

# THE LAST POST

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

ISSUE 26

REMEMBERING  
DAVID  
GULPILIL



# The Last Post Story

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.

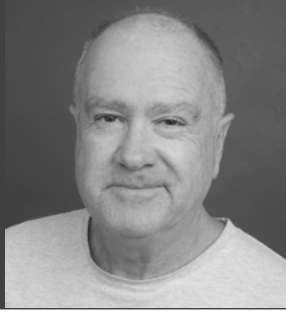
Acclaimed for its quality and journalism The Last Post is unlike any veteran's magazine seen before.

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.

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.



# from the publisher GREG T ROSS

With this, the release of the Summer edition, it still seems like a very recent experience, that we were producing and releasing our 10th anniversary edition.

So here we are, in our 11th year, and our first post-10 year edition. We embark on a new chapter of the story with this edition. And, what a beautiful start to that chapter.

There can be great things in life that appear, seemingly from nowhere, and disappear just as quickly. To attract serious consideration, there must be an element of consistency. Over a period. And, I guess, a decade is a period of significance in the lives of humans.

I can be doing this for as long as we attract the interest and appreciation of readers. But the interest, from this side of the desk, would soon wane, were it not for the people I meet, the network that makes each edition readable.

Here, in this edition, we reach out again, with stories of sailing and surfing and the amazing life of the late David Gulpilil. We look at work being done around the country to assist veterans and to benefit us all. Our Inspirational Australian Women series continues. As do our interviews with Australia's best.

In this Summer edition, there is hopefully enough to flick through and read, at your convenience. Whether you're holidaying with friends, family, or contemplating places of interest to visit. Or just doing nothing. I feel, after all we've been through in the last two years, we deserve some time off.

My thanks go out to all who have been involved with The Last Post, since its birth in 2011. My brief, to make each edition different from the previous, but with a common thread.

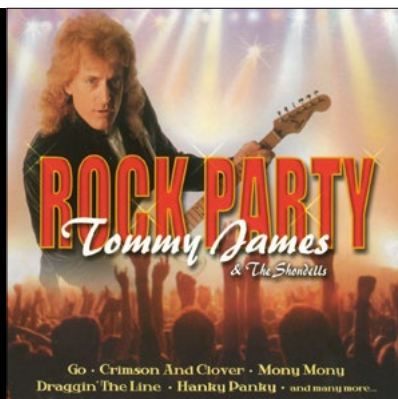
Enjoy your Summer. Enjoy the time you make for yourself. And, hoping you will enjoy this first edition of our second decade experience, of a magazine that threw itself into the mix and emerged with something important to say.

*Greg*



- 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](http://www.mua.org.au)



The Last Post Magazine has a limited supply of legendary singer Tommy James' new CD Rock Party available to giveaway.

To request one please email [greg@gtrpublishing.com.au](mailto:greg@gtrpublishing.com.au)

# foreword

Leone Crayden  
CEO, The Buttery



The Buttery is proud to launch the Veterans COPE Recovery Program (VCRP) - a residential program for Veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Substance Use Disorders (SUD). The Buttery is a not-for-profit, charitable mental health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre located in Northern NSW.

The six-week evidence-based program commences on 21 February 2022 and is the first of its kind in Australia to support Veterans living with psychological challenges and addiction. Three months of aftercare is provided via telephone or online to support participants returning to the community. The confidential program is delivered by clinical psychologists, counsellors and staff who have experience in supporting people to recovery and wellbeing.

Under the COPE treatment model, PTSD and substance use disorders are treated simultaneously rather than as separate issues. The program provides structured daily living and physical and psychological safety support.

The VCRP is delivered in Northern NSW in an idyllic location on peaceful hinterland acreage, with access to amenities including a pool and gymnasium. A qualified chef provides delicious and nutritious meals to support recovery for the mind and body.

This program is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice and supported by NSW Health and is free to Veterans who meet the criteria. Families and loved ones can also receive support from qualified family support staff.

The Buttery has nearly 50 years of experience enriching people's lives by treating mental health disorders and addiction.

We look forward to supporting you in your recovery.



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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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# A Challenging and Important Time for Defence Personnel, Veterans and Their Families

2021 has been a tumultuous year for many Australians. The return of lockdowns in many States has interrupted plans for important commemorations, left people feeling isolated, and made it more challenging to connect with our communities.

While it may not have been the year anyone expected, we have seen our State branches and Sub-branches rise to challenge to meet the needs of their members and make sure no one feels left behind. It is this spirit of compassion and service that the League was founded on and continues to be the motivating influence today.

For more than a century, the RSL has served its members, our nation's veterans and their families and strongly supported the defence and wellbeing of Australia.

While the needs may have changed over the years, the RSL's role and responsibilities evolved, and its approach modernised and expanded. Our commitment to the veteran community is unbroken and our resolve to serve stronger than ever.

Some of the key current initiatives being pursued by the RSL include:

- Supporting and contributing to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide
- Implementing the RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative in partnership with Open Arms
- Supporting veterans, their partners and immediate family members to find rewarding work through the RSL Veterans' Employment Program
- Promoting advocacy training with the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Providing support for Afghanistan evacuees' arrival in Australia
- Representation to government on the wide range of veteran and defence concerns and issues.

The coming months represent a crucially important time for Australia's Defence personnel, veterans and their families, as the hearings of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide are underway.

Between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2019, there were 1,273 certified suicide deaths among those with at least one

day of ADF service from 1985. Each suicide represents an individual tragedy for the Defence Force member or veteran involved and their loved ones.

The RSL has presented a detailed submission to the Royal Commission identifying issues, risks, and opportunities to improve the current landscape for Australia's Defence Force members and veterans. The submission builds on the contribution of State branches and the interests and input of RSL membership.

Ex-service organisations, the Government and Australian society, must find solutions to minimise Defence and veterans' suicide, and in doing so, honour the covenant between the Australian people and those who have served and sacrificed so much on their behalf.

RSL Australia fully supports the Royal Commission and is committed to engaging with whichever process can achieve the best outcomes for Defence Force members, veterans and their families regarding mental health and suicide.

The community expectation is that the time to act is now, and the Royal Commission must be the catalyst for that action.

While we can't predict what 2022 will bring, we will continue to operate under the same ethos that drives us: compassion and service. We will continue to assist veterans and their families, develop services to support our community, and lead the nation in commemorative services that help all Australians to remember the fallen.

On behalf of RSL Australia, I'd like to wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. Take care of yourselves and check in with your loved ones.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**GREG MELICK**

*RSL Australia National President*

# RSL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

*Rewarding work for every veteran and their immediate family*

*Looking for work? Changing careers? Or maybe you want help to find your passion and purpose?*

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[rslaustralia.org/employment](https://rslaustralia.org/employment)

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-  CAREER NAVIGATION
-  CAREER COACHING
-  CV & COVER LETTERS
-  INTERVIEW SKILLS
-  PATHWAY PROGRAMS TO UPSKILL
-  EMPLOYER CONNECTIONS



**RSL**  
Australia



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

## RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative

RSL Australia acknowledges that the many challenges and uncertainty of 2020 and 2021 have greatly strained mental health within the veteran community.

We feel it is essential to continue the ethos of compassion and service with which our organisation was founded. RSL Australia has partnered with Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling to provide suicide intervention and mental health literacy workshops across all RSL Branches. The RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative will provide various free training opportunities to those seeking to help family, friends, co-workers, or others in the veteran community at sub-branches across the country.

Open Arms suicide intervention and mental health literacy workshops assist participants in recognising warning signs for suicide and learning intervention strategies. The RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative involves three of these workshops:

- Suicide alertness for everyone-(safe)TALK
- Mental Health First Aid
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

RSL Branches are actively engaging with their sub-branches to identify those interested in running workshops for their community.

RSL Australia sees this initiative as an opportunity to develop a solid coordinated approach to support Australia's veteran community's mental health and wellbeing.

Find out more: [rslaustralia.org/mhi](https://rslaustralia.org/mhi)



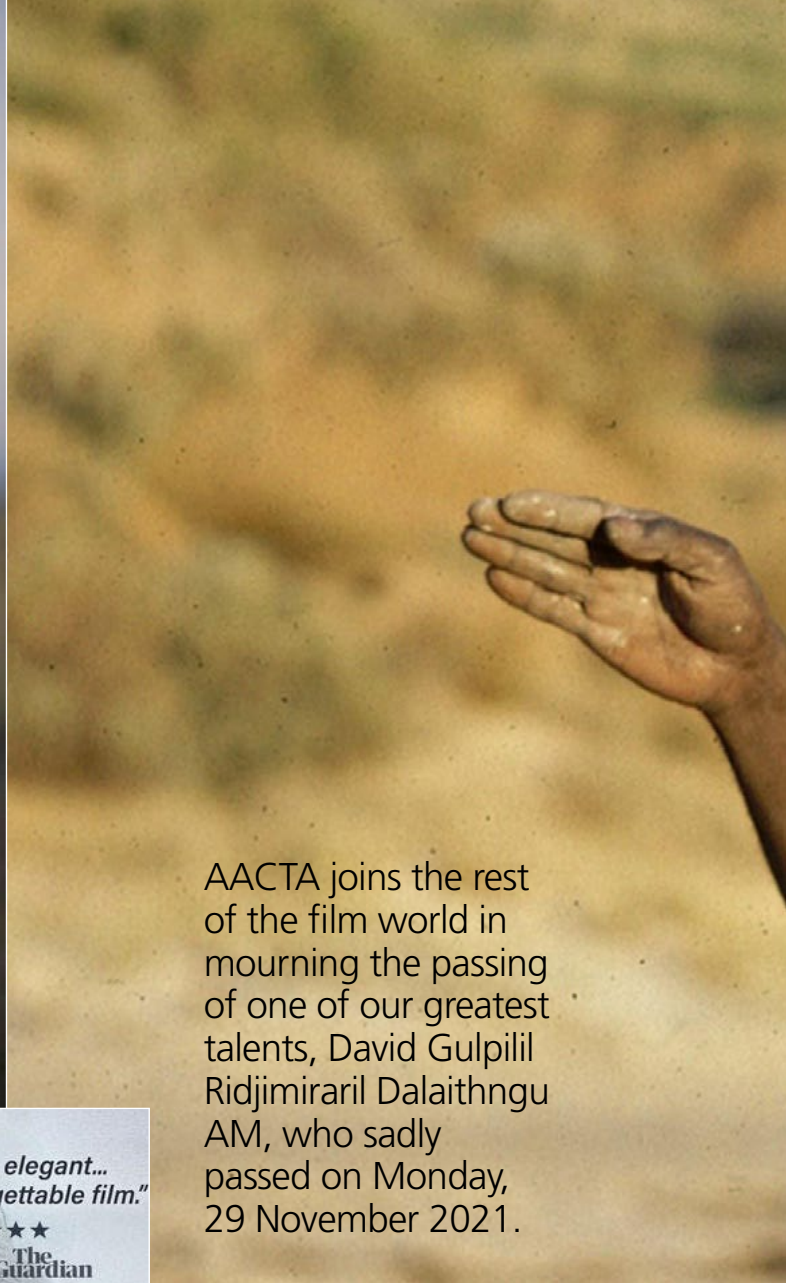
*Remembering*  
David Gulpilil



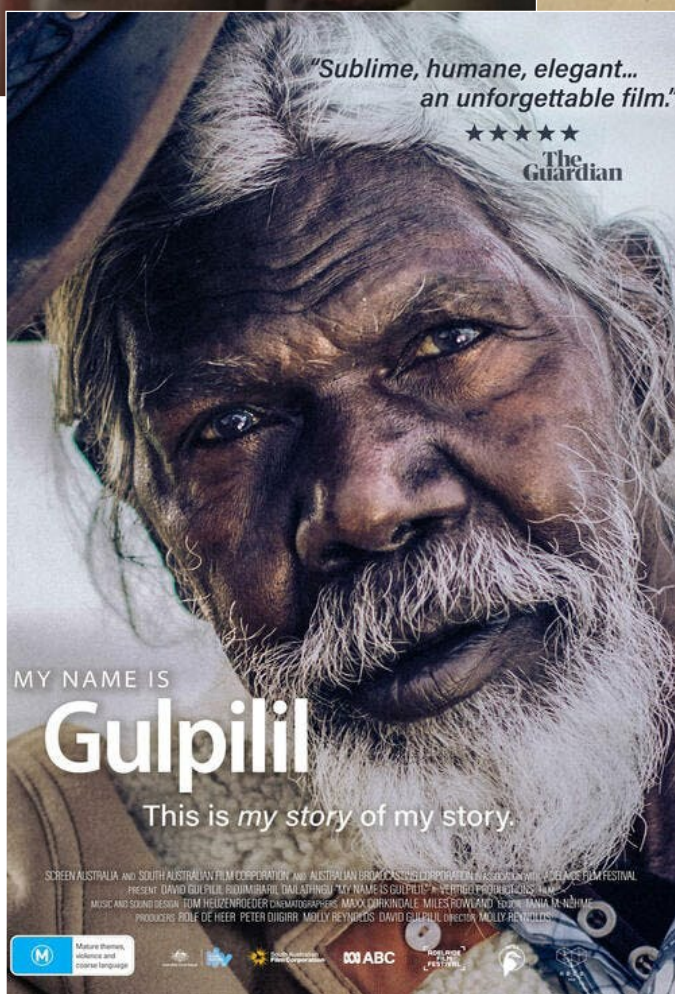


The legendary and influential David Gulpilil Ridjimiraril Dalaithngu AM was honoured with the 2021 AACTA Longford Lyell Award for his outstanding contributions to Australian cinema. AACTA began work on the tribute and award six months prior to the award with Gulpilil accepting the award in November, from South Australia as he was unable to travel.





AACTA joins the rest of the film world in mourning the passing of one of our greatest talents, David Gulpilil Ridjimiraril Dalaithngu AM, who sadly passed on Monday, 29 November 2021.



He joins an elite group of Australian cinema luminaries, including Cate Blanchett, George Miller, Paul Hogan and Jacki Weaver, who have received this impressive distinction.

The highest honour bestowed by the Australian industry, this AACTA Longford Lyell award acknowledges not just Gulpilil's incredible body of work but his role in creating more diverse, inclusive, and truthful Australian stories.

The award came on the 50th anniversary of his trailblazing performance in the 1971 movie Walkabout.

Raised in Arnhem Land with little contact with white culture and immersed in his own Yolŋu traditions, Gulpilil was just 15 years old when he caught the attention of British filmmaker Nicolas Roeg and catapulted onto the world stage.

Premiering just four years after Indigenous people were given Australian citizenship, Gulpilil's charismatic performance in Walkabout is credited with changing the face of Australian cinema and global misconceptions about Indigenous culture.



Walkabout was one of the first times that an Aboriginal person was seen in a leading role that wasn't derogatory or degrading. The groundbreaking film also marked an end to non-Aboriginal actors playing Indigenous roles (often in black face).

Throughout his career Gulpilil has continued to defy stereotypes with roles in classics such as *Storm Boy* (1976), *The Last Wave* (1977) and the top grossing Australian movie of all time *Crocodile Dundee* (1986).

It was Gulpilil's first lead role in *The Tracker* (2002) which garnered his first AFI Best Actor win, more than thirty years into his career.

In addition to his many iconic performances, Gulpilil has consistently used his cultural knowledge, language and identity to enrich Indigenous Australian representation across all our screens. This was particularly evident in the 2006 masterpiece *Ten Canoes*, where he narrated the film – at his own suggestion – in the Yolŋu Matha language group. It was the first time that a feature film was shot entirely in Australian Indigenous languages.

The semi-autobiographical *Charlie's Country*, which Gulpilil co-wrote and starred in, brought him more acclaim with the prestigious Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival Un Certain Regard section (an accolade never before received by an Australian), and his second Best Actor Award at the 2014 AACTAs.

His final film, *My Name Is Gulpilil*, in which he tells his own story, is nominated for the 2021 AACTA Best Documentary.

On the 50th anniversary of his first screen appearance, the Academy is proud to honour a truly great Australian at the 2021 AACTA Award Ceremony presented by Foxtel Group. Introduced by Australian rapper, dancer, and hip hop artist Baker Boy, Gulpilil was recognised and celebrated by his peers for his remarkable contributions to the Australian screen industry.

"As a little Aboriginal girl growing up in the Qld bush I remember seeing Uncle David in *Storm Boy* and being mesmerised by his movement, gestures and how he could tell a story through his eyes. Then as a teenager with dreams of acting

myself I got to see those same traits in *Crocodile Dundee*. Fast forward 20 years and I got to work with him in *The Proposition* and saw it all up close and personal, he was incredible. He was an inspiration, a teacher, a Songman of the highest order and a man of deep culture. We will miss him." – Leah Purcell (Actor, Writer, Director, Producer)

AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella said "David carried the legacy of his people into all his performances creating an authenticity that had never been seen widely before, and will never be forgotten.

By redefining how the world sees Indigenous Australians, he paved the way for the next generation to reject cultural stereotypes and express their own truths. All Australia owe him a debt."

The family of Dalaithngu has advised that his name and image may be used in accordance with his wishes, following his passing.

**AACTA TV**



Jeffrey Smart, *The construction fence*, 1978, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville,  
Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001 © The Estate of Jeffrey Smart.

## Jeffrey Smart at 100 Years

Acclaimed for his dynamic depiction of the 20th century urban experience, renowned Australian artist Jeffrey Smart is celebrated in a major exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia marking 2021 as the centenary of his birth.

Jeffrey Smart is on display at the National Gallery of Australia until 15 May 2022.  
Tickets: [nga.gov.au/exhibitions/jeffrey-smart](https://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/jeffrey-smart)



Jeffrey Smart will introduce new audiences to Adelaide-born Smart's artistic legacy and provide fresh insights on his work for long-time enthusiasts, examining themes including architectural constructs, art about art, and portraiture and friendships, as well as an in-depth examination of Smart's art practice – his studio, archive and working methods.

Curated by the National Gallery's Dr Deborah Hart, the Henry Dalrymple Head Curator, Australian Art, and Dr Rebecca Edwards, the Sid and Fiona Myer Curator of Ceramics and Design, Jeffrey Smart will showcase more than 100 paintings beginning with his early works from the 1940s to Smart's last painting *Labyrinth*, completed in 2011. This diverse showing of his art brings together many of the philosophical, literary, and aesthetic

threads running through his work from the start of his artistic career.

National Gallery Director Nick Mitzewich said Smart had sought inspiration from the world around him and in the process captured a new way of looking at urban life.

"He looked to the environment of urban and industrial modernity such as apartment blocks, factories, transportation, highways and signage. These potent images have become emblematic of the 20th and 21st century urban experience," he said.

Hart and Edwards said Smart's artistic approach combined the mundane and metaphysical, along with a strong sense of geometry and construction. The theatrical nature of his art sets the scene for the viewer to read his works through their own lens.

"Smart's subjects are suggestive realms in which the characters and

signposts are a jumping off point for the viewer," they said. "We hope people will feel intrigued and moved by the imagery which Smart deliberately preferred to leave open-ended and to bring their own stories about their place in the world and experiences to their interpretation of his works."

With a career that included stints as an art critic at *The Daily Telegraph*, presenter on the ABC children's radio program *The Argonauts*, and a drawing teacher at the National Art School, Smart explored his journey to becoming an artist and the complexity of being gay in postwar Australia, in his 1996 memoir *Not Quite Straight*. Across several decades, his brilliantly constructed works convey a rich array of sources and imagery which continue to intrigue and engage us today.

Born in 1921, Smart died at his Italian home, Posticcia Nuova in Tuscany, where he lived much of his adult life.



# Too much and never enough –watching get back and feeling it all

There is so much.  
Of everything.

I laughed often (a very young Heather Eastman wailing into a microphone to which John Lennon says “Yoko!”; the serious faces on the Constable Plods wanting this rooftop racket turned down; Paul McCartney suggesting Jimmy Nichol might step in for Ringo Starr who doesn’t want to travel to Africa; the late middle-aged businessman saying he thought The Beatles were “cracking” while a woman of similar age grumbles the noise had woken her from her afternoon sleep and she wasn’t happy).

Was left gobsmacked by all the moments of creation appearing right before us (Get Back being birthed on a bass from a two chord rifling around more in hope than inspiration; a George Harrison guitar line emerging from noodling into sunshine; Let It Be’s chords, not yet a song, heard off camera as a conversation takes place in the foreground; the building blocks of Something and Jealous Guy appearing uncertainly, seemingly as transient as a bunch of other ideas picked up, played with and discarded).

Then felt equally gobsmacked as the grunt work, the repetitive, fail-fail-fail-succeed-fail-succeed, business of working out chords, lyrics, tone, tempo, arrangement and ultimate judgement progressed. Watching in boldly projected colours at cold, impersonal

and impervious Twickenham Studios, and in white and silver crampness in the makeshift basement space at Apple’s Saville Row offices, as ideas good and bad and silly emerged, subsided and were dug up again.

And I cried as that rooftop show began (for the culmination of the experience, for the end it signalled, for what most of us had never and now would never see in the flesh, for the sheer pleasure for them and for me) wishing it wasn’t going to be stopped by fuddy duddy suits and fussy police.

Seven hours and change extracted from the voluminous source material by Peter Jackson didn’t seem anywhere near enough and only made me wish original director Michael Lindsay-Hogg had kept filming as The Beatles and George Martin returned to Abbey Road’s studios for one more album (or had been around for every album beforehand: oh man, to have been there during Revolver and Rubber Soul!).

This even as I wondered how “civilians” – normal people who haven’t spent days upon days reading the minutiae of all the band’s recording career, who don’t stupidly/proudly own at least five versions, in every format/remaster, of every album, and who don’t have multiple shelves stuffed with Beatles books of every hue - would stomach such microscopic and yet voluminous detail.

Not surprisingly, it got me thinking.

There has always been a singular advantage that a band has over a solo artist. And that’s any band, from dancing boy group to masked metal-punks, from prog makers to potent riot grrls. It’s why that chap from Decca was so wrong in 1962, irrespective of the trend for guitars, the quality of the tape Brian Epstein’s protégés offered or the possibility that the musical world might soon be divided between pretty boys called Tab with nothing to say and Aran jumper-wearing folkies with too much to say.

In business terms, you might call it multiple entry points, in pop psychology terms it would be identification: basically, the ability to be a different band to different people so that anyone, potentially, could recognise themselves, or recognise an aspiration/inspiration, in the collection of faces, body types, and personalities presented.

Any two-bit manager in the past 58 years looking for or putting together a group has worked to this knowledge. Any half-awake media looking for an angle has worked from that knowledge. And any emotionally-aware fan has intuitively had that knowledge.

The Beatles didn’t invent it, because they didn’t even attempt it – their personalities existed pre-Derek Taylor’s liner notes and Epstein’s stage dress-notes – but they defined it and embodied it, even as it was simplified into the snarky one, the sweet one, the quiet one, the funny

one. All of them attractive in some way. And as a bonus, all of them extremely talented in several ways.

Jackson's *Get Back* is too sophisticated to begin from this angle, and too gargantuan to depend on it. But it is a film instinctively constructed around this idea, and in many ways our responses to it reflect how we have always seen The Beatles – band and individuals – and how open/resistant we are to these notions being challenged or reinforced.

Was McCartney the man who held the band together after the death of Epstein in 1967, giving them purpose and direction? Or was he the martinet who drove away first Ringo Starr, then George Harrison and finally John Lennon? Was Harrison the vital contributor in the centre working at his own pace, in his own way who was perpetually patronised as the “little brother” to the dominating presence of Lennon and McCartney? Or was he the one so damaged by the demands and stupidities of fame (and the inadequacies of stage equipment/venue PA) he refused to consider playing live when it might have given the group a new lease of enthusiasm – but also saw the impractical madness of the Libyan desert show/ferry the audience on the QE2 idea so insistently pushed by Lindsay-Hogg?

Was Lennon the unfinished boy who finally found in Yoko Ono the adult relationship that enabled him to exist as a man and as an artist with a reason to make art? Or was he the focus-less former leader who was drifting away from responsibility and care and happy to allow blame to land on McCartney? Was Starr the simple rock to which the others were tethered so they could explore at will, knowing things would be managed? Or was he the surprising emotionally sophisticated core who bound them?

One of the many beautiful things about *Get Back* is how all of these ideas are revealed as true and simultaneously inadequate an explanation. How the actions and interactions of the four band members are much more complex, much more nuanced and much more real – you know, like actual people, not stereotypes – than so much of what we “knew”. And yet may still confirm all your prejudices.

While a musician friend of mine said his dislike of McCartney has only grown watching the first episode, it was different for me, someone who has had a mixed musical/emotional relationship with McCartney all my life (boy fan; teenage/early 20s “John boy” with a bit more disdain than respect for McCartney; adult appreciator of his genius, adventure and limitations who still can't listen to a number of his songs).

Watching him want to make things happen because if he doesn't it

won't, his confidence understandable but understandably grating. Then watching him recognise and articulate in front of the cameras how those very qualities are infuriating and sometimes insulting as he tries to have the others step into this space.

I don't want to be the boss, he tells the others. Which is true and not quite true. You were the boss but you don't want it anymore, he tells Lennon (in what it turns out was a secretly recorded conversation the pair had in a dining area), which though denied by his friend and collaborator, was true and not quite true.

It was like watching him and Ringo near tears as they contemplate the possibility that Lennon and Harrison may not come back (“and then there were two,” McCartney says forlornly) or hearing McCartney explain to people that what Ono had brought to Lennon is too important and integral to be dismissed as her stealing him from them, and that if forced to choose Lennon would, and indeed should, choose her.

That is, I was moved and encouraged, and felt somewhat embarrassed about all the times I have been so definitive about him, or any of them. Just as I was impressed by the emotional intelligence Ringo brought to his patience and silence as much as his observations – often voiced quietly to Lindsay-Hogg – which in the end really just reflected the subtlety, insight and appropriateness that had always defined his musical contributions.

Which brings us back to another “which version of The Beatles have you held on to” angle on *Get Back*.

It is generally accepted that the gloomy, it's all going to hell original *Let It Be* film reflected the atmosphere of tension and bitterness of a band falling apart in 1969, despite the fact that Lindsay-Hogg had always said this was not all that he saw and filmed.

That's the story we have told ourselves, that's the story the band members told, especially in the wake of the acrimonious, litigious and scarring breakup of the band a year later that seemingly soured their memories. Yet it wasn't true.

In the stupidly impractical and inappropriate film soundstage, McCartney and Harrison fell out, yes, and the guitarist left for several days (as Starr had a couple of years earlier) with the need for a creative outlet outside The Beatles for the flood of songs emerging from him, so evident to us if not yet fully to him. Yes, Lennon, Starr and McCartney tried several times to convince him to return, without much success initially and the talk of a fill-in – Clapton? Really? – meandered. And no one will ever doubt playing before an audience, whether

in a theatre or a Roman ruin, was the last thing his psyche could handle.

But return he did. Contribute he did, clearly stimulated by the songs the others had brought in, the songs he was writing, and by – with this such an important part to see – the pleasure in collaboration with the other three, and then with Billy Preston (the one unequivocal and sustained source of happiness and, by-the-by, brilliance to match the central four, throughout the whole film) in an environment that was his natural and comfortable home: the studio.

Similarly, the idea that Lennon was only interested in projects and time with Ono, that heroin and exhaustion and ennui had emptied him out, that he had only contempt for his erstwhile co-writer (as captured in brutal lines from his 1971 solo song *How Do You Sleep?* “The only thing you done was yesterday/and since you've gone you're just another day”) suited a post-split narrative and the deification of Lennon as the cerebral and passionate counterweight to the glib showman McCartney.

But again and again, *Get Back*, shows Lennon excited by what he was writing, emboldened by what the band brought to those songs, enjoying much (but not necessarily all) of the material being thrown up by the others in the writing process, deeply connected to McCartney. And having fun. So much fun.

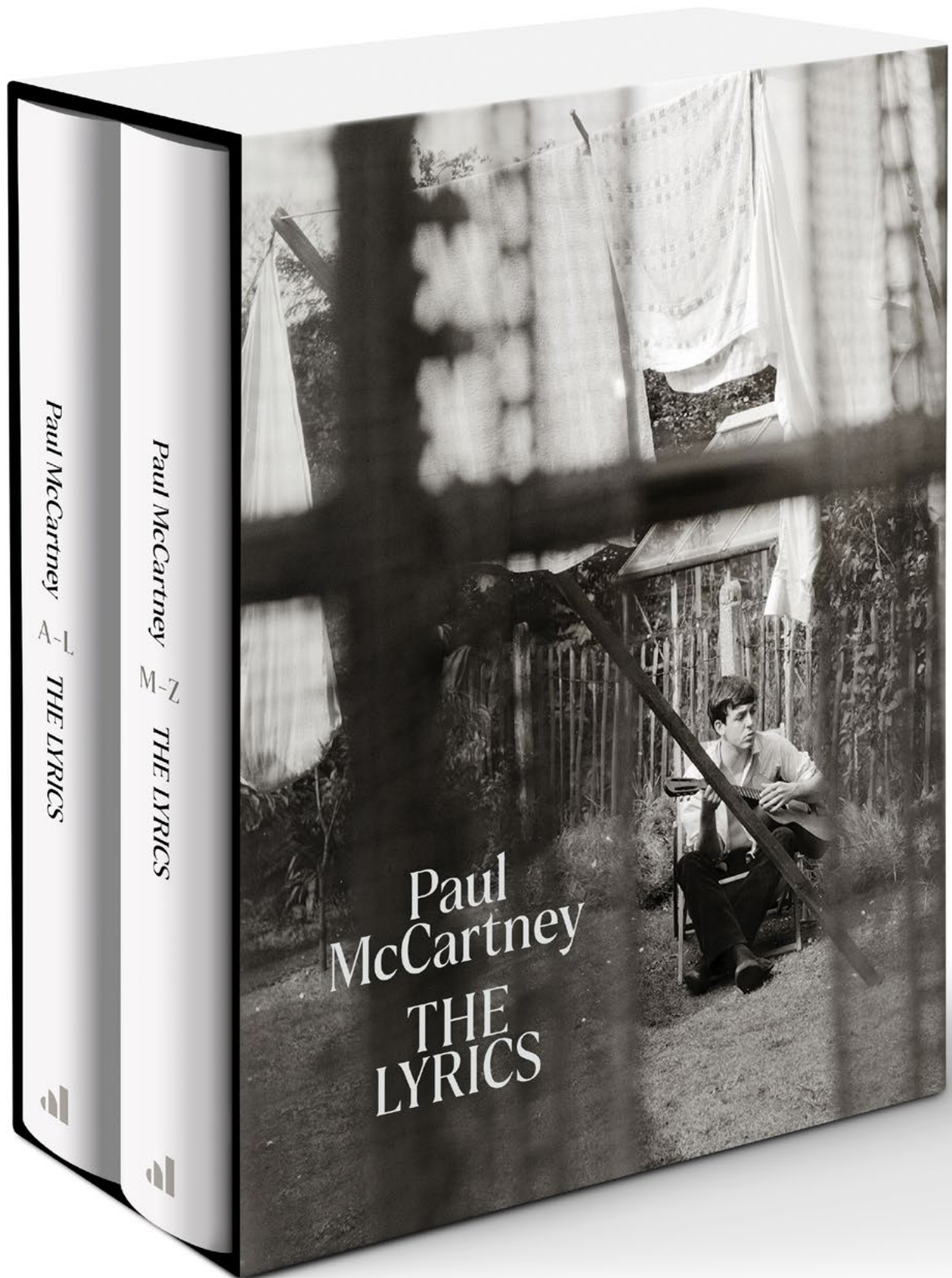
Watching this it is clear what each brought to the collective and to each other, and how the collaborative process, the deeply ingrained musical and personal relationships, is at the core of the band story. Something captured in a tweet over the weekend from AC Newman of the Canadian/American band *New Pornographers*, where he said: “People who've never played in a band: ‘You can tell the Beatles were about to break up, so much tension!’. People who played in bands: ‘Wow, they had a very healthy group dynamic!’.”

This is what a band is. This is what this band was. Just more so maybe.

Which is why, as excessive and at times slow-moving as the film is, as typically Jackson as it was to make a trilogy from a single story, to have done otherwise would have been to tell only part of the story and to have missed the small changes, the evolutions and failures, the tedium before inspiration, the mechanics, the flaws and inadequacies, that explain the unexplainable just as much as the often sublime and lasting songs and influence which were the end product.

