

# THE LAST POST

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

INSPIRATIONAL  
AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

JANE CARO

PETER FITZSIMONS

TOM KENEALLY

MICHAEL LEUNIG

LEON GREGORY

PAUL MCCARTNEY

TONY WRIGHT

ISSUE 27

THE WAR  
CORRESPONDENT'S  
SERIES, PART ONE:  
TIM PAGE AND  
NEIL DAVIS



# 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.

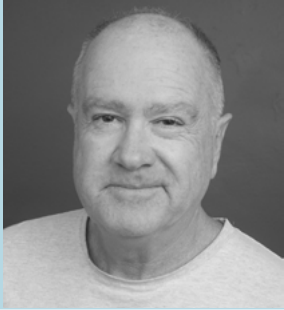
Acclaimed for its quality and journalism The Last Post is unlike any veteran's magazine seen before.

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 the release of each edition of The Last Post, there is a myriad of people and things that have gone into making the end result possible.

This Anzac Day edition marks the 27th time this has happened. With Kirstie Wyatt and I steering the ship, we meet, virtually or physically, a couple of weeks before the release date and start to sort through the wide range of material that's been sent through.

A lot won't make the cut. Not because of the standard of copy but because there is a space-and-time issue. And, what may be relevant at the start of a campaign, may be passed its use-by date come publication day.

In this issue we continue the popular Inspirational Australian Women series and introduce another, Australian War Correspondents. In the new series, we start with the late-(and legendary) Neil Davis. Neil was killed by shrapnel in a Bangkok street in 1985.

Joining Neil will be the very much alive Tim Page. Tim left England at 17 to travel across Europe, the Middle East and to India and Nepal. He covered the Vietnam War and the rising peace movement in the USA in the late 60's. His photography has raised our expectations of standard in the visual reporting of conflicts and assisted in the historical remembrance of war.

We look too, at the photography of Leon Gregory and his capturing of street life in inner Sydney, in the 70's.

Again, great interviews with great Australians - Jane Caro, and second interviews with Peter FitzSimons, Tom Keneally and Michael Leunig.

Input from RSL Australia, Australian Red Cross, RAAF, Legacy Melbourne and others.

Now, approaching our 11th birthday, this whole trip keeps gaining momentum. It's been a busy last couple of weeks but we present this issue to you with the same pride that we have with issue #1. All those years ago.

Going up to Byron Bay for a couple of weeks to recharge.

**#thelastpostmagazine**  
**#diaryofanindependentpublisher**



- 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)

# foreword

Anna Maria Lang

Founder, Women Veterans United



## ***The role of women veterans in the military and society***

In recent years, the number of women enlisting into the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has increased and it is important to acknowledge the service of all veterans, women also play a major role in the successful outcomes of all roles they participate in. Women veterans are skilled in many ways that are conducive to a productive workplace and now that women are enlisting into combat roles, it is the ideal time to give all women who served the credit they deserve for paving the way in an organisation where women are and always have been a minority group.

The role women veterans play in society isn't just as soldier, sailor, or air woman, it is often as a mother, spouse, and care giver also. It's an arduous task sometimes managing all of these demands and add into that deployments and postings, you have women who experience much more than the average woman would in a lifetime.

The role of women veterans has expanded as mentioned and this comes with great responsibility to them to lead the way for other women. Thus, creating more innate leaders in society and causing women to be more resilient in the face of adversity or challenges. This is coupled with the fact that women veterans are a valuable asset once they leave the ADF making them more employable often due to their commitment, diligence, discipline and their view of the world.

As most veterans do, deployments and seeing the devastation of war leads to a greater appreciation for life in our lucky country. This is an important aspect when it comes to the role of women because many are more passionate about giving back and contributing as a result of what they have seen and the way in which they continue to want to play a role in impacting the world and welfare of those who are most in need.

As you can see, there are many roles women are playing in the military and society where they must be valued and honoured for their service and sacrifices. There is much that you can do for the cause of Women Veterans United and I thank the Last Post for running the Inspirational Australian Women series.

You can see the Women Veterans United website at **[www.womenveteransunited.org](http://www.womenveteransunited.org)**.

# contents

## FEATURES

- 24 The Tom Keneally Interview – Tom speaks with TLP Editor Greg T Ross about contemporary issues and his book, *A Bloody Good Rant*.
- 32 The Jane Caro Interview – Jane speaks with TLP Editor Greg T Ross about women's issues and her new book, *The Mother*.
- 38 The Peter FitzSimons Interview – Peter speaks with TLP Editor Greg T Ross about his new book, *The Sydney Opera House*.
- 42 The War Correspondents Series, Part One – Neil Davis and Tim Page
- 48 Inspirational Australian Women
- 55 Honouring Lawrie Lampard – Ian Smith
- 58 Women's Economic Opportunity Review
- 87 Save Australian Shipping

## ARTS

- 4 Paul McCartney, *The Lyrics* – The world's greatest living songwriter is featured with extracts from his amazing book, *The Lyrics*
- 8 *On The Street, Inner Sydney, 1970-1973* – Leon Gregory. A look at life on the streets of inner Sydney, through the lens of Australian photographer, actor and musician, Leon Gregory.
- 12 Artist John Mezzini – A look at the work of South Australian-born artist, John Mezzini
- 14 The Michael Leunig Interview – In his second interview with TLP Editor Greg T Ross, the political and social commenting artist who has made a habit of ruffling feathers, speaks about life. And his book, *Get Well*.
- 31 *Greyfin* – Josh Francis. The former Australian soldier is featured with an extract from his book, *Greyfin*.
- 36 John Bois – *Work of Art*. Michael Macdonald reviews the Australian musicians third album.

## HEALTH

- 68 NSW Nurses and Midwives Association – Founded in 1931, a look at the association run by nurses and midwives.
- 75 Plan for the future and safeguard your rights – Dr Kay Patterson AO
- 76 Death bed discrimination - When it comes to choice at the end of life, why are some Australians treated like second-class citizens?
- 78 CSC Vets Hub - Among the challenges faced by veterans when returning to civilian life, getting their financial wellbeing in order can be overwhelming for some. Enter the Vets Hub, developed by veteran David Wilton.
- 84 RSL Australia – An update from RSL Australia National President, Greg Melick. Includes RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative.

## TRAVEL

- 90 Wagga honours Empire Air Training role – A memorial near the entrance of the RAAF Base is nearing completion.
- 94 The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary – The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary is a partnership between the local council and Koala Hospital, designed to save this unique species.

## SPORT

- 98 Vale Shane Warne – Tony Wright. Over the years, Tony's great writing has appeared in editions of *The Last Post*. Here he remembers and pays tribute to the greatest of them all.
- 100 Unconquered at The Invictus Games – A look at the recent Games, held in The Hague, April 16-22.

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

## MANAGING DIRECTOR & PUBLISHING EDITOR

Greg T Ross

## ART DIRECTOR & GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Kirstie Wyatt

0419 035 000

[kirstie@wyattcreative.com.au](mailto:kirstie@wyattcreative.com.au)

## ADVERTISING

[www.thelastpostmagazine.com](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com)

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

[www.thelastpostmagazine.com](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com)

[www.isubscribe.com.au](http://www.isubscribe.com.au)

[www.magshop.com.au](http://www.magshop.com.au)

## ENQUIRIES

GTR Publishing  
42 Broomfield Crescent  
Long Beach 2536 NSW  
0419 165 856

[www.thelastpostmagazine.com](http://www.thelastpostmagazine.com)

## FRONT COVER:

Tim Page in War Zone 'D'.  
Photo by Kyoichi Sawada.

Kyoichi Sawada was killed in a chopper crash with Larry Burrows, Kent Potter & Henri Huet in 1971.

Photo courtesy Tim Page.



## designer / art director KIRSTIE WYATT

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

0419 035 000 [wyattcreative.com.au](http://wyattcreative.com.au) [kirstie@wyattcreative.com.au](mailto:kirstie@wyattcreative.com.au)



[facebook.com/thelastpostmagazine](https://facebook.com/thelastpostmagazine)

[twitter.com/thelastpostmaga](https://twitter.com/thelastpostmaga)

# Paul McCartney The Lyrics

A self-portrait in 154 songs,  
by our greatest living songwriter

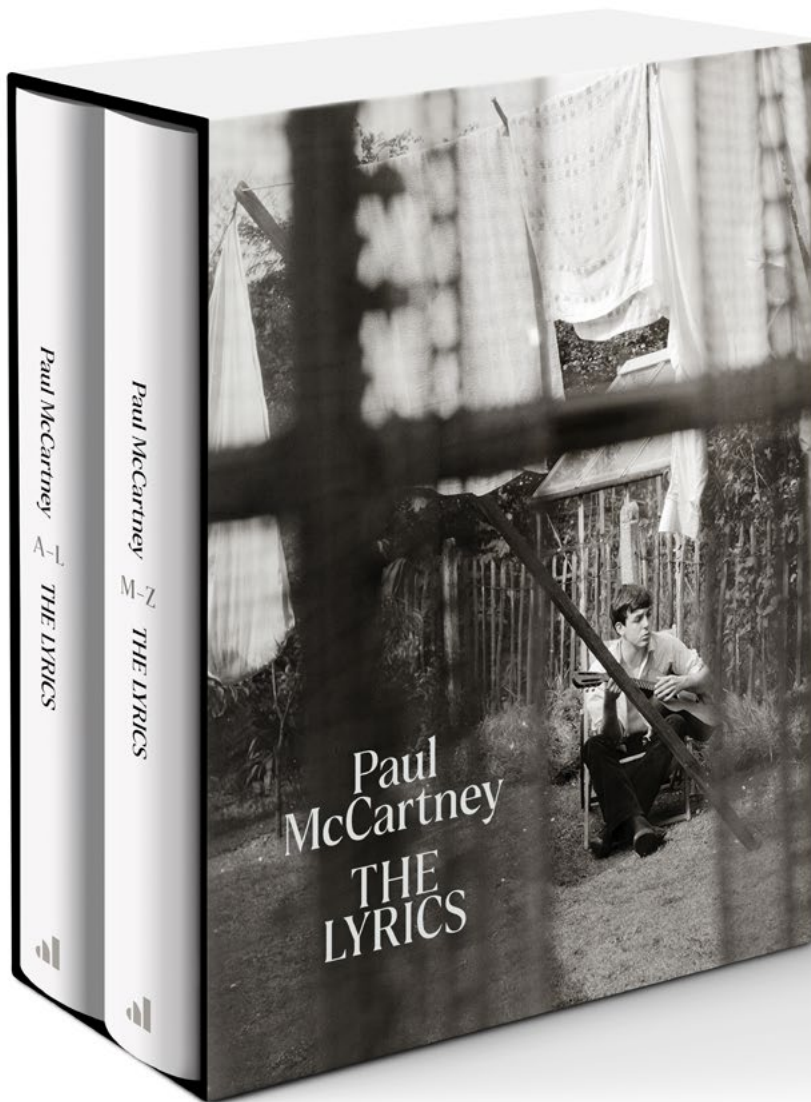


Paul McCartney photographed by daughter  
Mary McCartney in Sussex, England, 2020.  
© Mary McCartney.



