had symptoms for around 18-months leading into his diagnosis in December 2019. And as he explains, no stone was left unturned when investigating the cause of his symptoms.

"There were three or four things the neurologists were looking at and had to exclude. MND was always in the background, but it was never the likely diagnosis during that 18-month period," he says.

"When it was finally diagnosed as MND, there were tears, but it didn't come as a complete and utter shock. I was kind of prepared for it, but when you hear those words, it's not what you want to hear".

Not wanting his diagnosis to define him, Pete has used it as the catalyst for his positive mindset and desire to help others.

"I wanted a legacy that is not negative. There's no way I want people to look at me and remember me as being someone who couldn't cope with this."

PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

Greg T Ross: It's a pleasure meeting you, Peter Chambers and thanks for joining us here at The Last Post. I know little about MND and motor neuron disease. I'm just wondering, what's your story and what can you tell us about what's happening?

Peter Chambers: Yeah, look I'm same as you, Greg. I knew bugger all about it as well. I suppose, in Melbourne you might be a little bit different in the rest of the country, but we're very AFL centric here, so we had Neale Daniher, starting a massive cause, which is just wonderful in terms of raising awareness of the disease and doing a hell of a lot for raising money for research. But I think without Neale, and again, in the Melbourne environment, I don't think we'd know too much about it as well.

GTR: And Neale contracted motor neuron disease, what, 10 years ago or something?

PC: Yeah, I think seven or eight, from what I understand. Yeah.

GTR: He's done remarkably well.

PC: Oh, it's extraordinary, what he's done, absolutely extraordinary. So yeah, I think I'd be in the same camp as you, mate, that I wouldn't have known too much about it prior too. So yeah. Look, my story is, I suppose with hindsight, this is a very much a hindsight thing. My first symptoms, probably as early as 2016, just little things, my arms were starting to get a bit weak and my hands would starting to get a bit weak. So, 2016 I started getting these symptoms and just a little feeling something was wrong. So I ended up having some spinal surgery in 2018 and that was to decompress the spine and all sorts of things, which was in theory supposed to be the answer. It turned out it wasn't, and I actually regressed as a consequence of that

surgery to the point where I lost most of the use of my right arm from that point on. And then spent a pretty agonizing 18 months or so. Unfortunately, it's one of those diseases where you don't identify it. It's a process of exclusion, where you look under every rock that you can look under and when there's no more rocks, you're left with MND, which that makes it tough, because that would have been an 18 month process, and depending on the stage that you're at, it's not inconsistent to have that sort of time lag before you get diagnosed. So, the version I've got is called flail arm, which as the name suggests, is attacking my arms. The nerve cells basically die, and they support the muscles and it really just kills the muscles. So my version is flail arm, and it's seen as a slow progression. I've heard cases where it can take you literally in months and you see a lot of cases that are a lot worse than what I am at the moment. So yeah. So that's the very brief background there.

GTR: That's all right. Thank you, Peter, for sharing that with us. And I was just wondering, what was your life like before, and what were you doing when you discovered this?

PC: Yeah, so I've had a career in banking, so I'm 59, Greg. Had a career in banking, had some pretty senior roles, and doing some good things. And it's an industry I enjoyed, not the most exciting industry going around, and not a conversation starter at a barbecue, but I've moved on from that. Avoid the banker over there. But, no, I had a good life there. I finished work in probably early-ish in 2019. And yeah, look, I hadn't been diagnosed at that stage, but one of the factors of MND is the fatigue just really gets you. And I got to the point where, if I did that process in the morning of getting up, having a shower, having a shave, getting dressed, having breakfast, and I'm back to bed at that point. I've got no energy left at all. So

— INTERVIEW —

I dragged myself into work and pretending to work for three or four hours and going home again. So we called it quits at that point. But then there was another six months or so, it was the end of 2019 before I was actually diagnosed. So I still had that period of not knowing. And that was a really difficult period to deal with. It was always in the background, but until such time, as those three little letters were mentioned, it wasn't MND. And so, yeah, still hit pretty hard when it was diagnosed finally. And then that was confirmed in early 2020. And of course, 2020 was a cracking year, wasn't it? We had a barrel of laughs last year.

GTR: Geez, I'll tell you what, Peter, it's been one thing after another for everyone. And you've been dealing brilliantly with this from all accords. Where has the strength come from and who has been assistance to you in this journey?

PC: Yeah, it's a good question. So much of it comes from within. Again, a little bit of a segue into what I'm doing at the moment, actually, I started off with a podcast. It would have been late last year and really a few things started to snowball from there. And I asked myself, what sort of legacy I wanted to leave. And I wanted to capture something on video. I wanted to capture moments on video. And so I've met a terrific videographer from there. And so we're just capturing moments and she's editing, and we've started a YouTube channel and so that's been a wonderful little ride and I've really loved it. So that's become my crusade, if that's the right word. I found myself by accident, I think, as becoming a bit of an advocate for promotion of the disease and just talking about it and being someone again, I'm in the fortunate position, I can still, as you can obviously hear and see, I'm living a reasonably normal lifestyle. I've pretty much lost the use of my arms now. I'm very limited in what I can do and I get fatigued and whatever, but I've adapted my lifestyle around that. So, I do one thing a day only, and that's my diary. And if you want a second thing in the diary, well you have to find another spot. So, that sort of thing's helped. So it's found me rather than me going looking for it. But once I found something that was all the important things, mentally stimulating, meant I had something to do with my life. I'm not the sort of guy that goes around blowing his own trumpet, but you start to hear, "Oh, I heard your podcast, and gee, it was fantastic. And you're so inspiring." And whatever, and you hear people saying that sort of stuff, and you go, hang on a minute. I didn't start this to move people or whatever, but it's happening. So, that kind of, again, that lit the fuse a little bit. The obvious support is family and I've got a lovely, wonderful, supportive wife who's been terrific in supporting me in everything I've been doing. And 22 year old twin boys who, again, they've adapted really well to our environment. And they've had to deal with the COVID thing of, being young and their life getting put on hold and all that sort of things. So I think they're learning things as well about themselves.

GTR: I was just thinking, my wife died of pancreatic cancer in 2017, so you have my blessings and you're so lucky to have a loving wife, and it's a beautiful thing. And twins, I'm a twin also Peter, so I can relate to that.



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“I’D TRADE MY HEALTH IN A HEARTBEAT TO BE BACK TO MY NORMAL LIFE AS IT WAS TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO, BUT, I’M EMBRACING WHAT THIS HAS THROWN AT ME. I DON’T THINK THAT THERE’S ANY OTHER WAY TO DO IT.”