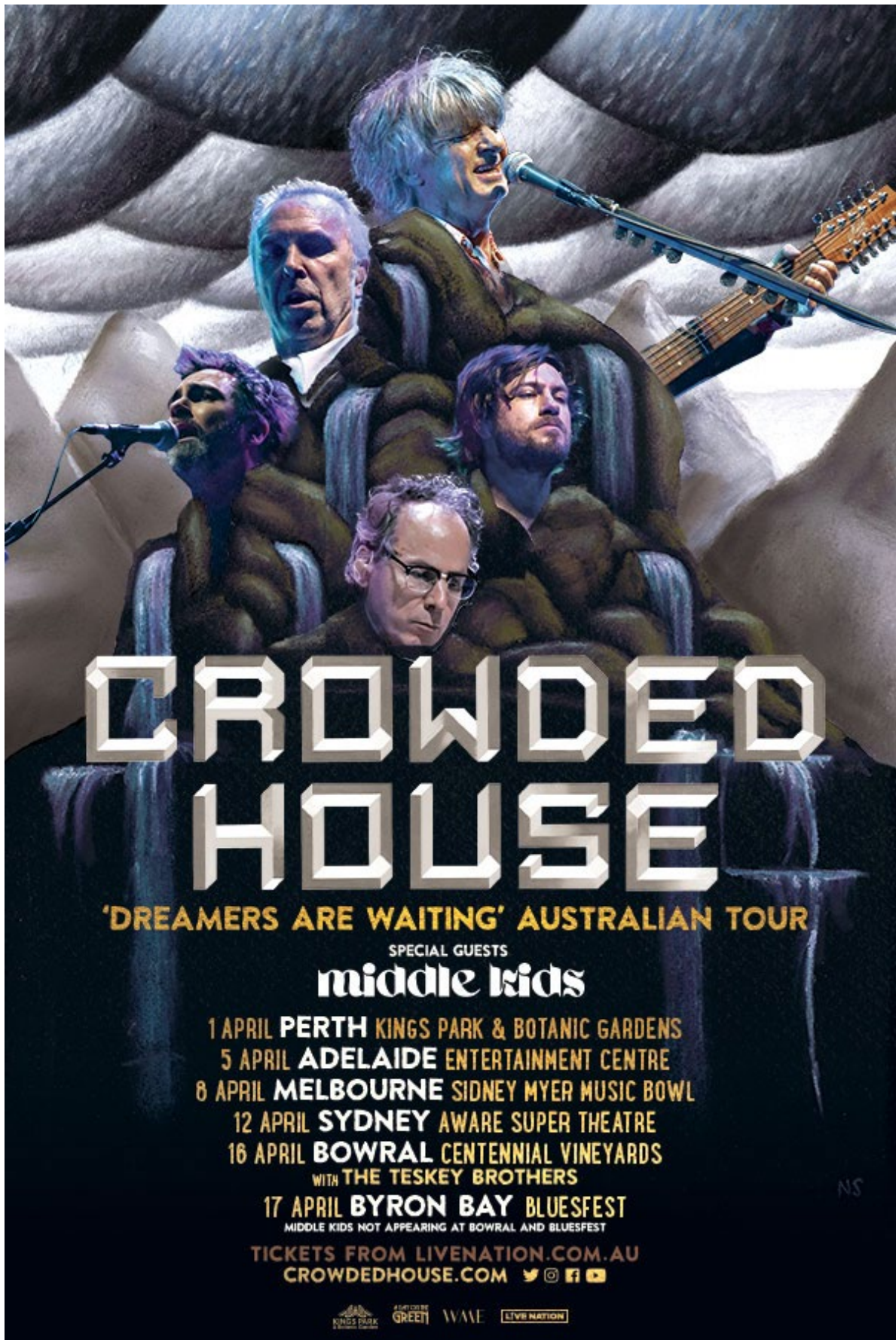
There is so much. Of everything. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

**BERNARD ZUEL**



Extract from Paul McCartney's *The Lyrics* in the next edition of *The Last Post Magazine*.













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# Paul Kennedy

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Paul Kennedy is an ABC reporter with 25 years as a journalist. He is also an author of five books, a football coach and loving father. Here, Greg speaks with Paul about his latest book, *Funky Town*. A look back at the summer of 1993 and the transition from boy to man.

*Greg T Ross:* Paul Kennedy, 25 years with the ABC, you're an author and a football coach and you've got an interest in your children's cricket team, a lot of things going on in your life. How did you find time to do this latest book of yours and how long did it take?

*Paul Kennedy:* Well, Greg, it took five years so that explains part of the ability to write a book, I guess. I had to redraft and it was the first time I've ever written a memoir so it was quite vastly different, I should say, to anything that I've written before and so I gave myself plenty of time to just get it right, basically. And 2020 came around and lockdown and that perhaps helped me get a lot more words down as I was sort of getting towards the final manuscript. The 2020 lockdown was me finishing my news breakfast shifts and giving the sports updates in the morning and then once the house settled into its routine with the kids homeschooling and Kim working or not, I sat out the back deck and wrote. I'm looking back at 2020, now that we've had 2021, and I've got some fondness in my hindsight because it enable me to finish *Funky Town*.

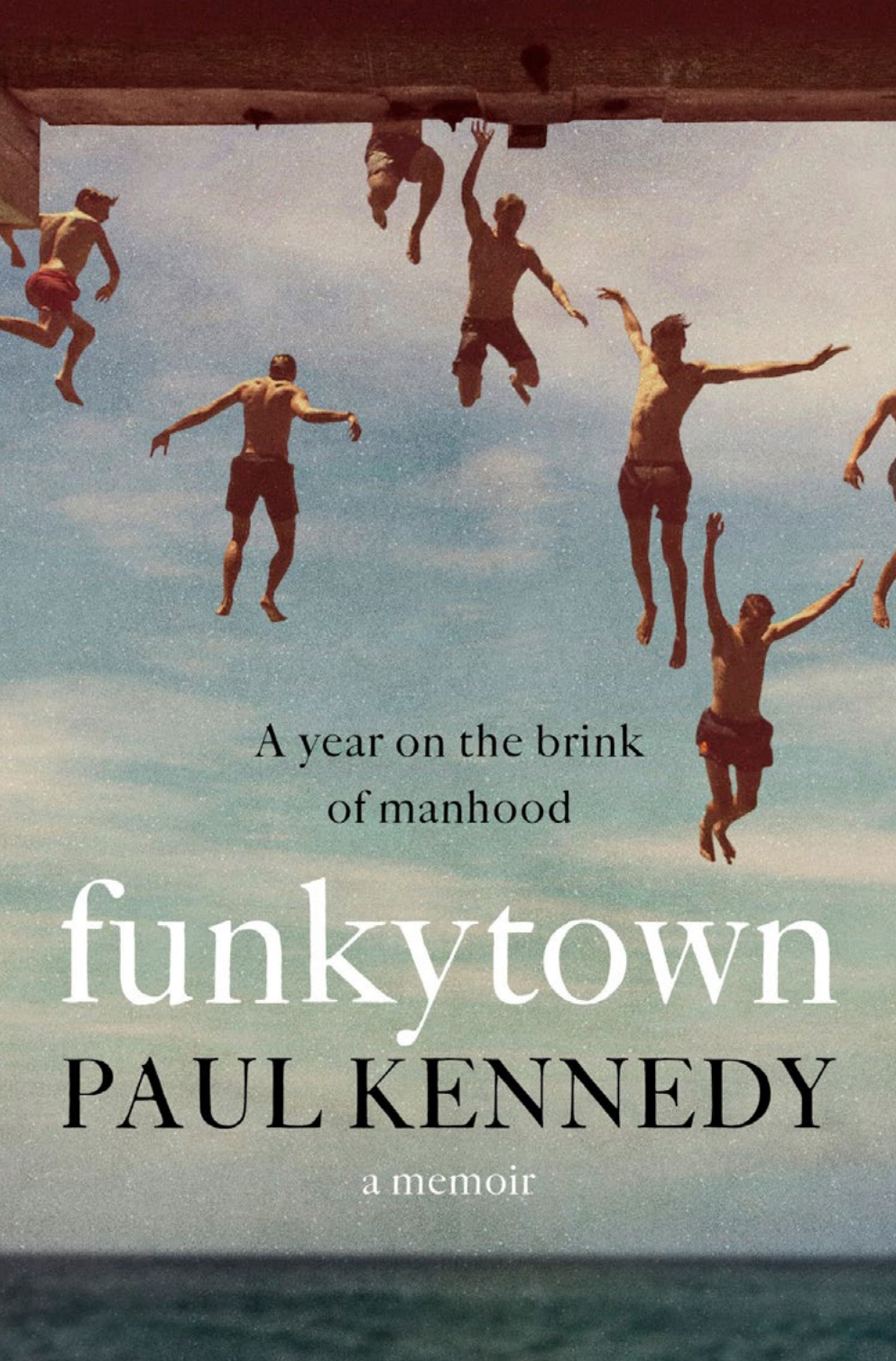
*GTR:* And, of course, I suppose, good of you to bring that point up too, Paul, or, as we know you, PK, I guess for years on the ABC Sports breakfast, which was a great gig. And we go back to what's happened in the last 18 months, I guess, with the bush fires and then COVID, and impact. To be writing a book about something that happened in 1993.

*PK:* Yeah. Yeah. Well, I didn't set out as a cleansing experience or to sort of correct history or make myself feel better or anything like that. I guess there was some central questions that I wanted to answer as you get to the age of 46, as I am now, and probably just turned 41 when I decided to write the book. I guess there were some questions that I wanted to sort of sort through and I'm not saying that my adolescence or that year when I was 17 was any more difficult than anyone else's. In fact, I wrote the book because I didn't think it was so extraordinary, although the circumstances in timing was in Frankston. Absolutely extraordinary but the things that I went through at 17 were very common things and so I understood that. The one thing that I couldn't quite work out until I

did write the book and there's that experience that you have when you get the words out of your mind and you put them down and everything's in order, I can see quite clearly now but the big question was why did I make those choices and why was I, in a way, self destructing, to borrow the term from one of my teachers, through binge drinking and all the rest of it? Why was I doing that, given that I came from a very, very stable and very peaceful and what I would argue as almost a gold standard upbringing with Mom and Dad and-

*GTR:* Yeah. There was something ... No one would've picked that, coming from that background, Paul, and I get it. When you speak about, you're referring to Mrs Mac and the book that she gave you?

*PK:* Yeah. Yeah, my literature teacher. I had great role models, that was the thing, and Mom and Dad particularly. I did come to one conclusion and that is that boys like me are delivered twice and once when we're, of course, come into the world and around 15 or 16, we sort of get delivered again to the elders and the male elders, in my case, around me. And so, that was where,



A year on the brink  
of manhood

# funkytown

## PAUL KENNEDY

a memoir

I guess, my choices were influenced by what was happening around me. I wanted to be one of the boys and one of the boys meant drinking and pretending I was fearless and all the rest of it and that's not at all to blame the culture on, my decision making. It was the insecurities within me and the uncertainty that caused me to make poor choices and to be out of control. But the other role models in my life were my teachers and, of course, my football coach, Greg Hutchison.

*GTR:* He played for Melbourne or something, I think, didn't he?

*PK:* He did, he was ex Melbourne and a terrific coach of the Stingrays. In Funkytown, I talk a lot about that season, playing with the Stingrays in the Under 18 competition, which,

in a way, that was a way to compare the two different types of masculinity, which is not a word that we used back in '93 but we can now. We talk a lot about boys becoming men and the difficulties and those poor cultures. Well, the Stingrays was just such a great culture and I loved being in a football environment, I loved being around my teammates.

*GTR:* It's good.

*PK:* And it was and when I say I loved it, it was a lovely beautiful experience to play football and I guess I wanted to share that and some people, a lot of people, had never played footy so they might think that the change room is all bloke, all macho, and-

*GTR:* But you're each carrying different things.

"...MY CHOICES WERE INFLUENCED BY WHAT WAS HAPPENING AROUND ME. I WANTED TO BE ONE OF THE BOYS AND ONE OF THE BOYS MEANT DRINKING AND PRETENDING I WAS FEARLESS..."

*PK:* That's right but that Stingrays environment was everything good about masculinity, I would say. But, yeah, the other role model was Mrs Mack and she was part of a really exceptional English department at my local high school. It was a knockabout school and anything and everything went on there but-

*GTR:* I Heard the Owl Call Your Name, was the book.

*PK:* Yeah. Mrs Mack introduced me to this book called I Heard the Owl Call My Name, a book that I never would've chosen for myself, and that was the real trigger for me to fall in love with the written word and become a reader and also want to become a writer. And, of course, I don't go past '93 in the book. In fact at the end of '93, things were pretty hopeless, didn't get into Uni, got expelled from high school, got locked up, didn't get a cadetship at the newspaper but, of course, people would know me through my work and understand that my path had already been made clear to me, that I would become a journalist.

*GTR:* Well, this is incredible too, Paul. I think it's such a brilliant book because of its complexity and its honesty and I guess honest in writing is a reflection of honesty in life. How have you learnt, through the book? Or is this something you'd already started to learn?

*PK:* Well, that honesty, I think is something my mother and father really taught me so I tried to have that in my work and in being honest, I guess, the word 'authentic' is something that I keep coming back to. Dad always says, still does, Dad's now in his 70's but whenever I come to him for advice, his piece of advice has always been be yourself. And so, I've done that through my life. Invariably, I sort of stray from it every now and again but I always come back to being myself. I think I've done

that in journalism and when I came to the crossroads in writing this book, and you do, you come to a chapter or a paragraph or even a sentence, you have to say, "Am I being truthful here?" And there are little things like the truth can hurt sometimes too and it can be embarrassing. There were moments there where I talked about how I was towards other kids, including girls, in as early as primary school and the teachers sent home notes that Mom had to come to the school because I was bullying other kids and looking back now, that's confronting for me. It's embarrassing and I'm ashamed that I would've made any other child feel uncomfortable but you know what? That was the truth. That happened and it wasn't something that was a big part of my schooling. Mom, particularly, she was the one that always-

*GTR:* To a lot of people, you seem a candidate for the less likely person to bully because this may be an exemplification of how you've grown as an individual through your writing and through your presentation on television, etc. But I guess one of the really deep things about your book and we carry on from the honesty is it's discussion on transference from boy to man. I think, was it Mrs J said something about show me a boy at seven, or something?

*PK:* Yeah, yeah. Mrs J ... I can't remember the wording of the quote but she was my grade two teacher and I've still got a good strong relationship with her. A lot of the teachers, I still come across, keep in contact with. I guess when you're on television, you become a sort of familiar presence as well so that they perhaps might remember you more than they would otherwise. But, no, I've got great memories of my teachers. None of them took any rubbish from me because I was ... And it's different with boys and girls, I guess. I was very insecure around girls, I could not talk to girls so I tried to be athletic and impressive but my communication skills were terrible. I bored into the old traditions that were passed down to her, the disparagement of feminine. Any other boys who weren't competitive and sporty like me, I perhaps dismissed them or I was prone to being over emotional when I was competing in sports events and that was something that I think is natural. My brother and I grew up in the same house and he wasn't like that but I was and I wrote about that in Funkytown, having to go to a psychiatrist and psychologist twice.

*GTR:* In Funkytown, Paul, in Funkytown, you go through these things, I guess,

of learning and communication and wanting to fall in love so you obviously had an appreciation of the femininity from an age and what is it that you learned about femininity during that period?

*PK:* Yeah. Well, when I say the disparagement of feminine, I'm taking that from things that I've read as well in describing toxic masculinity and the start of that, even going back to things like I heard Germaine Greer talking about this one day with John Faine, little things like not wanting to be seen having your mom drop you off in the morning, you know? And wanting to sort of not be seen with your mom kissing you on the cheek and all those sorts of things. And then liking girls, that was the other thing that reading about this as well and we're not taught to like girls, we're taught to think that girl germs and if you're doing anything girly, that's not good and, of course, we use all of that language, homophobic language, as well in describing even our best mates. If they do something, we call it gay. And so, it's all that language and I think it's ... That's what I mean by the disparagement of those type of things but, in fact, there is nothing particularly feminine about wanting to fall in love. That's something that's very natural to boys and, I think, looking back, that was made clearer to me. And I knew it at the time because ... And I'm not just writing this in hindsight, I was taking a diary, a journal, and I was writing notes. A girl dumped me and I wrote lines along in the themes of, "Will I ever find someone to love me?" And so, I was expressing these things, unable to talk to anyone about them but writing them down and it was far from unusual. It was very, very normal for me to feel that way. What was not normal and it remains a dangerous thing to do and unhealthy thing to do is to not be able to express yourself. I was wearing that mask of bravado so tightly. And that's why I say I don't think it's an extraordinary tale, in that regard. It's a very common tale of boys like me.

*GTR:* Your reflection on that period, Paul, is quite normal, in many respects, for a lot of males but I guess I was talking with Michael Leunig yesterday and we were talking about the importance of self expression and I told him about my talking to you and one of the great things that we agreed on was the need to self express. You had obviously felt this from a young age and yet you had that harboured inside by playing football, etc, which I've done too. I mean, it's great but you wanted something to go beyond that, you wanted to

reach beyond that in some ways. You were searching for something.

*PK:* I think I understood that there was me than just footy head and I didn't feel like I needed to replace football because, for me, football is something so natural as to feel like I was born to play it and when I was on the footy field, all of the insecurities and the fears and the uncertainties that we're talking about now, they just went away when I played football. I just loved it. I dreamt about it, it's all I wanted to do. But there were these other things, I took up playing the saxophone in Year Seven and I loved it, secretly loved it, and then I gave it up because someone teased me about carrying the saxophone case around the schoolyard and I thought, "I don't want to get teased by those guys." Not that I knew who they were but I wanted to be someone that was not teased or looked down or called a nerd or anything like that. How stupid is that?

*GTR:* You could've taken James Valentines place in The Models.

*PK:* I could've at least played beautiful music, if I had persisted, you know? And, at least, for myself but I gave up the saxophone and then the great thing about that Year 12 class, Year 11 and 12, that literature class, was that I could sit in this classroom with Mrs Mack and have her explain Shakespeare, not that I could read it myself but she would explain it and it would sound interesting and then we read the book by Thomas Hardy, which I talk about in the book, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, which discusses coincidentally, the double standards of the way that men and women are viewed and their relationship with sex but there was one passage in there about the perfection being the, about the imperfection being the perfection.

*GTR:* Yes, that's right. That's right. Yes, yes, yes.

*PK:* Beautiful line and, sorry, it escapes me now but it was just so beautiful and here I was, reading this old book that I really couldn't understand unless the teacher walked me through it but this beautiful passage. And so, I knew that I loved those type of things and I felt ... I've never been a religious person but I felt, at time, that I was having those spiritual type sensations and of course I was because I was 17 and that's what happens to us. It's a great big world and you're thinking, "Wow, the world is bigger than ... I love my footy but there's more there but I better not tell anyone because I might not seem manly." Yeah, that was the quandary, the constant quandary.

## “...THE WORD ‘AUTHENTIC’ IS SOMETHING THAT I KEEP COMING BACK TO.”

*GTR:* And it was the transition from boyhood to manhood, I remember myself, Paul, I'd gone through something similar when I was a couple of years older than that, when I was around 19, and I wrote a piece called Young Kids Games, referring to what was once considered normal as a youngster, was not considered normal as a young adult so there was this transition in learning to do that. But, I guess, we speak about Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Hardy and all these classics. We have some people that learn writing and reading through the Beat novels or through modern but you found some transference to reality through Shakespeare and Hardy and things like that?

*PK:* Well, they were the texts at school and Mrs Mack was a young teacher who could really connect with her students, put us at ease and the other thing was she was able to make me want to not disappoint her with my work. In my other subjects, I was pretty carefree, fairly cavalier about school. I wasn't prepared to put in the hard work. But in literature, and also in my English class and also my legal studies class, I did have some really good teachers and it was the teacher that said to you, "This is not up to your standard, you needed to do better than this." And I just really responded to that. Mrs Mack, she was a great example of just knowing how to get more out of me as a student and the longer the year went, the better I sort of became at reading and writing and I reached a competent level and then it was towards the end of the year, where she suggested that I go for a cadetship in journalism and writing stories for a living. And, at first, I thought, "Oh, no." There was my arrogance and bravado kicked in, I thought, "No, I'd just prefer to be an author." But, of course, I'd only just started reading books. You know, journalism, I'd never heard of a cadetship but I applied for one and didn't get it but she really put me on the path towards journalism and it's been my life ever since. I've been doing it virtually since I left high school.

*GTR:* It's incredible. I was at the Sydney Morning Herald as a copy boy when I was 15 and I was supposed to-

*PK:* Oh, yeah.

*GTR:* Yeah, I was supposed to be-

*PK:* You what what the copy boy, right? When I left high school, it's not a spoiler alert because it comes after the book finishes, but I finally just snuck my way through the door to be a copy boy so you and I had the same experience, Greg, of going and getting

coffees and doing the photocopying and shooting the rolls of copy up to the compositors from the Editors desk and all that sort of great stuff.

*GTR:* That's it exactly and then the highlight was actually meeting John Fairfax one day, that was something else. Geez, I'll tell you what. But we'll get onto where you are now but I suppose if we go back too, you've had some female role models. Maybe this has been part of the blessing in your life is you had female ... And, of course, Mary Karr, the American writer who did something for you.

*PK:* Oh, yeah. Mary Karr, I'm just a fan of her work and read her memoirs. She's a great memoirist and one of the leading sort of writers in that field in America and internationally too but she did write a book about memoirs, how to write a memoir. I read that one and the best sort of snippet that I picked out from that is she really gave me some clarity about writing people that you know and family and friends. She's utterly fearless but she did say that the game ... I think it was Mary Karr. It might've been another book but, anyway, the great advice was when you're writing a memoir, understand that the game is rigged because you are the only one who gets to have a say. And so, when you write about people in your life and they don't get to have a say but you do, what I took from that was, in Funkytown and I'm not sure I'll ever write another memoir but I wanted to be fairly kind to others and certainly not place anyone under the scrutiny that I was putting myself under.

*GTR:* That's the brilliance of it. You have treated others with respect in the book and it is an opportunity to observe your life and the way you interact with others and not others, how they interact with you. It's been a very good way of doing that, really, really draws you into the story. And I guess, how badly did you want to play for Collingwood?

*PK:* Oh, I got to 17 and when I was playing for the Stingrays, I just wanted to play AFL and anywhere would've done by that stage. Of, yeah, I fantasized for many years when I was a kid and playing for the black and white at Victoria Park. I loved Collingwood and still do, probably in a slightly different way now, but the players ... My brother and I used to align our bunk beds and count through the numbers and get all the way up to 45, was probably the highest, then we'd go through all the other teams as well and, yeah, we just idolized players and, of course, number one player, for me, was Peter Daicos. And

I still love watching him play and I love the type of player he was. More recent years, I love Eddie Betts and players that have fun and they're unconventional and brilliant and they can do something that surprises you every week. Yeah, Daicos was my man and the late Darren Millane, I wrote a piece about him for the ABC, on the 30th anniversary of his death, Millane and Gavin Brown was another favorite of mine.

*GTR:* Millane was a bit deeper than people thought.

*PK:* Yeah, Millane, he was 26 and we talk about boys becoming men, he was probably nearing that age where he might've been sorting a few things out to but died of a car crash while he was drunk and, yeah, once again, used to get in fights but he had a very caring side to him. He had a love for family that those who knew him said he was-

*GTR:* Quite a beautiful man, in some ways.

*PK:* Yeah, just loved his family and made some bad decisions and he paid for his and I think the other thing is, in Funkytown, I'm describing events where, but for a bit of luck along the way, I could've been seriously injured or the people around me could've been seriously injured or killed because that's what happens when you drink a lot of booze and you stay out and blokes bash into each other and they fight, that's what happens. We hear about it all the time, don't we?

*GTR:* Yeah, that's right. I often think when I look back on my life, which may not have been too dissimilar to yours at the same age, I think we're just very, very lucky but the grooves of Funkytown, to me and many others that I've spoken to about this book, you encourage the question, what makes a man?

*PK:* Yeah, and for a while ... Greg, the funny thing was, for me, I had it there right in front of me my whole life. My dad, a gentleman, Mom was a feminist. We never used the word feminist in the house but I look now back and see, quite clearly, Mom was a feminist and Dad was right by her side and he was an old school gentleman. He didn't hardly drink around us so he was the perfect role model. You know, a guy drove a truck and probably intimidated people by his size and the way he looked, yet he just loved the sounds of the birds in the backyard so he built an aviary one day and, for a time there, we had an aviary and he'd go and feed the birds. He was a man of many layers and he just loved simple things and he was a family

man and I need never have searched for a better role model, he was there as the perfect role model of the way to be a man. My dad was always that but, as I said, you get to 15-16 and you stop listening to your old man and he was always there and I didn't stop listening to him but I was looking to make my own mark as a young fella.

*GTR:* Yeah. And that's the strong character that allowed you, in the end, I guess, to grow and I guess do we always ... Getting close to the end now, Paul, but do we always, through a voyage of self discovery, do we go back to who we always were?

*PK:* Yeah, I think so, Greg. I think that's a great point and I've coached football as well, I've coached a lot of football teams and a lot of young men and I see the values that my mother and father instilled in me, if I'd forgot about them or I drank too much or I got carried away, those values are always still with me. And so, I think when ... It might even be a bigger timeframe than 17 or 18. It might be from 15 to 25 before some men settle down and sort themselves out and become the man that they want to be. And some longer.

*GTR:* It may take longer.

*PK:* I see, I've coached young men who have come from very difficult upbringings, who can settle down and live a really safe and peaceful and healthy lifestyles for a couple of years and then they get to 30 years old and things from their past cause them problems and I feel sorry for them because I never had that. I always had ... I think that's a great point that the values that I learned from my mother and father were always probably going to steer me in the right direction and I was very thankful that I met my wife when I was just turning 23. There was some wild years there and Kim was 20, I was 23, and we've been together ever since. And at some time, I was still prone to binge drinking in those early 20's but I very quickly decided that if I wanted Kim to keep loving me and stay with me, then I couldn't keep doing that.

*GTR:* The wisdom of understanding that there are some things that are superficial, I do remember when we were of a similar age, we would do something similar. We would ask adults to buy us drinks outside hotels and then we would go scull bottles or port when we were 15 but then we would go to parties and it would give us bravery and bravado but it very soon came to realization, that was not what you did. It's all learning.

*PK:* No, it is learning and I wouldn't dismiss the importance of rites of passage as well because these things are important and Billy Connolly summed it up, I love Billy Connolly and the way he talks about when he first went to work at the docks and I'm going to mangle this quote too but it was something like, "We had hairs on our chins and we could throw a punch and we might even be able to get someone pregnant but you step into a man's world and you shut up and you learn to look and listen." And that's a similar thing, that rite of passage.

*GTR:* Yep.

*PK:* And I know there are some unhealthy things there but he also-

*GTR:* That's really good actually about listening.

*PK:* Yeah. Well, yeah, you do. You shut up and you listen, "Okay, well, I want to be like that." My brother's friends and they were two-three years older than me, "Well, they were doing that. I want to do that." But the point about rites of passage, I think they're really important. I'm not, by any means, judging young men and saying, "Don't do this, don't do that." I would say that to get through that period, if I was to offer any advice to my three sons, it is don't believe that mask of bravado, don't wear it around because you want to fall in love, you want to be friends with girls. You don't just want to be friends with the blokes down the club and you want to open yourself up to new experiences. You want to play a musical instrument, go and do that. You want to write a play, go and write a play. You want to go and join the amateur theatre and you've got that feeling inside you, go and do that and you can do that and play footy as well and you can do whatever you like.

*GTR:* Yes, that's the brilliant thing and you can write poetry, you can play football, you can fall in love and you can be the same man and I guess, for you, the sense of creativity has been more part of your life since coming to terms with who you are.

*PK:* Yeah, I think so, the writing. The writing has really helped that and also journalism has been good for me too because I've been a newspaper journalist, I've worked in television, I've done the full gamut of working radio too and the other part of me is not just expressing myself but that's actually helping people tell their own stories. And through Mom and Dad, particularly through Mom's work in child protection, as she was a foster care worker when she went back to school and got her diploma, I've had

a very fierce sense of right and wrong as well and I think journalism has suited that and I've suited journalism because I've been able to do, I think, some important work along the way and help people. Yeah, it's not just an artistic expression, it's what I think is meaningful work and we all should be so lucky as to have meaningful work.

*GTR:* Exactly. And you made breakfast television so much more watchable during a period there and I must say, mate, you're a bit of a fashion plate because I remember seeing you one day and you had shoes without any socks on and I went back to my period in the '80s, my style counsel period, and I used to do the same thing and it used to raise eyebrows but I love it. It's good-

*PK:* Well, Greg, it sounds like you were doing it to express yourself. If I ever wore pants and shoes without socks, it was because I had forgotten to take socks into the studio with me.

*GTR:* They look good.

*PK:* Well, the thing is, particularly in summer, when you get up at 3:30 in the morning, and I love wearing thongs, I don't wear shoes unless I have to so I would sometimes go into the studio wearing thongs and my office shoes were always in the change room but I didn't always have socks so sometimes I went sockless and-

*GTR:* Yeah, yeah. Well, it's about time they brought that back, I thought. And, of course, Michael would've had a go at you for that, no doubt too.

*PK:* Yeah, and then we got into the colourful socks, which was even better.

*GTR:* That's right, that's right. That's a beautiful thing. Paul, your book, Funkytown, is a real and extraordinary read. It encourages thinking and I think, as we speak about great artists, we speak for the great thing that they do is encourage thinking. May your literary career continue for many, many, many years and your brilliant journalism too and we hope that your football team has luck next year too.

*PK:* Our football team, yeah. It's not looking good for another couple of years but we'll hang in there and we'll enjoy the wins as they come along the way. No, thanks, Greg. You're very kind to say those things and it's been a pleasure talking to you.

*GTR:* It's been absolutely a pleasure too and thank you very much for your time, Paul.

*PK:* Thanks, mate. ■

## Crossing the Rubicon

In a voice almost too soft to hear  
but not to recognise,  
I heard you call my name.  
Meshing, verbal. Precise and as carefully placed  
as if the hands of a masseur.  
I could dump everything that's ever been and throw it out  
into the trash and rinse out the percolator,  
But it would come back  
to haunt me  
sooner or later.  
Turning an errand of the mind  
into an excursion, most likely.  
Through ponderings  
we may have wondered what was going on,  
But by then, we'd already crossed the Rubicon.  
Riding the rails  
ever since, comforted  
only by  
the knowledge that  
in a true life,  
things of value  
must be earned.  
Through volumes of poetry, as a reflection, the  
understanding  
that experience is unique. To  
embrace, to  
fall in love, to  
hesitate, yet persevere. Unique  
but common.  
And that  
different versions of ourselves, different outcomes, may exist.  
Somewhere.  
Infinity  
suggests so.  
In a voice almost  
too soft to hear  
but not to recognise,  
I heard you  
call my name.

GREG T ROSS



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### TIM WHEATLEY AND BAND

*Sat, 22 January 2022*

### EMILY WILLIAMS - ONE DIVA

*Fri, 28 January 2022*

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*Fri, 11 February 2022*

### RITA SATCH

*Sat, 12 February 2022*

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*Fri, 8 April 2022*

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*Sat, 9 April 2022*

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*Sat, 30 April 2022*

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*Fri, 13 May 2022*

### MARCUS ELVIS JACKSON AND THE TREBLETES

*Sat, 2 July 2022*

[birdsbasement.com](http://birdsbasement.com)







# Michael Nesmith (1942-2021)

We lost Michael Nesmith on Friday – although there'd been some recent fragility health wise, his death still hits hard. Forever attached to The Monkees, there was so much more to Nesmith than just that – he should be remembered, and revered, for being a trailblazer, visionary, ideas man and one who never let his talents ossify. There was a presence long before The Monkees and long after.

After The Monkees shut up shop, Nesmith went solo and, by design or accident, became a Country Rock pioneer. Nesmith's take on the genre was a little more elusive – his songwriting was literate and devoid of clichés. He may be the only tunesmith to slip words like “harbinger” and “didactic” into his lyrics. Signed to RCA, Nesmith released six albums of idiosyncratic Country Rock all accompanied by pedal steel virtuoso Red Rhodes. Then there was his business acumen.