Paul backstage in Dublin during his Back in the World tour, 2003. Photographer: Bill Bernstein. © MPL Communications Ltd.

Since writing his first song at the age of fourteen, Paul McCartney's career has been impossibly prolific and singularly influential. In the 1960s Paul changed the world forever with The Beatles. He didn't stop there, and has continued to push boundaries, as a solo artist, with Wings, and through collaborations with numerous world-renowned artists. He has received 18 Grammys, and in 1996 was knighted by H.M. The Queen for his services to music. Paul is a dedicated philanthropist, passionately advocating for many causes including animal rights and environmental issues. He's also a very proud grandfather. Paul's most recent album Egypt Station was his first ever album to debut at Number One in the US album charts.



## extract

EDITED EXTRACT FROM  
**THE LYRICS**  
 BY PAUL MCCARTNEY,  
 PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

### **Here Today**

WRITER Paul McCartney  
 ARTIST Paul McCartney  
 RECORDED AIR Studios, London  
 RELEASED *Tug of War*, 1982

And if I said  
 I really knew you well  
 What would your answer be?  
 If you were here today  
 Here today

Well knowing you  
 You'd probably laugh and say  
 That we were worlds apart  
 If you were here today  
 Here today

But as for me  
 I still remember how it was before  
 And I am holding back the tears no more  
 I love you

What about the time we met?  
 Well I suppose that you could say that  
 We were playing hard to get  
 Didn't understand a thing  
 But we could always sing

What about the night we cried?  
 Because there wasn't any reason left  
 To keep it all inside  
 Never understood a word  
 But you were always there with a smile

And if I say  
 I really loved you  
 And was glad you came along  
 Then you were here today  
 For you were in my song  
 Here today

### **A self-portrait in 154 songs, by our greatest living songwriter**

'More often than I can count, I've been asked if I would write an autobiography, but the time has never been right. The one thing I've always managed to do, whether at home or on the road, is to write new songs. I know that some people, when they get to a certain age, like to go to a diary to recall day-to-day events from the past, but I have no such notebooks. What I do have are my songs, hundreds of them, which I've learned serve much the same purpose. And these songs span my entire life.'

In this extraordinary book, with unparalleled candour, Paul McCartney recounts his life and art through the prism of 154 songs from all stages of his career - from his earliest boyhood compositions through the legendary decade of The Beatles, to Wings and his solo albums to the present. Arranged alphabetically to provide a kaleidoscopic rather than chronological account, it establishes definitive texts of the songs' lyrics for the first time and describes the circumstances in which they were written, the people and places that inspired them, and what he thinks of them now. Presented with this is a treasure trove of material from McCartney's personal archive - drafts, letters, photographs - never seen before, which make this also a unique visual record of one of the greatest songwriters of all time.

We learn intimately about the man, the creative process, the working out of melodies, the moments of inspiration. The voice and personality of Paul McCartney sings off every page. There has never been a book about a great musician like it.



Paul with John Lennon during the Abbey Road cover shoot.  
Abbey Road Studios, London, 1969.  
Photographer: Linda McCartney.  
© Paul McCartney.



***A love song to John, written very shortly after he died.***

I was remembering things about our relationship and about the million things we'd done together, from just being in each other's front parlours or bedrooms to walking on the street together or hitchhiking – long journeys together which had nothing to do with The Beatles. I was thinking of all these things in what was then my recording studio in Sussex. Before it was made into a studio, it was just a little house with a small room upstairs with bare, wooden plank floors and bare walls, and I had my guitar with me, so I just sat there and wrote this.

It started, as it so often does, with finding something nice on the guitar, in this case a lovely chord. I just found that chord and pushed on from that; that was the dock, and I could push the boat out and finish the song.

There's one line in the lyric I don't really mean: 'Well knowing you / You'd probably laugh and say / That we were worlds apart'. I'm playing to the more cynical side of John, but I don't think it's true that we were so distant.

'But you were always there with a smile' – that was very John. If you were arguing with him, and it got a bit tense, he'd just lower his specs and say, 'It's only me,' then put them back up again, as if the specs were part of a completely different identity.

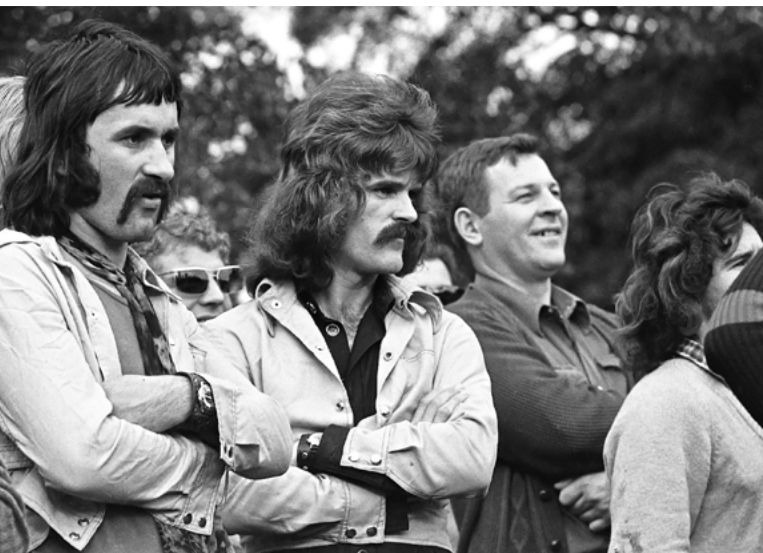
'What about the night we cried?' That was in Key West, on our first major tour to the US, when there was a hurricane coming in and we couldn't play a show in Jacksonville. We had to lie low for a couple of days, and we were in our little Key West motel room, and we got very drunk and cried about how we loved each other. I was talking to someone yesterday who was telling me that if he cried, his father would say, 'Boys don't cry. You mustn't do that.' My dad wasn't like that, but that was the attitude: male people do not cry. I think now it's acknowledged that it's a perfectly good thing to do, and I say, 'God wouldn't have given us tears if he didn't mean us to cry.'

I heard somewhere recently, 'Why can't men say "I love you" to each other?' I don't think it's as true now as it was back in the 1950s and '60s,

but certainly when we were growing up you'd have had to be gay for a man to say that to another man, so that blinkered attitude bred a little bit of cynicism. If you were talking about anything soppy, someone would have to make a joke of it, just to ease the embarrassment in the room. But there's a longing in the lines 'If you were here today' and 'I am holding back the tears no more', because it was very emotional, writing this song. I was just sitting there in that bare room, thinking of John and realising I'd lost him. And it was a powerful loss, so to have a conversation with him in a song was some form of solace. Somehow I was with him again. 'And if I say / I really loved you' – there it is, I've said it. Which I would never have said to him.

It's a very charged experience to perform this song in concert. It's just me and a guitar. In the current show, I do 'Blackbird' and then 'Here Today', and I'm stuck in the middle of a great big arena with all these people, and a lot of them are crying. It's always a very sentimental, nostalgic, emotional moment.

# On The Street – Inner Sydney 1970-1973 Leon Gregory



It's often said that ordinary life, under close inspection, can be quite extraordinary. Photographer Leon Gregory's recently published volume *On The Street- Inner Sydney 1970-1973* lives up to that thought bubble in spades.

A product of Sydney's North Shore, Leon crossed the harbour at the tail end of the 1960s and settled in Kings Cross. At the same time, his profile as a stage and television actor was fast gaining momentum. As one of Hector Crawford's favourite small screen hoods, Leon made over a dozen appearances across *Homicide*, *Division 4* and *Matlock Police* playing, in no particular order, an armed robber, a vengeful ex-con, a burglar, an unrepentant rev-head, a safecracker, a blackmailer, a car thief, a kidnapping prison escapee, a drink spiker, a small time dope dealer and publisher of a subversive underground magazine. However, acting was only one component of Leon's make-up – there was also a passion for music and photography.

Between 1970 and 1973, Leon moved about the streets of Kings Cross and adjoining suburbs as a roving lens man who was able capture transient moments with remarkable clarity. The 90 something photographs that fill *On The Street* combine Leon's visual aesthetic and observational talent with an acute understanding of

human behaviour. Leon's subjects of choice were the most marginalised of inner Sydney – migrant children, bohemians, stoic pensioners, knockabouts, down and outers, blue collar workers and pub patrons all photographed in black and white against a backdrop of railway station subways, strip clubs, laneways, weather-beaten terrace houses, laundromats, corner hotels, doorways, city parks, bus stops, park benches and towering commission flats.

By the mid 1970s, Leon had farewelled Kings Cross and relocated himself and family to a rural haven in NSW's Kangaroo Valley. Over one hundred negatives came with him and sat undisturbed in a cupboard for forty years give or take. In 2009, Leon patiently transferred the negatives into a digital format and effectively created his own time capsule of a Sydney either long gone or long forgotten. All the images were acquired by the State Library Of NSW and, in 2014, they were exhibited at The Head On Photo Festival under the title of *At Last – The Seventies*. The exhibition gave Leon plenty of overdue recognition

where comparisons were made to acclaimed street photographers Vivian Maier and Robert Frank. Compiling the photos into book form with accompanying text was a definite no-brainer and just prior to Christmas 2021 Leon had done just that.