So you’ve been doing things through this that you may not have done before, particularly, the YouTube channel, et cetera, that you’ve just spoken about. And along the way, you’ve learned more things about yourself, I guess.

PC: Oh look, absolutely. Absolutely. And I’ve met people, I’ve been exposed to different things and different ways of thinking. Your life is what it is, and you get a fairly structured way of thinking and doing things and then all of a sudden, yeah, I’ve had to think differently about things. I’ve become a bit more creative with the way I think, and whatever. So it’s a bit of a running joke inside the family, that I’ve never been busier. My wife now, she runs her own business and she’s wound that back a fair bit, but she’s become my PA. Everything I do now, I put a calendar note in my phone and copy her in and whatever else, so she can work out her lifestyle around what I’m doing and whatever. So, yeah. I’ll give a classic little example. I’m actually on a trial at the moment. There’s only four cases in the world where this has happened, but it’s putting a stent in your brain. The stent acts as a brain computer interface to help with communication. So I’m currently on this trial and in the middle of the phase of... There’s my phone going. So it’s all happening here. I’ve killed that. So yeah, I’m currently in this screening phase. But, when I was approached by a neurologist I was seeing and, do you want to do this? I mean, you jump out of your skin at that stage to be at the forefront of technology that’s absolutely cutting edge, and it’s only being done in Melbourne and those sorts of things. You shake your head. So it’s exciting. I’d trade my health in a heartbeat to be back to my normal life as it was two or three years ago, but, I’m embracing what this has thrown at me. I don’t think that there’s any other way to do it. I completely understand, and, there’s so much mental health going around now, and it’s only because we know about it more. I mean, there was probably the same amount many years ago, but we’re able to identify it and deal with it and whatever else. And I completely would understand where someone in my situation, wouldn’t be able to find the get up and go to be able to do it. And as I say, none of this is by design. It just followed me around and caught up with me and I’m on that train now. So, it’s a good ride and why the hell wouldn’t I enjoy. Unfortunately, I have got a bit of a timeframe. I’m the same as everyone else, we’re all dying. It’s just the case I’ve got a bit more definition around the how and the why, than most.

GTR: And so, Peter, I’m thinking obviously your ability to become creative and these are extensions of who you were anyhow, but you probably hadn’t discovered that. I don’t know. But what would your message be to others that are going through the MND experience, motor neuron disease experience?

PC: It’s a really hard one, because of this inevitability about the mortality side of it. I actually was fortunate enough to speak last week because I’ve been on a committee to, I suppose, work on the communication process out of MND Australia. And that includes revamping the website and whatever else. So I was the guy who gave it a user’s experience in terms of what is useful on the website and those sorts of things. So I was at the launch last week. And I was lucky enough to go to Canberra speak in front of a few senators and the like, to launch the website and a couple of other initiatives hanging off that, but what I spoke

about there was about hope. The whole MND community, unfortunately, and I hate saying this, but it’s geared to the fact that this is an incurable disease. So there’s that inevitability about it. And so you’ve got this whole structure, this whole infrastructure is around supporting you until that inevitability arrives. And that’s really tough to take, right? You spend your whole life going to doctors and, and having a cure for things, or you hurt your knee and whatever, and there’s someone will fix it for you. But there’s no bouncing back with this. And so my theme was about hope. I think this community that has MND, the families, the carers, the whole network, I really think there’s that hope aspect to it. And there’s a number of things I’ve seen, which I’ve lived, that there are a lot of gaps in the system. I know there’s a lot of trials going on, but I think we need to be at the forefront of being more positive and more proactive about those trials, to try and get more happening in that regard, so that the research increases. So I think I speak for a lot of people that a lot of people would be putting their hand up to be the subject of a trial, but, I think that lack of proactivity around that sort of stuff makes it tougher. Well it did for me anyway. Again, I don’t know if I’m speaking on behalf of others, but I just found, again, I had to go searching for trials rather than, I’d like someone to put a suite of trials in front of me and saying, “Well, you’re perfect for X, Y and Z, so, would you consider those?” But it was me asking. I had to ask the question a lot in order to see if there’s any trials that suited me. So, that’s where the hope comes in, right? That’s where we are giving people down the track who will contract this, we are offering them hope. And that’s probably the biggest one I’d like to change. I’d like to give people hope and I don’t know how you do that again. It’s incurable. So how do you give people hope around something that ultimately has no or offers no hope? It’s a really tough one. I understand that. But I just think if you change that mindset a little bit, I think it has the ability to change things up.

GTR: Yes. Well said, Peter and more attention, I guess, which we’ll provide through podcast, obviously with this, to the general public to become, as you said, it will strike others. It could strike anyone. And if, for people to be aware that research into this is essential to provide more hope for those that will contract it, Peter.

PC: Look, absolutely. I mean, I’m not privy to the amount of research goes on. I’m certain it’s an enormous amount. Webinars pop up and I follow groups on Twitter and those sorts of things. So you see across the globe, what’s happening, and whatever. So, I’m certain, absolutely certain, that there’s a whole lot of work going on behind the scenes in terms of that research and whatever else.

GTR: We wish you continued success in what you’re doing and how you’re getting out to the Australian public and indeed the world. And we honour you, and we think that you’re a magnificent example of what can be done in situations that are less than favourable. So we send our love and blessings and we know that we will follow you and we’ll get a few more people to watch you and to listen to you, Peter. Thank you very much.

PC: That’d be fabulous, Greg. I really appreciate the opportunity and the platform you provide because, without this sort of thing, we don’t have the opportunity to talk about it, and this is a case of using social media and all those sort of things for good, instead of evil, which is a nice surprise.



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Making people's lives better

The MedWalk diet: a step closer to walking away from dementia

It's been named the world's best diet for weight loss, but now researchers at the University of South Australia are confident that the Mediterranean Diet – combined with a daily bout of exercise – can also stave off dementia, slowing the decline in brain function that is commonly associated with older age.

In the world-first study starting this week, researchers at the University of South Australia and Swinburne University, along with a consortium of partners will explore the health benefits of older people adhering to a Mediterranean diet, while also undertaking daily walking.

Termed the MedWalk Trial, the two-year, \$1.8 million NHMRC-funded study will recruit 364 older Australians – aged 60-90 years, living independently in a residential village, and without cognitive impairment – across 28 residential sites in South Australia and Victoria.

It's a timely study, particularly given Australia's ageing population, where around a quarter of all Australians will be aged 65+ by 2050.