While still a solo artist, Nesmith decided to establish his own record labels. Countryside was set up in 1973 with a house band and first off the press was Pure Country, a Nesmith produced album from Californian based Honky Tonker Garland Frady that remains something of a lost gem. Then came Pacific Arts, a label Nesmith used to release his ambitious solo project The Prison (an album that came with a book) and issue albums from cult artists such as Kaleidoscope, Chris Darrow and Rank Strangers. In between, Nesmith found space to produce albums from UK folkies Bert Jansch and Iain Matthews as well as producing tracks for Linda Ronstadt's future road band The Corvettes.

When Country Rock was seemingly made redundant by the emergence of Punk and New Wave, Nesmith, without much fanfare, released the wonderful From A Radio Engine To A Photon Wing in 1977 and scored an unlikely hit with the whimsical Rio. An Australian tour followed and I was fortunate enough to see Nesmith perform at St Kilda's Palais theatre backed by a band (Al Perkins, John Ware and David MacKay) who could really switch gears and rock. For the uninitiated, do seek out Michael Nesmith Live At The Palais still available from Nesmith's website.

Nesmith's life and career is more than enough to fill a book and, fortunately, Nesmith's memoir Infinite Tuesday was published in 2017. An intriguing and entertaining biography, it offers much insight into a singular and complex man who could be both unapologetic and witty. Above all, he leaves behind a formidable legacy – a man of many arts and parts. RIP Papa Nez.

**MICHAEL MACDONALD**



# Lust Love Loss:

## Australian stories of wartime relationships

The complex issues surrounding matters of love and sex profoundly affect people, everywhere and every day. Wartime is no exception. Indeed, the disruptive nature of war and the extraordinary situations it brings about, inevitably magnify human experience in these spheres.

Lust Love Loss is on display at the Shrine of Remembrance.  
Learn more: [www.shrine.org.au/lust-love-loss-exhibition](http://www.shrine.org.au/lust-love-loss-exhibition)



Extended periods of separation, loss, injury and trauma deeply affect relationships across the country during and after wartime. Divorce rates in Australia rose dramatically in the years immediately following both World Wars and some 38% of Vietnam veterans' marriages failed within six months of their repatriation. But there were also moving tales of passionate romance, desire and embracing sexuality. Sex itself can also be used as a weapon—sexualised imagery has served as a persuasive recruitment tool and a way to undermine an enemy's morale.

The first of three exhibitions in the Shrine's 'Identity' series, *Lust Love Loss: Australian stories of wartime relationships* will display artworks and photographs that offer a unique insight into themes of separation, grief, exploitation, sexual freedom and oppression and sexual identity.

The exhibition's display cases will delve deeper into the stories of individuals and couples with memorabilia and objects.

Neil Sharkey, curator of the exhibition, says:

"Discussions about military history so often deal with geopolitics, troop movements, 'big men', heroics and tragedies that we often forget about the frailties and emotions of the ordinary people who get caught up in these tumultuous events. I hope this exhibition sparks the discussions about primal emotions that have influenced the lives of

Australians during wartime as profoundly as their dark counterparts, violence and hate."

The exhibition follows the launch of award-winning and bestselling writer Peter Rees and Sue Langford's *A Week* in September (Harper Collins), a true story of love, resilience and survival discovered through a precious cache of WWII letters which will be celebrated at an 'in conversation' event at the Shrine on 14 February 2022.

Australian Broadcaster Megan Spencer will also be delivering a three-episode podcast series in early 2022 featuring interviews with couples about their experiences of wartime love.

As Victoria's home of commemoration, the Shrine of Remembrance is a place for the wider community to connect with the human stories of veterans' experiences. *Lust Love Loss* explores these universal themes within the context of commemoration, service and sacrifice.



## — INTERVIEW —

*Greg T Ross:* Les Cameron, welcome to The Last Post podcast series and to our summer edition. First of all, how are you up there in Terang?

*Les Cameron:* Very well. Thanks Greg. We've survived, I guess, the worst of it. It'll be interesting to see what happens from now on.

*GTR:* That's right. It's been a hell of a time for us all. Les, I first became aware of you and what you were doing in the arts realm recently through an article by our mutual friend, Tony Wright. You've got a bit of a background. You're a sportsman, you'd played for North Melbourne. And can you give us a bit of a background on what you've been, what you've done and what led you here to Terang and the pub.

*LC:* Ah look, I'm certainly here by accident. We bought the place about three years ago and it's really from my daughter who was very keen to be running the organization, but found it pretty difficult with young kids and the sort of demands and probably as, especially as we drifted towards COVID. So I took up, came out of late retirement. Typical footballer, I suppose, mate, but thinking that maybe I could use it probably as, not much more than a big house, but it's been a pretty interesting place, certainly as a community resource largely for probably the two and a half years that I've been here. My history is education. So therefore I'm just a jumped-up school teacher, who has lost his class and tried to get back as much as I could, think.

*GTR:* Well, I have other mates that are ex-teachers and ex-footballers too, and they're involved in the arts, so it seems to be a nice fix, and good on you for your background there. What lead you...of course, for listeners and readers, you're turning the Terang Hotel, The commercial, and I think even the courthouse too, is that right, into a hub for the creative people? Is that so? Is that close to the truth as to...?

*LC:* Look, I suppose, like most people, we recognize the role of events in community happiness. And I suppose when I got here, my ambition was to try and sort of make sure that we had sort of entertainment here a couple times a week. We've also got our own little in that we built into the pub, which obviously means that people come along for, to share the good, the bad and the ugly. And in that, we've obviously had lots of book groups and community parties and all that sort of



stuff that were happening here. When COVID obviously hit, I suppose I was or really picking up a nuance from so many of the performers that it's so difficult to have live performance in Australia. It's all gone and probably everywhere in the world, I guess, and people were getting... Well, in one case, I can remember some of the news editor, would professional news though, saying that their net weekend was a cost to them, that actually they had to pay for accommodation. They had to pay for the travel. They often had to pay for food and drinks. And so I made the declaration certainly two and a half years ago that there wasn't going to be one penny that came through the gate that didn't go to the performers. That was obviously a surprise for me when I was talking to some of these people to find that they actually were playing for as little as a couple of 100 dollars a week. And yet they loved it so much that they are true artists and enjoyed it. It just seemed something that I could do at this particular time. Obviously, we've had almost no accommodation anyway for the last 12 months. And so I've survived. Some of that's due to good government grants, I guess, but it seemed time for me to give it back and to say to these guys, this is we've got to at least, start some sort of new movement. So I'd love to think that in every state, there were a couple of pubs that basically did the same thing, that we tried to get an adequate living wage for these people and then gave them a chance to really do the art that they're obviously passionate about.

*GTR:* And I guess for many, hotels are a meeting place, and a place where people exchange stories. So I guess there's some creative backgrounds to the essence of hotels, anyhow, particularly in country pubs, Les. So that would be a step that obviously would be welcomed by the community. What is the importance of creativity in the happiness barometer, if you like, for country towns? Let's take an example of Terang. What is it

about being creative or allowing people to express themselves, do you think, that's important?

*LC:* Well, I think it's where our ideas are born in creativity. I suppose I'm one of those people. I'm actually trained in physics and maths. So that shows that I don't know what I'm talking about most of the time, but certainly came into the school system in the seventies, understanding that many well, that almost all people were sort of their futures were governed by what happened in education and realizing that in many senses, that the question that the average year nine kid says, what's the use of this quadratic equation or something going to be for me later in life? And I don't think I had a realistic answer to that. I knew that the great scientists were fundamentally creative, and especially the great physicists. I mean, most of the sort of rubbish that Einstein and Newton were talking about is completely a black cloud to people. But most of it was their imagination and their challenging the existence. And to me, a good artist is someone who actually asks you to think differently for at least the time that you're actually viewing or enjoying their work. And whether that's music, visual arts, performing arts, there is something that sort of says we can be better than we are now. And I guess that's the one that seems to me to have been tested over these last two years in particular. But I think that voice has got to be heard.

*GTR:* And I mean, I suppose in times of climate change and, I suppose the background to much of what you are doing, seems to me to be sort of asking questions about where exactly do we get a peaceful existence and how do we actually shape our future. So that's the big question part of it.

*LC:* On the other hand, I just think there's a lot of happiness that does come from listening to music which you love, perhaps dancing to it, certainly sharing it with somebody else. And there's no doubt, under the current

# Les Cameron

PODCASTS: [www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews)

Les Cameron, ex-footballer and teacher, bought The Commercial Hotel in Terang, Victoria in 2018 and transformed it into a popular cultural and social venue. He plans a future when the Commercial is alive with resident artists, writers, musicians and performers, all of them freed of financial care.

economic system where it's probably driven to be consumers more than we are to be participators. Nice to be able to have an aged theatre troupe here of just about all of us over 55. And we all think that our chance may still come, so we're trying hard for fame.

*GTR:* You mentioned about your teaching background too, with maths and science, et cetera, and contrary to popular or not popular opinion. Contrary to some opinion, I suppose, maths an art, science is art in itself too, a lot more than people and creative a lot more than people understand. So, but I guess also too, Les, is the idea that you spoke about with the happiness, et cetera, et cetera. And there is, I guess, something in singing and creating and music itself that, and acting too. You spoke about the theatrical part there, that raises people's happiness level. And particularly during the times we've been through, we need that more than ever. So it seems a timely thing that you've done. What sort of feedback have you had from the people in the town?

*LC:* Well, there's no doubt that there's massive interest in it. Terang's an interesting place as I hinted in the sense that probably the only place in Australia, and I've been to a few of them and stayed and lived obviously and taught and coached. But it's almost the only town that seems to have roots all the way back to white imperialism, really that I, so... I met a guy the other day, who told me that his mother had 85 grandchildren and almost all of those people still living in the area. Our bar manager, who's a fabulous local guy. He nudged me one night recently. And so this... Well it's before COVID, sort of nudged me for 35 people in the bar. And he said, "I think I'm related to every one of them." And I think it's a town that obviously has a history, some of which is pretty dark. Obviously no doubt this has been the centre of genocide. And in this country, well, one of the centres. It's a very rich community in indigenous history. I'm finding more and more about that every day. It's also the ones where people gave their lives in and two world wars and a number of others. Young boys that came off a

farm. I guess in general, it was young men and none of this. We've got a Nobel prize winner from Terang, too, who's very, very important character.

*GTR:* Who's that?

*LC:* Sir Macfarlane Burnet in the town.

*GTR:* Oh wow. We featured Macfarlane literally 10 years ago in the magazine and a look at what he'd done. So that's brilliant.

*LC:* Well, he spent 10 years of his schooling here was not surprisingly known as a nerd. And apparently most of what he was doing was studying various huge number of beetles he actually found in this strange environment, and probably was sharing a whole lot more with his indigenous brothers and sisters than he actually realized at that particular time. But as you well know, obviously one of the world's greatest immunologists and probably would've been absolute in his element at this particular time. Yeah. In short, it seems to me as though each town has a regular look at it, say, what are we, what are we actually trying to do? Who's living here? That connection is something that's particularly challenging us, as people of our age are now sort of beginning to occupy realizing that we've got 30 years of some sort of work to do before we go. Not like our fathers this generation, is it?

*GTR:* That's right. So with the music input and the theatrical, obviously the courthouse, are you finding, and I don't know, it might be a bit hard during the COVID experience, but if we look forward, I guess, to what will come. A reflection more and a bringing forth of stories from the local environment?

*LC:* Oh, absolutely. I mean, I think, we presented eight theatrical pieces even with the stops and starts over the last two years here. And every one of that has been locally written. It has basically been workshopped, notions of aging and consideration of what relationship really means. Looking at the sort of history that we've been involved in. Each of those has had very good support from locals. We're making what we consider to be a feature film. So watch out for my directorial debut

here. It's been great, but obviously again, the sort of sense that life has to be fully lived to fully enjoy it, but to bring people into it. And I know a lot of people who've actually sort of been saying that almost down to you've saved my life because of the fact that I actually feel as though there's a point to be living as a person, doing things. And I think that, again, always, I mean, as a footballer, I mean, I know that I got that great pleasure out of the game. It wasn't whether you really won, it wasn't that the premierships didn't matter. It was, had you done the best you could have? Did you actually encourage the other 17 to play this game? And I know you've got all sorts of other strange games up there, but it's a... But it was-

*GTR:* It's teamwork too. I suppose that's bringing in that teamwork analogy too, with people working together get an outcome, a positive outcome.

*LC:* Well, I think, I mean, I was married to an artist once and she was a fabulous artist, a visual artist and sculpture and right at the... I could sort of see that she felt on her own with her own intelligence in that area. It was almost like a sort of a desperation. I must made me think of Van Gogh in the sense of someone who obviously lives a life painting things that nobody wants is really the artist's greatest fear, but they can't do anything but keep going. If they're a real artist, they're going to make that picture, or they're going to take that photo, or they're going to write that play, or what have you, and those people. And I think that was one of the great things about Tony Wright's article. He pointed out that forever there has been a need for patrons to support artists to survive. Isn't it under the story of Samuel Beckett and Shakespeare...

*GTR:* Ah, yes.

*LC:* That echo through the ages.

*GTR:* Yes. That's right. Actually, and course with that, I guess, now more than ever, it would seem that we are latching on to people like yourself, Les, that are doing something constructive in this area from a grassroots level, because of course we are in a position where we could have a federal

government, at least, that could be more understanding, seemingly of the arts. And I guess, you could say it's a bit of a fight at the moment.

*LC:* Well, I mean, there's no doubt. And I'm interested in the fact that it is quite clear that there has to be some sort of basic entitlement to a living wage and that whether or not you're just talking artists or you're talking others. I mean, it's interesting that two of the people who we've agreed, to who will be joining us soon, are in pretty desperate financial circumstances, partly because they had no choice, I think, but to follow their art. And that has led them to difficult periods. And unless there are people who... And both of them are really excellent at their chosen area, from what I can sort of see, but there's a marketplace that is probably chockablock with sellers and not that many buyers, isn't it? And so, and it's always annoyed me slightly that you walk into an art gallery, walk around, admire the good works of 30 people and then walk out again. And nobody, there was no financial transaction, whereas at least I think those of us who've enjoyed an afternoon doing that feel like it's just hand over 10 bucks or 20 bucks and hope that some of it gets to the artist and even those who are acting-

*GTR:* That's right. And that's, of course you visit the art centres of Australia or wherever, or the museums. And there's a feeling of betterment when you leave. But I know the art gallery of New South Wales has a Wednesday night, there's where they have jazz and, and wine, and that encourages

people to stay and spend. But of course we are all facing, I guess, a post-lockdown future now where it will be a different emergence. There will be a different reality if you like. How do you see the post- lockdown situation happening there at Terang for you and the artistic people there at Terang?

*LC:* Well, I'm hoping, obviously this makes a difference. I mean, obviously trying to make sure that the artists in effect have got a third of their income covered by having free accommodation. Part of it will obviously be the fact that they will perhaps encourage and teach each other. What's possible. Thirdly, I've already had a number of people want to check into the hotel so that they can mix with the artists. And I find that a really interesting idea and that... And certainly locally people are watching to see whether or not we'll go broke very quickly or, and how many people are sort of weird. I had a great application last night, which I'm actually looking at. There's a few which are... A big brown envelope arrived with three pictures in it. No other words of, to communicate who it was, there's an address. I've got an answering address. The person was very careful to use a, let's see, the Aboriginal name for Melbourne on the copy, to draw up a Picasso-like image on the front and say, "Here I am." So, I'm the one who's got to make the next move. And that's okay with me. And I will later on today, but-

*GTR:* How exciting.

*LC:* Yeah. Whereas the others are film directors, writers, journalists,

photographers, who are struggling to be able to do the art that they actually want. So it'll be fascinating to see what will happen. I'm hoping you call me again in six months' time, and we talk about superstars and at that stage.

*GTR:* Yeah, and I think in six months' time, hopefully, I'll be up there and we can do a face-to-face, which would be lovely. So you'd encourage those with a creative input to contact you at Terang?

*LC:* For sure. I mean, we've got three people that we believe are coming from Texas in about June of next year that aren't, and my original thoughts were just simply to approach the colleges of art probably around the world and simply sort of say, this is available, knowing that, of course, that would benefit local economies as well as hopefully the economy of the artists themselves.

*GTR:* So you're, you're providing free accommodation and a creative hub for those that have something to express. And we wish you all the best there. We will keep an eye on this, Les, because it hopefully will be a long, ongoing saga where we can see different things evolving that will impact us all in a positive way. And that's the beauty of the artistic genre. And you are a big part of that. So thank you so much for that.

*LC:* It's a pleasure, Greg. Nice to talk to you and you make sure you come and stay with us when you come down. All right.

*GTR:* I'm booked in there now. See you soon. ■

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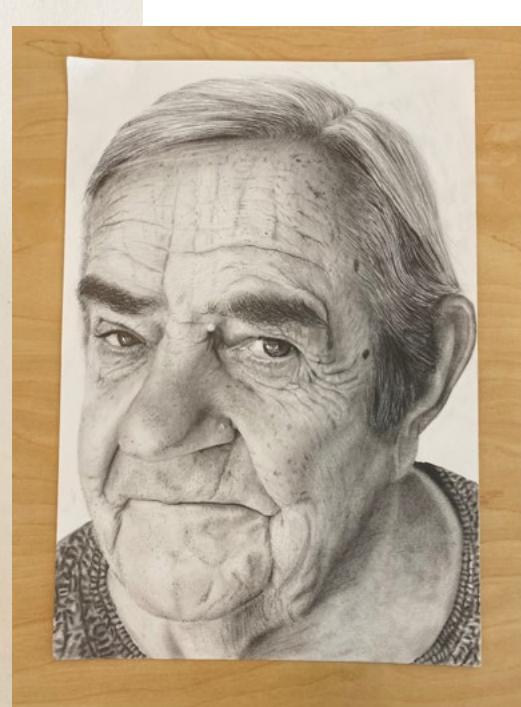
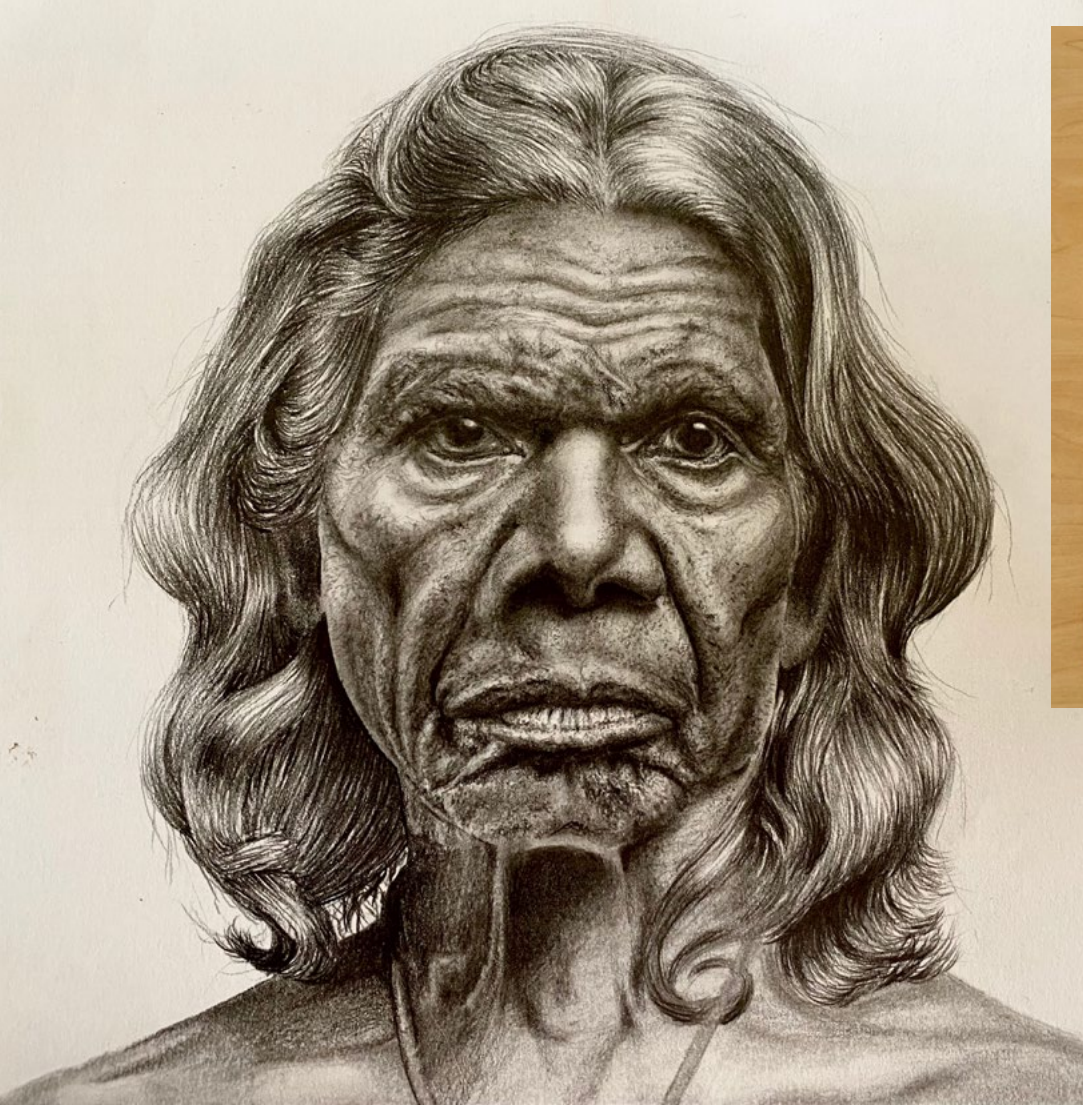
Great  
Ocean  
Road

A tall, white, cylindrical lighthouse stands on a rocky cliff. The sun is setting behind the lighthouse, creating a dramatic, golden glow in the sky filled with scattered clouds. At the base of the lighthouse is a small, white, single-story building with a dark roof and two chimneys. The cliffside is covered in green and brown vegetation, with some red flowers visible in the foreground. The ocean is visible in the distance to the left.

## A Lighthouse Love

Memories on the mantelpiece.  
A photo of your mother, stoking the fire and a letter  
from your fiance,  
who was killed in the war.  
A box of pressed flowers,  
your  
daughter had collected,  
when she was eight.  
A climb on a  
spiral  
staircase,  
to get to you.  
A raven on the chimney.  
The warmth and  
earthy  
smell of your unwashed  
body.  
The taste  
of sweat on  
your bosom.  
The taste  
of me  
in your kiss.

GREG T ROSS



# Artist Christy Hansell

Christy Hansell is 15-year old arts student and is a 2021 winner at the Hazelhurst Arts Centre's Young Archie Award.  
The Last Post: Promoting youth in art.



"Hi, I'm Christy! I'm a year 15 old high school student from Sydney, Australia. I'm in year 10 and currently figuring out how to navigate the world. I've always prioritised creativity, putting effort into anything to do with drama, art, filming, and songwriting. All of these help me share my perspective of the world as a teenage girl trying to understand life and everything that comes with it. I spend most of my time every day listening to music which is mostly why I wanted to start creating my own. My biggest inspiration would be Lana Del Rey, but I listen to every kind of artist from every genre.

This song I'm releasing is my debut single and something I am excited to share! It's the first song I have ever made so it was a good way to introduce myself to the music industry and how to make music. I decided to write this song for someone else, not me. To be frank, the song holds no real meaning for me, and if it does, it shouldn't matter. I want each individual to create their own meaning and interpretation of the song so that they can relate it to their own lives.

If I'm not listening to music or creating it, you'll find me doing art. Art is something that I also put a lot of my time and effort into. I've recently entered into the Young Archie Competition in Hazelhurst Art Gallery and got into the finalists with my artwork "The Eyes Are The Windows To The Soul", a portrait of my grandfather. I started drawing around 4 years ago and have started experimenting with new mediums such as watercolour, oil, and acrylic paint."



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# The Chateau

for Eden

We ate our berries in the garden, among tonal greens and woven tabletops.

An artist was being interviewed nearby.

We heard – in a loud, confident voice, about his clients in Stockholm, Tokyo, Rome.

It wasn't clear whether his career was on the rise or had already peaked.

He was obviously enjoying the moment – complete with dessert and wine.

Meanwhile, the Chateau waiters were gracious and observant – completely tuned in to the needs of all the guests.

They appeared to have a glow about them.

A glow that came with believing that they were indeed working in a preeminent, influential place.

It seemed that if you were to place an order for 'fame and fortune' they would be able to bring it straight to your table.

But you'd have to grasp it quickly, hold it tightly before it slithered away –

back into some dark and desperate breeding nest of celebrity culture.

**JEREMY ROBERTS**

# The night I met Suzanne Vega.

It was in the 90's. Suzanne had just been released, or had released herself from her recording deal with the company that was handling her stuff back then. She announced a tour that included Australia. Instead of larger venues, Suzanne was, at least in Melbourne, planning to play at pubs etc.

I was freelancing and selling some stuff, but still a postman. I wrote a piece on Suzanne. I came into contact with her PA. I organised two media tix for her gig at a pub in St Kilda.

So now, we had an accomplished and respected artist who had grown up in Spanish Harlem, without a label. So she started releasing her music on her indie label and was selling them at her Aussie gigs.

My girlfriend and I went into St Kilda, had dinner at a favourite Asian eatery and walked to the pub.

Suzanne's show was incredible, with songs that included her amazing storytelling ( her grandfather had been a writer in Puerto Rico ). An intimate crowd.

After the show it was announced that Suzanne's CD would be sold to punters.

I remember feeling taken aback that it had come to this. An artist of Suzanne's standing, funding her tour and making up some of the cost by selling CD's and t-shirts.

My girlfriend and I decided to go upstairs to the lounge, to hang and come down from what had been a memorable show.

A few drinks later, descending the stairs, we bumped into a woman ascending the stairs.

It was Suzanne. I recognised her and thanked her for the show. I told her my story and she told me her PA had told her about me. I was greatly chuffed. We stood on the stairs and chatted for maybe 5-minutes.

I asked her if she would sign the complimentary CD, I'd been gifted. Suzanne signed it.

I'm not a starstruck person. I felt humbled to be welcomed by an artist I admired. She was prepared to stand up to the corporate companies. She was open and articulate.



Sarah and I hailed a cab in Fitzroy Street. When we got back to Hampton, we played Suzanne's music for some time.

There are a couple of her songs, personal favourite's that I can't find in her library. Maybe that was a reflection of the times, or the memory of. But that night, after a superb show at a pub in St Kilda, I met Suzanne.

**JACK P KELLERMAN**

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# LET'S GO TO THE LIBERTY

A return to splendour and magnificence. Fresh from the original 1939 Art Deco plans by Australia's greatest cinema designers Guy Crick and Bruce Furse, The Liberty Theatre is now recognised this new century as Australia's most anticipated relaunch 'Art Deco Ocean Liner Style' cinema and entertainment venue. With all 1939 decor and style intact and absolutely no changes to the building.

At its gala opening on 14 December 1939, people gathered from miles around. They marvelled at the Liberty Theatre's dazzling 'ocean liner' ambience. It was the work of Guy Crick and Bruce Furse, two leading theatre architects.

For many years, the Liberty served as an entertainment hub for Yass and its surrounding communities. However, patronage gradually declined, and the cinema finally closed in 1974. Since then, the building has been used for an interior design business, an art gallery, real estate office and craft shop.

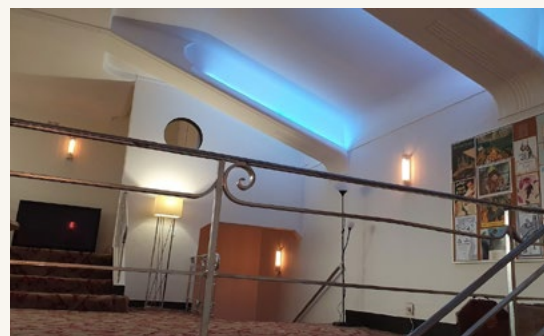
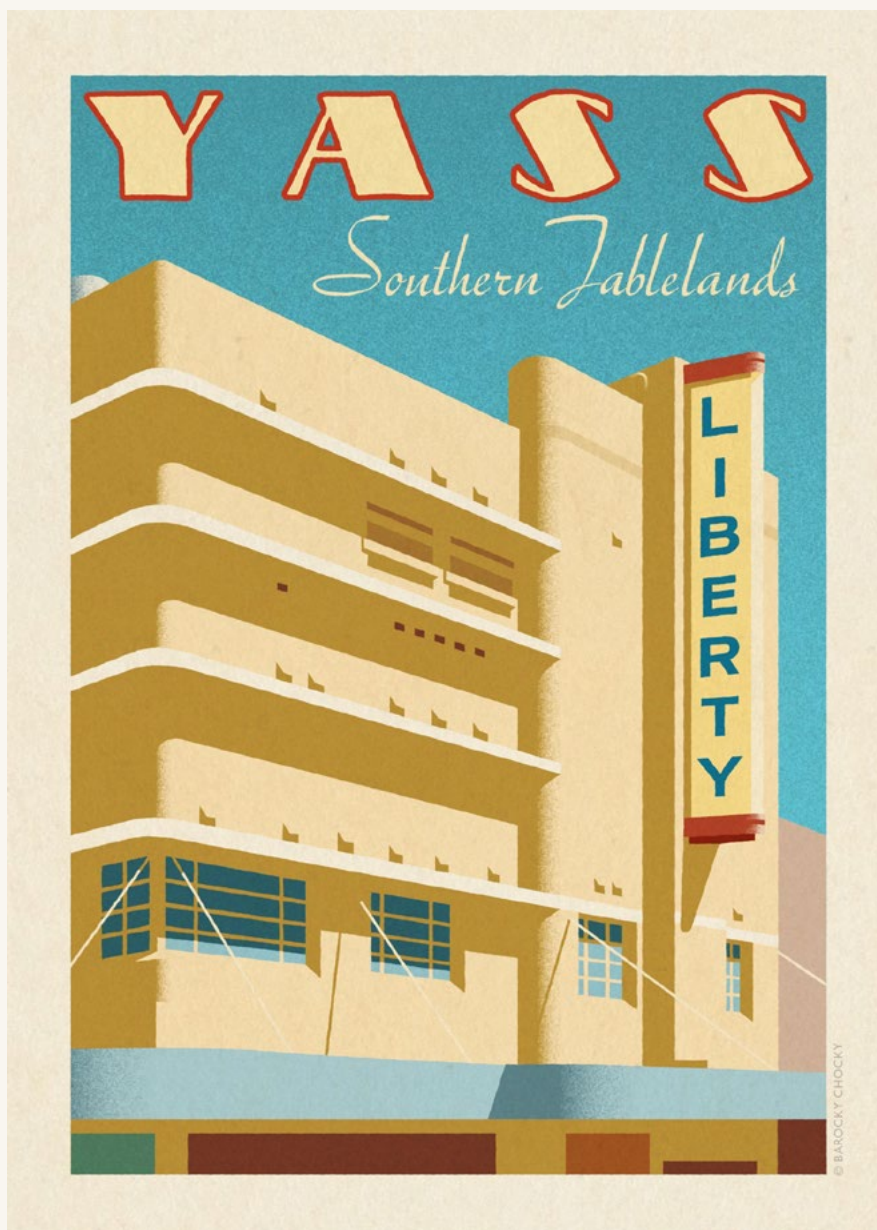
Today, the ocean liner is ready to be re-launched. Cinema heritage consultant Paul Brennan says the possibilities are endless: whether it serves as a movie palace, performing arts centre or multi-function entertainment venue.

The Liberty is also conveniently located, being a mere 40 minutes' drive from Canberra. Federal MP Kirsty McBain recently toured the building, and she's enthusiastic about its potential.

In his book *Picture Palace Architecture*, architect Ross Thorne describes it as "an outstanding Art Deco building..."

An application has recently been made for State heritage listing, and the building is currently for sale.

To find out more, contact Paul Brennan at **0411 366 916** or **ptb@bigpond.net.au**. This is, as he puts it, "an entertainment venue for half the price of an apartment in Sydney." You can get a glimpse of its glamorous future at **libertytheatre.com.au**.



EDITED EXTRACT FROM  
**POSEIDON**  
 BY JOSH FRANCIS, SCRIBE PUBLICATIONS

extract

"Jonas," said Kryton into his radio, "Wallis is here."

The Australian spy on Guam gasped. He composed himself and barked an instruction to his staff.

"Get onto the local assets and get Taiwanese law enforcement to that location, right now."

Kryton observed as Wallis looked nervously at his watch. Wallis pulled a phone out of his pocket and tried to make a call. A moment later, a loud ringing noise emanated from Kryton's pocket, audible even above the cacophony coming from within the kitchen.

The Australian dropped the tray and dived into his pocket to pull the phone out, desperately trying to find a button to silence the device. He managed to make it stop, but only after several rings that could be heard above all of the noise.