There is nothing random or haphazard about *On The Street* – Leon has bracketed the images into their particular locales as each has an identity all of its own. Long regarded as Sydney's premier den of iniquity, Kings Cross has forever been associated with sleaze and vice, however, Leon bypasses the predictable and instead documents the suburb's often unexamined diversity. A rag and bone man is photographed pushing a handcart laden with empty bottles and a bulging hessian bag filled with god knows what along Victoria Street, three men of differing creeds are caught enjoying conversation and tobacco outside a shop front, a slightly spivvy club bouncer stands in the doorway of a burlesque house and a small gathering of Hare Krishnas parade across the Fitzroy Gardens. As Leon notes in his eloquently descriptive



texts there was a certain trepidation that the unique charm of The Cross was on borrowed time – in 1973 property developers were hell-bent on demolishing rows of terrace houses along Victoria Street and replacing them with monstrous apartment blocks. Protests and street marches were counteracted by intimidation and corruption which, ultimately, were linked to the abduction and murder of Juanita Neilsen, one of area's most visible activists, in 1975.

Playfulness and humour creep into the dozen or more snapshots taken at Speakers' Corner in Sydney's Domain. In its glory days The Domain was a Sunday afternoon open air venue for soapbox preachers, political agitators,

passionate unionists, religious zealots and prophets of doom to harangue, pontificate and lecture. Rather than concentrate on the orators, Leon, instead, trained his camera on the eclectic mix of spectators and captured expressions that range from amusement to derision. In one photo a pair of unpretentious teenage girls are caught in the middle of a giggling fit. Another zeroes in on two surly looking gents who seem have embraced the seventies with minimum restraint: shag haircuts, Dennis Lillie moustaches, ostentatious leather watchbands and double denim. It's obvious this camera truly loves every minute detail.

*On The Street* succeeds on multiple levels – it's testament to

a photographer who can observe, notice and preserve. The book is also a poignant archive of an inner Sydney left behind. Leon Gregory's Sydney of the seventies exposes an inner suburban melting pot – a vibrant pocket where academics, sex workers, senior citizens, artists, immigrants and the destitute shared the same streets. A world that existed long before the coming of mobile phones, laptops, metrosexuals and latte sippers which, surely, must astound any millennial. Nevertheless, an undeniable certainty runs through *On The Street* – anyone not moved or touched by its content has either a heart of stone or ice water running through their veins.

**MICHAEL MACDONALD**

Book purchase enquires contact: [leongory@icloud.com](mailto:leongory@icloud.com)

# You in relation to nature (Taking photographs of you) -

I started taking photographs of you on the day we met.  
A peaceful and vibrant picture  
you are appealing and inviting to me.  
A watercourse of femininity  
and calm  
amongst an often too brash and male world.  
A glittering landscape of  
beauty, you are. And your smell, helping to unlock the science  
of sex appeal. Kissing. Prowess. Of you wearing my clothes  
to feel closer.  
Like quartz stones in a stream,  
you sparkle for me.  
And so, I take photographs of you.  
Gerard Manley Hopkins  
would call you Goldfoil,  
bringing light to the night.  
Like soft seeds of grass  
pinched between  
fingertips,  
you are Honey Fur to me.  
Your smile,  
a lance of sunshine that would pierce  
the canopy of the coldest heart  
or the hardest heart. Your voice makes  
me meditate.  
And so,  
I take photographs of you.

**GREG T ROSS**



# Artist John Mezzini

I have been raised in a small rural town in South Australia and concluded my art education in Adelaide. Immediately after i discovered i didn't have the drive at that time or experience to make the kind of art I wanted to.





So I took an engineering traineeship and some twenty-five years went by.

But It's hard to let sleeping dogs lie. I have a full time job in the regular working world and have made a success of it. I have buried artistic pursuits deep, many times over and over. Pushing work and modern life ahead of the practice with pragmatic rationality. There are a thousand reasons to not make any more paintings. But the one that cannot be argued, is that if I stop making paintings, I am left with only the known knowns. Not the unknown. For whatever reason, we take a chance in uncovering something about ourselves and started making a proper attempt at making something meaningful.

Every experience we have is personal, the way everything looks and is remembered is different in each of us. To describe these things with a visual language of my own is a deep desire I have always had. Everything to do with the human condition is my chosen subject matter. I explore themes of vulnerability, social interaction, physical movement and composed poses with emphasis on the use of refracted light as apposed to detailed visual representation.

Its more of a need than a want to pursue an individual painting language that is both a tribute to what has been and an exploration of what can be achieved though the equity of time and continual application. Its important to me to keep within the confines of oil painting and drawing. Even though I have had a visual arts education, I have spent many years as an engineer and this has indoctrinated me into the value of some basic control of the variables and the importance of scientific rigor and using set tools of construction.

Whether it is the emotion or pure physicality of the subject, the fascination is the same. My approach is the exploration of the instinctual mark making and the learned understanding of its values or flaws. It is my process to recognise of where the gestural becomes the description of the represented figures and refracted light. My exposed views and their representations are all there, I hope, for your enjoyment as well as my validation as an artist.



## RED

An exhibition

By John Mezzini

From May 17th to June 28th

At POME

open night and QA May 28th 6PM

◆ POME

— INTERVIEW —

Michael Leunig has been drawing and writing for Australian newspapers since 1965. He was born in Melbourne and now lives on a farm in north-eastern Victoria. His work has been widely published overseas, and has been adapted in Australia for television, theatre and radio.

His many titles include *The Penguin Leunig*, *The Travelling Leunig*, *Ramming the Shears*, *Everyday Devils and Angels*, *You and Me*, *Short Notes from the Long History of Happiness*, *Why Dogs Sniff Each Other's Tails*, *Goatperson and Other Tales*, *The Curly Pyjama Letters*, *The Stick*, *Poems*, *Strange Creature* and *The Lot*.

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



## GET WELL

BY MICHAEL LEUNIG, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

*Get Well* is a collection of Michael Leunig's work over the past four years – a time when, quite remarkably, all has not been well with the world.

'Simple rhymes, homemade aphorisms, sentimental yearnings, many daggy jokes, funny faces and mysteries from the heart abound in this collection of cartoons – which cause me to wonder what is becoming of me and my world.' – Michael Leunig

Deceptively wise, heartbreakingly beautiful and just plain hilarious, *Get Well* is a robust selection from Michael Leunig's work over the past four years – a time when, quite remarkably, all has not been well with the world.

More than ever Leunig shines a light on questions about sanity and madness, innocence and corruption, friendliness and unfriendliness, joy and despair, and the possibility of an overriding eternal wisdom and beauty.

*Get Well* is the book we all need right now – just the tonic for these strange times.

get  
wellMichael  
Leunig

*Greg T Ross:* Michael Leunig, welcome. Our second interview.

*Michael Leunig:* Indeed, Greg. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. It's always nice to feel welcome.

*GTR:* Yeah. We last spoke in 2017 and so much happened since then.

*ML:* Yeah, it seems to have... I'm not sure I can hold it all in my head what's happened. I tend to be at that age where every day seems to be an entirely new event. So, I must say my memory about, of the whole last few years is not real clear. Yeah. And we all go through our own personal things. There's these public things that are shared on the national scale, but then it's our own personal lives and it's quite a blend.

*GTR:* Yes, that's true too. And of course, when we look at the forceful nature of these such, these events, Michael, they can't help but intrude on one's wellbeing.

*ML:* Yes, indeed. And in ways we can't quite calculate or be sure of. I mean, there's the immediate impact and the feelings but then there's the deeper things that take time to unfold, which we still don't know of fully. It takes time to understand what's happened to us or to ourselves. Yeah.

*GTR:* That's true too. And of course we have the immediate, we deal with things immediately. We have to because we have to get on with our daily lives. But as you said, there is an unfolding of circumstance and reaction, which will take time. And we really don't know what that's going to pan out at the moment.

*ML:* We don't. There's a kind of a chemistry in it isn't there? There's a mysterious element where nobody truly knows. Nobody, the highest to the lowest in the land, if there is such a difference. No one can know. And there's just not knowing of where we are heading. In some quarters there's great dismay about the way things have gone and what we've seen in political life. We're seeing parts of our culture that we didn't know existed really, or reactions from people to the what's been going on. And it's a bit of dismay. I think it's probably just traditional, isn't it? This like... Life is always a bit of snafu. Who fully control... It's not in control is what we would like to think. It's got its own momentum in its own way. It's nature at work in a sense too.

*GTR:* Yes, well said, Michael. And I suppose with the advent of social media, and of course the daily news on the firstly, the bush fires, and then of course the virus. We probably, with the bush fires, we saw examples of humanity that reminded us that we can be very good to each other. And of course, with the virus, perhaps the opposite.

*ML:* Yes. I would agree with that, Greg. I think the fires are such a national emergency and we... All our compassion comes forth and the dread of the thing. It's deep in the Australian psyche, I guess. And this, the fire, I know I live with it every summer. I'm currently getting ready for the fire season. I've spent about 15 years as a volunteer firefighting on this country fire authority in Victoria.

*GTR:* Oh, excellent.

*ML:* Yeah. And I've attended fires and done that and I've learned what radiant heat is and I've learned what smoking inhalation is. And I've also learned how people react to fire. I often... There's a principle in fire, which is fires always behave in unexpected ways. But I think it's also, I have discovered that human beings also behave in unexpected ways in the midst of fire and it's sometimes quite alarming. So it's a very big sad thing and that's in our culture and in our psyche about the fire. But the virus is not so much in our culture, is it. And so, strange responses. Some people act one way, others in another way. When people are fearful, they sometimes get angry. I've seen firefighters get very angry with their comrades. In irrational ways when it gets really dire, then you see great stoicism and courage and just plotting sort of duty, which gets the job done etc. You could put out little ones and stop them getting... becoming big ones. But once a big one's going, it's we're in the hands of God, if I could put it that way. And so how do we behave really? Oh boy.

*GTR:* Yeah.

*ML:* And yeah so but this virus is a new thing and there's so many different reactions. So there's a lot of sad qualities come out in humanity and wonderful qualities. I don't know.

*GTR:* Well, actually they had... I know that there had been some people that were saying that you were some things you were not because you put up a particular viewpoint, which was exactly what Michael?

PEOPLE WHO ASSUME THEY KNOW WHO I AM AND DESCRIBING ME ON SOCIAL MEDIA. AND I THINK HEAVENS, I'D LOVE TO SIT DOWN AND TALK TO THESE PEOPLE. THEN THEY MIGHT KNOW ME AND UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING. AND I'M NOT CLAIMING TO BE AN AUTHORITY, I'M JUST DOING THE OLD JOB OF A GOOD POLITICAL CARTOONIST.