Lead UniSA researcher, Associate Professor Karen Murphy, says combining the dietary benefits of the Mediterranean Diet with the health benefits of an exercise intervention could deliver significant benefits.

"Dementia is a condition that affects a person's thinking, behaviour and ability to perform everyday tasks. While it is more common in older Australians, it's not a normal part of ageing," Assoc Prof Murphy says.

"In Australia, around 472,000 people are living with dementia. Each year it costs the economy more than \$14 billion which is expected to balloon to more than \$1 trillion over the next 40 years."

"While there is currently no prevention or cure for dementia, there is growing consensus that a focus on risk reduction can have positive outcomes. That's where our study comes in."

"Early pilots of our MedWalk intervention show improved memory and thinking in a sub-group of older participants adhering to a combination of Mediterranean diet and daily walking for six months."

"We're now extending this study across a broader group of older Australians, using carefully-designed behavioural change and maintenance strategies in the hope of substantially reducing the incidence of dementia across Australia."

A Mediterranean diet is high in fruit, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and fish, while being low in saturated fats, red meat, and alcohol.

The 24-month study will randomly assign residential community sites the MedWalk intervention, or their usual lifestyle (the control group), so that all participants who live at one facility will be in the same group. Changes to diet and walking will be supported through organised and regular motivational, dietary and exercise sessions.

Head of Neurocognitive Ageing Research at Swinburne's Centre for Human Psychopharmacology and Chief Investigator, Professor Andrew Pipingas, says this trial is about trying to prevent the onset of dementia.

"As it's extremely difficult to find a cure and treat those in the later stages of the disease, focusing our efforts on helping those at risk of developing dementia to stay healthy is one-way to ensure Australians stay well in future."

University of South Australia

Supporting veteran families

It is widely acknowledged within the Defence community that families of veterans and service members need support. In 2019, we did a small pilot study with family carers – mostly partners – of veterans, to assess their psychological and physical wellbeing and to understand how the psychological wellbeing of family carers was associated with their physical wellbeing.

Photo by Katarzyna Grabowska.

Our findings demonstrated that around 70% of the family carers involved in the study had moderate-to-high levels of psychological distress; that family carers had lower levels of physical activity when compared to levels of physical activity done by the general population; and that family carers who were identified as being more resilient were likely to do more physical activity. Family carers told us that they often undertook their role in challenging circumstances and that this was sometimes to the detriment of their own health.

There is strong evidence for the link between physical activity and mental wellbeing, and the role of social engagement in supporting mental wellbeing. Family carers who are unable to make time to do things to support their own wellbeing, such as walking the dog, catching up with friends or participating in activities they enjoy, are likely at increased risk for poor physical and mental wellbeing outcomes. In many cases, family carers don't attend to their own health needs and often, this is because their focus is on the person they are caring for and they do not have the time nor the support to attend to their own needs.

Beyond this, family carers have indicated that they feel that their role in supporting veterans and service members is not acknowledged or considered when it comes to decisions being made about veterans and service members and their welfare. Additionally, the feedback we've received from families, and family carers in particular, is that they are sick of answering questions and that they feel like they're not being heard.

We are a team of researchers at the University of South Australia (UniSA). In our role as researchers, we have an obligation to make sure that: 1) the investigations we are doing are translated into benefits for the population; 2), we are respecting the time people give us to participate in our research; and 3), we acknowledge that for many, their experiences have been a source of trauma for them and their family. Because of this, it is important that we do not just collect information to complete a

report that then sits on a shelf, but instead, we take steps to make sure that the information gets to the people who can do something about it. This includes organisations that support families, veterans and service members, advocacy groups, government departments and individuals who can support change in policy.

Our team is currently doing a project that builds on the work we did with family carers in the pilot study. This project, co-funded by UniSA & the Breakthrough Mental Health Research Foundation, will extend our understanding of the wellbeing status of family carers of Australian veterans and serving personnel, and is intended to identify the practical and emotional supports required by family carers to assist them in their caring role and day-to-day life, as a means of preventing depression and supporting family wellbeing. We're hoping to collect information from families Australia-wide. We want to know whether there are differences for families based on their location in Australia, whether that's the state or territory they live in or whether differences are due to living in a metro, rural or remote location. With this information we will be better placed to advocate for the supports that families need. However, not many people are doing the survey and we would like your help to get the information needed.

Family carers may be a partner, parent, adult child, or sibling of a veteran; someone who provides daily support to a veteran. We're even interested in finding out what you think of the term 'family carer' – is this how you see yourself; does it even matter what we call it? We'll collate the information you provide and then build recommendations about what you need. What is missing currently? Are more services required? Is it that there are plenty of services available, but you don't know where they are or how to find which is the best one for what you need? The findings from this study are intended to be applied in future to inform strategies to support the wellbeing of family carers of veterans and service members, and of families of veterans and service members generally.

If you're interested in participating or if you'd like more information about the project, you can access it via this link: www.redcap.link/Family_Carers_Survey_Breakthrough_UniSA or you can contact Hannah Cockram (Hannah.Cockram@unisa.edu.au). The research team is: Dr Dannielle Post, Professor Gaynor Parfitt, Dr Kate Gunn, Dr Katherine Baldock, & Hannah Cockram, from UniSA. This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee, protocol 203453.



Veterans COPE Recovery Program

6-week residential program for Veterans
Commences 8 November – 17 December 2021



The Veterans COPE Recovery Program is a six-week live-in program to reduce the impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) for Veterans.

COPE stands for Concurrent Treatment of PTSD and Substance Use Disorders using Prolonged Exposure. COPE is evidence-based and modelled on the principles of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and relapse prevention. Under the COPE treatment model, PTSD and substance use disorder are treated simultaneously rather than as separate issues.

The developers of the COPE program, the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina, have trained the psychologists delivering the program.

The BATTERY is experienced in delivering trauma-informed treatments in a therapeutic community where participants support each other in their recovery.

The residential part of the program is held at a comfortable retreat on a peaceful acreage near Murwillumbah, NSW.

The program provides:

- Structured daily living.
- Support through physical and psychological safety.
- Acceptance and encouragement for every participant and support for nutritional values and a healthy lifestyle.

Elements of the program include group therapy, psycho-education, meditation, yoga, pilates, massage, exercise, good nutrition and other activities to promote holistic recovery.

The six-week residential program is followed by three months of aftercare that is conducted by phone or video conferencing.

COPE is free of charge to veterans who meet eligibility criteria.

To be eligible for the program, participants should be:

- Currently experiencing PTSD.
- Affected by a substance use disorder.
- Committed to remaining abstinent from substance use while in the program and have undertaken a detoxification program before attending (if required).
- A former member of the Australian Defence Force (Army, Navy, Air Force).
- Participants require a referral from a practicing psychiatrist.