He looked up worryingly.

Across the room, looking between the shelves and all the kitchen staff, was Wallis staring straight back at him. The American didn't flinch. He simply turned his body slightly and placed the phone down onto the bench, fiddling with something with his other obscured hand.

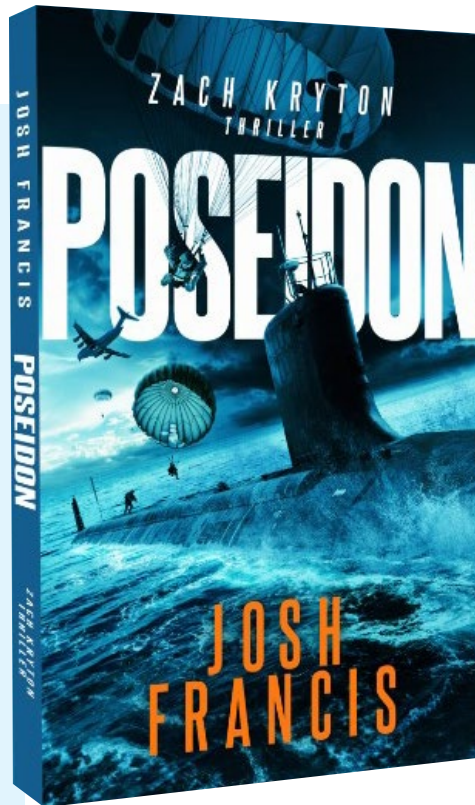
Kryton went to draw his pistol.

Wallis spun around and extended his right arm. He had already pulled out a pistol of his own and was pointing it straight at Kryton. The Australian sharply turned his body and stepped back.

It wasn't enough. The bullet Wallis fired narrowly grazed his right shoulder. The kitchen staff dispersed in a panic, some diving onto the floor, others running around aimlessly. Kryton dropped to his knees and managed to finally pull out his weapon. People and dishes flew everywhere. Wallis aimed his pistol again, but couldn't get a clear shot. Kryton watched as he effortlessly pushed a waiter to the side and run out of the doors onto the main floor.

He looked down at his shoulder which felt hot. Part of the fabric of the tunic was all torn up and the skin was exposed. A light red line indicated where the bullet had literally scraped across the skin, not causing any real damage.

"I'm in contact with Wallis. He's fled out into the meeting space," said Kryton, starting to give the SOCCE running commentary so that they could hopefully get some support to him.



## about the author:

Josh is a former Australian soldier now living in Canberra, where he writes as a hobby whilst running a consulting company called Green Door. He served nearly 20 years in the Australian Defence Force, deploying to multiple theatres globally. He initially served as an officer in the Navy, before resigning his commission so he could enlist in the army paratroopers. Josh later moved into military intelligence, where he served within special forces.

Josh has written six books, three of which have been formally published. His first book is titled *Under The Pump*, a memoir about his experiences working at a service station in Adelaide whilst he was studying teaching at the University of Adelaide. His follow-on books are personal development books based on his military experiences, titled *Battle Rhythm* and *Centre of Gravity*.

Josh then published three individual novellas (which together form one story), each titled *Pegasus*, *Poseidon* and *Phoenix* respectively. They are available on Amazon, as well as his own website: ([www.red-diamond.com.au/books](http://www.red-diamond.com.au/books)). Josh wrote the trilogy based on his own knowledge and experiences of the world of military intelligence, and the majority of the story is set in places he has personally deployed to.

## about the zach kryton trilogy:

Former Australian intelligence operative Zach Kryton is adapting to forced retirement in Canberra. His distinguished career over because of bureaucratic madness. However, when a man is killed on a warm moonlit night thousands of kilometres away, Kryton is called back to duty, reluctantly agreeing to help the government that so easily brushed him aside. Expecting a routine mission, Kryton instead discovers a complex web of intrigue and deception that leads him on a wild chase across the Pacific, where he must try to prevent a war between the two great superpowers. With equal measures of action and suspense, Kryton embarks on a journey that involves both old friends and former adversaries, and forces him to ask who is friend and who is foe.



**PRETTY BEACH NSW watercolour from Bouddi Peninsula series, 2021.**

## Alison Jane Rice

Alison Jane Rice is an accomplished natural history artist and poet based on the Bouddi Peninsula of New South Wales Australia. She holds a Masters degree in Creative Arts.

Recognised as a Business of Peace Award finalist (Oslo Norway) and recipient of a World Health Organisation Healthy Cities Award for contributions to Youth, Arts & Environment, Alison has an international following.

She paints primarily with watercolour, pencil and ink, connecting her art to the preservation of our natural world. In 2019, Ali's Imperial Flower Kingdom print series was chosen for an exclusive preview as part of HRH The Prince of Wales'

visit to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of his chairmanship of the Duchy of Cornwall Prince's Council.

This year Ali will appear in London's Global Art Agency book, *Investable Artists of 2021: Contemporary Art of Excellence*.

Apart from her botanical gems and wildlife creations, the artist continues to write and illustrate whimsical picture books for children and families. Her published rhyming picture books include *The Legend of Prince Farty Barty & His Sacred Bum Bum Tree*, *Arty Barty's Magic Paintbrush*, and the self development journal *ALIGHT*.



"Thomas Rice was my uncle. Visit to my grandmother's home in Lane Cove weren't complete without Tom being there. We would sit in front of the old clock and play cards and dominoes. We shared apple snow and hot chocolate and he told me stories. Sometimes my father Eric would take me to a place which had become his home since the war. Callan Park. There we would walk or sit quietly by the water's edge ...

I remember the tall reeds edging the shore. The dust and the heat, and over the rippling waters the sound of a church bell ringing its soft angelus. Mid air swans glided over a land flooded with gold and silence

... and fifty years later these visual remnants would remain, wall-papered to their memories in my brain.

What Tom was lay hidden. Just as the rose lies hidden within its bud. Mother Earth gave him life. Then she felled him like a tree. He died with sweet surrender and was held in her arms until the shadow of night faded.

Like the flower that falls upon the grass untainted he shall not be forgotten but cherished like the ancient briar that winds itself around the heart of a central tree.

Let tears fall petal soft for this man who, so early in his prime, fell victim

to the tragedy of war. Four years on the frontline without a break and not even twenty two on his return. I open my heart to sorrow as I do so for joy for it is God's Will and cannot be undone. I never shied away from this tragedy but turned within. Deriving the strength to bear it and benefit by it at the moment of his passing.

What becomes of us after death is determined by what we think at the moment of dying so let us prepare for our final transition throughout our life. With love and forgiveness. If our being has been with God we will go to God. My love for Uncle Tom is a prayer. For love is the only prayer I know. Amen."



# Friends of Callan Park

Callan Park, that jewel of the inner west in Sydney, is in the news again. Over the past three decades local residents have defeated attempts by both Labor and Coalition governments to sell off chunks of this 61-hectare heritage park and former asylum to developers.

Twenty years ago they succeeded to convincing the NSW parliament to pass the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act. This landmark legislation bans the sale or privatisation of any part of Callan Park and includes a range of other protections. It also reserves Callan Park and its heritage buildings for health, community and education use – as long as those uses are not-for-profit.

But now, in the Greater Sydney Parks Trust Bill that has just been published for public comment, the Coalition state government it is seeking to gut the protections that Callan Park enjoys under the Callan Park Act.

The two protections that this Greater Sydney Parks Bill seeks to eliminate are vital.

The first is a parliamentary one. Contrary again to what the minister says, leases longer than 10 years are possible at Callan Park but such leases must lay on the table of both houses of state parliament and which either house can disallow by majority vote. This is a very good protection against dodgy deals – if only we had something like this for Barangaroo. The Bill would abolish that protection from the Callan Park Act and leave all decisions to the Minister.

The second protection the Bill takes aim at is Council's power at Callan Park. Under the Act all DAs must be determined by the local Council. This is a further level of protection. Residents get a say and DAs are decided at arms-length from the Minister. The Bill seeks to abolish this too – again in favour of ministerial 'discretion'.

So there would be no checks and balances on the Minister's powers.

As well as abolishing vital protections and diminishing the power of parliament and Council vis-à-vis the minister, the Bill also seeks to undermine social welfare and mental health uses at Callan Park. It explicitly seeks commercial tenants for Kirkbride, Convalescent Cottages and Broughton Hall – these are not the odd cottage or small building. Kirkbride, the former asylum complex, is 25,000 square metres of floor space. It covers almost 5 hectares. Kirkbride is important because the state government ran an EOI process last year and a consortium of social welfare NGOs won the process and have been waiting for 9 months to sign the lease. Now that looks very unlikely. Big bucks beckon with local MP Jamie Parker warning that the government would like Kirkbride to become a reception centre or business park.

So on the score of protections, democracy and the social value of Callan Park, this new Bill is arousing strong local and even Sydney-wide opposition. The Bill threatens the other four iconic parks in the folio of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust too: Centennial & Moore Park, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill & Mulgoa Valley. These parks are also threatened with commercialisation, privatisation and the loss of any local say in their management if this Bill becomes law.

How the latest battle over Callan Park and Sydney's other iconic parklands turns out is very much in the balance. While the Greens and Independent MPs have been quick to publicly oppose the Bill, and some Labor MPs have privately indicated their concerns, the fate of the Bill will very much depend on what happens in the NSW Upper House. In that house, the government does not have a majority and Labor and the crossbenchers can combine to defeat government Bills. Ultimately that may be the space to watch.

## HALL GREENLAND

*President of Friends of Callan Park*





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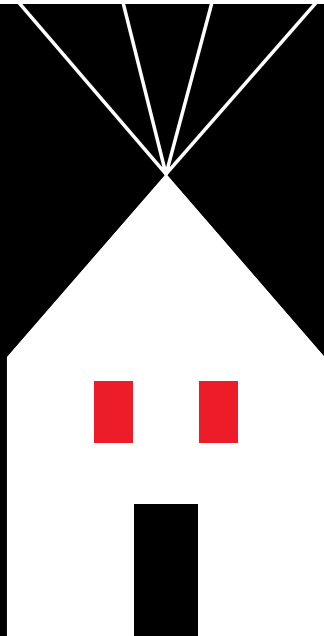
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# Honouring the sacrifice of 'Gull Force' POWs – Lao'ou Village, Hainan, China

In February 1942, 804 members of the Australian 2/21st Battalion, known as 'Gull Force', were captured by the Japanese on the Dutch East Indies island of Ambon along with a large group of Dutch soldiers.

In October of that year, the prisoners were divided into two groups: half remained on Ambon, while the other half – comprising 263 Australians and 237 Dutch soldiers – were transported to a POW camp known as 'Bakli Bay' at Basuo (now the city of Dongfang) on Hainan Island, southern China. Most of those transported to Hainan were sick and unable to work, and were told they were being transported to a more relaxed recreational facility. They arrived at Basuo on 5 November and were soon put to work on arduous infrastructure construction projects in the fledgling port town and surrounding hinterland. Japan had recognised Hainan's potential as a source of natural resources and planned to use the POWs to build roads and viaducts to support the development of the island's agriculture and industry.

## **Escape near Lao'ou**

In April 1944, a group of 23 Australian Gull Force soldiers was assigned to a road construction task near the village of Hoban in the hinterland southeast of Basuo. While transiting to the work site one day, the Australians were caught up in an ambush conducted by Chinese resistance fighters targeting the Japanese guards. Nine Australians were killed in the incident, three were wounded, and one later found his way back to Hoban. The remaining ten managed to escape into the hinterland of Hainan island.

According to later reports, two of the Australians who fled the ambush site made their way to the village of Lao'ou, approximately 12 kilometres southeast of Basuo. There they were cared for by local villagers, but both succumbed to illness in late-1944 and were buried at a site near the village. There were unconfirmed reports of the other eight Australian escapees remaining with Chinese resistance groups.

## **Release in August 1945**

After Japan's surrender in August 1945, a small group of US soldiers known as 'Pidgeon Force' parachuted into Basuo and facilitated the release and repatriation of the remaining Australian and Dutch POWs. A total of 76 Australians were confirmed to have died while in captivity on Hainan, and all were buried adjacent to the POW camp at Basuo. The additional ten Australians who fled the ambush in April 1944 remained unaccounted for. Three Australian War Graves investigators travelled to Hainan in March 1946 to investigate their whereabouts. They were told stories of the two soldiers living amongst villagers in Lao'ou, but were unable to officially verify what had happened to them or confirm the whereabouts of the other eight missing diggers. They concluded that the missing soldiers had probably died and been buried in unmarked grave sites or in mass graves, possibly with Chinese labourers, making it near impossible to positively confirm what had happened to them. The remains of the 76 soldiers buried adjacent to the POW camp were reinterred at the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Yokohama, Japan, shortly after the war.

## **Unravelling the mystery**

In March 1985 a group of ten Gull Force veterans had the opportunity to travel back to Hainan. Their main purpose was to find the remains of their 10 missing mates. In speaking with elderly villagers who had lived in the area in the 1940s, stories again emerged of two Australian soldiers being buried near the village of Lao'ou in late-1944. They were shown the site adjacent to the village where locals were certain the two Australians were buried. In 1990,



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Australian officers at Bakli Bay POW Camp, August 1945  
[www.awm.gov.au/collection/C329878](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C329878)

030350/04

both graves were exhumed under the supervision of the Defence Attaché from the Australian Embassy in Beijing. No identifiable human remains were recovered from the graves, but small bone fragments were later identified in the soil. The soil was recovered and later re-buried in consecrated ground at the Yokohama Commonwealth War Cemetery.

When Gull Force veteran Rod Gabriel visited the site at Lao'ou in 1990, he remarked "For the present, they are two unknown Australian soldiers who were befriended by the villagers of Lao'ou, and who left their remains as a memorial to Australian-Chinese friendship".

## **Gull Force Memorial, 2003**

In July 2003, the Darwin City Council – which has a sister city relationship with Haikou, Hainan Province – established a Gull Force Memorial at the site near Lao'ou adjacent to the two graves. Local villagers continue to maintain the memorial site, and are still visibly proud of the role their forebears played in caring for the two Australian soldiers.

Despite reliable advice that no confirmed human remains were discovered at the site, locals remain adamant that the remains of two Australian soldiers are still buried there. Regardless, it seems reasonably certain that two Australian soldiers were cared for by the villagers at Lao'ou in 1944, and were initially buried on the outskirts of the village near where the Gull Force Memorial now stands. The site is therefore a fitting memorial to the 76 Australian soldiers confirmed to have died on Hainan Island during the two and a half years that Australians were interned there, and the 10 Australians who to this day remain unaccounted for.

## **Australian Governor General's visit, 2015**

On 27 March 2015, the Governor General of Australia, His Excellency General The Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, visited the Gull Force Memorial at Lao'ou and laid a wreath in memory of the Australian and Allied soldiers who were interned and died in western Hainan. He also paid tribute to the locals of Lao'ou, not only for risking their own lives by sheltering the two Australians in 1944, but also for their ongoing commitment to maintaining the memorial site and honouring the memory of the fallen Australians to this day.

**SIMON MONTEROLA**

# Two world wars, but no land: Herbert's skin was the wrong colour

Herbert Lovett had to wait for the Australian Imperial Force to reduce the minimum height for volunteers before he could sign up for World War I.

The AIF, which initially ruled its soldiers had to be at least five feet, six inches tall (167.6 centimetres), soon enough found itself running out of volunteers willing to face the slaughter on the bloodied fields of France and Belgium.

It decided in April 1917 that men who were at least five feet (152.4 centimetres) would be accepted.

Mr Lovett's recruitment papers on April 30, 1917, revealed he stood at five feet, one and a quarter inches (about 155 centimetres).

But that wasn't the most important test of his eligibility.

A note written by the recruitment officer in Hamilton, western Victoria, still held by the National Archives of Australia, reveals the starker truth.

"This recruit has two other brothers with the AIF and his parents are not pure-blooded Blacks," the note reads. "White people on both parents' side."

The 20-year-old, from the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission, a man of the Gunditjmarra of south-west Victoria and the Bunganditj people of south-east South Australia, was judged as suitable to fight for Australia only because he had enough "white" blood.

By mid-1918, Mr Lovett was in France with the newly formed 5th Machine Gun Battalion, fighting to hold back Germany's last big push, known as the Spring Offensive.

Soon, the young machine-gunner was immersed in the deadly Hundred Days Offensive – a series of battles that drove the Germans back from Amiens and through the Hindenburg Line, eventually ending the war on November 11, 1918.

We call it Remembrance Day.

But Mr Lovett's son, Uncle Johnny Lovett, holds every day as a personal remembrance day for his dad.

Uncle Johnny, 73, knows there was never proper honour shown to his father, and he is determined that, even now, it should be paid.

Mr Lovett – like his four brothers and numerous other Aboriginal men who fought in World War I – brought home lasting memories of horror, believing at least that he had earned on the battlefields what he had always craved: equality. There was no white blood, nor black blood. It all ran red.

Back in Australia, however, nothing had changed, beyond the fact the Lake Condah Mission – Mr Lovett's home in south-west Victoria since he was born in 1897 – had officially closed.

Part of the old property was split and hived off for an early form of soldier settlement. No farms went to Aboriginal soldiers.

Having lost their ancestral lands in the frontier wars of the 1800s, the people of Lake Condah were now effectively homeless.

Mr Lovett married Emma Foster, from another mission family, in 1927, and over the next 20 years, they had six children.

He chose a condemned house on the old mission, mounted it on sleds and dragged it behind horses 12 kilometres through the bush to a plot of land by a creek near the town of Heywood.

Here was a soldier, however, who had won no freedom to create his own home for his family.

Before he could hammer together and weatherproof the old building, he had to ask permission of the Heywood policeman, who would "supervise" the job on behalf of the Aboriginal Protection Board.

Mr Lovett kept his family fed by splitting posts in the bush, stripping wattle bark for tanning, labouring at a quarry, working at a timber mill and grabbing work wherever it could be found.

There was no electricity at home, but there was a piano. Mr Lovett was a talented musician and singer, and apart from piano, he played button accordion, violin and organ to buoy his family's spirits.

When World War II rolled around, Mr Lovett and his brothers returned to the recruiting office.

He was 43 when he signed up in August 1940. Deemed too old for battle, he served out the war as a cook at Australian military bases.

By war's end, he divined that more land at Lake Condah would be carved up for soldier settlement. He decided to get in early.

On September 25, 1945 – three weeks after Japan had surrendered, ending the war – he wrote a letter to "the Secretary, Aboriginal Board".

"Dear Sir, I am writing to you to see if you could give me any information regarding the cutting up of Lake Condah Mission Station into blocks for Aboriginal servicemen of this war," he wrote. "If same was being done,



I would like to make application for a block. Awaiting your early reply."

No reply ever came.

Sure enough, the old mission station was carved up – and every farm went to a white ex-serviceman.

Mr Lovett, who knew how to break a horse, muster cattle, strain a fence, shear sheep and divine water – skills that might have made him a fine farmer – eventually got a job as head stockman on a big old squatting property, Gazette Station, near Peshurst.

There he lived for about 15 years, alone in a tin shed without power or running water, sending his pay cheques by post to his family at Heywood, 80 kilometres away.

Mr Lovett, you might imagine, was reminded every day of his status.

The station owner, a near recluse, lived alone in a vast Italianate mansion.

Running through the property was a waterway named Blackfellows Creek.

Herbert Stahl Lovett died in Hamilton on May 30, 1976.

His son has fought for years to win compensation for the man of two wars who was denied land.

A decade ago, Uncle Johnny produced figures from accountants showing the loss of opportunity was worth more than \$5 million. The federal government has always turned a deaf ear.

Uncle Johnny also insists the Australian Constitution of 1901, which specifically excluded Aboriginal people from laws made for other Australians, means neither he nor his father are Australian citizens, whatever laws were made since and whatever Constitutional experts might say.

"I'm never going to give up," he says. "This has always been our country – there has never been a bill of sale by any black person to any white man for this country.

"My father only wanted equality. He served Australia at war, twice, and he was served up nothing but humiliation. Bucketloads and bucketloads of it."

**TONY WRIGHT**



— *INTERVIEW* —

Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin

PODCASTS: [www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews)

Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin is the Convenor at Defence Families of Australia. As part of our Inspirational Australian Women series, Sandi speaks with Greg about her amazing work history and attitudes towards achieving.

*Greg T Ross:* Welcome, Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin. Welcome to our, The Last Post Inspirational Women's Series. You've certainly done enough in your relatively short life to raise the attention that I found interest in too. And I'm so glad to be working with Defence Families of Australia. What put you on this course, Sandi?

*Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin:* I suppose, from an educational perspective, I finished high school and I didn't really know what I wanted to do, like so many people, especially in this day and age. So, I was pretty good at science, so, I did a bachelor of science, and a bachelor of arts, and then pretty much enjoyed that. So, moved into the biology honours and worked with the penguins down at Philip Island for the year, which was pretty amazing.

*GTR:* What was that like?

*SLS:* I was going to say, there's a few with names. I couldn't tell you them now, but penguins are, now that I'm a new parent, I think more and more, resembling teenagers for me. They've got some serious attitude. They stink, but they've a lot of character and a lot of charisma. So after that, I thought I'm still young enough to fail, but I'm still young enough that I need to broaden my horizons. So I packed up my car. I had no particular job in mind. I'd never been to New South Wales and drove my old Toyota Camry that I was treating like a four wheel drive working in biology, across the border, into New South Wales, from Victoria to New South Wales. And I thought I was being really brave, crossed the border, and I saw a sign saying U-turns are illegal in New South Wales, and I wasn't sure if I'd done the right thing, but I couldn't turn around. So, I kept going and set up shop in Sydney, initially as a boarding assistant with Abbotsleigh School, which was a really, really good, ready made family unit and good networking in the space, and got a series of amazing contract jobs with Parks and Wildlife Services and with Department of Environment for New South Wales, so it was an amazing time.

*GTR:* That's of interest too. And I'm glad you touched on the environment and heritage, both very important matters. And of course, I started my company in 2009, Business for Environment, and did some work with the South Australian government on environmental issues. So I'm glad to

see you've got that on your CV. What was that like for you, that period?

*SLS:* A really steep learning curve. It was my first big foray into a very emotional sector that needed a lot of help. Everyone in the sector has some sort of agenda and the vast majority of those is to help others, to help the environment and to look to the future. So it was a lot of hard lessons that I learned in dealing with different stakeholders, and not necessarily having a perfect solution, but trying to find the best solution for multiple stakeholders.

*GTR:* What are your views on the environment and heritage at the moment? Is it still an interesting place from an outsider's point of view?

*SLS:* I think it's something that everyone should keep in mind to a certain degree. Especially with climate change, dare I get political. It's something that will impact everyone, if not already, then in future. We've already seen it with the bushfires. I used to work with a lecturer at Monash University, a gentleman named Ross Thompson, who's brilliant if you want to look up any of his...

*GTR:* I've heard of Ross.

*SLS:* He's a wonderful presenter. Yeah. He's excellent, and I remember him saying something that really stuck with me, was he showed me a photo in a presentation of a little girl at a rock pool. And he said, "What do you think I want this little girl to grow up as?" And everyone went, biologist obviously. And he went, "Well, no. I want her to be a banker. I want every banker, every salesperson, every minister, to have an interest and to have some sort of education on the world around us." And I think we're starting to see the real implications of that with the financial costs of climate change, starting to be quantified for our government as well.

*GTR:* And it strikes me as odd, when politicians, or some politicians will cite economic fears at engaging in a positive way with the environment when the costs of not doing so, are so much greater.

*SLS:* I think it depends on the term that you're looking at. And if you're looking at a political term, that may be the case in the short term. But if you're looking at a long term, the evidence is pretty clear.

*GTR:* Heritage is a very important part of who we are and what we were, and a beautiful area to be involved in, and also to keep an eye on it. Correct me if I'm wrong, you've had more experience in this than me, but I think we're lucky in Australia with some of our heritage. We seem to respect our heritage. We respect obviously indigenous heritage, but also since the white settlement too, we've got some beautiful buildings in Sydney and Melbourne that have been maintained. What your view? And I suppose heritage goes beyond buildings.

*SLS:* I think so. I think there's the hard stuff that you can touch and feel. And then there's the soft stuff, which is equally important. And I think you're right. We've done some things really well in the past. And there's obviously plenty of areas that we can continue to improve, and best practice across the board, in any area, is ongoing and always evolving. But I'm really pleased to see the ongoing focus on those areas and recognizing our history, all the good and the bad in Australia. It's a heritage that I'm very proud of and very proud to be linked to and a country that I'm very proud of.

*GTR:* After that, you went on to what?

*SLS:* So, I moved a little bit into project management, across different departments in New South Wales in particular. And one day met this charming young army officer, and he was something very different to what I'd seen before. I had no exposure or engagement with anyone in defence before. He initially told me he was in finance. And I remember saying, "Oh, that's boring, but as long as you enjoyed it." And then he said, "Oh, actually I'm not in finance. When he went on a date and I turned out not to be crazy, he confessed and said, "Oh, I'm actually in the infantry." So, that was a real education for me. And we didn't look back. So, we then posted... Well, I didn't. He posted, I followed, over to the US in 2016. So, being in the deep south in Georgia, at Fort Benning, for the 12 months of the Trump election was absolutely another education that I wouldn't have missed...

*GTR:* Oh, you were there then.

*SLS:* We were, and we were unmarried and I was in science and biology to boot. So, it was an interesting time.

*GTR:* You were at the Smithsonian?

“MY PARTNER GREW UP ON AN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY, BUT IS NOT INDIGENOUS HIMSELF. SO IT WAS GOOD TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THAT CULTURE, AND PARTICULARLY ABOUT THAT SUITE OF CULTURES...”

*SLS:* Yes. So, one of the opportunities that I got, as a result of being a defence spouse, and having that posting opportunity with my then boyfriend, was that when he deployed, I had a couple of months to kill. So I reached out through a contact of mine at Melbourne Museum to the Smithsonian, to his contacts over there and said, “Hey, I’ve got some time free. What can you use me for? This is my background.” And they said, “Absolutely. Come on down. We’ll obviously pay you for your internship. And I went, “Well, you can’t on the visa that I’m on.” But they said, “All right, well, we’ll sponsor your accommodation to reduce the cost coming to Washington for that.” And it was the best working holiday I think I could ever have had. I worked in the invertebrate zoology team for about eight weeks, so it was amazing.

*GTR:* I’m not jealous, but I’m envious. I think that’s a wonderful experience to go through, and such a pivotal point in American history too, from the outside, with the political thing happening. But what was your views on the Smithsonian? Was it everything you thought it would be?

*SLS:* It was. It was a real revelation for me. I was simultaneously figuring out what I wanted to do. I love biology. I love ecology, but I was also really, really interested in what was happening in the defence space, and there was a really pivotal moment for me, where my husband, as I said, or boyfriend at the time, was deployed at the time, while I was working there. And I received a call from a random soldier saying, “I work with your partner and I just want to catch up with you. I understand you’re at the Smithsonian. I’ll meet you out the front.” And I got off the phone and burst into tears because I thought something had happened. I thought he’d died. Luckily, he hadn’t. So, the individual made it very, very clear, called straight back and went, “I just realized what that would’ve sounded like. I’m very sorry. It’s not anything like that. He’s absolutely fine. I’m just home on leave in the middle of a deployment and he’s given me a love letter for you.” So, he dropped that off to me and I might have ignored the letter for a day or two because I was so annoyed. But no, it was really gorgeous. But one of those times that I think most defence families go through when their loved one is away, where you’re not sure if they’re all right or not. And again, was a little bit of a lesson for me.

*GTR:* That’s indeed something. And you sound similar to me. I would’ve

been thinking the same thing because I suppose I have been known in the past to be a bit of a worrier, but there you go. We’ll go back to the defence thing in a minute, because this is an interesting thing. Had you done some work with the Aboriginal Land Council?

*SLS:* Yeah, so, a few years after that, I was offered the opportunity to support a brilliant initiative being led by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. They brought me on board for six months, to help them to design Yarpa, their business and employment hub that they were establishing. It was the first of its kind to be established under the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy, led by Prime Minister and Cabinet, and it was a real honour to be in there. I obviously, came in not having indigenous roots myself. My partner grew up on an Aboriginal community, but is not indigenous himself. So it was good to learn more about that culture, and particularly about that suite of cultures in New South Wales. I wasn’t aware, and it was a real privilege to be able to support that great initiative that continues to go from strength to strength now.

*GTR:* That’s wonderful. Yeah. I mean, growing up, I played football with some indigenous kids, but apart from that, we really had a lack of education in the white education system about indigenous matters, and so it became a self-learning process growing up. So, I think with what you did there, obviously you learned a lot.

*SLS:* Absolutely. Yep.

*GTR:* That’s good. So then, you’ve done so much work. If we go back to your work within the defence arena, you’re with Defence Families of Australia at the moment. What does that actually mean to you, Sandi, and how have you been able to enact your experience in other matters here?

*SLS:* Sure. I suppose, to take a step back, I need to explain how I ended up going from working with penguins to working with veterans. It is linked to the Smithsonian in some ways. We finished our posting period in the US at the end of 2016 and had some posting orders to go to Canberra. So, I quit my job in Sydney and started job hunting in Canberra, looking at different roles in biology, government, project management. And then we got a late change to the posting order saying, “Well, actually you’re going back to Sydney.” So, that was a little bit awkward for me, but I was really lucky that my CV got spotted by a

Colonel called Garth Callender, who’s now the chair for the Bravery Trust. He was looking to set up the first veterans employment program for New South Wales government, and reached out and said, “I reckon you’ve got some really handy skills and experience here. Let’s have an interview.” So I remember interviewing for him, top to toe in snow gear in Whistler, in Canada, at the end of 2016, and then came and started work for him in 2017. And it was almost, I don’t know, a personal defining moment for me, where that experience, the skills, my passions, but also the need in the community, all aligned and being able to find my purpose, which is now helping defence families, and helping the defence community was a huge relief, being able to find what I wanted to do. So, there’ll be a number of jobs in that space, and I’ve already occupied a few, but the power of that purpose was really, really important. So since June, I’ve taken on the role of national convener, the lead for Defense Families of Australia, which is the ministerially appointed body to advise government, particularly the Minister for Defense Personnel and the senior leadership for defense on all matters related to current serving families or current serving members and their families. It’s a big role. It’s a part-time team of amazing women. We’ve got a team of almost 12 on board. We’ve got a few new starters coming on at the moment, which is really exciting, and these women are all linked to current serving defense families. So we live it, we breathe it, and we’re obviously really passionate about it. So, our key remit is to help to push for improvements in policy, to reduce the negative impacts of military service on families, and also to help to emphasize and support the positive impacts, because there are quite a few of those as well.

*GTR:* Yeah, that’s true. In fact, probably the women around you, there could be 12 more inspirational Australian women. I’ll be busy interviewing and talking with everyone.

*SLS:* Hundred percent. Yeah. I find them inspirational, that’s for sure.

*GTR:* After our mother and father split up, Mum really brought us up as a solo single parent. And it was at an early age that I realized that women, if they put their mind to it, can be empowered. Mum took on two jobs to make sure that we weren’t out of sorts anywhere along line. And it’s about gaining respect. And I think also, what would your message be to young women

today, entering the education system or going through the education system, to what can be achieved, Sandi?

*SLS:* I think for me, there's a couple of things. Women aren't great at shooting their own horns, for the most part. And a good example of that, is when you first asked me to be involved in this initiative, I didn't feel like I had anything to offer. But speaking to a few people and a few mentors of mine, they said, "No, no, it's really important that you share your story to show that the pathway doesn't need to be linear. You can follow your passions and still find where you fit, and where you fit today might be different to where you fit in 10 years time. It's going with what suits you and the needs of the community at the time." But I think there's also another lesson which has been hammered into me by one of my wonderful PhD supervisors, Professor Kristy Muir. She said to me at one point, "Well, you've achieved a lot." And I said, "Yeah, I'm really lucky." And she went, "No, you've worked your backside off. You've earned it. Don't short change your values." So, we compromised on the fact that my hard work and achievements had attracted the right mentors, the right supporters, and encouraged me to keep going and keep improving. But I think that is a lesson that we, as a

cohort, as women, need to continue to push. And I think that's starting to happen, which again is really exciting.

*GTR:* And of course, if you say, "Well, I've been lucky." And then comes, I guess, the belief that you create your own luck, and that becomes part of your personal, spiritual CV, in the sense that you will attract good people into your life, if you are focused enough to want to achieve and help others too, I guess, Sandi, that's a big part.