*ML:* Well look, what I was doing, Greg, was honouring my profession. The duty of my profession is to question. Just to question what comes from on high, the pronouncements, the political dictates and there's much involved in this. There's police policies, there are political policies, and there's a lot to be looked at. Now, I didn't have a crazy radical view, but because of social media these days, people are appalling that this thing of people trolls, you know, just denouncing you and obliterating, insulting, lying about you, projecting so much onto you. People who assume they know who I am and describing me on social media. And I think heavens, I'd love to sit down and talk to these people. Then they might know me and understand what I'm saying. And I'm not claiming to be an authority, I'm just doing the old job of a good political cartoonist. It's like the kid who says the Emperor's got no clothes. There's a bit of that and that's always relevant. I think it's always important and it's a traditional function of a good cartoonist, but a lot of people don't like that. They think you should just fall in line. And they seem to imagine that you are somehow being malicious or sabotaging the national board. And I think no, we should value that voice which intelligently asks a question of authority, of political authority and also calls into question our own behavior. I'm questioning human nature at a time like this too. This is philosophy, this is what the philosophers always did.

*GTR:* Yes.

*ML:* But people react as if you are making an act of parliament. Or a legal document. It's not. It's simply a drawing and it's just raising little ideas and thoughts and you hope you're trying to do it responsibly. I'm not here to overturn society. I'm here to keep it as healthy as I can. I mean, a democracy can... It needs to be healthy. And what is the definition of a healthy democracy? I don't think it's we're all marching to the same tune. We have diversity and we... And we're learning to bear with each other in our differences. It's a really important part of a healthy democracy to not get so threatened if someone doesn't agree with us. But it all requires a certain dignity and courtesy and you're not trying to be hurt anyone. That's a love. I mean, I'm an old Aussie, I'm 76 years old. I care about my culture and my country and my society. I care, but doesn't mean say I'm just going to say all nice, simple kind of digestible things. Sometimes you've got to raise a question.

*GTR:* Yeah. That's true too. And it speaks volumes for your work that can raise such indignation. Do you fear for the future of society when this happens?

*ML:* Well, I have a great concern. It's hard to keep your chin up. Sometimes when you see, you read the media. See the media is a bit of the problem, it's not the full picture. The media does not give the full picture. When I say media, I mean just what they call the mainstream media I guess, the dominant things and journalism has changed considerably.

*GTR:* Indeed.

*ML:* And I think it's a narrow view. Out there in, as Malcolm Fraser used to say, in the factories and the farms, they're a broad... There's a different kind of culture of and concern. And I mean, I live pretty much in the bush these days. And that's a different culture. There's a more, I don't know, it's more open in a way. Traditionally country people were regarded as narrow. I find that it's... There's a new urban narrowness that sort of...

*GTR:* Yeah, that's interesting you say that. I mean, I live in regional, in the south coast of New South Wales, far from this, so I understand what you're saying. But your job hasn't changed and your position really hasn't changed. Now, were you writing... were you doing work for the Nation Review back in...?

*ML:* I was. That was in... Well, I started in about 1970 I think.

*GTR:* Yeah, that's right. And back then the right wingers were getting into you and now they want to get in bed with you.

*ML:* Exactly. Yeah. And therefore I'm described... Was it all right?

*GTR:* Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

*ML:* Or all the words. So people are always trying to categorise each other, I guess. And it's a sort of a very... Oh yes, it is prejudice and yeah, it hurts to be misunderstood. We all...

*GTR:* Very true.

*ML:* We want to be understood for who we are. I think it's a fundamental human need. But are when you are getting insulted deliberately to hurt too, to hurt. I think there's a lot more people wanting to oh, punchy. There's a sort of a punishing thing out there floating around in media and really harsh criticism.

*GTR:* Well, didn't they come on... Didn't they get stuck into Burt Newton too I think?

*ML:* Yeah.

*GTR:* Yeah. And that was, I mean to me, but I thought that was quite over the top too.

*ML:* Yeah. Well, it's happened. It's a kind of public entertainment. It's like the Coliseum. You're going to see some Christians thrown to the lions or something. There's a part of the public loves a bit of... It's a bit morbid you want to see someone hurt. And I mean I don't like dwelling on that because fundamentally there's a... I don't know. I see it's decency in people and it's unheralded. These are never Australians of the year are they? Just these ordinary people who have...

*GTR:* No, that's right. That's right. I've never been big on awards myself and actually that, and funny enough, Michael, because I just turned to your new book *Get Well*, which is absolutely brilliant. And I've come across your cartoon when you've got Joe Blow goes up and there's a guy standing there, award winning Australian. And then Joe Blow goes up, award-winning journalist. And then he sees an award-winning artist, award-winning wine, and an award-winning vacuum cleaner.

*ML:* That's right.

*GTR:* And then...

*ML:* That's possible. Yeah.

*GTR:* And then he sees, and he's got such a smile, just a simple duck is there.

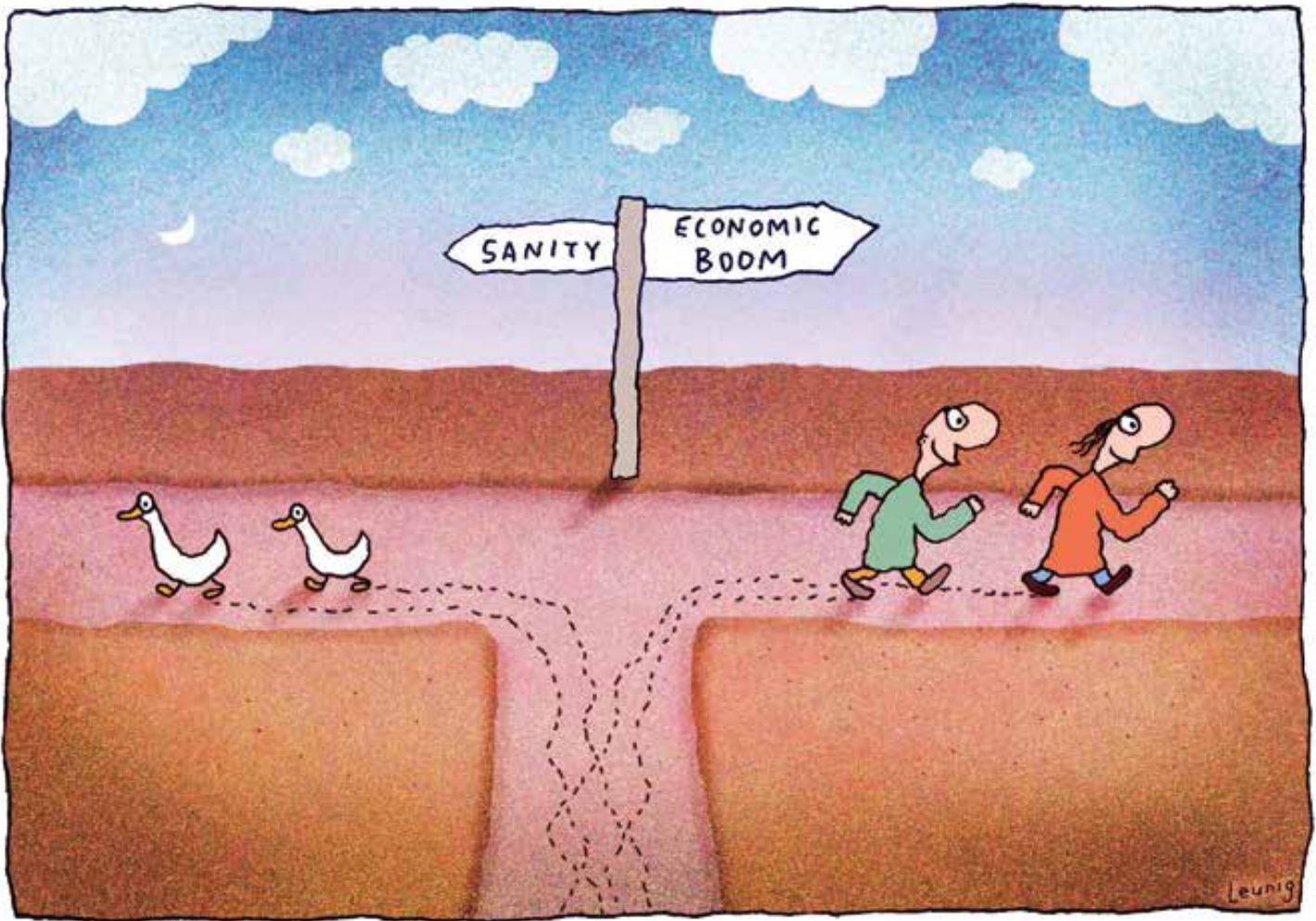
*ML:* Yeah. The duck, that's just a recurrence in my work of, I don't know, nature and simplicity and who the... I don't know, many people to dislike ducks. They're sort of, it's a childlike thing, isn't it? So it comes back to a simplicity. Yeah no, everything's award winning now and I'm not very impressed. That's not the mark of a man or a woman. I've seen too many dubious awards handed out.

*GTR:* Yes, that's my view on the subject.

*ML:* And so awards are handed out by committees and committees usually get everything wrong.

*GTR:* Yeah. I'm not big on awards either but are goats and ducks perhaps your favorite animals?

*ML:* Oh, I probably don't have too many favorite animals. I mean, they're



all pretty interesting and they're... Some of them are shocking. We've got a lot of feral deer moving into the bush around us and oh boy, did they do some damage. And then the good old Sulphur-crested cockatoo. My God. Well, what a vandal is that bird? It won't let you have any of your fruit off your trees. So look, it's just nature's plan, isn't it?

*GTR:* Yep.

*ML:* And we are at the mercy of nature in so many ways so you've got to accept that eventually, do your best and sort of know when to accept that things haven't worked out as we hoped, with the fruit tree or something.

*GTR:* Yeah. That's right. There's always little disappointments and little rewards too. And the cockatoo's actually, it's funny you use the word vandal because I think they are described as the vandal of the skies. There's some around here and they get in a pack and they just talk, talk so loudly.

*ML:* Yeah. Their voices shocking. The squawking. Yeah.

*GTR:* Someone needs to tell them.

*ML:* Yeah. I think they're beyond that and we've taken to calling them... They're called cockatoo's. I call them hoonatoo's now because they're hoons. And they are just so wild, molly,

and I think it's part of the Australian character too perhaps as well.