Please get in touch with The BATTERY intake on 02 6687 1111 - Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4.30 pm AEDT or download the Referral Form and forward it to your psychiatrist.

The BATTERY is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, which has been helping people with alcohol and other drugs misuse and mental health issues for nearly 50 years.

The organisation has provided services to over 5,000 participants in its residential programs and over 20,000 participants in its outreach services. The BATTERY delivers long and short-term residential rehabilitation programs and several evidence-based outreach programs and aims to help each participant learn about their mental health and substance use and put strategies in place for a healthy and fulfilling life.

www.battery.org.au

Sara Rohner

— INTERVIEW —

Sara Rohner is the US-born founder of Colorado's AFL Women's team, Centennial Tigers. Her journey is an example of female achievement and here, Greg speaks with Sara about her life and the benefits of dedication to a cause.

Greg T Ross: Sara Rohner, welcome to The Last Post podcast series, an, of course, inspirational Australian woman without actually being Australian. So, you're a first.

Sara Rohner: Thank you.

GTR: Now, the reason for this, of course, is you have started... I guess you're part of a very important role for American women, too, in being able to play Australian rules football. What led you to this? What's the backstory of this, Sara?

SR: Sure. So, I've been playing footy for about... This is my ninth season now, and I have been playing in the US throughout that whole time. I've been down to Australia a couple times and played. I played with USA Freedom, which is the women's rep team that comes down to the International Cup every few years. And then, I came down again and trialed for some AFLW teams and VFLW teams, a couple of years ago. Basically, so when I came back home, I just realized that the competition wasn't growing fast enough. And where we live, I'm in Denver, Colorado, which is a pretty big city in the nation, and we only had one team, one women's team. And I had been saying for years, there needed to be multiple teams, just because of the growth of the city. And so, finally I had myself, my sister, my mom, and one other friend, and we said, "Let's do it." And then people just started flooding in after that, and sponsors were coming in, and it just was a really great move. And there was a lot of apprehension surrounding us breaking off, because people thought that it would cause the other team in Colorado to collapse or fold. But what it did is it had the opposite effect, where they pushed to do recruiting to keep their numbers up. We pushed to bring our numbers up. And by doing so, the two teams have grown the sport by hundreds and hundreds of percent. So, I think this year for our Centennial team, we have about 50 women who have joined. And so, every practice, every training, we get at least one new person. So, we've just been growing the sport by exponential numbers.

GTR: Isn't that incredible? And there's so much to discuss here. I mean, it's a wonderful thing. How do you think it has empowered the women of Colorado, and I guess throughout America, too, playing Australian rules?

SR: Well, it's interesting because so many women have never played a contact sport at all. And so, I grew up playing rugby, and when I was a teenager, I was shy and bashful and insecure. But when I started playing rugby, I realized how strong I actually was physically and mentally, and it changed my whole mindset. It made me realize what a strong-willed and physically strong person I was, if I could handle being tackled or doing tackling. And so, I went through that metamorphosis when I was 16 years old. And so, now doing this for Australian rules football, we have women coming in. So, we have some rugby players, so they're not shy of the tackling and the strength- But, we also have a lot of women who haven't played sports for a long time, because they're either moms, or there was no path forward after they left college sports. Some women never played team sports. They were runners or swimmers. And so, they came out to this sport timid and afraid and insecure about their abilities to compete in a contact sport. And once we did the first training with tackling, and they realized it wasn't that bad, and it was really easy to do, and it wasn't something you were going to get hurt doing right away, all of a sudden their confidence changed, and their empowerment and their feeling of self-worth, everything just totally changed. It was a whole shift in the entire team.

GTR: Isn't that wonderful? And I guess if it can help with that realization of inner strength, and obviously, as you say, a metamorphosis in many ways, too, for a lot of women to discover that about themselves, strength to you and the competition for enabling that. What led you to Australian rules in the first place, Sara?

SR: So, I left soccer and I joined rugby, and I had known Australian rules football existed from the time I started playing rugby in the early 2000s. Because on Fox Sports World, the footy was on before the rugby, and so I'd always catch the end of footy games. And so, in like the mid-2000s, I actually wanted to switch sports to Australian rules from rugby. And I looked up the teams, and there were no women's teams at all at that point in the United States. And so, I was disappointed because I thought it was a really neat-looking sport. It required a lot of athleticism, and there just was no option. And as a 19-year-old girl, I didn't really feel comfortable going out and training with a bunch of men on a men's team, and I honestly didn't know if they would accept me onto their team in the first place. So, I just continued with rugby, but always knew footy was there. And then, I had a friend who played for the Denver women's team. And this was maybe 10 years after I had first looked up the team, and she kept trying to get me to come out. "Come out, come out, come out." And I would turn her away. I said, "No", I'm playing rugby. And then finally, one year I said, "Okay, I'll come give it a try." Well, that was almost a decade ago, and I never went back to rugby. My parents used to watch AFL in the '80s, when it was on ESPN. So, my parents have known about the sport for decades.

GTR: Well, they were pleased when you decided to play Australian rules?

SR: My mom was thrilled because she knew all about the sport, and she was really excited that I was going to try this, because she had known about it and watched it years before.

GTR: And so, do you or your family have a favourite AFL side?

SR: Well, I cheer for the Hawks, Hawthorn. Second from the bottom right now.

GTR: So, the Centennial Tigers, the team that you formed, how are the Centennial Tigers going, and what sort of group have you got around you there?

SR: Well, we just played in our first match ever as a club. Unfortunately... Well, so we started the team in late 2019, where the USAFL season had already ended. And then we started moving forward in 2020, and then COVID just shut everything down. And so, we kept doing things throughout 2020 here and there, when it was safe to do so. And we were doing trainings, but we never got a game in. And then as 2021 started coming around, we started looking at scheduling, and things were still iffy with COVID, but we've finally got our first match, and we actually flew 1,300 miles to San Francisco, California, and we played the four-time reigning national champions. They had two VFLW players on the team. They brought in a couple of hot shots from Seattle and Sacramento, and we played four quarters. In the US we usually just play two halves. And so, the scoreboard showed we got slaughtered 60-1, but if you look at the scoring, by the time we hit the third quarter, we held them to one goal on the third and one goal in the fourth. So, 71% of the women who played in that game, the first game ever for the Tigers, was their first game ever playing footy. Let's see, about a quarter of the team was experienced, with at least one

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game under their belt, whereas the rest of the team kind of just sat back the first half because they didn't know what to expect. They were just kind of watching. But once they got more comfortable, then we started getting some more ball movement, and holding them. And we definitely won the ground contests. We were more physical. We were getting stuff off the ground, but we were losing in the aerial game. And unfortunately, that was just the way the game ended, but it was a really good learning experience. And once everybody got the jitters out, they've been hungry for more.