*SLS:* I think so. I think for me, I've made plenty of mistakes in my career so far, and I'm sure I'll continue to make plenty of mistakes, but having a growth mindset, and being sure to be really clear on and stand by my core values, helps me to keep learning and keep improving.

*GTR:* Yeah, wonderful stuff. And it's a message of course, that we take, to feel energized enough to be able to go about what you have to go about and you're helping others, it becomes less of a job and more of, I guess, a lifestyle that becomes embedded in your thinking, isn't it? That's for a lot of people.

*SLS:* Absolutely. Absolutely. That old adage of, you'll never work a day in your life, if you find something that you love, is true. And look, don't get

me wrong, the current role I'm in, and many other roles previously have been a lot of hard work and continue to be, but you do get energized by knowing that you're on a path that aligns with your values, that is making a difference, and it doesn't have to be in a social impact space that you're making a difference either. You can easily work in sales or any other space, and still be making a difference. You're still driving change. So I think it's finding what your purpose is, and that can be quite broad and applicable to many jobs, and then chasing it.

*GTR:* Yeah. How wonderful. How wonderful. And I can relate to that myself, and indeed it's not really a job, but of course, if you help, we're probably not very good, a lot of us, at pushing our own barrow, but if we allow others to observe what we're doing, and we have comments directed in a positive fashion, then we begin to associate that with ourselves and our work. So, I for one am proud to be speaking to you. Proud is the wrong word, I suppose. Happy to be speaking to you, and to be able to hear your story, and to be in the position to be able to share it with other Australians and worldwide too, Sandi, so thank you very much.

*SLS:* Thank you so much, Greg. ■



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**GREG T ROSS**

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# New report calls on greater Commonwealth investment to curb public housing crisis

Just a few years ago, Ashlie Stevenson was volunteering to feed the homeless in Sydney's inner suburbs — now she's homeless herself.

After falling into an unforeseen cycle of disadvantage, the 64-year-old is one of hundreds of thousands of Australians languishing on growing waiting lists for public housing.

The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) is calling on the federal government to step up its funding for new social and affordable housing projects to arrest a crisis fanned by ballooning rental prices across the country.

A new joint ACOSS and University of NSW report to be released today has found more than 155,000 households are registered on social housing waitlists, with more than 400,000 households in need of affordable housing.

Ms Stevenson joined the list seven years ago as a precaution when she left work to study for a Diploma of Ministry at bible college in 2014.

Unable to find paid work in her new field, she volunteered to help the less fortunate instead.

She lived off Newstart student payments of \$400 per fortnight and dipped into the last of her superannuation to make ends meet.

"I was able to keep renting most of that time, but I could see ... that things were getting worse, rents were going up," Ms Stevenson said.

"Unemployment income was going down in real terms, and people weren't hiring me. Despite my experience, knowledge, qualifications, I wasn't getting any answers."

Then in March 2020, the first COVID-19 lockdown hit and her two younger flatmates decided to move out of their share house.

With nowhere to go, she ended up in emergency housing — a stopgap system she described as "cruel" — before accepting the kindness of friends who offered a bed or couch to sleep on.

For the first time in her adult life, she has been unable to find full-time work despite handing out more than 100 resumes detailing her decades of experience in both horticulture and pathology.

Without a steady income, she lives off JobSeeker but rental prices in Sydney are so high she's unable to afford her own place even with the Commonwealth rent-assist supplement.

Recently, Ms Stevenson has come to the grim realisation she is likely waiting on someone to die before taking their place in a government home.

"I'm hoping after seven years I'm somewhere near the top [of the list]," she said.

The ACOSS report found housing stress due to affordability and

availability has increased in both metropolitan and regional areas, particularly in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

In regional Australia, the proportion of dwellings low-income tenants can afford has declined from 41 per cent to 33 per cent over the course of 2021.

ACOSS has called on the federal government to resume its "historical role" as the main funder of social housing developments by delivering a funding boost to build at least 20,000 new dwellings.

It has also recommended the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payment to low-income households be increased by 50 per cent.

Federal Minister for Homeless, Social and Community Housing, Michael Sukkar, said although state and territory governments had the primary responsibility for such developments, the Morrison government had supported the creation of more than 13,000 dwellings through the National Housing Financing and Investment Corporation (NHFIC).

Mr Sukkar said the establishment of the NHFIC was "one of the most significant national investments to support social and affordable housing in recent history".

"The government is also delivering across the housing spectrum, with

around \$9 billion expected to be spent on housing and homelessness in the upcoming financial year," he said.

State governments in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia have committed to self-funded public housing projects worth nearly \$10 billion, set to deliver 23,000 homes.

ACOSS chief executive Cassandra Goldie said state governments had done a "remarkably good job" in supporting people who found themselves homeless

during the pandemic but state resources for public housing weren't enough to meet demand.

"We need the federal government to step up and step back into this space and do some heavy lifting to both address the massive social housing shortfall and meet the future needs of a growing and ageing population," Ms Goldie said.

A NSW government spokesperson said it would welcome any additional support from the Commonwealth

in the building of new social and community housing.

Last financial year, 408 social homes were built in the state by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, which aims to complete another 3,200 new dwellings over the next five years.

There are more than 150,000 social homes in NSW, compared to just over 80,000 in Victoria, and the number of social housing in NSW has increased by 10 per cent since 2011.

**HEATH PARKES-HUPTON**

## Governments' response to housing during COVID-19 highlights need for policy reform

UNSW Sydney and ACOSS partnership research shows the impact of the pandemic on long-standing unaffordability, inequality and indebtedness.

A report released today by UNSW Sydney and ACOSS Poverty and Inequality Partnership shows renters on low and modest incomes are experiencing housing stress, especially in regional Australia, due to surging rents and lack of social and affordable housing.

COVID-19: rental housing and homelessness impacts in Australia was researched and written for the Partnership by UNSW's City Futures Research Centre's Professor Hal Pawson, Dr Chris Martin, Dr Sian Thompson and Dr Fatemeh Aminpour.

The report says that confounding many predictions, by far the most significant housing impact of the pandemic in Australia has been the house price boom that took off in late 2020. Stimulated by government measures to boost private market demand, it has compounded long-standing unaffordability, inequality and indebtedness. While some states have recently increased their investment in social housing, they lack the financial capacity to make up for a decade of government neglect.

"A crucial part of any crisis is what lessons can be learnt that could and should lead to policy reform," lead author Professor Hal Pawson, Associate Director of the City Futures Research Centre, said.

"State governments generally responded well in their emergency actions to help homeless people and protect vulnerable renters during the worst of COVID. To their credit, some have gone much further by pledging billions for short-term social housing investment. But there is little sign of any positive legacy on the systemic reforms

and Commonwealth government re-engagement is fundamentally needed to fix our housing system."

ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie said community organisations across the country are telling them about the growing levels of despair experienced by people trying to find affordable accommodation in both metropolitan and regional areas.

"The situation for those on the waiting list for social housing feels increasingly hopeless. Individuals and families struggle to keep a roof over their heads in the face of rising private market rents or are forced to stay in unhealthy or unsafe circumstances.

"The COVID crisis tested governments. Most state governments did a remarkably good job in protecting people who were homeless during COVID. But with such a chronic shortage of affordable homes, the resources they are putting towards social and affordable housing are just not enough to meet existing demand, let alone future need," Dr Goldie said.

"We need the federal government to step up and step back into this space and do some heavy lifting to both address the massive social housing shortfall and meet the future needs of a growing and ageing population."

Some findings from the report

Four state governments – Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia – have announced significant social housing construction as a component of post-pandemic stimulus investment, providing nearly \$10 billion. While this will add more than 23,000 new homes to the stock of public and community housing over the next four years, there are 155,000 households registered on social housing waiting lists across the country. More than 400,000 households also need affordable housing.

According to the report, recently announced social housing construction across Australia will be 'patchy'. For example, while Victoria and Queensland can anticipate social housing net growth of 8300 and 4400 units respectively over the next three years, NSW will gain little more than 400 units. Even where states have stepped up, the Commonwealth government needs to resume its historical role as the main funder of social housing development to come close to meeting demand.

Housing stress due to both affordability and availability is also rising significantly. While rents declined sharply in some inner-city suburbs at the beginning of the pandemic, from mid-2020 they increased. By August 2021, they were accelerating at more than 8 per cent – the fastest pace since 2008, and far ahead of wage growth at under 2 per cent.

The report notes that regional rent rises are now outpacing metropolitan areas, particularly in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. They have surged by 12.4 per cent to August 2021 and raise the prospect of increased homelessness.

In regional Australia, the proportion of tenancies low-income tenants can afford has declined from 41 per cent to 33 per cent throughout 2021. This percentage could decrease further with the end of affordable rents for homes developed under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), which funded 38,000 newly built rental homes for key workers and other disadvantaged renters to be leased at 75–80 per cent of market rates. Government figures show that over the next three years the subsidies and rent restrictions attached to some 22,000 of these affordable homes will expire.

**BELINDA HENWOOD**  
UNSW Sydney



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Shirley's father, Erle Chandler Gash, passed away in 2010 at the age of 93. Throughout her life, right up until his passing, Erle made her pledge that she would remember Red Cross and leave a gift in her Will if able. He was not in a financial position to leave a bequest himself, so Shirley is carrying out his wishes.

*"He would always say to us 'You must remember Red Cross.' He always wanted to support Red Cross in any way that he could."*

Erle was recruited as a foot soldier in WWII, but vowed he would only go to war if he was able to save lives rather than hurt people. He was firm that he did not want to carry a gun. He trained with Red Cross and became a stretcher-bearer and medic, assisting for around four years in El Alamein in Egypt and Italy.

When Erle returned from the war, he continued to support Red Cross and was always thinking of ways he could help. He was constantly looking to inspire others to act and donate.

In his 80s, he got himself a busking permit and would while away his days busking in



the main streets of the Auckland CBD. His sign read 'War veteran raising funds for the Red Cross,' and he raised an incredible \$10,000 over the years. For "an old guy" Shirley says he was pretty amazing.

At Erle's memorial service, two young members from Red Cross attended to pay their respects. Shirley and the rest of Erle's family were so appreciative and thought it was wonderful

that their 93-year-old dad had impacted younger and future generations.

*"He would say 'You have always got to be doing something for someone else.'"*

This is the message that Shirley wants to pass on as her legacy.

She's happy and proud to be able to carry out her father's wishes and has now updated her Will to leave a bequest to Red Cross.

*"I think that when I look at the Red Cross it's an organisation that's impartial...It's not looking at who people are. It's just looking at what's happening to them and so it's an organisation that I think that I can trust will go in, feed hungry people, help people who are broken, and get people back into some kind of semblance of normal life."*

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SCAN ME

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.

— INTERVIEW —

Ben Wadham

PODCASTS: [www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews)

*Greg T Ross:* Associate Professor, Ben Wadham, Director of Open Door there at Flinders Union. I'd like to welcome to the Last Post Podcast. And thanks for joining us here.

*Prof Ben Wadham:* Good day Greg. Thanks for having me.

*GTR:* Yeah. Wonderful. Ben, tell us a bit about what you're doing there with Open Door. It involves obviously a look at veteran transition Ben and in integration, wellbeing, but there's a lot of avenues to achieving those goals. How are you going about that?

*PBW:* Yeah, sure. Well, look, we know that we've had plenty of really good strong research in Australia around transition, but mainly from a mental health perspective or a medical or a psychiatric perspective. So we've got some great organisations like Phoenix and Gallipoli and a few others. What we are doing is taking a social health approach. So a holistic, a lived experience kind of approach. I served myself. I'm a veteran and I have my own transition experiences. I left the military, did my undergraduate degree. And after a bit of a struggle, found my myself in the health department where

I was writing men's health policy. So I've taken that sort of model, but looking at social determinants and population health, to look at veterans as a population group. That means that we look at transition through a bunch of domains. And United Nations and DVA, and a few others have this wheel. Domains are education, employment, housing, for some it's finances, corrections. Yeah. A few others.

*GTR:* There's actually a big list, Ben, which covers just about everything. And hats off to you and Open Door for doing that. How was your own experience as a veteran? How has that enacted with you and your role here?

*PBW:* Yeah, well, I served '87 to '92. Joined up as a young fellow that couldn't find work out in the city street, and thought it'd be a good idea to join the military. Was excited by the movie Platoon, at the time, where Charlie Sheen and the early scenes heads into the jungle for his first patrol. And it's night time and his weapons an arm's length out of reach. And the Vietcong come through the jungle. It's raining and the moonlight is filtering through. And anyway, there's a bun fight. I was

excited by that strangely enough. And I think a lot of my peers as young men are. I joined the military, joined the infantry, and then spent my five years and came out and transitioned. Wasn't very well prepared for that experience coming out had a bit of baggage. So, I sort of rejected the institution for about a decade while I sort of went to Uni and studied it. Came back 2004 to study the reform of the military justice system. And that opened up my connection with the veteran community. And here we are 15 years on, having done some really good ground-breaking research in the space and trying to tell the Digger's story, not just, try to appease the command, and the politicians, and the leaders. So the Digger's story is very important to Open Door. And I mean that in terms of every member of the defence force, men, women, officers, other ranks.

*GTR:* So the Digger's story is one that has been under increasing scrutiny as we mature in our outlook about what actually goes on in service and what can be difficulties that attract themselves to veterans when making the transition. A lot of it, obviously, is we speak about

“WHAT WE ARE DOING IS TAKING A SOCIAL HEALTH APPROACH.”



unemployment homelessness, mental health, all attached to each other. What has been your experience with, with the diggers and veterans involved in the study? Ben, have you been pleasantly surprised by a willingness to cooperate? Tell us about that, how that works?

*PBW:* Well, since 2004, I would've done about 120 long interviews with veterans across the rank structure from privates and recruits, to privates, to cadets, to senior NCOs and other ranks, all the way up to two star generals. And yep, everyone's very happy to tell their story and contribute. Everyone wants to see, everyone's very proud of their service and even with bad experience, still very supportive of the institution. And to a T everyone wants to see the best defence force that we can possibly have. So we don't take that lightly and we're happy to stand up and say, "There's something wrong here. Let's have a look at it differently." Without being overly negative. To offer solutions, not just talk about problems. The general transition experience around those 120 people range from quite tragic transitions to some that are really successful and really

prosperous. It is really quite variable. And it's not to say that everything that the ADF does in transition doesn't work or isn't adequate. For some people, it is quite adequate and comes out in very good and very strong outcomes. But there is a general pattern to say that one digger's or Australian soldiers, Australian defence personnel give all their all to their service. But when leaving and coming back into civilian world, it's one they're not very good at articulating or having a language to describe what they've done. That means that it's often an interpretation by civilian agencies and organisations to understand what military, the strengths of military are. You know, what the return of investment is upon that massive amount of skills and stuff, which every soldier builds up. So generating a language to communicate both for veterans and for civilian industry. That's one of the most fundamental experiences of transitioning that I've come across out of those 120 interviews. And then each story's different in terms of some of the other ups and downs that defence members can experience.

*GTR:* Well, I mean, I was about to ask if there's a common thread in those 120 interviews, and you've answered that. A great coverage of different experiences, obviously. And you speak about how success comes to some veterans in some areas. And I know that particularly because the number of veterans that I speak to through the magazine, Ben. We have people like Mick Bainbridge. We have people like Glenn Kolomeitz. And, and of course,

I speak to many others that have been successful in civilian life. But I guess that doesn't take away from the fact that these elements that can lead to health issues would still exist with these people, exist in that transition.

*PBW:* Well, I speak for myself. Like I said, I had some great experiences, had some tragic experiences. Came out feeling probably unsupported and totally unable to articulate who I was and where I wanted to go. Spent some time on the sidelines. So many skills and strengths came out of the experience that bounced back, and were in the mix. And those characters that you talked about there, they too probably have had ... I know they have their own experiences on the way and look, they're very successful now. We still ... so talk about 20% of from that mental health perspective, anyway, the mental health policy bridge to about 20% of veterans needing intensive servicing and the other 80% is not. But I think that incorrectly suggests that the other 80% have a smooth run. Well, one of that 80% ,still transitioning, still having the odd thing to deal with here and there. But at the same time, the heart, the way, the resilience, the way they deal with hardship, the way to change your mindset and find a solution is, comes from that five years of military experience. And that's what allows us to get through. And I'm actually, I see amongst my colleagues in the university and government, and the veteran sector, and in the students that we are supporting to come through uni, that they have this capacity to step above the crap

and make it happen. And that's just an overwhelmingly positive aspect of military experience, I think.

*GTR:* Yes. And look, with your experience, how good does it feel for you to be in a position now to assist? And of course, I suppose life is for learning, and you would be learning new things each day in your role. But how good does it make you feel to be able to come back from service, go through your own issues to a degree, and now be in a position to help, and I guess, cast a wider net, if we can say, through the wider community to understand the veteran experience?

*PBW:* I think of it probably in one level as service after service. I'm still ... such a formative experience that I'd still understand the *raison d'être* of the military. And I think one of the things ... if I lose track here, just bring me back on. But one of the things when you get out is a sense of ... there's quite a gap in our country between civilian and military. We talk about the culture gap, the civil military culture gap. That's having post Vietnam volunteer Army, volunteer military, sorry. I'm Army. Bit army focused. And it's increased over time. So military know military, but don't necessarily understand the civilian world anymore. Civilians don't really understand what the military does. Whereas, The Great

War efforts of World War 1 and 2, we were more of a combined force.

*GTR:* You've done well there because things have become a bit more fragile and difficult since the Vietnam War experience. And of course then again, we get to what's recently happened, or is happening, in Afghanistan. Do you expect there will be more a need for help from veterans that have been to Afghanistan?

*PBW:* More help for, do we need more services for?

*GTR:* The veterans, will there be an increase in health issues, do you think from veterans that have been to Afghanistan, and now may feel as though that was for naught?

*PBW:* Yeah, well, I'm feeling a bit, I didn't go to Afghanistan, but I'm feeling even after all this time a bit burnt by the things that happening recently. I felt disappointed by the war crimes allegations. But I felt disappointed in the leadership and the command around that, more than the troopers. I felt it's command and politicians that put them in that position and facilitated that alleged going rogue. I haven't felt that they've owned up to that or been transparent about that. So, that's disappointing. And then today knowing that, I just would've thought if I was an infantry

soldier engaged in that sort of thing, and through multiple deployments lost some of my mates, seeing the tragedy through the community, that had come out 20 years and in two or three weeks for it to all be turned around. And then to have your prime minister come up and say, "Well, we fought for freedom." It's an insult. And it's raising sort of issues for me, which I'll be thinking about for a little while.

*GTR:* I think the community feels that way. When I started the magazine, Ben, I had an idea of wanting to get the general community and the veteran community closer together. We've succeeded in a lot of ways. There's still a lot of work to be done. And we look at never knowing who we are passing in the street. So we speak of the need for a decent accommodation for veterans, a surety in community engagement. And also, I guess, social health of the individual veteran then is reflected in social health and community health generally, because we are, at this understanding, we are all intertwined with each other.

*PBW:* Yeah, that's absolutely ... and this is part of the transition. Why we focus on transition integration and wellbeing is veterans can leave the military, but without a sense of community, a new sense of identity, purpose, and belonging, we know

# 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







"AND HERE WE ARE 15 YEARS ON, HAVING DONE SOME REALLY GOOD GROUND-BREAKING RESEARCH IN THE SPACE AND TRYING TO TELL THE DIGGER'S STORY..."

that the common experiences can be isolation, withdrawal, can lead to family violence. Being stuck in the home with the shades down, sucking cans. I mean, I don't want to be stereotype, but you know what I mean, this ... know that this is an aspect of that. And that's an aspect of being marginalized and socially disconnected. And so that's why it's so important for the families to be recognized behind veterans, but the broader community too. And we need to find ways to continually bring community and veterans together so that we have that broader sense. I was going to say it before, but you came out of the military feeling like being in the military was a bad thing. That you were somehow com ... if not complicit, active in the war machine and that's all about violence and hurting other people and territory. Well, I've done the survey of a 1000 university students or, population groups; what do you think of the military? And would you join? The largest portion of people say, "Yeah, I want to be involved in humanitarian work. I want to do it to build, to progress, to contribute to broader society." That misunderstanding is a big part of the veteran's transition experience. I think. Again, in my interviews, it comes through and really it's about somehow government and community engaging in educational opportunities for us all to understand that we are part of something bigger. That the military is not just a war machine. It's actually intertwined in every part, of everyone's lives in Australia.

*GTR:* And the peacekeeping efforts are well documented. So, how can people help to become involved in Open Door, Ben? And what are you looking for as the study ...

*PBW:* Well, we engaged in a number of projects already. Okay. So we've got like 63 members across Australia, New Zealand. And we are doing work for Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other government agencies, and independent research, which is very important. We desperately need independent research in this space. It's all right to do tenders, but they are constrained in some of the answers they can provide. So we're doing a study on veterans in incarceration. That's the first national study for

Department of Veterans Affairs. We know nothing about incarcerated veterans in Australia. We've still quite sort of fallible ways of identifying them in the system, in the criminal justice system. We are doing some work on the wellbeing measures, transition wellbeing measures for Department of Veterans Affairs, which is just about some of the frameworks around assessing and helping, supporting people on their way out. We've being engaged in complex care work for DVA around people with serious PTS and associated issues. So, we're covering all those bases. Currently just been funded to look at male veterans suicide. But probably our biggest, and that's through the Freemasons and the South Australian Men's Health and Wellbeing Research Centre. They're all really important studies. Probably the big one we're focusing at the moment is employment and education. So, a bit about what I was talking about before. How we help veterans know where they've been and who they are and what they've done, and translate that, through explicit pathways, through education, to employment. So we're working with service providers and government stuff around that.

*PBW:* Our lived experiences organisation CoDesign. We actively have veterans to our meetings and our strategic planning. We work explicitly with some XOs, such as the Defence Force Welfare Association, and the Australian Student Veterans Association. So very organic, very connected, very veteran centric, very lived experience. We're always happy to, and we're working on this creating educational opportunities to bring the community. We have interested veterans on the books to evolve in advising. And the work we want to do is to bring a holistic approach to the research issues, which have been sort of identified, but pretty much only focused on through that psychological lens. So we're talking about life course, total, life, holistic veteran centric involving family and community.

*GTR:* And that's very important that the family, of course ... I've been reading about a bit about that too lately and yeah, there can be a distancing there. Sometimes we spoke you about education and I guess, education

being so important to give, I guess part of that would be formal education, but also education that's offered through Open Door to give veterans a voice and to be perhaps less ... well, to find justice for veterans in a lot of ways too, I suppose. How can people get involved in this? Do you need people to get involved, Ben?

*PBW:* Yeah, we do have the website and the usual social media outlets. So people are more than welcome to ... we'll provide those details for you obviously. But people do contact us out of the blue and we do involve them. And, as much as our capacity holds, we will continue to do that. And that's, like I said before, that's not just Australia. That's also in New Zealand.

*GTR:* Wonderful. Well, we have a following in New Zealand too. And I thank you for taking the time to go through this with us here, Ben. We'll have your details and Open Door details through the podcast and also in the magazine. We wish you all the continuing best in finding some ongoing solution. How long's Open Door going for, is it an ongoing program?

*PBW:* Yeah. Yeah. We're a baby at the moment. We're a research initiative, but you know, we've pulled in a million dollars in nine months. So we're on our way. That'll then lead to being a centre and an Austral Agent Institute. We're working internationally with five other nations, with five or six other universities, and we're building a global presence. So we're going for gold and we are going to create good outcomes for veterans, and we're going to remain loyal to the veteran voice and veteran experience.

*GTR:* Wonderful to hear. And a pleasure speaking with you and meeting you and being able to discuss some of the issues involved with Open Door, and your role in that, and your own experience, playing an important part in what's developing to be an essential part of assistance for veterans and beyond. And the general community. So on that, we thank you so much, Ben and wish you all the best. Stay in touch.

*PBW:* Thanks Greg. ■

# Grandmother given 12 months to live makes emotional plea for funding of clinical cancer trial



Gaynor van der Walt was “enormously surprised” when she was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer in February this year and given only 12 months to live.

The 71-year-old grandmother of three had no related possible risk factors, like smoking, poor diet and lifestyle or family history of cancer.

She felt an “unbearable, “persistent” pain in her epigastric region, around her ribs and back and also lost about 10kg from a loss of appetite.

With the cancer being so difficult to detect, the Kensington Gardens resident saw a number of medical professionals in the year before her diagnosis.

Nine months on from her prognosis, Mrs van der Walt hopes to be selected for phase 1 clinical trials, run by the University of South Australia, for an experimental drug called Auceliclib that targets certain enzymes and kills cancer cells without damaging healthy tissue.

“If I could leave one legacy in my life it would be (to get) people who are able to donate towards this research and dig deep in their pockets. It would be wonderful,” she said.

“I’m aware it’s a stubborn tumour and it doesn’t respond to chemo(therapy) like it should and this looks like groundbreaking research.

“I would be very grateful to be part of the trial ... but it’s about making people aware of the difficulty of treating pancreatic cancer and that more research needs to be done.”

The former nurse said all she wanted to do was to see her grandchildren grow up and watch them choose their path in life.

“I have to accept that now. I wouldn’t have the healthy mindset I have if I dwelled too much on everything that’s been taken from me. I have to live in the now,” she said.

“There have been times where I thought ‘why me when I’ve taken such good care of myself?’ but it’s just bad luck.

“It’s devastating for both my girls. We don’t have easy lives and I’ve been the centre and core of keeping all

of us going, so the disappointment to me is letting everyone down.”

Her husband of 25 years, Johan, 78, said it was “awful” having to watch his wife in pain but called her “an absolute star”.

“If Gaynor is a suitable candidate and meets the criteria for the trial, I’d be very keen for her to participate,” Mr van der Walt said.

“When she got the diagnosis, she was incredibly sick in the beginning.

“It’s now nine months later (since the prognosis) and the fact she’s so well at the moment is a real gift, but it signifies we live in a bubble and it could burst at any time.

“There is uncertainty about our future ... it’s an absolute game changer.”

About 90 per cent of pancreatic cancer patients die within the first five years of their diagnosis.

Just last year, 466,003 people around the world succumbed to the disease.

Auceliciclib, developed by UniSA head of drug discovery and development, Shudong Wang, was successfully trialled in animals and the researcher is hoping to recruit up to 10 pancreatic cancer patients for a human clinical trial.

The trial is subject to \$350,000 being raised by the end of the year.

"Pancreatic cancer is extremely difficult to diagnose at an early stage as there are very few symptoms," Professor Wang said.

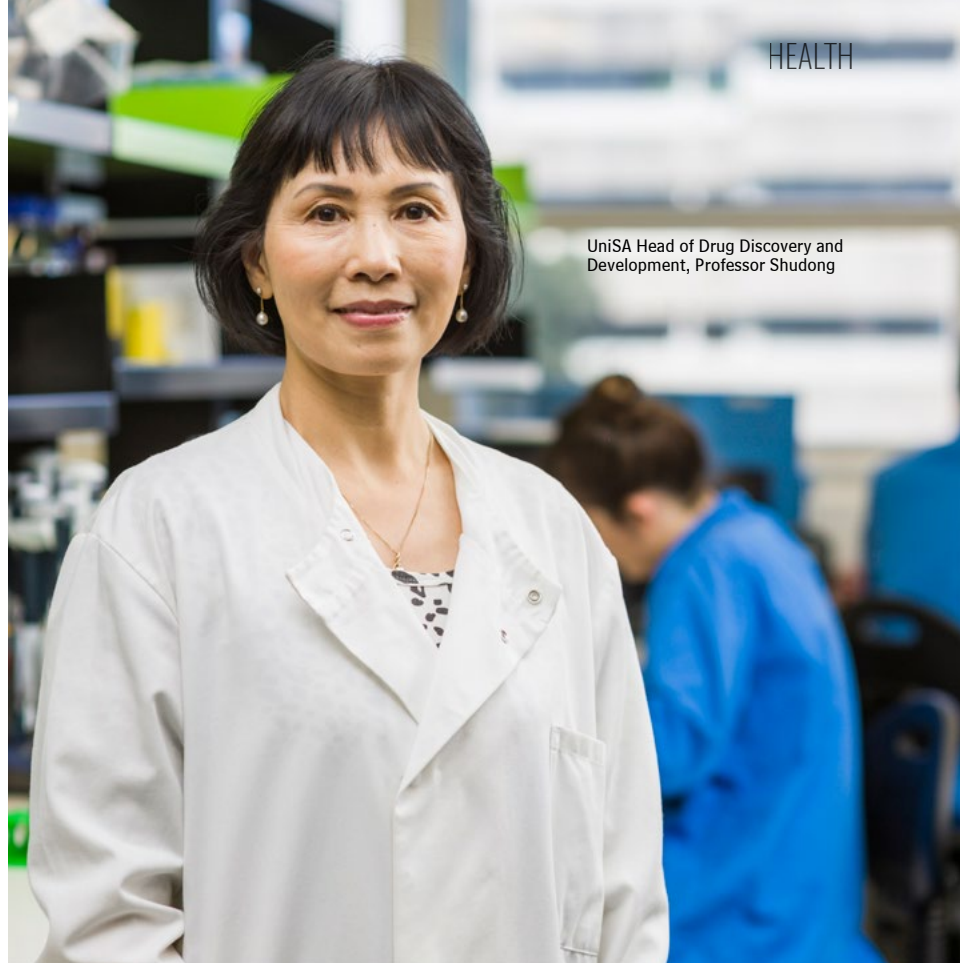
"If it is caught early the malignant tumour can be surgically removed. However, once it spreads into other organs it is lethal, and chemotherapy and radiotherapy only buy patients a little extra time."

The drug, taken as an oral tablet, has shown promising results in clinical trials to treat glioblastoma, the most aggressive form of brain cancer.

UniSA is launching a campaign to help fund this clinical trial and is accepting donations.

#### EMILY COSENZA

*NCA NewsWire*



UniSA Head of Drug Discovery and Development, Professor Shudong

You can help fund this important research by donating here:  
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# Cancer survival rates continue to improve, while death and incidence rates fall

Cancer survival rates in Australia are continuing to improve and the rate at which Australians are being diagnosed with cancer has been declining since 2008, according to a new report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report, *Cancer in Australia 2021*, shows a downward trend in the rate of new cancer diagnoses since 2008, but an increasing rate for females, albeit from a lower base than males.

'The estimates for 2021 presented in the report are based on actual data up to the end of 2017. They don't take into account potential health service disruptions due to COVID-19, but are still useful for identifying trends in cancer cases in Australia,' AIHW spokesperson Justin Harvey said.

'It is estimated that around 151,000 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Australia by the end of 2021, which is an increase from around 47,500 cases in 1982. However, there has been a 5% decrease in the incidence rate over recent years from the peak of 508 cases per 100,000 people in 2008 to 486 cases per 100,000 people in 2021.'

The report shows that five-year survival rates from all cancers combined had improved from 51% in 1988–1992 to 70% in 2013–2017.

'Changes in survival rates over time varied by cancer type, with the largest survival improvements seen in prostate cancer, kidney cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma and tongue cancer,' Mr Harvey said.

'While many cancers have high rates of survival, people diagnosed with cancers such as pancreatic cancer, lung cancer and mesothelioma have a less than 1 in 5 chance on average, of surviving at least 5 years after diagnosis.'

Cancer death rates have also continued to drop since the 1980s.

'By the end of 2021, the cancer mortality rate is expected to reach a

new low of 149 deaths per 100,000 people. It is expected that just under 50,000 people will die from cancer in 2021, an average of 135 deaths each day,' Mr Harvey said.

While more males than females die from cancer, there has been a sharper decline in the cancer death rate for males than for females.

'The mortality rate for males reached a peak of 287 deaths per 100,000 in 1989 and the rate is estimated to have decreased by 37% to 182 deaths per 100,000 in 2021,' Mr Harvey said.

'The overall decreasing trend for persons is largely due to the decline in the rate of death due to lung cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, cancer of unknown primary site and breast cancer.'

These declines are likely due to a number of reasons. For example, smoking rates have declined dramatically since the 1960's; screening, early detection and monitoring programs (such as national bowel, breast and cervical cancer screening programs and PSA testing) have been introduced over the years; and therapeutic interventions have continued to improve.

The report also details information about rare and less common cancers, which generally have lower survival rates and are responsible for 2 in 5 cancer deaths.

While accounting for 30% of cancers diagnosed in 2017, rare and less common cancers accounted for close to 42% of deaths from cancer in that same year.