*GTR:* Yeah. It reflects the country very well. And I suppose narcissism seems to have come into... I mean, that's been a bit of a problem with the selfies and the social media. Everyone wants to have a say, everyone wants to be seen. It appears so at least, Michael. So what is the antidote to that?

*ML:* Oh, heavens. I don't know. Nothing you can all... I think nature sorts you out eventually. Life itself sorts you out. Is it a young people thing predominantly? I think young people are very insecure about their, as we all were more so when we were younger maybe. They wanted to be acceptable or more or less, some did more than others. We wanted to be liked or valued. And so but when some people go over the top trying to present as worthy and good and attractive, and then they start telling fibs about themselves presenting only their best side and it's not that best. It's a bit glossy and it's becomes fake. And I don't think you'd feel good if you were full-time narcissist. You'd feel a bit of guilt every now and then wouldn't you?

*GTR:* So didn't you say in one cartoon where the female's looking at her taking selfies, and then she's talking to the phone and asking if she's like selfish. And the phone says, "How can you possibly be selfish when you

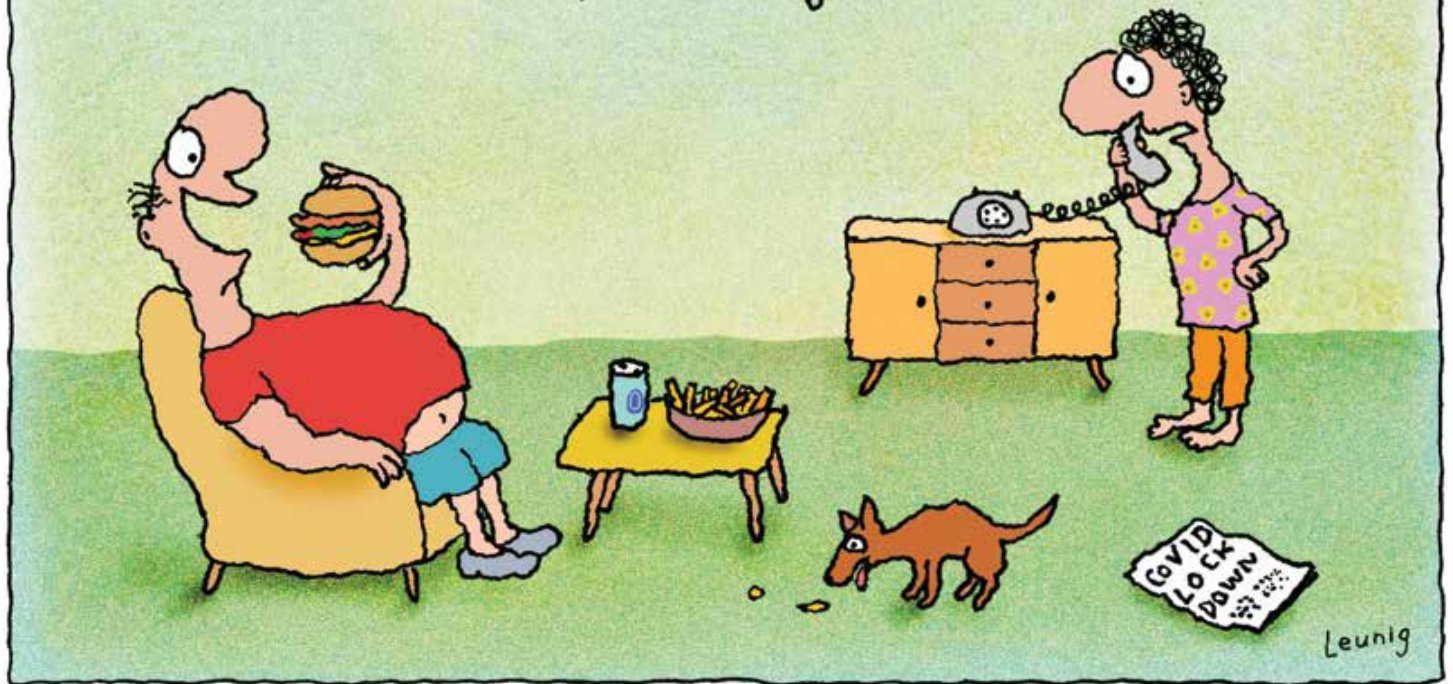
share your photo on social media for the whole wide world to see?"

*ML:* Yes, of course. Yeah. Well, there's my... Well, there's the cartoonist asking questions about not just what the politicians do, but what us ordinary punters do. I'm, I'm very, always curious about what is our part in all this debacle because sometimes it is a debacle. Some days it's not working well and you can turn to the politicians as we must and say, "Hang on, you're not doing a good job here." But then you got to look at yourself in the mirror or society does so that's probably what a cartoonist too. It just holds up the mirror. Of the culture to the system as best a cartoonist can. I mean, they're not experts. I'm not an expert, but you try and give it a go and people don't like that of course. A lot of people don't like.

*GTR:* Why don't, I mean, you'd think you'd... Any, I don't know, but I do know that it's uncomfortable for some people.

*ML:* Well, of course, because look, it's almost biblical, isn't it? There's this kind of what does this, there's this kind of... is it biblical? No, it's religious almost this thing of seven deadly sins. They say pride, greed, laziness, all these things, right? Which are part of human nature. Now, they do account, I don't go around banging on about the seven deadly sins, but I think, hey,

We're in isolation, Beryl;  
I'm flattening the curve and  
Norm is fattening the curve...



this is just lazy. Just old fashioned laziness or something you say about, and you know that you yourself have a capacity to laziness or humans are greedy more or less. And you've got to keep saying that we like to describe ourselves as wonderful glorious people a bit, or the culture does. It's always award winning and all this stuff. A humble position is also good. So, no, we are also we are fallible. We also do sin. Envy is a big part even of professional life. I find people imagine you're doing very well or, "Oh, you're in the public realm. You're are having say, so therefore you're doing well and you're wealthy" or something. Whatever their fantasy is. I'm not going to go at myself as a wealthy and for God's sake, I've just been through a divorce. A marital financial settlement. I mean, I've got to keep working. But so people... And anyway, they fantasise that because you're doing cartoons in the public realm and you do books.

*GTR:* It's incredible.

*ML:* That you're up yourself. You're a narcissist, you think you're pretty good. I said, "No, I don't. I'm struggling." And if they think you're doing well, they can get envious. People can, other people in the media envy you, and they won't know or admit to envy much but I think it accounts for a lot of hurtfulness that goes on and trying to bring people down.

*GTR:* That's true too. And then of course, if you think about this too Michael, you obviously, to me, I shouldn't say obviously, I suppose nothing's obvious. But to me, these people that do that, then you say because you're an artist, you must be up yourself and rich and everything. These people, don't they have any forms of self expression except envy? Because I think self expression is so important for the soul.

*ML:* Indeed, it is vital and it's natural and to be expressive and... But to be antagonistic and malicious without due cause. I mean, we're all... Sometimes if someone's giving us a hell of a hard time, we can be antagonistic back and say, "Don't...just leave me alone, buzz off." But for no reason when you're just doing your job. And people are trying to tear you to shreds. And also as Sydney Nolan I think it was said, the artist Sydney Nolan, said "Australia is not a good country for an artist to grow old in." So it was we are young and free. Now yes, that's lovely who doesn't love the spontaneity and the beauty of youth and the energy. Fantastic. But I think sometimes when they say as an insult, "You're just an old guy, you're an old", you are old as if that's some kind of failure or sin. I say, "Well, yeah, well, welcome to the club. We'll all be... We all have to go through it if we're lucky."

*GTR:* Yeah. That's right. It beats the alternative.

*ML:* Yeah, exactly. And from the themes in *The Last Post*, they shall not grow old as we who are left grow old, it said that's sad when people...

*GTR:* Oh yeah, that's true too. Yeah. And you can have friends and friends will say... Oh, you hear them talking to someone on the phone. They might say, "Oh, I'm just an old bastard" and I think, "Well, I would never say that about myself because it's not true." I don't think we live long enough to be old.

*ML:* No, no. We know what it is to feel a bit like an afternoon nap because I'm going through a bit of what my mother used to call spring fever at the moment. I've been up there really doing a bit of hard yakka.

*GTR:* Right.

*ML:* And oh, geez, I'm down in Melbourne today. I don't get to Melbourne much anymore and oh, you think, "Oh, I don't have the energy I used to have on these hot sort of days."

*GTR:* My older brother is in his late seventies and he sent a message to me yesterday saying the same thing, but he's very youthful of mind too. And that's the thing, but I suppose, is love still the strongest emotion do you think?

*ML:* I hope it's a very... Yes. I hope so. I hope so. I think for me, it just develops and develops and it broadens and it deepens. It's something that goes on until your day you die. I think in the end, it's all that remains and I think. And it's so... It broadens one's understanding of what love is is it grows with age. I think it's a lifetimes work.

*GTR:* Beautifully said.

*ML:* It's a lifetime's work and it's like a miracle and it's the thing that is most valuable amongst humans and the most... It's the most regenerative and it's the great healer and it's worth... If you were the most award winning wealthy person and there was no real love in and around your days, I think that would be a great tragedy. And so yeah I think it's powerful...

*GTR:* Yeah. You never think of yourself as old when you love, I don't think.

*ML:* No, you don't. No, it's a state of... There's some freed...genuine freedom of soul and mind and aliveness. There's some real, this vitality of love and the meaningfulness of it and it makes so much worthwhile. To work with love, to love whatever, to cook with love. It applies to anything we do.

*GTR:* Gardening.

*ML:* Gardening and it gives contentment and it bestows contentment. And I think in this agitated, discontented, anxious world, which the modern world is, it's moving probably too fast for its own good. And I think love is a deeper, slower thing and...

*GTR:* Yeah, beautiful. That's right. It is. And it will be worthwhile in its slow form.

*ML:* Yes. I think so. It grows in, as I said once before in a little cartoon or something, nothing can be loved at speed. Nothing can be loved at speed. Well, that was just me having a shot at it, has having a try to understand something. But I think to slow down is it... Love can flourish a bit and take and grow in a slower life.

*GTR:* Yeah, it's quite amazing because of course food, food tastes better, music sounds better.

*ML:* Yeah.

*GTR:* And the birds seem to be singing better songs when you have love.