GTR: Isn't this marvellous? And we spoke about the metamorphosis that happened to you individually when you were 16, and I guess playing contact sport, how have you taken that into your adult life, Sara? Do you recognize that pre-16-year-old anymore?

SR: I'm still in there, sometimes. It's just a shy person, but I have overcome that, because I've actually changed a lot since doing this team. I have been a shy person, but I force myself outside of my comfort zone to introduce myself to people and try and recruit for the team. And it takes a lot of guts to be able to walk up to a stranger in a grocery store and say, "Wow, you look really athletic. Have you ever played sports? Would you ever consider playing Australian football?" And so, that's how I do a lot of my recruiting is just going up to strangers and asking them. But it takes a lot of inner strength and confidence to be able to do that, and pull it off successfully. And so, I would say, even I'm still changing and growing as a person, as a result of the sport. And that carries over into other parts of my life, like my career, and my family, and the things I do in my neighborhood, and the way I interact with my friends.

GTR: That's beautiful. Totally beautiful. Maybe we can describe you as a reclusive extrovert. So, of course, with the COVID cloud and everything, but we'll forget about that for a moment. The future for the Tigers looks good?

SR: Yeah. We're really excited that we have a regional tournament coming up in a couple weeks, and we're going down to Dallas, Texas, and we're bringing a full squad with rotation, depending on what the format may be, what the other team is bringing. There's a chance we might be playing a twelves game versus a sixteens, and if that's the case,

we'll actually be able to put two teams into the tournament because we have that many people traveling with us. So, the girls are dedicated. We don't have a lot of home games, but they're having so much fun playing the game. They enjoy the team atmosphere and the culture that we've built, that they don't even think twice about buying an airline ticket just to play in a match. And I think that's a foreign concept for a lot of Australians, because it's your sport at home. You have ovals in every neighbourhood, and you have teams, and multiple teams within one club. And then you have the neighbourhood. And so, for us, we don't have that luxury, but to be able to get people to experience the love of the game that everybody in Australia knows, to the point where they're purchasing airline tickets just to play in a game, and I think it means a lot for the sport and how we're progressing it here.

GTR: Wonderful. And what positions do you tend to play yourself? What are you an expert at?

SR: Let's see. This season, I've been playing center, but my preferred position is roving or roaming forward pocket, where I just go wherever I want on the field, and don't have a defender following me.

GTR: That's beautiful. A very important position, centre. also to roving in the forward pocket. You can kick goals. So, finally, I guess, Sara, what would your message be to all the female listeners and readers of the magazine about female empowerment through sport?

SR: I think that if girls are included in sport at a young age, and they have the encouragement to continue it beyond the age of 18, or beyond schooling, that it will do immense things for them in life. It continues to give them the empowerment of strength and determination. It gives you physical fitness. It gives you an outlet, a way to do something outside of work, or outside of family. It gives you a way to make friends, or to travel and see things that you normally wouldn't have seen on your own. And if it's something that makes you happy, there's no reason why you shouldn't keep doing it. So, I know I have so many friends who have had children, and they felt like that was the end of the road for them. Or, I have so many friends who played college sports, and they felt like that was the end of the road for them. And then they realized that, no, there are women who still play competitive sports outside of what those life-changing moments happen, and it brings them so much joy into their lives. So, I would just encourage any woman who loves sports so much, but unfortunately stepped back because they felt that it wasn't their place to continue playing, is to reignite that spark and keep playing until your body can't do it anymore. Because that's my plan.

GTR: I guess football clubs, and sporting clubs generally, but we're speaking about Australian rules football, have a great way of reaching out to the community, and involving and assisting those in need in the community.

SR: Yeah. We've done stuff with a local high school and junior high school. It's an all-girls school focused on athletics, and we've built a relationship with them. We did a whole day session teaching girls about Australian football. And so, our intent is to actually go into the school in the city, and to play some games with the girls and get the footys in their hands, and just show them something different that they've never experienced before.

GTR: Yeah. How wonderful. We'll, Sara Rohner, thank you so much for being part of this. You're, I guess, a special Australian just for this edition.

SR: Am I an honorary Australian?

GTR: That's the word I was looking for. I'm searching for the words. Thank you for being an honorary Australian, Sara.

SR: Well, thank you so much. It's a real honour, so thank you very much.

Be the change you want to see in the world

For nearly three decades, I have actively participated in women's sports (and sometimes men's sports). Starting at age 8, I had incredible desire to play soccer. No one in my family had knew what soccer was, let alone played the game or knew the rules.

I clearly remember my first training. I didn't have boots and showed up in a pair of Chuck Taylor Converse tennis shoes. But that didn't matter. I loved the game the first second. I was not a very good player ... at first. It took me a couple of years before I really grasped the concepts and mastered the basic skills. But I did, and my abilities continued to improve every week.

All along the way, I had family, friends, teammates, coaches, other parents cheering me on. They empowered me. I didn't realise this then. I was too focused on trying to be my best, earning starting positions, leading the goal scoring, or winning our games. I switched to rugby union at age 16, and immediately excelled at that sport. I made the under 19 USA team within my first year of playing, played under 23s, trialed for the women's sevens program at age 17, played semi-pro, and so on and so forth. My competitive spirit took over, and for the following 25 years I only focused on the competition aspect.

It wasn't until 2018 when my mindset shifted from winning at all costs to teaching skills, using personable skills to empower women, and focusing on the parts of sport that make outstanding people – not drilling into people that winning is the only goal. I switched from rugby union to footy in 2013 and didn't have much to do with the operations until 2018. Our team went through a major change, and I assumed team operations. Our player list was decimated. We couldn't keep new players because of team atmosphere and attitudes, and something needed to change.

That was the moment I realised there won't be a way to win any games if we can't even field a team. That year we brought close to 20 brand-new women to our annual USAFL national tournament. Many of them didn't even have a game under their belts until that tournament. But through connections, positive attitudes, empowerment, and hard work, our team performed better than most expected. We knocked off the projected national champions in the first game. We overcame a 10-point deficit in the second game to win in the last seconds, and we lost by a goal in the third game.

I saw so many changes manifest in these women – some who never played team sports in their lives. They dropped weight, got in shape, improved their self-images, gained confidence, changed their lifestyles, made friends, and found purpose.