Rare cancers include bone cancer, mesothelioma, eye cancer and cancer of the nose and sinuses.

Stomach cancer, liver cancer, bladder cancer and brain cancer are among the group of less common cancers.

While overall progress has been made, the report shows that cancer remains a major cause of death in Australia.

'Cancers are responsible for more deaths than any other group of diseases, accounting for 3 in every 10 deaths in 2020,' Mr Harvey said.

'Lung cancer is expected to be the leading cause of death from cancer in 2021, followed by colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer and breast cancer.'

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have had at least some effect on the uptake of cancer-related services.

'After increasing by an average of 1% per year over the previous 20 years, the rate of cancer-related hospitalisations decreased by 1% between 2018-19 and 2019-20 – noting that COVID-19 restrictions were in place only during the last quarter of 2019-20.'

'COVID-19 restrictions also appear to have affected uptake of breast ultrasound, mammography, breast MRI and colonoscopy. For example, the number of people having Medicare Benefits Schedule-subsidised colonoscopies was 11% lower in 2020 compared with 2019, following average growth of around 3% per annum since 2011,' Mr. Harvey said.

'The full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer diagnosis and treatment will not be known for some time.'

[aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au)

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## Empowering Australian kids to thrive beyond the impacts of family mental illness

60% of children impacted by family mental illness are at greater risk of experiencing their own mental health issues compared to other children (1)

23% of Australian children are living in families where at least one parent has or had a mental illness (1)

85% of our program participants responded correctly to questions about unhelpful myths and stigma associated with mental illness at the end of programs (2)

98% = proportion of young people who plan to re-engage in our services (2)

In the last financial year defence kids have attended an average of 3.3 sessions each (2)

Kookaburra Kids are almost twice as likely to use a phone helpline as a source of help after camps (2)



Australian  
**Kookaburra Kids** Defence Kids  
Foundation

REFERENCES: 1. National Mental Health Commission; 2. Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation / Big Sister Foundation

In September the National Mental Health Commission released the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, providing the framework and foundation for lifelong mental health and wellbeing with a whole-of-community approach.

The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation welcomed this strategy and its message that early intervention is important for positive mental health outcomes.

The strategy stated that as many as 23% of Australian children are living in families where at least one parent has or had a mental illness, and 60% of children impacted by family mental illness are at greater risk of experiencing their own mental health issues compared to other children. AKKF supports these young people combining fun with mental health education.

We support approx. 2800 young people across Australia with our stepped care programs including Camps, Activity Days and online Connect sessions. We have identified the unique need for kids from defence families and have established a specialised program with funding from the Australian Government and the Department of Veteran's Affairs to support them and their families. In the last financial year our defence kids attended an average of 3.3 sessions each ranging from Connect sessions to Activity Days such as movies, Dreamworld, Safari and island adventures.

We are able to provide this service through grants, funding, corporate partnerships and individual donations. As the impacts on mental health from natural disasters, COVID-19 and international conflict are being realised, the demand for our services has never been greater.

If you can contribute to help us deliver our programs to Australian kids, please visit [bit.ly/AKKFdefencekids](https://bit.ly/AKKFdefencekids)

# MND is a battle no one should have to face alone.

Motor neurone disease has no cure, and sees those experiencing it lose their ability to move and speak. As the disease progresses differently for everyone, there is no knowing when will be the last time they will tell family how much they love them, easily communicate their needs to carers, or have a chat with friends.

But Eyegaze technology can give people living with MND the ability to communicate once more, and have control over their living environment.

Simple things, like being able to tell a joke, turn on a light, book an appointment or put on a movie to watch with the family can be impossible for someone with MND, unless they have a communication aid like an Eyegaze device.

Unfortunately, for someone aged 65 or over living with MND, there is no government support or funding available for them to get assistive technology like an Eyegaze device. Once they lose their voice, they can no longer laugh with their grandkids. Tell their spouse they love them. Let their children know hard-earned advice or how proud they are of them.

MND NSW is aiming to change this, by offering the use of Eyegaze devices to people living with MND who need them. You can help them by donating now at [xmas.org.au/LP](https://xmas.org.au/LP).

Kristine Centeno has motor neurone disease, and her story of trying to continue being there for her family whilst battling a devastating disease shows just how vital an Eyegaze device is.

“Imagine this, in a couple of weeks, will be your child’s first birthday. You want to give her a big party, with a magician, party games, face painting and surrounded by lots of friends and family. Sounds easy, right? Party planning?”

But here’s the challenge. You have to do everything with your hands and feet tied up, and your mouth stuffed with a sock! ”

How can you plan a party without being able to move or speak? Sounds impossible, doesn’t it?

MND affects every aspect of my life. It does feel like I’m tied up, gagged, and trapped. This disease severely limits

what I can do. My list of can’ts is incredibly long, and sadly, even growing. From the time my first symptoms appeared in late 2019, I now only have full control of four things: my thoughts, my bladder, my bowels and my eyes.

Bladder and bowels aside - how do you organise a party with your thoughts and eyes?

Well, I did with my Eyegaze device!

The Eyegaze device allows me to operate a computer with my eyes. With an Eyegaze enabled computer and the internet, the possibilities are endless.

I was able to organise my daughter’s first birthday party with the use of the Eyegaze device. From sending invites to ordering food and decorations, organising a magician, photographer and a face painter- I did it all!

The Eyegaze device crossed out a lot of can’ts on my list. It has given me ways to continue to function and live meaningfully.

It has allowed me to spend time with my daughter as I pick the shows she watches, I use it to write stories with my son, to send a grocery list to my husband. The Eyegaze device connects me to my overseas friends and family. It helps me maintain connections or build new ones. With it, I was able to find support workers, participate in meetings, manage appointments, all of these without lifting a finger.

While MND has erased so many verbs on my list of functions, the Eyegaze device gave me so much back.

It is, without a doubt, a piece of equipment that every person with MND must have. Sadly, the process can be long and painful. And for a person with MND, time is a precious commodity. Hire programs are ridiculously expensive with a week’s rent of a device the same as a week’s house rent!

Access to an Eyegaze device is a life changing! While MND has taken an incredibly huge part of me, my Eyegaze device opens up doors of opportunity for me to continue to live a productive and meaningful life.”

*Give a voice back to people living with motor neurone disease by donating now at [xmas.org.au/LP](https://xmas.org.au/LP)*

mnd  
New South Wales

Will you give a voice back to people living with motor neurone disease?  
You can help share the positive impact an Eyegaze device has by donating now at [xmas.org.au/LP](https://xmas.org.au/LP)



# Everyone Deserves Digital Access in Today's World

Watching the award winning Australian animation series *Bluey with my grandchildren*, I was struck by the episode called "Grannies". I was actually dumbfounded.

This episode of a usually charming, funny and instructive program based around a family of blue healer dogs showcased some of the most ageist stereotypes of older people. *Bluey* and her sister *Bingo* dress up as 'grannies' and spend the episode tripping over, crashing into things, falling asleep mid-sentence, driving over things in their car and coming to a crashing halt overturned in a sandpit.

In one section *Bluey* and *Bingo* call their grandma on Facetime to see if grannies can do a dance move called flossing. The real joke of the scene is the inability of their grandma to work the device. First she's holding it too close so that all you see are her ears, then its looking at her feet, then the ceiling and then up her nose until she finally gets the hang of it. The feel good laughing at all the silly and incompetent things only vaguely obscured the underlying theme, that old people are basically incapable bumbleheads especially with technology. It is assumed that this inability to use digital technology is something we would all recognise and would find hilarious.

Not a good message when there is clearly a need for older people to have access and meaningful participation in the digital world.

Everyone appreciates how developments in digital technology and the online environment have transformed our society. The United Nations has recently highlighted that it is women and older people who either lack access to technologies or are not able to benefit from them. This research is consistent with our experience at Seniors Rights Service. This past year alone, we have assisted older people from across NSW with over 9,000 enquiries. We have heard many stories of how older people are being excluded from important and necessary parts of civil society because of the digital divide. However, unlike the *Bluey* scenario, it is not so much that older people don't know how to use digital technology but that they simply do not have access to it. This is especially true for people who are disadvantaged and it is becoming a serious issue for vulnerable older people. It prevents them from participating socially and makes it difficult for them to access many government services that increasingly require online engagement, digital forms and smart phone technology.

For many older people, and especially those living in regional areas, access to online services is just not sufficient and for many others even mobile phone coverage is inadequate. Recently, during an outreach visit to communities in Far West NSW, our solicitors and aged care advocates heard the frustration of older people who were required to access government information or services via online portals but had no capacity to do so. Accessing the internet just wasn't possible and they would have to drive long distances to attend a government office in person to submit a paper form. This is especially challenging as many local offices have closed or moved to larger regional centres.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this digital divide. During the enforced restrictions to manage the pandemic, we have seen many older people left isolated and alone with their social interactions severely curtailed. Families not being able to visit aged care facilities, travel restrictions preventing visits across suburbs and lockdowns separating people from each other for months on end. Loneliness and isolation have been hard for so many and online communication has often provided a lifeline for some but not for all. While technology has had the potential to help older people stay connected with family, friends and their communities, many disadvantaged older people just don't have the means to connect in this way.

Many older people in aged care facilities have been prevented from seeing families and friends during the COVID-19 lockdowns. In fact, visitation rights and restrictions were the main issues raised with our aged care advocacy service this year. In the absence of face to face visits, some of the better aged care providers made sure that older people had access to devices to speak to their families. But many have not had this access and have not even been provided with mobile phones in their rooms to keep in touch with their loved ones, even when there has been no COVID-19 outbreak in the facility. They have simply been shut off from the outside world and they and their families have suffered and are suffering still.

Seniors Rights Service is calling for our government and our sector to ensure that all older people are provided with the means to engage in our increasingly digital world. It is also important to ensure older people are protected from cybercrime and misinformation as they access digital technologies and we need strategies developed and implemented to ensure vulnerable people are protected from online scams and crime.

We cannot leave older people out of digital world. Inclusion in all aspects of civil society is their right. The stereotyping of older people as technologically incapable goes far beyond *Bluey*. It is a commonly held trope throughout our society. Technology can and will be used by anyone, no matter what age. Communication and connection with others are powerful motivators but the ability to access them must be there. For so many people digital technologies have been a life saver in these pandemic times. I am just asking for that to be available to everyone no matter their age, their resources or their location.

*Bluey* creators, get with it! Remake that Grannies episode and start the change. We don't need those ageist stereotypes. Not now, not anymore, not ever.

**SHANNON WRIGHT**  
*CEO, Seniors Rights Service*



# Advocacy in Action for older Veterans

What does aged care advocacy really mean, and more importantly how can it help everyday older Australians uphold their rights and get the services they deserve?

On a practical level, an advocate is someone who works alongside you to help you navigate and resolve a range of issues impacting your rights in aged care – whether you are receiving support at home or in a residential facility. This can range from concerns or problems with the organisation who is providing your care to issues with other services or decision-makers.

It can also help you navigate different government service systems to find the best support solutions for you, which will help you maintain your independence and live the life you want. This can be particularly important for veterans who are coordinating veteran supports and entitlements, alongside government aged care services.

Navigating multiple service systems can be complicated, but advocates are here to help.

Let's take a look at John's story. John is an 87-year-old Vietnam veteran who is legally blind and deaf, and also has diabetes. John is a proud veteran who has a range of services in place through the Department of Veterans' Affairs but currently relies on neighbours to assist with preparing meals and managing around the

house. John received a letter from My Aged Care to advise that he had been approved for a Home Care Package. However, John was not sure if he should accept the Home Care Package, how it might impact his current services, and where to ask questions.

John called the Older Person's Advocacy Network and was connected to an advocate who worked with John to:

- Understand his current situation and identify all of his care needs
- Explain how Home Care Package funding works and how he can still access veterans' services such as the Open Arms service and his Gold Card and community nursing to help manage his health
- Identify all current services, and make sure they are aware of each other and not working in isolation
- Locate and assess suitable services to deliver meals and assistance at home under a Home Care Package

John now has well-coordinated services which meet all his care needs at home and is still linked into veterans' services.

Aged care advocacy services are independent, free of charge and available across Australia. Services are currently being expanded which means more local advocates in more places. Call **1800 700 600** to talk to an advocate in your area.



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# Annabelle Wilson

Legacy was founded in 1923 on a promise made from one digger to another – to “look after the missus and the kids”. My experience as a Legacy Beneficiary goes even deeper than that. It’s a family.

My husband Josh, or Ralph as he was known to his mates, served in the Airforce for 10 years. On ANZAC day in 2008, he returned from an 8 month deployment to Afghanistan. Less than 2 months later, he was diagnosed with Brain Cancer.

The following piece was written by Josh’s mates: “Ralph joined the Air Force in 2003 as a Fighter Controller, and quickly distinguished himself as a uniquely talented individual. He excelled as a controller, was frequently recognised for his talent and initiative, and loved his work. Despite being quite junior, his aptitude saw him chosen as one of the first members of his Unit to deploy to Afghanistan. This experience was a defining one for him, and he often spoke proudly of his time there.

At the time of his diagnosis, he had been selected to undertake one of the Air Force’s most difficult courses, to become a weapons and tactics instructor; he would have been among the youngest to ever attempt the course. Ralph continued to contribute to the ADF even as he navigated the challenges of his diagnosis and treatment. He took up a role as an instructor, where he made huge strides in improving training outcomes for students, using his unique combination of intelligence, skill, and humour.

In 2013, he received a Silver Commendation from the Deputy Chief of Air Force, for his dedicated work as an Air Liaison Officer to the Defence Science and Technology Group. In 2017 he also received the DST achievement award for outstanding contribution to defence outcomes as a result of his role in the development of Pitch Black. Over his service career, Ralph made significant contributions to the ADF that are still felt today.”

Josh and I had ten magnificent years together, and he passed away at 10.03pm on Saturday the 25th of November 2017. As his mates put it, his loss robbed Air Force and the nation of a brilliant tactician, an insightful leader, and a great mate.

Two and a half months later, on Josh’s birthday - the 13th of February 2018 - our little baby girl Primrose was born.

And that’s where Legacy stepped in. The support I received not only allowed me to get back to work, but provided support to aid my recovery. Legacy supported Primrose going to daycare, helped pay for moving costs, tax bills and cleaning services. When I crashed my car, Legacy was there with Coles vouchers and a cuppa.

But most importantly, Legacy provide a connection for Primrose to her father, and her father’s service. Our Legatee Suzanne, a proud Navy Veteran and an all-round incredible human, has helped me navigate paperwork, provided mentorship and has advocated for me and Prim. But it runs deeper than that, Suzanne is now a fully-fledged member of our family. I don’t know where we would’ve been without her.

The Legatee Program at Legacy is one of the most unique and important aspects of this

charity. It’s just one of the examples of how Legacy is transformational, not transactional. Which means that it’s not just about a one-off payment or service, it’s a long-term commitment. This has been fundamental for me as I’ve faced the trauma and grief of losing my soulmate alongside the challenges associated with becoming the sole provider for my baby girl.

Over the last three and a bit years, Legacy have held my hand as I have rebuilt a life that I am honestly so proud of, for Primrose’s sake, and for mine.

But I’m just one voice in a choir: Hundreds of thousands of war widows and children have been cared for by Legacy around Australia in the past 98 years. Currently, Legacy staff and over 3600 dedicated volunteer Legatees assist some 44,000 veterans’ families Australia-wide.

I firmly believe that Flight Lieutenant Joshua Mark Chalmers gave his life for his country, and it is Legacy who have been the ones who have allowed us the freedom to feel proud of, and not disadvantaged by, his sacrifice.

I only wish that Josh could’ve seen the incredible support that Legacy has provided to his girls.

## ANNABELLE WILSON

*Legacy Beneficiary*



Annabelle and Josh.

Annabelle Wilson and Suzanne Shaw.



# Suzanne Shaw

I am a very proud Veteran who served 4 years in the Women's Royal Australian Navy – WRANS, and a Legacy Legatee.

I recall when I joined in 1974 as a naïve 17-year-old, that for the rest of our lives, we would always have our navy family around us and if you ever needed any help then the defence network would step in and help.

There is the defence sisterhood and brotherhood and they are never far away.

I met Annabelle who was looking for information on support for people living with brain cancer, and she invited me to attend a brain tumour support network. At this time, I was working at Royal Melbourne Hospital as a liaison on the neurosurgical ward. I met Josh that night and several other members that evening and we continued on for a couple of years meeting and finding ways of supporting those living with brain cancers.

Josh had not been well and was having rehab. The 31-year-old Afghanistan veteran was receiving treatment for brain tumours. On this particular day, I was off to meet with another family when I arrived at Epworth Hospital in Richmond instead of where I was meant to be at Epworth Brighton. I took a wrong turn, but it was the right turn as who walked towards me as I collected my thoughts, it was Josh. We chatted for over an hour that day, about their baby due in February and how excited he was, a little bit about our service history, yes, defence family are never far away, and we hugged and said our farewells until next time. There was not to be a next time.

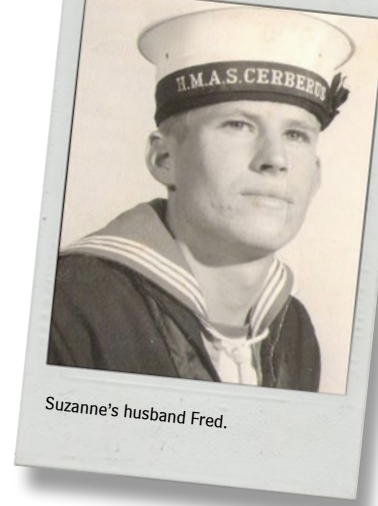
I made a decision to contact Melbourne Legacy so Annabelle would be supported by Legacy and the defence family networks. As a Legatee with Melbourne Legacy, I have met too many younger widows who have lost their partners & husbands to service. With Annabelle and Josh's baby due in February, there was a lot to do.

I was a similar age and also a young mum of 3 children when my husband Fred passed away. Fred was a veteran too, and also died of a neurological illness, so I saw myself in Annabelle, her situation brought back memories of years passed.

I understood what she needed and how we as Legacy could help, but more significantly I wanted her to know that she and her baby Primrose were never alone, that there was a whole defence and veteran family ready to wrap our arms around her.

I was raised in a large family with a long history of war service. My parents' siblings served in WW2 in the Army and Air Force and my father was in the Reserves. Fred's family also had a long history of war service with his father & grandfather serving in WW1 & WW2.

I too was interested in service; however, I wanted to be a nurse, but when the Navy did a recruitment at the High School, my mind was made up, I went home that day and said to my parents, I am joining the Navy and six months later I signed on the dotted line and never looked back. I loved every day of my 4 years of service.



My service in Stores Victualling at HMAS Lonsdale is where I met Fred. He was a leading seaman, at sea for most of his career training the young recruits who joined the ships at sea. Fred served in the Navy for 12 years and was a radio operator/ communication aboard HMAS Sydney, deploying and repatriating troops to and from the battle fields of Vietnam.

In 1998, Fred lost his battle with Multiple System Atrophy, MSA a rare neurological disorder. He fought for over 9 years and he remained at home with our young children and extended families nearby. Fred always remained a member of the RSL and after his passing, I was contacted by Melbourne Legacy and Werribee RSL. The support that I received from Legacy and the RSL was amazing. They supported us financially, emotionally, in every way. It was if they wrapped their arms around us and provided that comfort and support we didn't know we needed.

In my role as Legatee, I am the Secretary & Contact Secretary of the Western Branch, we have over 400 widows of all ages that we support.

We have social groups for the Ladies & Gents which prevents that social isolation and provides companionship for those in the communities. We have a great time and lots of laughter.

I became a Legatee to help others and to give back to Legacy. I love my work with Legacy and enjoy meeting with the ladies and enrolling them in Legacy so that they are supported financially and emotionally.

I also work with the younger families and provide support, information and advocacy. It is so important to be available to support our families, I know first hand what it is like being lost, scared and thinking what will the future hold for myself and my family. I know that Legacy will always be with us to provide that support.

Annabelle and I now have a lifelong connection and are FAMILY. Little Primrose is now growing up and enjoys her kinder days. She has brought so much joy to Annabelle, and to the Legatees when she visits us at Legacy House. Josh is certainly watching over his girls.

What do I want? I want this for all Families.

Please contact Legacy & the RSL for support. Our arms are ready.

**SUZANNE SHAW**  
Veteran & Legatee



John is an Army veteran. He also struggles with severe mental health issues as a result of his service in the Australian Defence Force. When COVID-19 first hit, John's wife, Sally, lost her casual position. Then one-by-one, each of his four children (who were all studying at university at the time) lost their part-time jobs too.

John soon found himself the sole provider for his family of six. And as a self-employed transport worker during a global pandemic, business was far from booming. This is what John said when he first reached out to Legacy:

"I'm financially crippled at the moment. I won't lie."

***Donate today and give urgently needed food vouchers for veterans' families who find themselves in dire financial need.***

To John and his family, your gift means so much more than a food voucher for basic essentials. It also means relief for a dad struggling with his mental health – the assurance of knowing that you are helping to put food on the table for his children.

"When my wife opened the envelope and saw \$1,000 worth of food vouchers, she immediately broke down in tears – they were tears of relief. I will always be grateful for this."

***This holiday season, veterans' families like John need your support more than ever. The average family needs around \$250 for a week's worth of food. So please donate today.***



This Christmas, your generosity will assure a veteran like John that he and his family are remembered. And give him the peace of mind that he deserves.

To help you consider the impact of your donation, on average, it costs \$250 to feed a family for one week.

You can also give food vouchers by calling 1800 LEGACY (1800 534 229) or by visiting [legacy.com.au/donate](https://legacy.com.au/donate).





THE BUTTERY  
ENRICHING LIVES

# Veterans COPE Recovery Program

6-week residential program for Veterans  
Commences 21 February 2022



## The Veterans COPE Recovery Program (VCRP) 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.

The program 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](http://www.battery.org.au)



# RAAF Veteran Business

## Taking Off

RAAF veteran and entrepreneur Cherie-Ann Borghouts has taken the precision she applied to engineering military runways and used it to meticulously formulate nourishing organic skincare, creating an ethical business along the way with help from Prince's Trust Australia.

Cherie-Ann Borghouts left a fulltime career in the Royal Australian Air Force to grow an artisan skincare business, all because of a peanut allergy.

The Brisbane-based entrepreneur admitted the catalyst for her journey from airfield engineer to skincare formulator was "a bit random".

It started when her youngest son was diagnosed anaphylactic to peanuts and she began investigating.

"There's a lot of research that backs the link between chemicals and allergies," she said.

"So, at the time I was trying to bring chemical-free products into our home, there were very few natural and organic skincare alternatives on the market."

Cherie-Ann decided to fill the gap and a decade on that gap-filler - Indira Organics - is thriving.

"Indira Organics is all about bringing about real skincare results but doing it ethically and doing it in a way that really is sustainable," she said.

The Wing Commander, who shifted from full-time to part-time RAAF service in 2016, spent the past 10 years diligently

creating chemical-free skincare products to be proud of.

"It's been a methodical process that started as a bit of fun, research and concocting, then moved into actually doing some genuine study in the area, coming up with some really solid products, and then making a decision to launch the range," she said.

"And then, of course, along the way you can't be stagnant, so there's been a lot of modifications.

"But things that have stayed the same are the quality of the ingredients, the aluminium packaging, which is sustainable,...and the move away from the industry norm of excess packaging."

Cherie-Ann takes pride in being "very meticulous" in every part of her business.

"The fact that I am an artisan means that I design everything and I handcraft everything," she said.

"I research, I refine and the products are tested.

"It's the best offering that I can possibly do."

But her biggest challenge is communicating Indira Organics' points of difference in a growing market filled with generic, mass-produce skincare.

"There's a great deal of products out there that are just emulsions of water and then an emulsifier and a couple added extras," she said.

"Ours are designed from a place of intention that have high percentages of oils and butters and active ingredients that are designed to deliver some kind of function and therefore a skincare result.

"The formulating stuff, that's just who I am, but the marketing and trying to connect with people, that takes a lot of time and development of skills that are not necessarily familiar to me.

"So that's been a really big challenge. But the highlight would have to be the success stories.

"The connection with our customers, and then hearing about how the products are making a difference in their lives."

And while Cherie-Ann was busy formulating, she was also building her



# INSPIRING OUR VETERAN COMMUNITY TO EXPLORE SELF-EMPLOYMENT

LET US HELP YOU GET STARTED. ➔

Designed by Enterprise participant and Defence partner Bianca Newey of B Luvd Design



Enterprise Participant - Zach Briggs  
Veteran & Founder of Relic Design and Craft Co.



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business with help from Prince's Trust Australia's Enterprise programme.

"I was fortunate enough to be on one of the first iterations of the Prince's Trust programme...right back when it was most valuable to me," she said.

"It allowed me to really take stock and look at some of the things I was going to do for my business to improve it at that stage."

Cherie-Ann said she still uses the evolving business plan she created with help from the programme and she maintains her relationship with the Trust.

"I feel there's a lovely support system from a genuine group of authentic people in the Prince's Trust organisation," she said.

"The team listen, and they really want to assist the growth of small businesses."

The free Enterprise programme is the only one of its kind in Australia and supports ex-serving and transitioning ADF members and military spouses to launch and grow small businesses.

Cherie-Ann said the connections she had made through Enterprise were particularly helpful.

"For veterans, the Prince's Trust programme is a great avenue to explore," she said.

Chair of Prince's Trust Australia, the Hon Julie Bishop, said she was delighted that Cherie-Ann was still seeing benefits from the Enterprise programme.

"In light of World Women's Entrepreneur Day on November 19, Cherie-Ann's decade of hard work and the transfer of skills from her time in the military makes her an impressive role model for other female veterans exploring entrepreneurship".

Ms Bishop said since its inception in 2015, Prince's Trust Australia programmes have helped create more than 100 veteran-community-owned businesses.

"I am pleased to see an increasing number of women taking part, half of this year's participants are female," she said.

## 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 programme.

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.

Visit: [www.princes-trust.org.au](http://www.princes-trust.org.au)

## What is Enterprise?

The Enterprise programme helps veterans and defence spouses explore and refine business ideas, launch and grow businesses and enhance skills, all while networking with likeminded people from the veteran community.

Enterprise is broken into four stages, each an entry point depending on where a person is at in their self-employment journey.

The programme is for transitioning ADF members, ADF veterans, and civilian partners or spouses of current or former serving ADF members. This includes current, separated and widowed partners.

The Enterprise programme is an initiative of Prince's Trust Australia, which is part of The Prince's Trust Group, a global network of charities founded by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

Check out Cherie-Ann's business: [www.indiraorganics.com.au](http://www.indiraorganics.com.au)

To register for Prince's Trust Australia Enterprise programme: [bit.ly/Enterprise2022EOI](https://bit.ly/Enterprise2022EOI)

## WRITTEN FOR THE TRUST BY COURTNEY SNOWDEN

Australian Defence Force spouse, freelance copywriter, and Enterprise programme alumna

# *Serving second-hand*

DFA's push to highlight the family as a foundation of Defence capability



In 2021, Defence Families of Australia (DFA) has marked our 35th anniversary in subdued fashion. As the Ministerially appointed group representing the interests of families of current serving ADF members, we have impacted every aspect of defence life in that time.

The official advisors to Government and Defence, DFA advocates for ongoing improvement in policy and practical support. Our aim is to reduce the negative impacts of military service on ADF families, and to support the positive aspects of this unique Defence lifestyle.

Right now, the defence community faces the biggest set of stressors in a generation. For many Defence families it's been Bushfires, Covid Assist, the Royal Commission, the Brereton Report and the evacuation from Afghanistan, let alone home schooling and increased isolation from our extended families in many cases. The whole country is carrying more than normal on their shoulders, but many Defence families bear additional weight. So DFA's work is more important than ever.

DFA are undertaking significant reform, to ensure the organisation is best positioned to deliver effective change for families for the next decade and more. There are three key things we're aiming to achieve:

- Increase communication to the defence family community about what advocacy we are undertaking and providing you with more regular updates and opportunities to get involved.
- Increasing mechanisms to collect and use the feedback that hundreds of families share with us day to day. Our National Delegates will continue to support individual cases as we have for years, but we will also develop more ways to effectively map the issues or feedback we receive to inform and drive regional or national advocacy – that is, change that impacts many families at a time.
- Increase collaboration and play a stronger role in connecting stakeholders in the defence support sector to help them to have a greater impact across the community.

These are lofty goals, but we have the right people in the right roles with the right skills, experience and connections to make it happen.

There is a growing body of research and evidence to show just how critical families are to supporting defence capability. ADF members perform better and serve

longer when the family is happy, well and stable. Defence recognise this, and engage heavily with DFA to inform their policies and practice. The business case for supporting military spouse employment is also gaining momentum. Employers see the amazing talent in the community, and realise – particularly after the pandemic lockdowns – that they can employ this talent regardless of the family's posting location. The hurdles to progress are falling, and DFA are on the frontline to knock more down.

DFA have chalked up a number of big wins in recent months, including advocating to the WA and Victorian governments for them to overturn a general ban on ADF families accompanying their ADF member posting to those regions. But it's not only the national level wins that make an impact. We have eight National Delegates across the country are continuously working on individual advocacy. In the past 12 months we have directly supported over 450 defence families with complex personal issues. This is part of the work that is never seen, but has a huge impact.

Often the result of DFA advocacy, there are a suite of recently updated or new programs to support families available through Defence Member and Family Support, formerly DCO. These programs are designed for us, for families. We need to engage with them, fact check them ourselves and provide feedback about what we want.

Every family member is an advocate. Not only do families underpin defence capability by supporting their loved on in uniform, but in everything you do you are representing our community and demonstrating our resilience, talent and strength. Like a lot of people I think, I used to shy away from saying that I serve second-hand. But that's exactly what defence families do – they serve second-hand. So advocate away! We've got the best shot we've had in years at driving a huge amount of change in the next couple of years. So get involved, ask for help if and where you need it, and you'll be an important part of shaping the system that supports our families.

**SANDI LAAKSONEN-SHERRIN**

*Defence Family Advocate, DFA*

**Established in 1986, Defence Families of Australia (DFA) is the Ministerially appointed group representing the equities of the families of current serving ADF members.**

As advisors to Government and Defence, DFA advocates for ongoing improvement in policy and practice. Our aim is to reduce the negative impacts of military service on ADF families, and to support the positive aspects of this unique Defence lifestyle. At this critical time of change, this work is more important than ever for shaping the future of our community.

The benefits and costs of being a military family can change the course of people's lives. If we can optimise family support there will be flow on effects not only for the wellbeing and prosperity of current serving Defence families, but also for:

- successful reintegration to civilian life post-service
- the recruitment, retention, and reputation of Defence, and
- local and national economies



[www.dfa.org.au](http://www.dfa.org.au)



Born in Dubbo, Lucelle is a country girl at heart.  
Here she is as a kid enjoying life to the full!



Lucelle with her Aquatherapist Rob Orr, filmmaker friend  
Jemma Pigott and staff at The Scuba Gym.



Lucelle during one of Rob Orr's Aqua4Therapy sessions.



You can support Lucelle through her My Cause campaign:  
[www.mycause.com.au/p/273806/support-to-help-make-lucelles-aquatic-dreams-come-true](http://www.mycause.com.au/p/273806/support-to-help-make-lucelles-aquatic-dreams-come-true)

# Cerebral PaLSEA; Diving deep with LuSEA!

From chin-operated wheelchair to freer mobility and muscle relief through Aquatherapy, Lucelle Hudson is pursuing her scuba dream with a grant from the Women Diver's Hall of Fame (WDHOF).

Lucelle Hudson is an amazing Australian woman living on Sydney's Northern Beaches. She loves the sea and as a kid, it was her favourite place to be. Lucelle has Cerebral Palsy and until 2019, hadn't been in the ocean for over 40 years! Determined to return, she connected with remarkable Aquatherapist, Rob Orr (certified advanced and rescue diver, and owner / operator of Aqua4Therapy). After years of hard work at indoor pools, Lucelle returned to the ocean in February 2019.

She and Rob started with a swim in Lucelle's local ocean baths at Collaroy. The sun was shining bright and reconnecting with saltwater brought Lucelle much delight. After this successful day, she and Rob – ever the adventurers – planned a snorkelling expedition around Cabbage Tree Bay. This local Aquatic Reserve covers an area of approximately 20 hectares, from the southern end of Sydney's famous Manly Beach, to the northern tip of Shelly Beach (one of only 2 west facing ocean beaches on the east coast of Australia). Iconic species dwell in the reserve including blue groupers, giant cuttlefish, wobblygongs and a resident green turtle. Protected and threatened species include weedy seadragons, seagrasses, elegant wrasse and grey nurse sharks.