*ML:* Indeed. You hear, and you see, and you feel more acutely and sensitively and more truly, I think. Now this might sound waffle to some but, and there is such thing as love envy. They see someone who lives with love and they don't... It's a bit menacing to some people. And it's so restricted, you can't love... All right. Say love between a man and a woman. You can't love that woman. You've got an age gap, relationship, blah, blah. But what's that got to do with it? It's love. It can be

anywhere in the most unlikely place. It can flourish. It can take... it can grow.

*GTR:* Well. That's right. James Baldwin said, the American poet James Baldwin said, you have no... you cannot choose who you love.

*ML:* Yes. Did he say that? Yes. Well, that would be true. And it's very, it's not that it's a wild force that takes hold of you, although some would describe it as just that. But the point is made it, you do not choose it. It's a bit of a miracle I think.

*ML:* And it's the salvation of many, it's such a redeeming thing. People will give up so much in order to love.

*GTR:* Yes.

*ML:* They will change so much that for the sake of love because they know that's the greatest value. And the old traditional, our grandmothers might have said it, "God is love" et cetera and understandings of what love is because nobody's got the exact definition. But to even talk to each other with love it can be just a deep, respectful wanting to touch each other's heart if you know what I mean? And bringing each other to life a bit. Just to the truth of life, to awaken that within each other even in conversation. Or that's what a musician might do or as Mozart said, he said, "All right, what is genius?" He specifically, in German of course and it translated roughly was what is genius? Because it's often he obviously was asked about it. He said genius is love, love, and love.

*GTR:* Is that what Mozart said? Is that what Mozart said? How brilliant.

*ML:* If you looked up Mozart on the subject of genius or love, you'd probably find some words to that effect. Yeah. And I think every artist who's very genuine, who's genuine, who's not a narcissistic ego self-promoting sort, who's not calling themselves an artist. I think any genuine artist knows about this, that you have to work. If you're a painter, composer, you're a writer, you have to write with love. If you put out a magazine, you do it with love. That's not corny because the old ...The more negative aspects of Australian masculinity, and it's not a bad thing, but a lot of guys are embarrassed about to use that word. Or they have been, I think things might be changing. I don't know. So if you talk of love, you're going to be shot down if you're a cartoonist. If you do a cartoon about love, there's a sort of a sneering eye.

*GTR:* I know.

*ML:* Yeah. And you think, "Oh, come on, be bigger than that." Have a bit of guts, have some courage. You have to, it requires courage to love.

*GTR:* Yeah. So this is true. This is very true too, of course, because we know that love will bring pain at some stage. There will be pain, but still we love and still we go in appropriately

openhearted to others. Not as though we are chasing love, but if we go in and give ourselves to someone you know is giving themselves back, then this when things happen.

*ML:* Exactly. Yeah, yeah. Something you set in motion and something grows and then all the words of, that go back in our ancestry, all the poets of the past and the people who gave expression to these ideas, whether it's Rumi in any culture, Rumi in the... They all were fascinated and they got very eloquent on the subject. Love has been elusive to humans, but it's also been profoundly influential, an act of love. And then with that goes mercy or things or humility and all these things, but mercy forgiveness, etc, all these things that we were important in our culture and not easy sometimes. Sometimes not easy. So, love is there, isn't it? In all of these qualities.

*GTR:* Oh yeah. Oh yeah. It's a great thing that you speak about, Michael. And I think with Rumi and others, when love is involved, great works of art have the potential to be born because there seems to be an openness from the artist or the person that love is directing them in some way. I don't know. I hope that doesn't sound too corny, but then again...

*ML:* No, no. No I think it's very accurate. And I think you use this word openness, and I think that's vital quality to dare to be open. I mean, you don't to be open and to be genuine, I suppose. And also to be... Some warmth between humans is a wonderful thing. The warmth, sometimes blokes aren't as good at it but they do have it deep in their heart.

*GTR:* Yep.

*ML:* They do. You've just got to find it in them or allow for it. And I find men are often been misrepresented in recent times as they all... They've got problems and all this. Well, of course who doesn't have? We all have sort of problems sometime or other more or less.

*GTR:* Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Yeah.

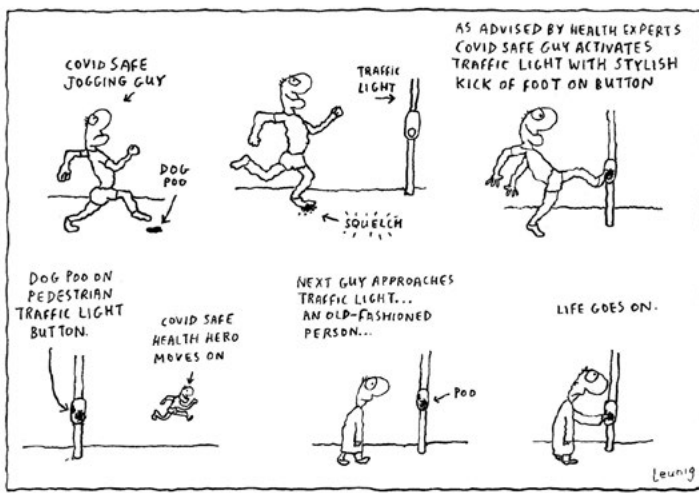
*ML:* But men are actually much softer than...

*GTR:* Well, the great poets and painters, Michael, and this is not being sexist or selective, but the facts are that some of the greatest artists and poets are men. So there obviously has to be a kernel in there that has gives birth to this.

*ML:* Exactly, exactly. And I think they, a lot of men yearn for it and that's what it is sometimes in times of war and conflict, men have to go through and see and take part in chaotic, sad, appalling things. And yet, I mean, have you read Alan Moorehead's book called Eclipse?

*GTR:* No.

*ML:* Moorehead, an Australian journalist, he followed the allies



advance up through Italy. He's a war correspondent. He went up through Italy. I think the Americans and the British and New Zealand, isn't it? All right up to Germany and he saw some really sad and horrible and the futility and the destruction. And he did sort of conclude at the end of that book that at least in spite of all the sadness, at least he saw men discover, men behave in loving and courageous ways who would otherwise have just been sort of shopkeepers in an obscure little town in England or something. And they found a certain huge qualities in themselves that they otherwise would not have discovered. I mean, I know some men didn't, some men were too mortally damaged and etc, but yeah, Moorehead's book is interesting about...

GTR: I might have a look at that. Eclipse.

ML: Eclipse. Yes. It's a very gripping thing. He was a great... He wrote a book called Cooper's Creek too about Burke and Wills. And he quite a writer, but that was a good book, Eclipse by Moorehead. And because it was very accurate reporting on the conflict.

GTR: Well, thank you for that. Thanks for giving us that heads up, Michael. And I think just in today's society where things obviously, and I know the last time we spoke I think we may have mentioned this, but that's four years ago. And the four years that have gone now, things have only increased in speed I would imagine. So there is a lot of challenges. How does one, is patience something that will lead to quietness? Patience and...

ML: Yeah, well, some sort of way to cope with it all. Yeah. I think patience is a fantastic virtue. It's a really effective discipline I suppose. And because to be patient is to diminish anxiety.

GTR: Yes.

ML: I think people driven by anxiety will just rush to things and not bear with things and say, "Okay, just stay with it, let it pass or just watch it." What the old saying, just watch and wait and wonder. And don't feel we

have to act necessarily straight away, calm down. To calm. I think we are very agitated at this time in history. We're so hyper stimulated with the media, with television, with film, with entertainment and it's not very reflective. It bothers me that so much films are being dumped into the world and a lot of them aren't real good.

GTR: Actually. Good point, Michael, you wonder who produced that? Who put the money into that? Who thought that was a good idea?

ML: Yeah. I think they just got to keep just like keeping the presses rolling. It doesn't matter what we print, just print something because people will buy it. And content isn't something that's profound and isn't so important. I think it's got to be worth doing in my view, but that's an old fashioned view. We're consumer, we consume and we expect to consume, and we expect to have a lot of stuff and a bigger house than our ancestors had. A bigger pool or whatever people have. I don't know. I think people are just...the materialism is very promoted and yet we look to our and our indigenous people. And we sort of talk admiringly in an idealised way about how there was a more simple life. In fact, it was very hardworking to keep the... To find food, but got a more spiritual life I guess.

GTR: Yes, that's true too. I think we were speaking before just briefly about... We were speaking about the media. One of your cartoons that I really like, and I really I think I've probably mentioned this, I really like the ability you have to get expressions on those faces. And one of them is a bastard, one's a good bloke, and there's this bearded Messiah standing on the hill and he says to the four guys there, "Put down your stones and let those who, without sin among you, become radio broadcasters, newspaper columnists, or television commentators."

ML: Well, that's right. I've worked with journalists all my life. Well, I worked in the meat works before I worked, became in the company of journalists you see. It was in interesting.

GTR: Right.

ML: I was a labourer in the... I was killing cattle in a meat works. And when, I was a kid who sort of didn't do well with education and I could earn some good money as a laborer and a meat works, and I didn't choose to kill cattle. Well, I was just a laborer who was sent to do that on some days and then just everything I did. So then suddenly I'm with journalists, because in the background I was always drawing little cartoons when I'd go home at night. I wanted to do this sort of thing. And it was the Sixties, there was things in the air, that things were changing. It was interesting. And it was a Renaissance, it was a creative time. It was a politically stirring time. There was the Vietnam conflict caused a lot of thinking and questioning and sadness...

GTR: It was so stimulating, Michael.

ML: Oh, it was, it was. And it was more... It was tolerant in a way. You could put ideas out there and it'd cause a bit of an uproar but it wasn't so dire and so punishing if you... You didn't get cancelled or censored as much. I mean, I did get censored a few times. And quite rightly. I stepped across the boundary of public decency a few times in the cartoons and we went to court and all that. We sort of all laughed it off and took it seriously and then laughed it off. But now it's yeah, journalism's changed is what I'm saying. Suddenly I found one minute I'm amongst slaughter men and meat workers. And these weren't bad blokes by and large. There was things to and they all got their virtues. And there's so much life and death going on in the meat works. There's life and death, and as I've said, if it hardens some, it makes other more sensitive because it's...

ML: Then the pack. But back then there was some very substantial people with journalism I remember. People who'd really... they'd been more correspondence. They'd worked all over the world. It's back in the days when newspapers had money to send them out on really big assignments. And it was really, there was some terrific characters, really good writers

too. I don't think they get the time and the money to write now and I think they're all too educated in a way. Back then there were a lot of journalists who'd just come in as cadets at 16.