From there I saw an opportunity to expand this movement of women empowering women through sport – specifically through Australian rules football. In 2019, my mom, my sister, a couple of close friends, and I decided to start our own women's team. Our focus strictly focused on the women's game and locally growing the sports through a grassroots effort. Within the first year (which unfortunately took place during a 100-year global pandemic), we welcomed 40 women to the club – and some men at



times – secured a coaching staff, brought in \$15,000 USD in sponsorship, and came onto the USA footy scene in roaring fashion, which by the way is very fitting seeing how we named ourselves the Centennial Tigers.

I was shocked at how many local and international businesses got behind us. But I think it was all perspective. What I saw as organizing a club of women playing an obscure sport, others saw as a revolutionary concept to empower women of all ages. And they wanted to be a part of it.

The evolution of women in sport has drastically changed even in the past 20 years. When I entered in high school in 1999, the school forced girls to play sports separate from the boys. I will tell you it is not fun to play gridiron football with five total women or to sit there on the sideline and watch the boys play. It was frustrating. In elementary school, I was the only girl playing soccer with the boys at recess. In middle school played tackle gridiron football with the boys at lunch. In high school and in college, I trained with boys' rugby teams to improve my skills. And in footy I trained with the local men's teams. Being told I couldn't play with the boys simply because I was born with different anatomy was upsetting. I can't even imagine the anger and disappointment so many women before me experienced when it wasn't acceptable to play certain sports.

As I learn the history of footy in Australia and how, for the most part, girls played coed footy until puberty then were told "no more," it really shocked me. We're in the 21st century and still witnessing the bias of what women (and men) should or shouldn't do. Seeing the birth of the AFLW and watching the women's skills change overnight has been so inspiring. It's like what the Centennial Tigers are going through a similar transformation but on a much smaller scale.

What I've learned about myself and the other girls and women in my life the past several years is to never be afraid to try something new; be a good teammate and raise each other up; and try to be a part of the greater good (whether through sports or other aspects of your life). You will find yourself to be a happier, more-complete version of yourself, and you will make a positive difference in others' lives.

Be the change you want to see in the world.

SARA ROHNER

Founder and President of the Centennial Tigers Australian Rules Football Club (Centennial, Colorado, USA)

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The sport of Lawn Bowls has many advantages. There are the obvious physical benefits, however there is also the social aspect and the sense of community spirit. New skills & techniques can be learned, and games can be played as full length competitions or on social occasions. Bowls really is a sport for life and that's why the love of the game has endured. City Club shares that same passion and it is showcased within the consistency and quality of each garment.

City Club bowls garments are cut for ease of movement and designed with high-performance in mind, while also retaining a smart appearance to fulfil bowls clothing etiquette. They are machine washable, wrinkle resistant, and quick drying.

So rest assured that when you choose a City Club bowls garment, it has been quality designed, developed and tested, to give you the bowling edge!

The Victorian Surfing Championships Bells Beach 1970

MURRAY WALDING

As we drove down the road into Bells, we caught a fleeting glimpse through the scrub of swell lines so we knew it was big. We piled out of the car in the gravel car park above the beach, full of enthusiasm and bravado- key ingredients when you're about to enter your first Victorian Surfing Championships. A solid set broke across the main break at Bells.

We caught a glimpse of the long lines of swell as we drove down the gravel road so we knew it was big. We parked on the cliff top and piled out of the car, full of enthusiasm and bravado- key ingredients when you're about to enter your first Victorian Surfing Championships. Especially when the championships were being held at Bells. Dark green walls brushed smooth by a light offshore breeze broke across the small cove. It was big but nothing that looked too hard to handle, and the late summer sun and warm breeze promised a day of great surf. Yet there were a few long faces on the cliff top peering out to sea. There were downcast looks, mutterings and nervous whispers. One of the guys from back home was heading back to his car.

'Where are you guys off to?'

'We're going to head around to Point Impossible.'

'You're not going in the comp?'

He rolled his eyes at me as he climbed into the front seat of his car.

'Come on, it's not all that big,' I laughed.

'Have you seen one of the big sets Muzz?'

'Yeah, I just watched a set then. It's not all that big... well it's big, but it's not that big.'

'Crikey mate, what you just saw wasn't a big set. Wait until you see a really big set!' he wound his window up and quickly reversed out of the car-park and wheeled up the gravel track that led away from Bells.

I walked back to the edge of the cliffs and heard the marshal announce the next heat over the P.A. Five minutes later there was another call. Two competitors still hadn't collected their competition singlets. They never showed up. The remaining contestants lined up at the water's edge and waited for the heat to start.

I looked out to sea as four dark lines of swell grew in size, stood up and in a great show of spray and power broke with a thunderous roar. This was a set- the kind of set my mates had warned me about and now it was bloody obvious why those two competitors

had failed to collect their competition singlets. The waves were bloody huge

But I'd already entered the event so I was faced with choosing between two evils. I could slink away and find somewhere to surf with smaller waves and right-off the entrance fee I'd paid, or paddle out in the giant surf, try and catch three waves to qualify for the next round... and try not to drown in the process.

Riding these waves wasn't so much of a problem. It was the fear of wiping-out, or being caught paddling out by these monster waves that really bugged me. When the surf at Bells gets big, a fierce rip runs along the beach which can carry the careless, or the half-drowned, into the tumult of the shallow reef at Bells neighboring break- Winkipop. The rip was well known to all Torquay surfers who had christened it the Winkipop Express. In waves this big, paddling against the Winkipop Express was all but impossible and getting caught in its clutches would mean a severe pounding, and in a contest that would mean your heat would be over long before you could paddle back to the take off. There was also a reasonable chance that you might drown. Slinking away suddenly seemed like a good option.

So I sat on the cliff tops and waited with my heart in my mouth until the marshals called my heat. Monster sets continued to steam shoreward every ten minutes or so and even the in-between waves were fearsome in size and strength. Very few heats hit the water with a full complement of surfers. I watched on nervously and tried to convince myself that the swell would drop as the day went on.

So I sat and watched nervously until the event reached the Junior Men's division. One of the competitors was a young kid I knew and I watched him as he nervously waxed his board on the gravelly beach sand and made his way to the water's edge, astounded that the organisers were sending juniors out in surf this big. It was okay to send out some of the hairy-chested older surfers who were at home in waves this big, but not for these kids. The kid I knew was only fourteen but watching him on the beach made up my mind for

me. If he was going out, then I figured I had to as well, or else my reputation on the beach at home would be toast.