It was another glorious summer day when Rob and Lucelle achieved their snorkelling feat around Cabbage Tree Bay! There was much to explore and they boldly ventured far from the shore. Lucelle loved it but wanted more! Rather than settle with this enthralling surface experience, she was emboldened to go deeper and learn to dive!

As an emerging local filmmaker, I am privileged to be documenting my friend Lucelle's aquatic quest. Like her, I grew up on Sydney's Northern Beaches and share her and Rob's love of the ocean. Filming their journey is one of the greatest things I have documented. Rob's skills as a dedicated Aquatherapist are matched by Lucelle's perseverance to achieve her dream. They are an amazing team!

The ocean is a wondrous place for all but for Lucelle it's also where she experiences freer mobility and healing respite from muscle aches. On land, she uses a chin-operated wheelchair and endures, at times, pain associated with her Cerebral Palsy. Regular Aquatherapy sessions with Rob help manage this, and, being a natural Mermaid like myself, provide endless mental health benefits.

In addition to pain relief and the joy Aquatherapy brings, the exercises Lucelle does with Rob in the water help build strength in ways she cannot accomplish on land, unassisted in her wheelchair. Overall, the water is her element! It's where she experiences happiness, relief from pain and feels free. She's also passionate about promoting protection of life under the sea!

We all hope my film documenting her journey will showcase the natural beauty of our local marine environment, inspiring others to lovingly explore and protect the ocean – as well as follow their dreams, despite any perceived setbacks.

I strongly believe in the healing powers of water. We all start life essentially as aquatic beings nurtured in our mother's "waters". I think this gives us an

innate affinity with water on Mother Earth. It does, after all, cover a majority of our planet's surface, and comprises most of our being as humans.

Covid has been difficult for all, and it severely impacted Lucelle and Rob's journey. Just one month after Lucelle received her Dive Medical clearance in February 2020, Australia entered our first lockdown. With indoor pools closed, Lucelle's beloved Aquatherapy and Rob's income stream came to a halt. News of the WDHOF grants brightened our pandemic gloom; a promising light to swim for at the end of a dark and uncertain tunnel.

Lucelle is thrilled to be the Hugh Fletcher Memorial Grant recipient, and to be connected to the inspiring WDHOF community. I know firsthand the benefits of motivational networks. I am a scholar of 7-times-world-surfing-champion Layne Beachley's former 'Aim For The Stars'(AFTS) foundation. AFTS encouraged Australian females to pursue their dreams (mine being filmmaking) through what I coined "the AFTS sisSTARhood".

Last year, one of my fellow scholars / sisSTARs (a Marine Conservation Genomicist and Freediver) shared the WDHOF grant details to my AFTS Alumna Facebook Group. Ever grateful and riding a wave of empowerment like Surf Queen Layne; Lucelle, Rob and I dived into this opportunity!

Fantastic news of Lucelle's success came amidst relaxed Covid restrictions in our Merry ol Land of Oz. Rob and Lucelle had resumed routine Aquatherapy sessions and connected with The Scuba Gym on the Central Coast (about an hour's drive north of Sydney). This great organisation offers Scuba Diving classes teaching adaptive scuba to people with disability.

In April 2021, Lucelle, Rob and I made our maiden voyage to The Scuba Gym. Lucelle's first session was a success, and like previous accomplishments – only whet her appetite for more!

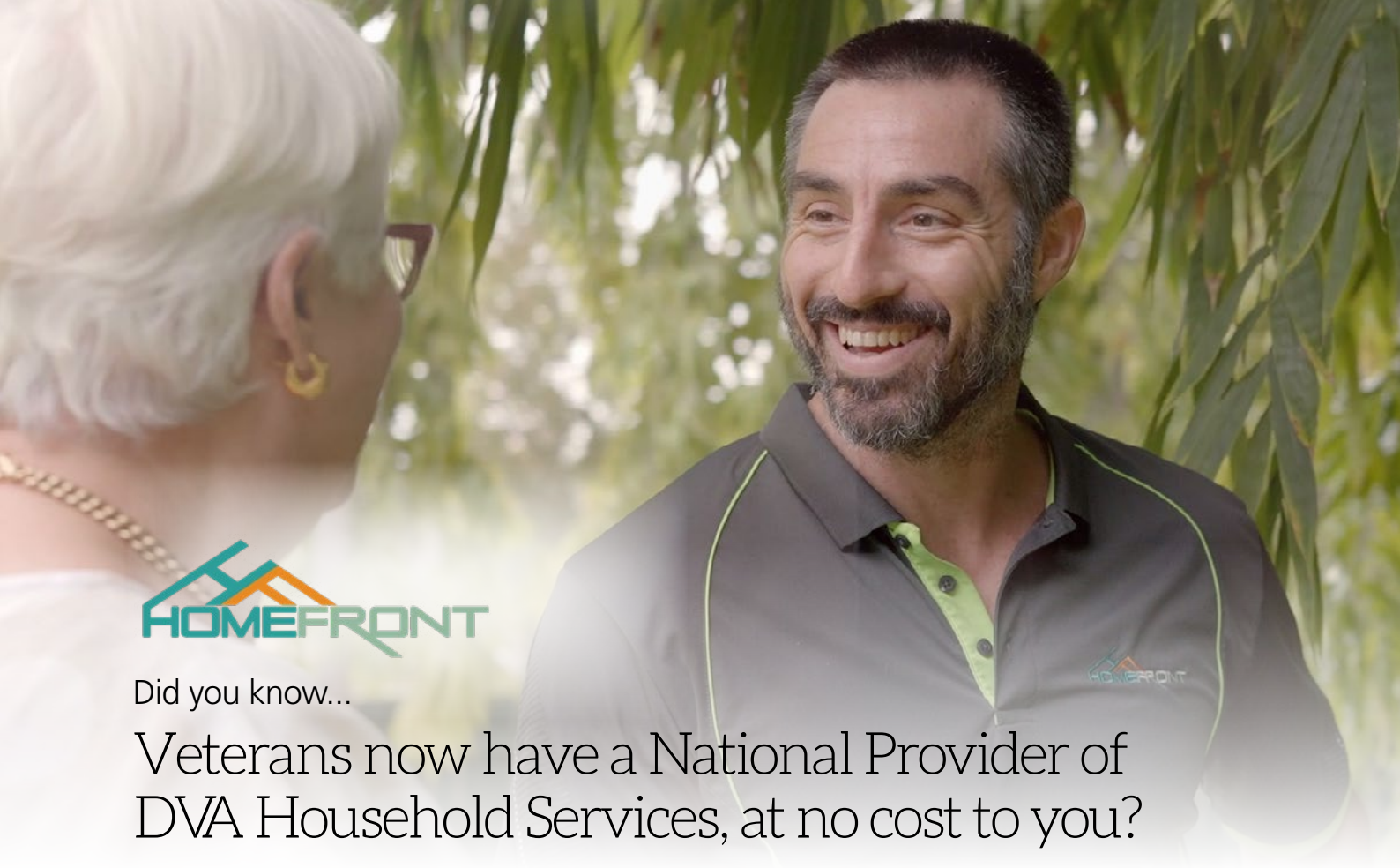
I filmed an interview with founder of The Scuba Gym Lyndi Leggett who remarked how impressed she was with Lucelle's first dive experience, taking to it "like a Mermaid to water".

Lucelle and Rob's next session at The Scuba Gym was another step towards Lucelle's ocean-dive dream. Their 3rd session was booked for 12 July, but unfortunately Covid reared its ugly head again. Greater Sydney was plunged into another lockdown with all indoor pools closed – severely impacting Rob and Lucelle.

The 3 of us are now fully vaccinated, and after over 3 months in lockdown, restrictions are beginning to ease. We are looking forward to getting back on track with Lucelle's dive dream.

That's the story so far from our trio Down Under! JemMer, LuSEA and Rob – two Mermaids and an Aquatherapist make 3! Just like the prongs on Sea God Poseidon's trident; an oceanic trinity. We cannot thank the WDHOF enough for backing our Oz OdysSEA!

**JEMMA PIGOTT**



Did you know...

## Veterans now have a National Provider of DVA Household Services, at no cost to you?

Could you be entitled?

Many Veterans, including younger Veterans, have service injuries making it impossible to stay on top of household chores. Whether from shoulders, backs and knees cruelled in the line of duty, to the constant spectre of anxiety and depression, registering your condition with DVA is the most important part.

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:**

**<https://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.

# HMAS Parramatta II

On 27 November 1941, HMAS Parramatta II was sunk by a German submarine in the Mediterranean Sea near Tobruk.

To mark the 80th anniversary of this day, City of Parramatta Council joined the Naval Association of Australia Sub Section - Parramatta Memorial (NAAPM) in remembering the 138 men of the HMAS Parramatta II who made the supreme sacrifice at a special memorial service.

Wreaths and books were laid in remembrance and a number of special guests were in attendance to pay their respects, including Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales and Mr Dennis Wilson, the Lord Mayor of Parramatta Councillor Steven Issa, Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths AO DSO DSC RAN (RETD) – Patron of NAAPM, Rear Admiral Mark Hammond

AM RAN Commander Australian Fleet, and relatives of those who served with HMAS Parramatta II.

HMAS Parramatta II was built by Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Ltd at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard, Sydney. She was launched on the 10th of June 1939 and commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy on the 8th April 1940 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Jefferson H Walker MVO RAN.

HMAS Parramatta II began her journey on 29 June 1940, leaving Fremantle to sail to the Red Sea, where she spent nine months in torrid conditions undertaking escorting, patrolling and minesweeping

duties. In 1941, she took part in operations against Italian Eritrea, East Africa, and later transferred to the Mediterranean station, escorting supplies to the Allied Forces besieged at Tobruk, thus gaining the nickname 'Tobruk Ferry Service'.

In the morning of 27 November 1941, HMAS Parramatta II was hit by a torpedo launched by the German submarine U-559. The vessel was sunk off Tobruk and 138 crew members were lost in action. Only 24 crew members survived.

City of Parramatta pays tribute to all of our valued servicemen and women, particularly NAAPM and the important role they play in our community.

Council encourages the community to view the online archives and local history stories relating to HMAS Parramatta II that are available to explore. Visit, [cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/hmas-parramatta-ii](http://cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/hmas-parramatta-ii)



L to R: Bruce Richens, President, Parramatta Memorial Sub Section, Naval Association of Australia. Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales. The Right Honourable the former Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Councillor Steven Issa. Rear Admiral Mark Hammond AM RAN, Commander Australian Fleet.

# Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Updates

## Royal commission into defence and veteran suicide ceremonial hearing

On Friday, November 26, The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide held a ceremonial hearing to mark the official start of public hearings.

Members of the Defence and veteran community, their families and support services attended the hearing at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, which began with a traditional welcome to country and smoking ceremony by Songwoman Maroochy and Auntie Kathy.

During the ceremony, Royal Commission Chair Nick Kaldas APM acknowledged the “tireless efforts” of family members and key advocates to bring the tragic issue of Defence and veteran suicide to the nation’s attention. Commissioner Kaldas told the hearing the inquiry represented a once-in-a-generation opportunity to turn the harrowing statistics around. “To those affected by suicide, and on behalf of this Royal Commission, I make this promise: we will listen with empathy, we will act with compassion – and without fear or favour – and we will learn from your stories in order to make a real difference to the lives of serving and former personnel, and their families,” Commissioner Kaldas said. “I believe that we are a nation that recognises and values the contribution and sacrifice made by our military personnel. And so, we

must meet the challenge of raising the welfare and wellbeing of the defence and veteran community.”

Commissioner Kaldas said the Royal Commission would expose systemic issues and risk factors related to Defence and veteran deaths by suicide, and address these issues and risks to reduce and prevent future deaths. Commissioner James Douglas QC said the inquiry’s terms of reference were broad and would examine contributing factors, including those in a Defence member’s life before, during and after their service. “We must examine the culture within the Australian Defence Force, the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and any systemic issues concerning how Defence members and veterans engage with those Departments,” the former Queensland Supreme Court judge said.

Commissioner Peggy Brown AO said compassion and accountability would be central to the inquiry. “I believe we need to recognise that to those who are suicidal or who end their life by suicide, this seems like the solution. It is their final devastating solution to an underlying problem, or problems which, despite all of their efforts, they have not been able to remedy,” she said. Commissioner Brown, a psychiatrist and former

chief executive of the National Mental Health Commission, said the job of the Royal Commission was to identify the “real root of the problem” causing people to think “there is no other option” than to end their life. The Royal Commission began hearing from its first witnesses with lived experience during a two-week hearing in Brisbane, that began on Monday, 29 November. The inquiry held five roundtable events earlier in November in Brisbane, hearing from support and advocacy organisations, mental health experts, researchers and practitioners. It has also begun conducting private sessions with those who wish to tell their story to a Commissioner.

The Royal Commission has so far received more than 600 written submissions from organisations and individuals. People are encouraged to share their experiences by making a submission. People with lived experience of defence and veteran suicide are also invited to apply for a private session, if that is their preference. Private sessions will run for the duration of the Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission was established on 8 July 2021, to address the high suicide rates among those who have served in the Australian Defence Force. The Royal Commission will produce an interim report by 11 August 2022 and a final report by 15 June 2023.

## Royal commission announces further hearing locations

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has announced public hearings will be conducted in Sydney, Canberra, Townsville and Wagga Wagga.

More details will be available once dates have been confirmed.

The announcement was made in Brisbane, November 29, at the first public hearing to hear evidence from witnesses. In his opening address, Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission, Kevin Connor SC, said for many veterans, Defence service was an “enriching experience from which they progressed to other fulfilling roles and careers”. “Unfortunately for others, this is not their reality. They suffer and their families and loved ones suffer.”

Mr Connor revealed two public hearings will take place in Sydney, in February and March. The February hearing will run for 10 days. Mr Connor also confirmed the Royal Commission would conduct hearings in locations where ADF facilities were located. These include: - Wagga Wagga, where the Army Recruit Training Centre is located Kapooka - Townsville, where the Lavarack Army Barracks and a Royal Australian Air Force Base are located. - Canberra, which is home to the Royal Military College Duntroon, the Australian Defence Force Academy and the Departments of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs.

## Royal commission into defence and veteran suicide

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide heard its first witnesses during a public hearing that began in Brisbane on November 29.

The hearing, held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, was the first public hearing since the Royal Commission was announced on 8 July 2021. It will hear from witnesses with lived experience of suicide, including family members of Defence personnel who have taken their life. Royal Commission Chair Nick Kaldas said the Brisbane hearing represented the first of many public hearings to be held in capital cities and regional centres across Australia. “We want to hear from as many people affected by Defence and veteran suicide as possible,” Commissioner Kaldas said. “Your stories will help the Commission identify the systemic issues and risk factors for suicide, to address these issues to help reduce the suicide rate among serving and former military personnel.”

Commissioner Kaldas acknowledged the Brisbane hearing may contain material and images that could be distressing for those attending or watching the livestream and said support would be available. Royal Commission counsellors will be onsite and anyone who needs support can call 1800 329 095.





**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 Tasic, 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

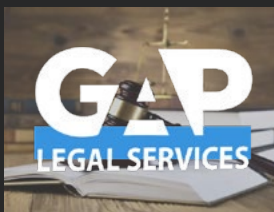
**Registered General Nurse** and Psychiatric (Mental Health Nurse)

**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



## CONTACT DETAILS:

Phone: (02) 6239 3066 | ABN: 35 649 353 471

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Unit 7, 24 Iron Knob Street Fyshwick ACT 2609

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



...The life of an independent publisher is 100% pressure and 100% relief. Both precincts are visited, daily. Tonight, I'll do the martini. I'll do dinner. I'll do some writing. And, as soon as we get this latest edition out, I'll start to ease into my six-weeks off...

Perhaps I had better become comfortable with doing nothing. For a while at least. In the meantime, tonight it's the David Gulpill tribute. With the help of Black and White Publicity, we're putting together something special. That's what makes the whole thing worthwhile...

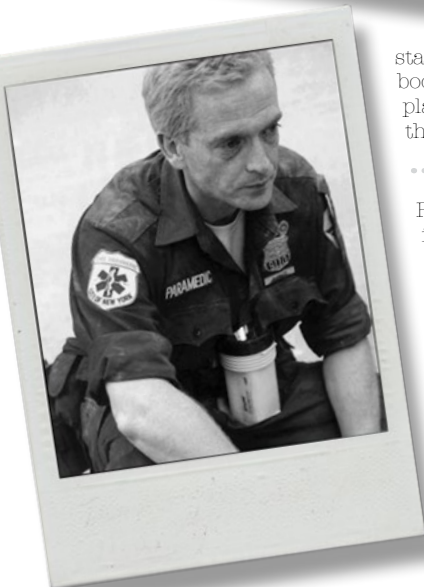
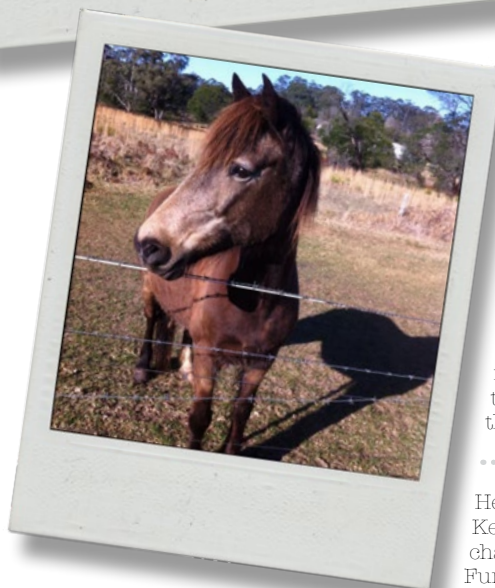
So today, I finished work (for the time being) headed to the beach. In the distance, lightening. I hoped I hadn't left it too late. But the sun came out and I went into the water. Gracefully question mark bodysurfed a few waves and laid myself out on the sand. On the ride home, drops of rain. Here, in the kitchen, it's starting to get prematurely dark. Ella Fitzgerald playing. Ooh Baby. Lightening and thunder, closer now. Jack the dog, barking...



In Melbourne soon. Then home, then Sydney, then north. I'm looking forward to the break. Meanwhile, on the radio tonight and before that, more work to be done. A mish-mash dinner tonight, but a tasty mish-mash. Starting to rain heavily now. Hang on, that's hail. Leon Bridges playing. Photos from the beach today, and photos from the journey...

Here, I've just finished editing the Paul Kennedy interview. I think the thing about this chat, on the back of his coming-of-age memoir Funkytown, was the discussion on transference from boy to man. Of the influence of good literature on one's life. And, the fact that we'd both started our careers as copy-boys. That may be worth a book in itself. Meanwhile, the sun is shining. Labi Siffre playing and the coffee is on. When push comes to shove, this is the beautiful oil that keeps the wheels turning...

Roger is a Belfast-born Ambo and was a first-responder in the 9/11 Twin Towers in New York. He showed me an amazing array of photos he had taken on the day. And a photo too, of Roger after emerging from a dust/smoke cloud that engulfed him. At the time, Roger and his workmates had been standing 300 metres from Tower One, the second tower to collapse. They had nine-seconds to find safety. They fled, on foot. There was no organisation in the escape, just panic. Inside the cloud, Roger heard debris being ricocheting around him. Metal debris that would slice you in two. Or three. He told himself he didn't want to die. So, here he is, now living in Australia. Here he is, moments after emerging from the cloud that swept through the streets of NYC. All those years ago...





The glory of it all. This afternoon I took Vespa down to Long Beach, to de-stress and there was surf. Two-foot pearlers coming through amongst the mushburgers. I contemplated returning home to get the car and board. But that can wait until tomorrow. On the beach, dogs and their owners and swimmers. I drifted off. I woke and rode Vespa back home. I opened the bar.

.....

Dispatches from the north coast -  
The temperature has dropped. The rain is constant. The fire is on. The beanie is on. The scarf is on. In town, vegetarian pies and a visit to the post office. Mau on the phone. Tim stoking. I worked this afternoon. Maybe the thought of "not working"

for a couple of weeks is actually not a plan but a dream.

Tomorrow seems light years away. I have a martini. The loving selfishness of living. Take care of yourself before hoping to help others. Listening to Japanese Breakfast...

.....

I drove through Nowra. I had thoughts of taking Vespa to the beach, when I got home. Then the rain set in. Heavy rain and slippery roads. I slowed down. I dismissed the beach idea. Back home, I collected mail (mostly books), unpacked and did a load of washing. I attempted to have a sleep. I nodded off for maybe ten minutes...

.....

As I make a cup of tea in the gatehouse, Sting's Fragile comes on. It's cool. Delightfully cool. Outside, the property and the forest and the chattering of waking birds. Almost all quiet but for my footsteps across the kitchen floor. A walk outside. The welcome cool. I can hear the kettle boiling. Following my forgiving footsteps back inside.



.....

Along the way, you will meet great challengers. But great things will happen to you, too... This morning, grey skies and rain. I decided to take it easy. I had a couple of Zoom's on in the afternoon and a client I had to ring. Apart from that, I was going to give myself some space. Shopping for dinner. I saw a woman in the supermarket, not wearing a mask. I got back in time for my Zoom's. After, I made a martini. I sent off an SMS. In the kitchen. Pizza tonight. Chopped garlic on the breadboard. Talk Talk playing...





# Sailing the Stella Mia

For Sabrina and Dierk Meyerheinrich, winter means escaping the Melbourne weather and sailing the Mediterranean in their Beneteau Oceanis 45, 'Stella Mia'.





***Why did you choose an Oceanis 45?***

Sabrina: We'd been going to boat shows for a long time and we just had so many questions. We couldn't make up our minds whether to buy a new one or a second hand one or just to charter.

When we saw the Oceanis 45, I just fell in love with it. Dierk said, 'Don't even think about it. It's way out of our reach and it would never sail any good. Not with that wide stern.'

We kept coming back to it, though. After talking with Michael Coxon, we realized that with the exchange rate at the time, the value of the boat and the warranty that comes with a new yacht, it was actually much better value than any of the other options we had thought about.

We signed up just a couple of days later.

Dierk laughs: And it does sail REALLY well!

***What was the inspiration for this life on the ocean?***

Dierk: For me, sailing, surfing, sailboarding, and fishing were my passion from the time I was a child. Years later I was extremely lucky to marry the love of my life, Sabrina. Man, how lucky! She is not only my best friend but shares an equal passion for the sea.

In 2010, Sabrina and I bareboat chartered a yacht in the Greek Islands and that caused us to reconsider our future. Then with our two boys forging their own lives, the 'oldies' were free to escape for a few months every year and go sailing.

Sabrina: I've grown up with sailing all my life. My dad came to Australia for the 1956 Olympics for Italy – the Star class of sailing. And he ended up staying here. My dad's done a lot of catamaran sailing – he was an Australian catamaran champion for a while. We've both done a lot of sailing over the years, so it's not new to us.

### **How was the Mediterranean handover?**

Sabrina: We picked up Stella Mia in Canet en Roussillon in the south of France, in June 2013. Michael Coxon was there – he was wonderful. He stayed for about two weeks and it was just incredible.

Dierk: It's one of the things when you're going overseas and doing what we did, you know nothing. We can sail, but we've done nothing over there with regard to the culture, the politics, the rules, regulations. Flagstaff Marine helps you with all of that.

There are some rules that you've got to abide by, otherwise, you have to pay VAT on the boat, which is 25% of the purchase price – that's a lot of money!

Flagstaff also gives ongoing support, which saves a whole lot of heartache. They've always been very helpful. If we buy another boat we'd go through them again.

### **How was Stella Mia's maiden voyage?**

Dierk: During the handover, the Mistral winds blew down from the Pyrenees and they were blowing so hard we couldn't get Stella Mia out for many days.

When we did take her out on the maiden voyage it was still windy. We started out at 20 knots and it ended up at 35 knots.

I said, 'If anything's going to break, it'll break now.' So, we thought yeah, that's good. And of course, nothing broke – it was all good. The boat handled beautifully.

### **Were there any difficult moments?**

Dierk: We did have one disaster – we hit a rock once. In Sardinia, about three years ago. It wasn't serious; we got it lifted and had her checked ... she'd survived remarkably well. In the end, we had just skimmed the rock.

Sabrina: It was a loud thump. It was an uncharted rock. That's what you've got to be careful with, there's a lot of uncharted rock around.

Dierk: Other than skimming the rock we've never had any problems with this boat whatsoever.

Dierk: We tend to stay out at anchor rather than go into a marina – they're very crowded.

Sabrina: You're right next door to everyone.

Dierk: With a boat in the Mediterranean they really shoehorn you. And it can be expensive. The most expensive marina was in Port o Sieno about three years ago. We paid €140 a night, but at the other extreme, in the public quays in Greece you're paying only €8.

If you go to anchor in most cases it's free, unless it's Croatia where a bloke comes along to your boat and charges you just for the pleasure of anchoring!

### **How self-sufficient are you on Stella Mia?**

Dierk: The power comes from solar panels and a wind generator. If we run into a bit of a deficit, we use our Honda generator, so we're self-sufficient for quite a while, so we can stay out for a couple of weeks at a time.

We have a fridge and freezer – they're the main things, but of course, they take the most power. We have our own power; a wind generator and we installed some bigger batteries. Water's our only limiting factor, but we can hold about 700 liters of water. At home, we use 400 liters a day. But on the boat, 400 liters would last us five or six days.

Sabrina: We've got storage under the floor as well where we put a lot of our drinks and things under there.

We bought two little bikes, so when we go into a port we find out where the supermarket is, and we've got a little trolley, so we chug off with our little bikes and our trolley and buy whatever we need.

### **What's inside Stella Mia?**

Dierk: We have three double cabins, one up forward with an en suite and there's another toilet and bathroom at the back that's connected to one of the other double cabins at the back. And there's another serviced cabin as well.

She sleeps six comfortably, but we've had 12 on board – sleeping on decks and all that kind of stuff.

Sabrina: When we had our two sons here visiting, their mates found out they were with us, so they all crashed here. It's very comfortable.

### **How do you keep in touch with friends while you're away?**

Sabrina: We do have a lot of family and friends come and visit, so that's always really special. We've had people on the Stella Mia who have had hard times and it's good to see them having a good time.

A lot of them are very apprehensive when they come on board and they think they're going to be seasick. But they end up crying when they're leaving, saying, 'This is the best holiday we've had, ever. Can we come back?'

Dierk: And we almost always have an internet connection, so keeping in touch is never a problem.

### **How do you cope with being back in Melbourne after the winter escape?**

Dierk: We have some other business interests, so we take care of them once we're home. They're not overly burdensome, but our house needs a lot of work because we're renovating at the moment. We do a lot of sailboarding and surfing in the other times. We've got a little beach shack and a little boatshed on the beach here in Melbourne.

Then there's the kids and our parents are getting older, so there's plenty to do. I look forward to coming home, though.

Sabrina: Dierk gets homesick, but I don't. I do miss my family a lot, but not to the point where I miss them so much that I need to go home.

I actually cry when I have to leave. I get so upset. I kiss the rudder – it's got lipstick marks all over it that don't come off!

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE YEARS AHEAD?**

Dierk: In a few years we might sail Stella Mia back to Australia. If we do, it'll probably stay in the Caribbean for a while before crossing the Pacific in a leisurely way.

And then – probably – we'll eventually come back to Melbourne. The Whitsundays and Port Stephens are also on the bucket list.

### **Does it give you a different perspective on life?**

Dierk: This has certainly changed our lives. You think Europe's been around a long time, but there's a lot of places that don't have much at all and what the people do with what they have is just incredible.

They're still cooking in little ovens and they grow their own fruit and vegetables. It's no wonder they live so long, they just eat really healthy food. And they walk a lot, especially in the islands.

Sabrina: It's the best thing we've ever done.

### **Last words**

Dierk: It's an unintended consequence of something like this, that while it's a little bit daunting at the beginning, and you're sailing in waters you've never seen before, it does change how you view things.

Sabrina: You develop a newfound respect for the environment and just looking after our planet. Every time I'm out on a sailboard or a paddleboard I'm always trying to pick up rubbish in the sea. I think it's really important to get the message out there to really look after our oceans. They're the only ones we've got, and they need to be passed onto the next generation in a state that they can enjoy them as well.

Dierk: I always walk on the pier down here at Morningson, pick up fishing lines that people throw out, so birds don't get tangled up. I found a young albatross that got caught in a fishing line – it was just terrible. ■



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RSL NSW exists to support all veterans and their families. The DFCL benefits are now being offered to all veterans and their immediate family members, including parents partners and children.

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# Discover Robe

Those who visit here and those who live here all agree on one thing. Robe is a special place. I'm the Mayor so I could be biased, but I don't think so.

I've spent countless hours trying to work out exactly what it is that resonates with the people who choose to spend their time here and this is what I've come up with. Robe is something different to each of us and it genuinely has something for everyone.

You can be as quiet, solitary and engaged in nature as you like, or you can be surrounded by music, people, food, wine and beer while you shop to your hearts content. Or you can do both within the space of half an hour. It's up to you.

Robe is a "little big town". There are about 1000 full time residents year-round and yet it swells seamlessly (well mostly) to about 15,000 in the summer peak.

It doesn't seem like that long ago that the ebb and flow of our town was as natural as the tides. Summer was busy, with the biggest decision to make was whether to go to Long Beach or Front Beach for a swim. The shacks filled with their owners and summer friendships were reestablished. Winter was just the locals with football and netball taking priority over just about everything else. Our fishermen would help out our farmers in the cold winter months when they had finished fishing (they were easy to spot as they wore their signature white rubber boots as they stood around the lamb marking cradle) or they'd go north to find the sun.

During the summer, fishermen and farmers would reconvene in the front bar of the pub to discuss their fortunes... or lack thereof.

This is an old pattern of life which still occurs today in our town, surrounded by the hustle and energy of our visitors who choose Robe as their summer home. Or their autumn home, their winter home or their spring home. If there is one thing Covid-19 has done, it's brought people to our town all year round.

We are a strong, proactive small community and live in a beautiful part of the world. We get to share it with lots of people who help to make us prosperous and diverse. We are blessed.

There are many tales of those who have come here for a holiday and stayed. Others have been coming for generations and have now made it their home.

We, like the rest of the world, face the challenges of managing change. These are not simple times. There are no easy answers to many of the current questions being posed.

One thing that is easy though, is enjoying the many faces of Robe. Enjoy it for its history, enjoy it for its beauty, enjoy it for its livability but most of all, enjoy being part of a great community. Our people will draw you in with their passion for Robe and the stories of how they came to live here.

And keep an eye out for the old patterns of life from which our town was born. These glimpses of who we are will tell you more than any brochure.

**ALISON NUNAN**  
*Mayor, Robe*



Robe, Photo by Jacqui Bateman.



TRAVEL

Robe, Photo by Jacqui Bateman.



Robe Personalities



Sky View of Robe

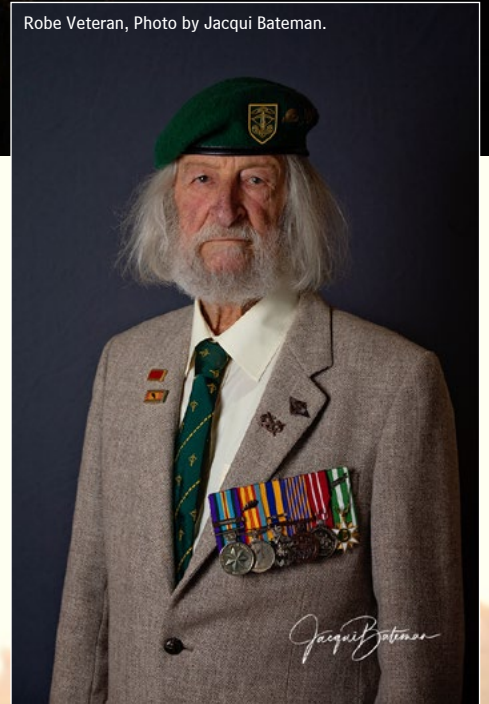


Rural Robe, Photo by Jacqui Bateman.



Jacqui Bateman  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Robe Veteran, Photo by Jacqui Bateman.



Jacqui Bateman



# Jacqui Bateman

Other than raising a family and being a partner in a farming business, photography has been the life of Robe's Jacqui Bateman. Her life work and her craft.

But Jacqui, with her collection of striking photos, is not for Robe, but for all of us.

A country girl in every aspect and a fierce advocate for our agricultural industry and those who work in it, our diggers, our incredible country and our way of life.