*GTR:* That's right. Well, I was 15 when I became a copy boy at the Sydney Morning Herald and the plan was to turn me into a cadet journalist. But I got homesick went back to Adelaide, but that's another the story. So do you think in the end, Michael, when we have so many opinions aired and some of them not all worthy, do you think sometimes it might just be better to interview an autumn leaf?

*ML:* Well, yeah. An autumn leaf is a very (laughter) sensitive. An autumn leaf has had quite a long, hard summer and has heard many, much bird song. And lot of it's looked down upon the world. It's..yeah, sometimes you might as well, yes.

*GTR:* That interview you did with the autumn leaf was good because it said, "I suppose you're right actually, autumn leaf. Thanks for your time." Autumn leaf says, "No worries. Thanks for the interview."

*ML:* Exactly. Yeah. I must say I do struggle with the daily purpose now. I don't find much that's very interesting or relevant. I don't know. It's all a bit too... There's, there's certain issues...

*GTR:* It's boring.

*ML:* Oh, that is the word, Greg, you put your finger on it. Just boring. And the other word would be stupid sometimes, I don't want to... This is, I can't believe how shallow it's got and I don't think anybody likes it very much. I'm surprised people still reading the purpose. Yeah. But so I don't find much diversity of people and views. And I think, I don't know, maybe they all went to university and grew, went to good schools or something. I reckon I went to a state school, pretty working class.

*GTR:* Same here. Yes.

*ML:* Yeah and I don't find enough of those, that sort of sensibility in journalism even. I don't know.

*GTR:* No, no, you're right. I think there's a lot of working class writers that have really been brave in the view eyes of some you really get well... I don't know, but I think I understand completely what you mean. I do get the weekend paper just for a read because it has more diverse things in it. But the Monday to Friday, you can just forget about that. That's pity they can't...good for the fish and chips. But I suppose we all have to live, learn to live together, Michael.

*ML:* Yes. I guess we do. And we got to learn to bear with each other and kind of all these... I am sounding like an old fogey, so we got to, you hope that people just can respect each other's dignity and they need... Respect people. Just you don't have to, just

allow for them and allow for their ways, their peculiarities. We are all peculiar, so long as no one's really hurting each other. And I think the modern conformity is not so good. I think we are so bombarded with imagery of how you might be and how you should be young people, I don't know how they escape. Pretty powerful pressures of public relations and advertising and...

*GTR:* Very good point too. There needs to be. And actually, I suppose finally, Michael, it's always an utmost pleasure to speak to you and I always feel we can go on for hours. But I'm thinking finally, Michael, is appreciating the small part of a blessing in life?

*ML:* The small things in life of course, I would say so. I would say the every day thing can be so beautiful and this simple thing and it's not so easy. Simple isn't necessarily easy because everything is expected to be peak. Well, not everything. This is tendency to look for peak experience, the most amazing and you think, "Oh, I'm sick of amazing things. I just want real things and people and each other."

*GTR:* How wise.

*ML:* Yeah. I mean, we've got this kind of addiction to these amazing things. You've got to search the whole world over and become this tourist and searching, searching and seeing all the small villages of the Mediterranean. And you think, look, I think there's an old Irish tale about the guy who, the Irishman who leaves home, and he searches the world for something amazing and meaningful and he finds nothing. And he arrives home at his doorstep and he sits down on the doorstep to just totally disappointed. And suddenly books down, there's this little leprechaun and this magical leprechaun is right there. And he says, "Where did you come from?" The guy says to the leprechaun. The leprechaun says, "I've been here all the time."

*GTR:* Ah, yes. Yes.

*ML:* And so what's important that is there is magic in your own life, if only you can see it and love it. And you talk about love before. I think through the eyes of love, we can see much, we can see deep, we can see beauty in small things. We can see... we can still see big things too, but we can see the beauty as well.

*GTR:* Yeah.

*ML:* And really beauty is another extraordinary thing. It's not what is depicted by the commercial interest. Beauty is where is in the eye of the beholder or in the heart of the beholder. I hear I am preaching, Greg.

*GTR:* No. I think the next book will have to be a book of philosophical quotes. Actually, finally I'm just thinking with... you talk about the simple

things, the small things. Is one of the simple things a dog smiling at you?

*ML:* Well, it is.

*GTR:* That was a good cartoon.

*ML:* Yeah. That's a cartoon. And the pleasure and you smile back. Dogs seem to, some dogs can smile at you. Don't you reckon?

*GTR:* I believe so. I remember saying that years ago someone said, "Oh, bull", I said, "Well, no, you just got to. Maybe they don't smile at you, but they do to me."

*ML:* It's like a mate of mine who was conscripted to Vietnam in that time. He was at Puckapunyal, doing his basic training and he had on his locker, he had a picture of his English teacher's dog.

*GTR:* Right.

*ML:* Chompy was the name of the dog and it loved Ray. Ray was his name. It loved Ray. And anyway, the guys, Ray was a real character. It was a tall lanky redheaded guy and all his mate there at Puckapunyal, all the other guys conscripted would just taking the piss off him all the time. Of course, he was a funny guy and this dog on his locker and they said it's ridiculous. And he said yeah. He says, "Yeah but you blokes have got all these pictures of all these girls on your locker." He says, "You don't love him, but I love Chompy. I love him."

*GTR:* That's a beautiful thing. Ah, Chompy. We'll have to do a Chompy book. That's beautiful. And that's classic and Ray too. That's wonderful too. Michael, it's always a pleasure and your new book. Well, I tell you what, it's something that continues some of the great legacy that you have and some of the great work you're still doing for all Australians to reflect on and people in the world, I'd say too.

*ML:* Thank you Greg, but I'm not too optimistic at the time. I'm in the bad books a bit with social media and I'm a sort of an awful person for reasons I don't comprehend. So I'm not expecting much publicity or favourable review or anything like that, but so it is. Just move on don't we? Yeah.

*GTR:* Yeah. That's right. I think you've summed it up and we can't please everyone all the time. And if we did, we'd have to be... Yeah, we'd be not even worthy. I don't think so. Yeah.

*ML:* Yeah. Oh, good. Yeah. Good. And you too, keep up this work, Greg. It's a good magazine. It's good. It's got variety and it's got depth and it's sort of... It's such a breath of fresh air in so many ways. ■

# Stilettoes that she wears with leather

As the rain comes falling down,  
I read a book about anal-probe robots that came from outer  
space and I'm thinking, my god, WTF,  
that'd be right, that'll come next.  
A punch to the midriff.  
I call on recent memories of you to get me through.  
I start a poem with the lines,  
"You restored my pride, you make me feel good inside"...  
I pause and reach for a bag of light.  
A chameleon changing shape.  
A blob of weird light.  
Evacuation warnings on the radio. As if we haven't been  
through enough stuff. As if we haven't felt like we've been hit  
by a slingshot.  
I just want to feel you next to me.  
I continue the poem, writing,  
"I sometimes wonder if this is just a dream", before realising  
that everything is just as it seems.  
On the highway of life, I see ghosts that could be roadkill.  
The rain keeps falling down. The humidity feels like a  
thousand degrees. I hear gurgled words in glossolalia,  
an alien Shakespeare. I feel like I'm hitchhiking with Slim.  
I feel all balled-up and banged up and shooting off the bazoo,  
I go back to the poem, I'm determined to see this through.  
Hipsters and bohemes in my mind. And stilettoes that you wear  
with leather.  
I go to the fridge and grab a beer.  
A slave to appetite.  
Lindsey Buckingham sings Down On Rodeo.  
I want to go to the rodeo with you. I want to  
be more than a Jump Chump with you.

GREG T ROSS





— INTERVIEW —

# Thomas Keneally

Thomas Keneally is a truly great Australian. He was born in 1935 and is one of the country's finest writers.

As well as his many novels, he has published a number of histories including his three-volume series *Australians*. His novels include *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, *Schindler's Ark* and *The Dickens Boy*. He has won the Miles Franklin Award, the Booker Prize, the Los Angeles Book Prize, the Royal Society of Literature Prize, the Scriptor Award of the University of Southern California, the Mondello International Prize and the Helmerich Prize.

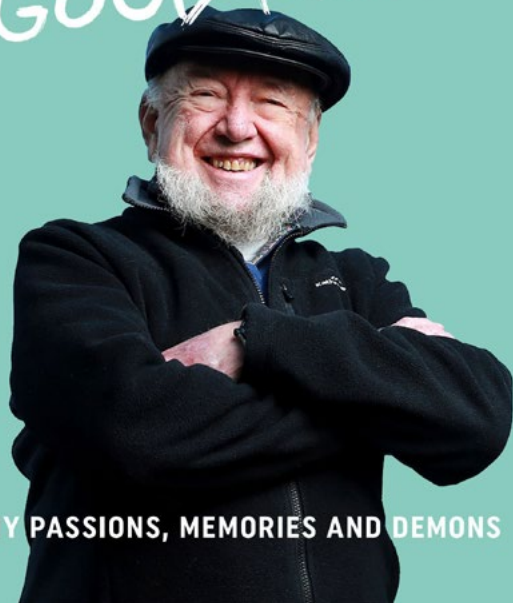
He lives in Sydney with his wife Judy.

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

**A BLOODY GOOD RANT**  
BY THOMAS KENEALLY, ALLEN & UNWIN

# THOMAS KENEALLY

## A BLOODY GOOD RANT



MY PASSIONS, MEMORIES AND DEMONS

Following a lifetime observing Australia and its people, Tom Keneally turns inwards to reflect on what has been important to him.

'When I was born in 1935 I grew up, despite the Depression and World War II, with a primitive sense of being fortunate . . . The utopian strain was very strong . . . if we weren't to be a better society, if we were simply serfs designed to support a system of privilege, what was the bloody point?'

Thomas Keneally has been observing, reflecting on and writing about Australia and the human condition for well over fifty years. In this deeply personal, passionately drawn and richly tuned collection he draws on a lifetime of engagement with the great issues of our recent history and his own moments of discovery and understanding.

He writes with unbounded joy of being a grandparent, and with intimacy and insight about the prospect of death and the meaning of faith. He is outraged about the treatment of Indigenous Australians and refugees, and argues fiercely against market economics and the cowardice of climate change deniers. And he introduces us to some of the people, both great and small, who have dappled his life.

Beautifully written, erudite and at times slyly funny, *A Bloody Good Rant* is an invitation to share the deep humanity of a truly great Australian.