They had made their way almost to the take-off when another monster set appeared and steamrolled its way through the break. Some of them pushed their boards away and dived deep under the rampaging white water. Others rolled over and held onto their boards like grim death, but it was no use. When the set finally cleared, there were six heads left bobbing in the white water. No-one had managed to hold onto their board. Some did manage to swim to their boards and scramble back on, only to be pushed all the way back to the beach while the rest had to make the long and dangerous swim across the Winkipop Express.

When my heat finally came along, I grabbed my contest singlet and with my heart in my mouth, headed to the beach. There were five other surfers in the heat and together we walked out onto the reef beneath the cliffs. As we waited for the heat to start the first gusts of a westerly change swept through. Before we even had a chance to hit the water, wind-blown slop had turned the waves into angry lumps of danger. A sheet of grey cloud fretted over head. The siren sounded to start the heat and out we went.

We found a lull in the sets and managed to edge past the Winkipop Express and towards the take-off as a smaller set rolled through. I saw the chance to get at least one wave under my feet before the wind made the waves chaotic, so I paddled onto a smaller foam-traced swell. I edged my board to the bottom of the wave, turned a few times then headed for the safety of the shoulder and sprint paddled back to the take-off spot. I sat on my board and drew a few deep breaths as Rick, one of the older surfers in the heat who I knew from Phillip Island paddled over to me. He hauled himself up to his knees and held the rails of his board. He was starting to shiver.

'I've got a confession to make Muzza.'

I looked at him blankly. Now seemed like a strange time to be making confessions about some past mischief after late nights in a pub on Phillip Island.

'Yeah mate. I'm shit scared... really shit scared!'

I tried to hang tough.

'Don't worry Rick, you'll be right.'

When a respected older surfer who knows his way around Phillip Island's waves makes a confession like that, there's not a lot more you can say.

I watched as he turned and paddled deeper into the take-off spot and caught a medium sized wave. I watched as he disappeared from view and then caught sight of him a minute or so later at the edge of the beach. Rick was walking from the water. He peeled his competition singlet over his head, hoiked his board under his arm and headed for the marshal's tent. He was done.

I didn't have time to give Rick any more thought as one of the bigger sets swung towards us, heaving and groaning over the reef. By the time that set had passed there was only Brian and me left in the takeoff. Brian was a well known Torquay identity who knew his way around big waves at Bells. Both of us paddled around nervously, trying to hear the announcements from the cliff top over the roar of the surf. There were some garbled words, but what both Brian and I heard quite clearly before the wind snatched the away announcement was...

'Surfers in the water, you have ten minutes to go in the heat. Ten minutes! And...out the back surfers in the water, another set! Big set approaching, surfers in the water!!!'

How could that be? The last set had only just swept through. Brian and I looked at each other then swung our gaze towards to the west of Bells. There, in front of the cliffs was another set approaching. This was a big set. A very big set! There was distant hooting from the cliffs as the set approached. It was a 'step ladder' set. Each wave bigger than the wave before. For a moment we were mesmerized. There were four of these monsters, stacked one behind the other, each bigger than the previous and it would be only a few minutes before they rolled into Bells. Brian and I turned our boards and headed for the open ocean, paddling diagonally away from the break as fast as was possible and heading out to sea to avoid the approaching waves. We went over the first wave and from its summit we could see the monsters that followed it. We dug deep. We sprint paddled towards what we hoped was the safety of deeper water. Down the reef to the west, the first wave drew itself to a height and roared towards us. We knew we were safe from this one but as we paddled over its crest, two more monsters were building. We didn't pause to think about catching them. We were hell bent on avoiding them. We paddled to the base of the first monster as it towered above us.

I've paddled over big waves in the past, but this was different. We were paddling up this one...watching as the crest started to crumble towards us. It took maybe half a dozen strokes to paddle up the face, praying that crumbling lip didn't turn into an avalanche and overwhelm us. I held my breath as with my last stroke I pushed my board over the crest with Brian right beside me, and broke through the crumbling lip at the top of the wave.

'Oh, no!' was as far as our conversation went.

The next wave was even bigger. I was praying this would be the last rung of the step ladder. Still paddling for deep water and not having time to draw breath we sprinted towards the on-coming mountain of water. We got to its base and started to paddle upwards. We were both laughing by now. This was a ridiculous situation. We had paddled wide into deep water but still this monster grew towards us. Up we paddled, still laughing until with one last lunge we pushed through the top of the tumbling wall of white water and banged down on the other side.

We had made it through. The next wave was smaller so we sat on our boards and took in deep lungsfull of air and looked around. I'd never been this far out to sea at Bells before. I'd never been that far out to sea anywhere- ever . We were well beyond the normal take off, where only the most extreme of swells could break. The three other surfers in the heat had been swamped by the set. One was swimming in; the other two had rode prone to the beach in the white-water. There was just Brian and I left.

And now we were faced with a big decision...should we paddle back in to

the take-off zone and try and catch a wave while praying that another rogue set wouldn't make an appearance, or paddle cautiously down towards Winkipop and try and reach safety? We headed cautiously back to the takeoff zone, eyes darting back and forth, looking towards the west for any more sneaker sets. Zigzagging our way back to the take-off with one eye on the break, the other on the horizon

The next set approached and although it lacked the size of the previous monsters, it was still bigger than anything I'd met in the water at Bells. I caught last wave in the set.

I dropped down and down and down. I looked up at the wave as it towered above me. It almost blotted out the sky. A steep gray wall the size of the side of a house stretched ahead of me. I gingerly made a turn at the bottom and shot along the wall. I made another safe turn and figured that was enough. I straightened out and rode through the bucking white water towards the shore until I was bucked off altogether. I quickly grabbed my board and sat up. There was hear a faint message over the P.A

'Surfers in the water, you have thirty seconds left in your heat. Thirty Seconds!'

I knew there was no time left to paddle back out, even if I had wanted to. I caught a small soupy wall of foam, got to my feet and rode the last hundred metres to the gravelly sand. It wasn't until I was walking up the steps to the car park and heard the P.A. announcement that I realised that last soupy wave was my third ride. I'd ridden it straight in, but in doing so I'd qualified for the next round, almost by default. There was no elation. Only relief.



Murray Walding,
Bells Beach.

The surprising health benefits of gardening

Whether you're growing fruit and veggies, flowers or succulents, getting your green thumb on can have a surprising number of health benefits for you and your family.

Stay fit and active in the garden

Depending on the size of your garden, maintaining it can be also be a great way to be physically active. This could be as strenuous as mowing the lawn, or as gentle as getting a good stretch and practice stabilising yourself while kneeling, sitting or reaching.