Living in Robe - one of the most beautiful coastal locations on earth - Jacqui finds new inspiration every day in her surroundings.

People, animals and agriculture - the things closest to her heart - are favourite subjects, along with this beautiful diversity of the country we live in. Everyone in this wide brown land has a story to tell and Jacqui articulates that through her images.

Although a regular traveller overseas - until COVID hit, and a fan of immersing herself into another country's culture, making new friends and living new experiences, at the end of the day, Jacqui finds nothing better than the feeling of returning home.

Jacqui speaks through her images. Telling stories through her lens: Images allowing us to re-live moments in our lives and preserving them for future generations, as tangible evidence of how we lived and how we loved. She brings something new to our experiences.

Jacqui Bateman on her horse Merlin in Robe.



BELOW: Shorthorn Sunset, Photo by Jacqui Bateman.



# Winton, Queensland

Dinosaur Capital of Australia, home of Waltzing Matilda, Queensland boulder opal and the birthplace of Qantas.

## **Winton's Spirit of Service**

The Winton region is believed to have one of the highest enlistment rates per capita for World War One. From a population of 2500 around 600 men and women enlisted from the district. The Walkway Of Honour was constructed in 2018 – the ANZAC centenary – a fitting tribute to the districts fallen service men and women.

## **5 things to see and do in and around Winton**

### **Australian Age of Dinosaurs**

The Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum, located on The Jump-Up, is home to the largest collection of Australian dinosaur fossils in the world and is Australia's first International Dark-Sky Sanctuary. The Ultimate Dinosaur tour includes a guided tour of the Fossil Preparation Laboratory, Collection Room and March of the Titanosaurs exhibition and a self-guided walk of Dinosaur Canyon. Getting there is easy, the museum is located just 25km south-east of Winton on the Landsborough Highway.

### **Waltzing Matilda Centre**

If there is one song that lives in the hearts of all Australians, it is "Waltzing Matilda". The Waltzing Matilda Centre is the first museum in the world dedicated to a song, boasting state-of-the-art interpretation telling the story of Waltzing Matilda, Winton and the outback region.

The museum opened in April 1998 and was devastatingly destroyed by fire in June 2015, before being rebuilt and re-opened in April 2018, and is the pride of Winton and Outback Queensland once more. The Centre is a landmark celebrating Winton's resilience and over the years has earned a place in the hearts of many Australians and visitors from around the world.

### **The Royal Theatre Winton**

Established in 1918, Australia's most iconic open-air theatre is one of only two of its kind still operating in Australia. The Royal Theatre on the main street of Winton operates seasonal programs, including screenings of current releases, classics of yesteryear, Australian and Nostalgia Nights, reliving the history of the golden age of cinema. Discover the history of Australian cinema while learning about the theatre's unique past and its place within Winton's local culture at the theatre's museum.

### **Dinosaur Stampede**

The Dinosaur trackways at Dinosaur Stampede National Monument were formed 95 million years ago when Outback Queensland was a vastly different place. It's now home to the only known dinosaur stampede in the world. A herd of at least 150 small two-legged dinosaurs came to drink at the edge of a lake. Over 3,300 footprints of these long-extinct dinosaurs are scattered over the rock face, stark evidence of the terror they must have experienced as they fled the scene upon the arrival of a large theropod.

### **Opalton, Home of Queensland's Boulder Opal**

Opalton is situated 123km from Winton. It is one of the largest opal fields in Queensland and is known for the quality of opal mined. It is believed that opal was first discovered by George Cragg, a stockman from Warrnambool Station, in 1888. Opalton was once a bustling township with more than 600 men working the opal field. Now the population has dwindled to approximately 25 today. In 1899, the largest piece of pipe opal ever recorded was discovered at Opalton, it was over three metres long and rumoured to be as thick as a man's leg.

## **WINTON VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE**

Waltzing Matilda Centre,  
50 Elderslie Street, Winton

1300 665 115  
[experiencewinton.com.au](http://experiencewinton.com.au)



Photo by TeQ.



Photo by TeQ.





# The Royal Theatre, Winton

The Royal Theatre Winton was established in 1918 as a small theatre attached to the back of the Royal Mail Hotel. In 1938 the theatre was purchased by John Thomas William Evert (Bill) and two weeks later a fire in the projector room burnt down the theatre, the Royal Mail Hotel and much of the block.

The theatre has been in the Evert family since this time and in 2019 a small not for profit organisation called Winton Movies Inc (WMI) was established to bring the Royal Theatre Winton back to life. The not-for-profit group consists of passionate volunteers from the community and the extended Evert family.

This iconic 103-year-old theatre is just one of two operating open-air theatres left in Australia and it carries a legacy of innovation, which is why it is still operating today.

In 1930, as one of four open-air theatres in Winton, it was the first to introduce the 'Talkies'. Until this time, only silent films were seen in Winton.

After the fire of 1938, the latest cinematic equipment was purchased from Brisbane and The Royal Theatre became the largest cinema in town and introduced colour. Proprietor Bill Evert was determined to rebuild before Christmas and it took just two months to have the theatre operating again. The floor is built on the bricks from the original Royal Mail Hotel and he built a retail precinct on the street front to diversify revenue.

In 1940, a skating rink was added in the theatre as another drawcard to the theatre and it screened *Gone With The Wind* in Technicolour. During this golden age of cinema, The Royal would host sell-out crowds of over 700 people on a Saturday night. The onsite museum showcases the original ticketing system used in the theatre.

As part of the war effort, Mr Evert donated the use of The Royal to the Winton sub-branch of the RSSAILA and army supplies were stored in the theatre. The Commonwealth Government recognised Mr Evert's contribution to the War Effort with a certificate that is on display in the theatre.

In 1964, Bill Evert's son Vince bought the theatre following the death of his father. Known as the Father of Tourism in Western Queensland, Vince passed away in 1998 and his brother Peter Evert took over the custodianship of the theatre.

The theatre has been the centre of the social history of Winton and the volunteers at WMI have a passion to carry on this legacy and a vision for The Royal to be a cultural epicentre for the Queensland Outback.



Regular programs run from March to October, including tours and a museum.  
Follow the Theatre on Facebook and learn more on the website.

[facebook.com/wintonmoviesinc](https://facebook.com/wintonmoviesinc) [royaltheatrewinton.com.au](http://royaltheatrewinton.com.au)

# John Ogden

PODCASTS: [www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews)

John “Oggy” Ogden is an Australian photographer, cinematographer, writer and publisher, whose wide-ranging career has encompassed producing television commercials, international documentary making, music video production, drama, and fine art photography.

*Greg T Ross:* John Ogden, welcome to the Last Post. We're here, for those listening and reading, to talk with John Ogden, who has produced this beautiful book, *Waterproof*, which is a collection of the work of some of Australia's great surfing photography and a forward from Tom Carroll too, John. It really is an amazing book, covering Australian surfing, I think, since 1858, the photography?

*John Ogden:* Yeah, that's right. That actually ... the subtitle came in, Australian Surf Photography Since 1858 is quite provocative. Some people think of surf photography as just being the era of standup boards or even the era of professional surfing. But I took a pretty wide lens. So it was going to be about anyone who's attempted and succeeded in photographing the surf zone. So where ocean swells become surf, where they'd come in contact with the coastline. And about a month before publishing it, the earliest photograph I could find was in the 1880s that shot of Coogee, and then I found this one from the state library of Victoria, 1858, which just gobsmacked me cause it's quite a beautiful picture. From Jan Juc we're getting cross Bird Rock towards the Winky Pop Headland and Bells Beach just around the corner. So 1858 Melbourne, was only found in 1835. The first photograph ever taken in Australia was 1841. So we're talking pretty early. It would've been just a goat track down to Jan Jac those days and these big glass plate cameras where you needed basically to take the cap off lens and hold a 1, 2, 3 count to probably 30 seconds and put the cap back on. So all the waves just like mist because of the time exposure. But it's a gorgeous photograph. So, that's where the subtitle came from.

*GTR:* Thanks for going through that, too, I was wondering about that myself and I was going to talk to you about that. I think with surfing photography, your collection of beautiful photos here, Australian surfing photography, what makes a good surf photographer? John, is there a subculture or is there a type of person, I guess they're united by the love of the ocean, but is there a particular person or a type that is attracted or good at surf photography?

*JO:* It's a good question. I mean, there's two parts to the question, what makes a good surf photographer, for one, and the other one is what makes a good surf photographer. It's no hard and fast rule. One thing that they probably united on, they're all pretty quirky characters. Some are so quirky to the extent of having schizophrenia, and that sort of creative genius may come out of that, but some are quite conservative in their own ways. And there's another group that were surfers who got injured and in their injury time, they took up surf photography and sometimes didn't go back to surfing or they became just part of what they were doing. They became surf photographers. And that was the case with Tom Carroll and why he was ideally poised to write the foreword. He was obviously a champion, two times world champion, but he was injured at one stage and started taking photos. And he has always been intrigued by light and how it worked on the waves. So he wrote quite an eloquent foreword, but he not only had been a photographer, but he's had to deal with a variety of photographers, some good and some not so good, it got in the way during contests and that sort of thing. So, he sort of covered all gamuts of it really.

*GTR:* I have heard some stories about Tom and that's interesting that he's provided that brilliant foreword and an example too, of how close the surfing community is to the photographers that take those photos. What's your relationship with the ocean, John? And I suppose that leads into what made you want to produce this book. So firstly, I guess, what's your relationship? How did that start with the ocean?

*JO:* I grew up in South Australia, in the calmer waters the St. Vincent Gulf. So, in the suburb of Adelaide called Brighton. So the only time we really got waves was during storms, so we were storm riders and they were never that great a wave. And that's where it sort of started. When I was probably in the late fifties, my dad made what's called a toothpick, the 18 foot hollow plywood boards. He would just make them in the garage. He was a carpenter after the war for a short time and quite skilled with his hands. And that was a beast of a board, 18 foot long. And me and my eight year old mate used to have to build a little trolley out of bike wheels to get it down to the beach and you have to get the water out of it at the end of the day. But then my parents didn't really want to encourage surfing because surfers were seen as kind of rat bags in those days, probably for good cause. And they were fairly conservative Catholic family I came from. But gradually I wore them down. There was never a lot of money around, it wasn't a rich family. It took me ages to get money for surfboards and things. But it's a bit like an addiction once you have those highs from surfing, you never want to... You probably spend the rest of your life trying to recapture them. You know what I mean?

*GTR:* Yes, indeed. Beautiful. So, with Adelaide, we lived in Brighton for a



# WATERPROOF

AUSTRALIAN SURF PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE 1858



**JOHN OGDEN**

while, too, my family, in Sturt Road, I think it was. We used to go down to Brighton and jump off the jetty before school, during summer. And of course, I've lived there too as an adult and I know that I have seen some surf there during storms. Did you get as far down south as the mid south coast?

*JO:* Yeah. Well, that was the Mecca for those days. Its like if you get to the mid south coast and if you could to the south coast to go down to...

*GTR:* Middleton?

*JO:* ...yes, that was gold. If you could do it. And I still have really fond memories of really good days at those places. But because of the placement of Kangaroo Island, as you know, is virtually blocking entrance to St. Vincent's Gulf. You had to just depend on swells that managed to sneak around the corner between the island and the head. So, there were limited amounts of times you had a good swell. So, where I live now in Avalon that used to always feature in magazines in the 60s and I always thought well, I'd love to go there and finally, I did move up here.

*GTR:* Isn't that interesting? It's a similar journey from mine. I remember reading Tracks and Surfing World in the early 70s and then still living in Adelaide, left Adelaide in '73. It became a romanticized east coast and just being given the opportunity to surf some of those spots, John, it was almost like stepping onto the set of a movie or something because it was culturally significant.

*JO:* Well, it's funny cause I've just finished... I've been working after, well almost at the same time I was doing Waterproof, I started doing the structural editing on a book by Steven Cooney, and it's just about to come out, should arrive in Australia in the middle of December, but in time for the 50th anniversary of Morning of the Earth in February. Which is a pivotal, seminal film in surfing. I think it's still in the hundred best films by the National Film and Sound Archive. And Steven was telling his story, how his family got to Collaroy and how his mum went to the headmaster and said, my son doesn't want to go to school anymore, though it was illegal to leave school early. And I thought, gee, I wish my mom had done that. But he was there

when Collaroy became the centre of the surfing universe for a second, when Nat Young won the world title in '67 and they were doing all the short board experiments, test driving boards out at Long Reef. So he was there and that's a brilliant kind of...

*GTR:* I'm envious of him.

*JO:* But yeah, I was getting all that via magazines. And when I left school, the first round, it was to move up to east coast and stayed at Angourie for a while and went to the other sacred places of surfing along the east coast. And that was it, that was done. I don't think... South Australia was definitely second place after that. I think I didn't leave it entirely, after I got pulled up for national service, which it was the last call up and I didn't go to the call up, but around that time I started working at a tuna fisherman over at Streaky Bay, in the old days, when you pulled tuna. And on the off season after I've made some money, it's a bit like Summer of the 17th Doll, you go and blow it, blow all your money. So, used to go up to Asia or wherever, but one winter we spent the whole winter at Cactus, just

Swimwear shoot, using boards from the Manly Life Saving Club, 1940s. Photograph by Ray Leighton. Image courtesy Betty Leighton.



"WHEN IT IN THE LATE FIFTIES, MY DAD MADE A TOOTHPICK, THE 18 FOOT HOLLOW PLYWOOD BOARDS. HE WOULD JUST MAKE THEM IN THE GARAGE. AND THAT WAS A BEAST OF A BOARD, 18 FOOT LONG...ME AND MY MATE USED TO HAVE TO BUILD A LITTLE TROLLEY OUT OF BIKE WHEELS TO GET IT DOWN TO THE BEACH."



Russell Bierke, 2016. Photograph by Leroy Bellet.

built little huts and lived in the sand dunes. I think it's in the winter of '73 or '74. And contributed towards that book, *Cactus*, I don't know if you ever saw it? But it was just republished it under Cyclops Press recently. It's a really nice book. John Witzig called it arguably the best book on surfing ever published in Australia. So that was...

*GTR*: Actually, I have heard someone said the same thing. I think Murray Walding, a friend of mine had said something about that book. Someone, I know had said that it was a good book to read and to appreciate. I remember Streaky Bay, my brother and I went there to visit a friend who'd moved from Adelaide in the winter of '73. So we weren't that far apart of that stage, its an incredible area. So, where did surfing come from John, and when did it arrive in Australia or generally agreed. What happened there?

*JO*: Well, I pursued that a little bit in this book, but in earlier books, I did the *Saltwater People*, books, the companion books, they won a Maritime History Prize, but I was doing the history of the coastline of the Sydney Basin, so one book was the northern side of the harbour and the other one was the south side. So I kind of looked in and I was really keen. I studied Aboriginal mythology and a few other things at university and I was always interested in Aboriginal culture. So, like a lot of people, I didn't really know a lot about the coastal clans around Sydney. And a lot of the information was lost because they were the first clans to be impacted when the, call it

an invasion, when the first fleet arrived because Europeans arrived in numbers and basically smallpox and pressures with the population, the coastal clans were pretty well decimated within two years of the first fleet arriving. So no one was bothered to really keep the stories. But there are a few stories because especially on the south side the Dharawal language group, they moved down the coast towards Eden and some of those stories are more intact on the north side with the Darug people, but I've got enough stories and enough information to understand that if you live along the coastline for 10,000 years, you're going to pick up a few skills. So they're gifted swimmers. Some of them would body surf using bits of wood and that kind of thing. They used to go out, they'd be spotted out at sea two miles out at sea in these flimsy bark canoes with a little fire going in there, cooking the fish as they ate it. Sometimes with a baby inside, husband and wife with a baby in two in of these canoes. They're very proficient. And sometimes coming in, there's actually an account, a near fairy barrel of coming in on canoes and riding the swells. Not the breaking waves, but getting a lift of the swells into the little beach there at Shelly beach behind [Manly]. So, there were Aboriginal people, you wouldn't call them surface I guess, but they are water people. New Zealanders are very proud of their Maori culture and the skills that the Maori had as navigators and skilled water people. But we haven't really... A lot of people when I said, did you know, the Aborigines surf, they said, no, mate, they were scared

of water. And that'd be true if you were a desert Aboriginal living in the interior, but the coastal clans, they weren't nomadic that they moved totally out of the area. They were always in that kind of area and they did have these skills. So I acknowledge them as the first surfers in Australia. In terms of surf craft. It wasn't really till probably the turn of the century, it was only in the 1880s, 1890s, where Europeans started to become interested in the beach, but they'd be wading, roll up their skirts or pants and wade. Was probably not till late in the 1880s before people started going to water. And that was actually encouraged by a couple of South Sea Islanders, like Tommy Tanner, which is a nickname, Alec Wickham, his brother who were great swimmers who introduced the Australian crawl over arms stroke. So it's basically South Sea Islanders who got things going there, showed us how to body surf, showed us how to swim properly. And then we quickly caught on. So, the earliest photograph of someone surfing is 1909 taken at Yamba of, I can't remember the chap's name, but he is doing a headstand. So that was four, five years before Duke arrived. Cause everyone says Duke introduced surfing, which isn't quite true. There's actually a photograph of Duke walking up the beach after he's done his surf demonstration. Obviously he would've been a lot better than any of the local people. And he had skills, he actually went past the white water and took off on an unbroken wave, which is probably unheard of. But in that photograph, there's probably at least seven other



## “AUSTRALIANS TEND TO BE COLOURBLIND WHEN IT COMES TO GOOD ATHLETES...”

surf craft in that photograph. From hand planes note the back there's two people with surfboards out in the water, behind in the background. So there was surf craft around before Duke arrived, but he always gets credit.

*GTR:* Yeah, because of who he was, I guess.

*JO:* He was a champion, he was an athlete. And I was talking about this the other day, I was in a conference to the Australian Historians Association and when Duke arrived, it was Federation and pretty much the white Australia policy. And he basically broke down a lot of race barriers through... Australians tend to be colourblind when it comes to good athletes and a lot of people can improve especially people from poor regions and indigenous people who have been oppressed and improved their status by being good sports people. Duke did it by being, not only was a good sports person, obviously Olympic gold medal swimming champion from an 1912 Stockholm games, but he was also a great surfer and a physically impressive person. But he also had the spirit of Aloha and he was very generous and a likable person. So, he did a lot to break down those race barriers that were existing round that time just to after Federation.

*GTR:* Yeah. We can do with more Dukes, that's for sure. An important part in Australian history too, I guess, in that regard too. So what makes Australian surfing different John, if it is different at all, is it attachment to its past that you've just gone through? Or is it the culture of Australians in general or the different breaks that we have? What makes it different?

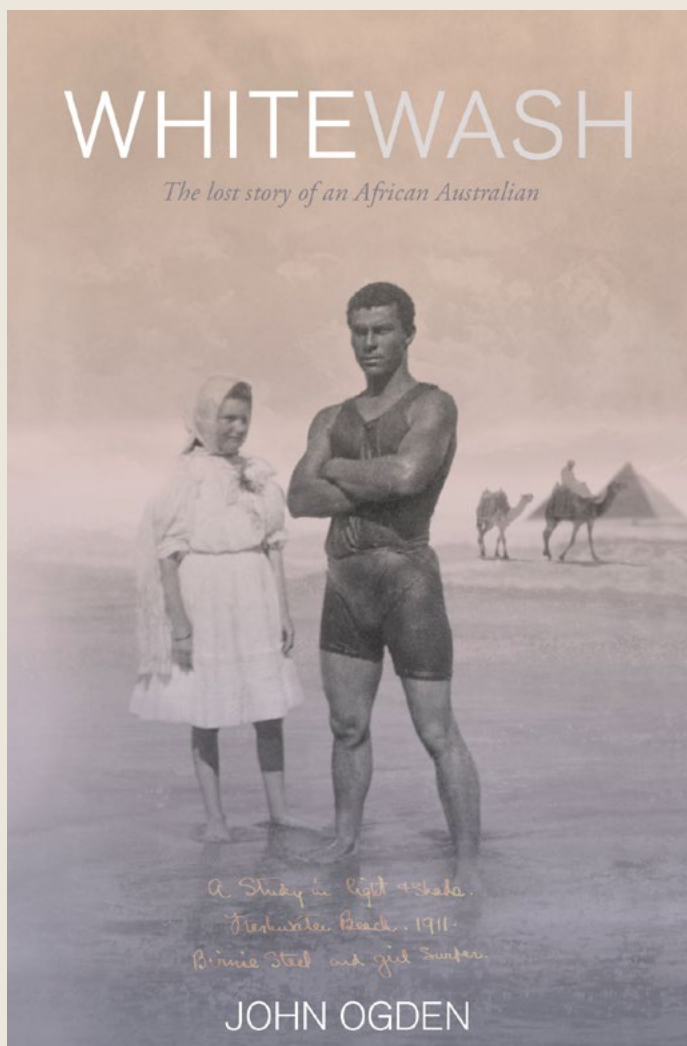
*JO:* It's complicated. In the early days, probably prior to the first world war or prior to the first surf club, so they started up around 1908, the Australian classic figure was the bushy. So the solitary pursuit and I liked being out there by myself and you'll be out there and you'll see fish swim around, maybe a dolphin, hopefully not a shark. And you're just out there with nature and seeing those...you paddle through a wave and you see the light come through the wave and it's just, it's an offshore day, it's just those magical moments. And it also makes you fit, which helps the endorphins, it's exercise. Some places I could... Probably hard to have spiritual experience, when paddle out at Bondi on a crowded day, but where I surf down at Palm Beach and down near Barrenjoey there's hardly anyone around there most of the time. And when you look back at those early

days, when we took off from Adelaide in the 70s, a lot of those spots were pretty empty in those days. So, I look back at them with nostalgia. So, when Steven paddling out for the first time, which he talks about in the book for Morning of the Earth in '71. No one knew this place, they had to find a way to get down off the cliffs and through a sea cave and then paddle out and middle encounter these magnificent 300 foot or higher cliffs. And I said to him, would you feel you're scared? And he said no, I was just excited to get out there. A 50 year old just frothing to get out there. There's those moments, I think everyone has these moments. They just go, oh God, how good is this? It might be the sunset surf or dawn surf or just a beautiful day where you've got some good waves.

*GTR:* Yeah. It's a beautiful thing. And you're aware of that, I think, from the time you start surfing. So, that's wonderful. John, thanks so very much for being part of this and being part of our summer edition too, which is appropriate with your book Waterproof, which is out now. A collection of great Australian photography and some beautiful images in it, so as Molly Meldrum might have said, do yourself a favour and go out and get the book. It's a beautiful thing. ■

Purchase Waterproof in bookstores or at [cyclopsproductions.com.au](http://cyclopsproductions.com.au)

**WHITEWASH**  
 BY JOHN OGDEN, CYCLOPS PUBLICATIONS



WHITEWASH – The Lost Story of an African Australian is a true story of breathtaking scope that follows a family’s journey across several centuries, from First Peoples genocide and the transatlantic slave trade to flight and freedom in a new land, punctuated by some of the most significant conflicts in human history.

It is also the story of race, identity and the whitewashing of Black and Indigenous history. George ‘Bernie’ Showery was born in Sydney, Australia, in the years prior to Federation. Abandoned by his African-American father when he was just three years old, an eccentric father figure would later introduce him to carefree days at Freshwater Beach.

It was here, in the summer of 1914-15, that Duke Kahanamoku would demonstrate his graceful ability to walk on water, with the ocean serving as both a stage and a supreme metaphor for change. Soon after, Bernie Showery would be called away to fight for the British Empire, serving in the Middle East with the legendary Australian Light Horse and the Imperial Camel Corps.

Fighting alongside Lawrence of Arabia, he would witness the great cavalry charge at Beersheba, the fall of Damascus, and the manoeuvring behind the British carve-up of Palestine.



Purchase Whitewash in bookstores or at [cyclopsproductions.com.au](http://cyclopsproductions.com.au)



## RIP Russell Ebert

It was 1968. My mother and brothers and I were living in a large house on a large property. Part of the house had been converted into a vets practice. My mother worked there as a nurse, part time.

For young boys, the large Kingswood property was a dream come true. We built a bike track, dug a creek and made a small bridge. Adjoining the house was a separate room, which we turned into headquarters for our club. In this room was a disused extendable table. We had plans to turn that table into a rack, for torturing. Who we planned to torture, and for what reasons, I can't recall.

In 1968, my twin brother and I were playing schoolboy football. And we followed the Port Adelaide Football Club.

In the first round of 1968, a 183cm eighteen-year old made his debut for Port. It was Russell Ebert. He worked as a bank clerk in the the Riverina town of Waikerie.

From memory, Russell played well that day. I recall my twin brother and I, sitting at the kitchen table, listening to the match on the family radio.

But it was Russell's third game, at Adelaide Oval, against reigning

premiers Sturt, on Anzac Day, that stamped him as a champion. He kicked six goals. And Port won. Russell went on to record an outstanding career that included three premierships, four Magarey Medals and a stint in the-then VFL.

It was Russell's post playing and coaching career that allowed us to see the quality of the man, outside of his unparalleled on-field achievements. He worked as liaison with PAFC on many of their community programs, helping the underprivileged and homeless and with youth. Annually, he would take part in the Hutt Street Centre's Walk a Mile in my Boots, for the homeless. I, and many others, would walk with Russell on those cold August mornings. On one occasion, he spotted me, came up and said, "Good to see you again". Russell Ebert, a man many called 'God', had remembered me. I had worked with him, a few years before, on a project for my magazine.

This coming Tuesday I am speaking with Paul Kennedy about his book, Funky Town and of the

transferring from boy to man. We will speak of the male culture and what it means to be a man.

Russell Ebert was a man. What a man should be. Ego-free, quiet, intelligent, a listener. A doer. A respecter of woman and a worker for the less privileged. A healthy, strong man physically, too. In his presence, I felt a quiet resignation that I was with greatness. In these moments, I understood the nickname 'God'. His quiet giving was similar, I imagined, to what they tell us about Jesus.

The world was a better place, with Russell Ebert here with us. We were graced to share time with him on this planet.

My mind goes back to myself as an 11-year old, listening to him play on the radio. To know him, as an adult, remains a blessing for which I am eternally grateful. Thank you Russell. May your spirit travel in peace.

**GREG T ROSS**



# Strengthening veteran health and wellbeing through sport

Invictus Australia encourages veterans and their families to engage with their communities through sport. Whether at a grassroots level or on the international stage, we leverage the power of sport to proactively foster health and aid in recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration.

We bring together sporting, community and veteran organisations to break down barriers to sport participation. We promote the physical, social and emotional benefits of sport, and shine a light on the unique needs of younger veterans, particularly those experiencing challenges associated with their service or when making the transitioning from military to civilian life. Our team is on the ground and active in local communities, working hard to make a difference.

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CITY  CLUB

# RAISE YOUR GAME

THE RIGHT CLOTHING IS ESSENTIAL,  
TO GIVE YOU THE EDGE

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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!





# Memorial Warrior Cup

Save the date and join in the festivities!  
The 2022 Memorial Warrior Cup T20 game  
**Saturday 22nd January 2022**  
**@ The Reg Bartley Oval, Rushcutters Bay.**

See you there.

'Rain stopped play' is a common phrase used for cricketing delays and matches abandoned. The storm that ended the third annual Memorial Warrior Cup in 2021 was COVID-19. The good news is that our 2022 game will be better than ever. Whether we call it the 'third annual' or the 'fourth annual' doesn't seem to matter much, it'll be fun either way.

There's nothing like sport to reignite camaraderie amongst veterans and love it or hate it, there's no sport like cricket. Pre-2019, under the stewardship of ex-Commando Luke Statton and his veteran mates, an annual charity cricket match was played in Sydney down in the Shire. In 2018, Luke pitched Wandering Warriors to take over the running of that match and to receive any donations that resulted. We loved the idea and still do.

So it was that the Shire match morphed into the Memorial Warrior Cup, with the inaugural game played in Vaucluse in 2019. That first match was contested between Team East (Commandos) and Team West (SASR); however, the makeup of the teams is a loose and evolving configuration of veterans, their families and friends united in a shared love of the game and socialising with mates.

The January 2022 match will be a beauty. This will be the second time we've played on the Reg Bartley Oval, a pristinely maintained, old-style cricket ground with an atmosphere of willow, leather and flannels.

There will be family fun for all, with lunch, drinks and kids' entertainment provided.

You'll also have the chance at the event to WIN a new MG SUV Car – the prize to be drawn just two days after the match.



## about the author:

Harry Moffitt is a former SAS Team Commander now registered Psychologist. He is the CEO of Stotan Group and APAC Director for the Mission Critical Teams Institute. An author and accomplished singer, songwriter, he is also the founder and architect of the unique, multi-million-dollar Wanderers Education Program.

Anthony "Harry" Moffitt recently retired after nearly 30 years with the Australian Defence Force, almost all of which was spent with Australia's elite Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment. He completed 11 active service deployments amassing nearly 1000 days on combat operations globally, including being wounded in action in 2008 and repatriated to Australia due to his wounds. Harry completed his time with the SAS as its Director of High-Performance. He recently authored his memoir, *Eleven Bats*, a book about his military service and his love of cricket.

Harry and his family are based in Melbourne where he practises as a Psychologist and strategic advisor across sports, corporate and government organisations. He has a Master of Psychology from Deakin University and recently attended a Harvard Business School Leadership Development Program. He is the founder and Director of Performance at Stotan Group – a human performance consultancy specialising in individual, team and organisational performance. Harry is also the Regional Director of the Mission Critical Teams Institute for the Asia Pacific region.

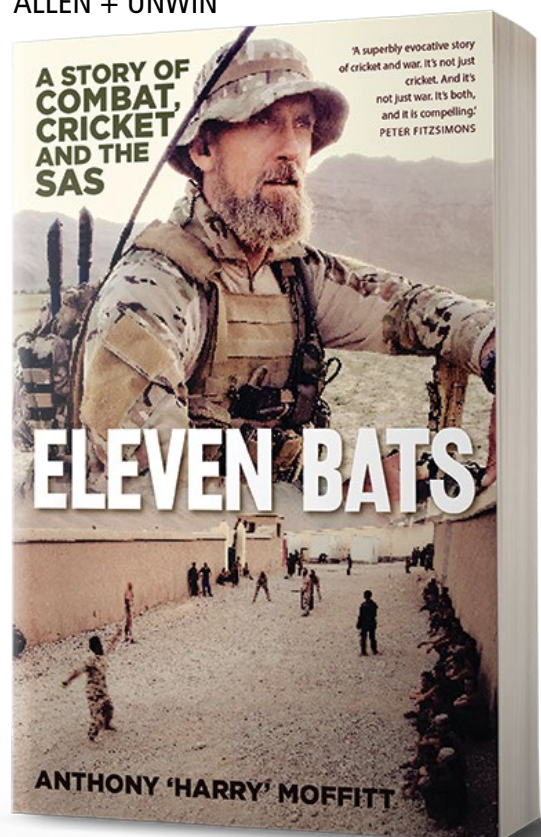
In 2008 he founded the multi-million dollar and first-of-its-kind Wanderers Education Program, which uniquely provides 'in-service' education support to soldiers in preparation for transition. Additionally, he is the Victoria State Manager for the Wandering Warriors. Harry works extensively across multiple veteran domains as a psychologist, mentor, and peer supporter, particularly with RSL Victoria.

Harry has written broadly about human performance including leadership; SOF selection; human performance (part 1 & 2); gender equity in sport; and, resilience. He has lectured at several renowned leadership institutions (e.g., RMC Duntroon, AGSM UNSW, and Wharton Business School), high-performance organisations (e.g., SOG VICPOL, SOCOMD), and elite sporting groups (e.g., AFL, Cricket).

He is regularly invited to speak at public and private events to share his experience in elite teams, academic research, and business, including at the MCC Members, Australian Open, Hello World global conference, and the high profile ANZAC Day Appeal in Melbourne. He has also featured in media appearances including TV, podcasts, and his compelling interview on National radio.

Harry and Danielle, his wife of 25 years, have two young adult children. He is an AFL and cricket tragic, exhibitor, and singer songwriter for original SAS Rock band The Externals. Harry values integrity, humour, bricolage, and the Stotan philosophy.

## ELEVEN BATS BY ANTHONY 'HARRY' MOFFITT ALLEN + UNWIN



To purchase and experience the Eleven Bats virtual tour go to: [elevenbats.com.au](http://elevenbats.com.au)

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.**

AUSTRALIA WIDE [ Project Management | Professional Services | Intelligence | Security ]

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