In fact, gardening is a recommended activity as it can encourage the use of many motor skills, improve endurance and strength and keep you moving.

Eat your greens

Do you have a picky eater at your dinner table? Kids who are picky eaters may be keener to try new foods that they've helped to grow. Watching the plants sprout and grow and waiting until fruit and veggies are ripe and ready to eat can help build their enthusiasm and excitement about healthy foods.

The effect works on everyone, not just those with hard-to-please tastes. Growing your own fruit, vegetables and herbs will encourage you to eat seasonally, add more variety to your diet, encourage you to prepare homemade healthy dishes and learn to appreciate fresh produce.

Understand seasonality

These days, we can buy pretty much any fruit and vegetable we want from the supermarket, at any time of year. But eating seasonally has important benefits for our bodies.

Different fruits and vegetables are "in-season" at different times throughout the year. For example, asparagus and apricots grow in spring and summer, while Brussels sprouts get going in winter. Eating seasonally can keep healthy eating exciting by encouraging you to try new recipes using in-season produce. You will also get a wider variety of different coloured produce, providing nutritious vitamins and minerals in your diet throughout the year as the produce you eat changes with the seasons.

Find out what's in season at different times of the year in Queensland using the Healthier. Happier. Fruit and Veggie Seasonality Charts [PDF 369KB] and ask about the ideal planting times for your area at your local garden centre or nursery.

Relax and meditate

Gardening is also a great way to relax, providing opportunities to still the mind and get away from the

busyness of everyday life. There is even evidence to suggest that gardening can help ease symptoms of mental illnesses like depression and anxiety.

Whether you're gardening by yourself, or getting the whole family involved, it's a great way to spend some time outdoors, away from screens and to-do lists, and engage with nature. From repetitive tasks like weeding that provide opportunity for meditation, to practising patience while waiting for plants to grow, gardening is a great exercise for your mind as well as your body.

Breathe easier

Gardening doesn't have to be an outdoor activity – there are many varieties of plants that can be grown inside, too. As well as making rooms look nice, indoor plants can help improve air quality in enclosed spaces. Some studies also suggest that indoor plants can boost the concentration and focus of office workers.

Not all plants will grow well indoors, so you'll need to research which varieties will grow well in the lighting and temperature of your room.

Things to keep in mind when starting out

Different fruits and vegetables grow best at different times of the year. The Healthier. Happier. website has articles on what plants to grow during different seasons and a guide to easy grow-your-own healthy foods.

If you're planting an edible garden, remember that not all plants are safe to eat. Make sure you plant non-toxic varieties, checking at your local garden store if you're unsure. Don't use chemical sprays or fertilisers on your edible garden.

Always wear gloves when working with plant material, soil and fertilisers, and be sure to wash your hands when you're finished. When working outside, remember to be safe in the sun by wearing a broad-brimmed hat and protective clothing, wearing sunglasses, using a broad spectrum SPF 30 or higher sunscreen, working in the shade when possible and drinking plenty of water.

Some councils and community groups offer gardening workshops, or set up community gardening sites, to help locals learn about gardening and growing edible plants. You can also find more information about starting a garden on the Better Health website and from this list of links on the Healthier. Happier. website.

www.health.qld.gov.au



If there is a positive spin to additional lockdowns across the country due to COVID infections, it is the opportunity to spend more time in the garden. The past 18 months have reinforced the positive benefits that are gained from tending to plants, regardless of whether you have a few indoor plants on a balcony or care for a large garden. It's a great time, heading into spring and summer, to revisit the health benefits of the garden.



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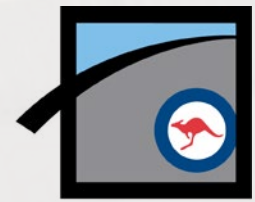
Sunny days are beneficial to us and the garden. This is the time to find a warm spot in the sun, soak up some Vitamin D for a few minutes, enjoy the health benefits away from the stresses of life, and plan to get stuck into a few 'pick me up' projects, whether it's for 5 to 10 minutes or an entire afternoon in the garden.

There are many simple gardening tasks that can be completed in a short space of time. Consider sweeping paths, watering pot plants, deadheading flowers, pulling a few weeds or harvesting edible produce from the vegie patch.

If you have the time and are looking for a project, consider brightening up an outdoor entertaining area with a few pots of colourful flowers or fragrant herbs. Petunias, snapdragons or marigolds add vibrant colours and grow well in pots through the warm months of the year. For herbs, potted options include basil, mint, parsley, thyme or rosemary.

When potting up plants use a good quality potting mix such as Seasol Advance Potting Mix and select containers with drainage holes in their base. Once the plants are in, water them in with Seasol then liquid feed every 2 to 4 weeks with PowerFeed All Purpose including Natives.

To keep the flowers coming and the herbs growing, deadhead flowers and harvest herb foliage regularly while enjoying time in the garden.



RAAF MUSEUM

POINT COOK

Located at historic RAAF Base Point Cook, the birthplace of the Royal Australian Air Force, the RAAF Museum is home to an amazing range of beautifully preserved historic military aircraft.

Here you will find a treasure house of priceless artefacts and fascinating stories of past deeds, giving visitors an understanding of the rich history and traditions of this arm of the Australian Defence Force.

Our Heritage Gallery incorporates multimedia technology and hands-on experiential activities to take the visitors through time from the Australian Flying Corps operating during World War I through to the RAAF's peacekeeping and civil aid missions to the present day.

The displays are augmented by a large variety of historic aircraft from the entire 99 year history of the RAAF. Additionally, visitors are also treated to an opportunity to see the Museum's Restoration Hangar, where staff and volunteers are currently rebuilding a World War II Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft and a DH60 Gypsy Moth training aircraft.

Models, books, patches, clothing and mementos can be purchased at the Museum shop.

Due to COVID-19, please check our website and Facebook page for reopening and booked attendance requirements.

Tel: (03) 8348 6040

Email: RAAF.MuseumInfo@defence.gov.au

Web: www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RAAF.Museum

Green Door was established in 2019 by a former army intelligence soldier who was looking to provide freelance consulting services. Since then, it has expanded in size and now employs ten veterans, predominantly from the military intelligence and security fields, providing services to both government and private clients.

Green Door has recently created its Pathways branch, providing recruiting services for military and law enforcement veterans seeking to utilise their hard earned skills and experiences in rewarding careers after their service.

GreenDoor Pathways

Green Door Pathways provides recruitment and employment services for job seekers and business clients. We aim to support veteran employment.

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