*Greg T Ross:* Tom Keneally, welcome to The Last Post podcast series, and we're here to welcome you for your new book, *A Bloody Good Rant*. And it is.

*Thomas Keneally AO:* Yes. This is the first interview I've done with it because it's just about to come out or it's just out. And earlier this year, because of COVID, I was able to publish a novel, 'Corporal Hitler's Pistol', which is about the North Coast.

*GTR:* That's right.

*TK:* But this is a non-fiction book, nor is it a history. It's actually a series of... God, I don't want to call them essays. Essays is what we used to do in school on the weekend. But they are history memoir obsessions of mine, and there are a couple of obsessions which I pursued through a number of recurrent chapters, which is separated I hope, by entertainment. But I hope it's an entertaining book. And if I call them essays, that doesn't sound like the sort of writing you dance on the table for. But I hope the book is the sort of writing that people cherish and like a lot.

*GTR:* Yes. Well, indeed, Tom. And the Australian public really owe you a lot. You've been, well as it says, reflecting and writing on the human condition now for over 50 years, plus doing a whole lot of other things, which we'll speak about a bit later on. But you are in a good position to give a bloody good rant. And the message, I suppose as you say a number of... If we say essays, people will understand that they are just a whole lot of looks at things that are of interest to you that you want to speak to Australians about. And one of them is I guess, the whole idea of ranting and clarifying messages. What do you think we need to clarify in modern day Australia?

*TK:* Well, I think we have been as the book says, in a struggle between neoliberalism, which puts the economy and what the economy needs to work efficiency, above every other issue, where it was never supposed to be. It is a grand platform and we all go mad if we don't have a good economy to work off. When I say we go mad, I don't mean we become cross. I mean bad economies are the stuff of suicide and desperation and mental illness. But the economy is there to serve humanity. Since the 1870s, the economy has been... 1970s rather, the economy has been there for the people to serve. They've been reduced from being citizens to become clients, and what's the other word? Consumers. Everything has been business-ised. For example, the universities have become what they never were before, a business. And the business is selling overpriced education to Asians. And it's been brought to a halt, and the Minister for Education has said that it's business, "We better get back to business in the university." Imagine if that had been said in 18th, 19th century Oxford. "Oh, this bloke has two masters." But you see this strict totalitarian belief in the market has a trickle down effect. You got to free the market as much as you can. And that's why you got to destroy the unions because the unions are an interference in negotiations between capital and labor. And as part of my rant against neoliberalism which has marked our society, I evoke the old dream of the Commonwealth from my childhood. It was with purpose that Australia was called the Commonwealth. And the idea that was very much around when I was a kid and worth fighting for, was the idea that there was a commonwealth where everyone had a place. Unlike other

“... I THINK WHEN WE BEGIN WRITING... WE GET ALL THESE CHARACTERS TOGETHER IN A ROOM... AND YOU JUST WANT THEM TO GET ON WITH EACH OTHER, RELATE OTHER EACH OTHER, AND DO SOMETHING USEFUL. AND THE ANSWERS TO THIS COME FROM WRITING, BEGINNING TO WRITE. BECAUSE WHEN YOU BEGIN TO WRITE, YOU BEGIN TO ACCESS WHAT JUNG CALLED A COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS.”

countries where people were just left to die, we had the pension. Everyone had a place of dignity at the table. The blokes who founded the system were often conservatives like, who was the Prime Minister from Victoria? The funny bloke who believed in seances? Deakin.

*GTR:* Oh, yes. Yes, yes. Yeah.

*TK:* Deakin was one of the greatest reformers because his sort of conservatism said that the economy had to be... society had to be balanced. You had to keep the punters happy and you had to keep them busy or else mayhem would break loose. Now, in the name of maximizing the market, manufacturing in the US was destroyed. And who are the people who now support? And the belief was that wealth made by other means would trickle down to them and keep them happy. But it hasn't kept them happy. And it's the myriad people, the children and grandchildren of the unemployed workers of formerly booming manufacturing, who are the drunk people and the people who think that there's an international paedophile empire takeover happening with Bill Gates, and a one-world government. I've had my second dose. They say it means that I should be turning into a Star Trooper or whatever. I said yesterday, to my grandkids, "No one's offered me a laser gun yet, and I've had the second injection for about six months now." Really, America is a very divided society. And I have a diagram in the book, which... There's a professor, Ian Lowe, who's a great writer I admire. And the market first proposition has a big face, which is a big circle which is the economy, and two interlocking circles, society and the environment. And you can only have as much environment as doesn't harm the economy. And you can only have as much society as doesn't harm the economy. Whereas, Ian Lowe's diagram is the environment, without which we're stuck, our species is gone. Not only is business gone, but the species is gone. The environment, and within that culture and society concentric circles, there should be society, and then within society there's the market. So that's been a bit of a bugbear of mine since the '70s. But it was a Labor government who bought the proposition, but they bought it... I've got to say, Keating and Hawke who I both knew in my life, they bought

it but without cancelling the social contract. They also said, "Okay, we're globalizing. But we're not giving up this idea that everyone has to be looked after." But more conservative politicians have a stronger view that the more you destroy that old-style economics, and the more you destroy the influence of unions, and the more you turn everything into a business so that students at University of New South Wales are called clients now. So that the more you make everything a business, the more the business will look after everyone. Well, it hasn't worked. There are 20% of Australia disinherited. And they're disinherited from generation to generation because their schools don't get enough funding, and so on. I described in the book, tell the story of going to a charter school in the US. They say, "Let's privatise the public schools." So, an Aussie who taught in one took me to his private school in south end of Chicago. And let me tell you, 3,000 kids, no decoration in the place at all. Bare institutional walls like a prison. An office of the Chicago police force in the lobby-

*GTR:* God.

*TK:* Very poor public playing grounds. And he told me, "All these kids," who were lovely kids, they set up our Australian accents, his and mine. But he said that they want to make this a charter school. They're letting it fail so they can sell it to someone. And of course in charter schools, there's no protection of teachers. You can sack them on the spot. So we've had conservatives here talk about bringing in charter schools to some of the failing public schools in Australia. But if there are failing public schools in Australia, it's because we've given up the dream of equality of opportunity. You know?

*GTR:* Yep. Yep. Yep.

*TK:* And we must never give up that. I mean, look at me. I'm a creature from the Irish bog via the bush. I got equality in Menzies' day. I would have got more if Chifley had still been Prime Minister. But I got equality of opportunity when I was a kid. Who's getting it now?

*GTR:* Yeah. Good point, Tom, I think. And when we start measuring PhD against business models and the trickle down effect of course as you mentioned, which doesn't seem to have worked, it becomes a dangerous place to be. And equality of education is the most important thing that we can

have. I guess education isn't... And we would like to think that there would be an equality of that to continue. So is that associated with death of the common good that you speak about?

*TK:* Oh, yes. And putting the market first. And they have a prophet called Adam Smith who was a very, very humble, amiable Scot in the 18th century, before the American Revolution. And he's their God because he spoke of an invisible hand, subscribing, everyone is selfish in a sense. He said, "The coach maker doesn't make his coach for nothing. The hat maker doesn't make his hats for nothing... And as if by an invisible hand, this self-interest that tradespeople have... Self-interest is good. Which is easily translated into, "Greed is good," as it's been. But he didn't say that everything business needed, you give in to them. Because he says, "There is never a time when businessmen..." I forget, "Merchants et cetera, from a particular area of merchantry, whether it be selling flour or selling iron, they never get together without," he says, "at some stage the topic comes up of screwing the public." He doesn't say... That means arriving at a project against the public interests by conspiracy over prices and by other little dodges. Well, now that is what he said. Is he their prophet? And he says that. I don't think Scomo, when he's approached by natural gas people thinks, "Oh, I better be careful here because they might not want something that's not in the public interest." No. They walk in and they say, "Oh, did you get the donation? By the way we'd like to drill for gas," say in Antarctica. "Oh, gee that's good. All right. Yeah. See, how much do you need? Let's give you a bounty while we drug test the unemployed, the disinherited. The disinherited. So we've got a lot of disinherited in the Western world and it's showing. It's purely because... Look people used to send this up. Unfortunately treasurers no longer do it. But treasurer after treasurer used to say, "This is a very good set of numbers." But increasingly over the last 30 years, people have looked at treasurers saying that and think, "But there's nothing in it for me. Where do I fit in those numbers?" I think we've been saved from the worst of it in Australia by the fact that Libs and Labor and National voters, nonetheless all of us were raised to believe that we

were entitled as citizens, to dignified level of healthcare and useful leave of healthcare. A reasonable education, in the interests of democracy, and furthermore that we were entitled to, oh what else? Oh, communications. Yeah. That's why they hate the state owning or building anything now. That's why in countries like ours, federated. They've told the federal government, "We'll take everything over and we'll privatise Qantas by the way. So we can't use Qantas to bring our blokes, those overseas, home, which is one of the scandals of COVID. We don't have planes to bring them back, and we can't tell this independent body Qantas to bring them back. We should have at least some statutory power over them for an event like this.

*GTR:* Oh, geez. And these are funny because I think there was a... It might have been a Leunig cartoon or something similar. A cartoon that showed Jesus with the disciples and he said now... Jesus said, "Bread and water for everyone except..." No, the disciple says, "Bread and water for everyone." Jesus goes, "No, only those that have been drug tested."

*TK:* Yeah. We'll that's the idea. I mean, these folks say they are Christians. But they want to treat everyone as a consumer, as a unit in a great economic machine. Did Christ say, "I've come to save..." If you believe in the Christ story, did Christ "I've come to save the-

*GTR:* Clients.

*TK:* ... the clients or the consumers?

*GTR:* Oh, Tom. I'll tell you what? So now, you speak also in the book about racism and the Aboriginal culture. And it's the richness of that. Have we missed the boat with that, or were we with the Aboriginal culture and equality of sorts and the way that we deal with First Nations people?

*TK:* Ah, well. I'll tell you what? It is true that there has been a big shift of imagination since I was a kid in, how old is human Australia? We're starting to realise that it's, as A.D. Hope says in his poem, Australia, "They call her a young country but they lie." But the reason the your lie is that this is one of the early places humans came. And when they entered, they didn't have any hominids to deal with. Any other species of humans, and they walked straight into an environment that was

lacking in the range of predators that characterised Africa. And I've written a book on Mungo. Oh, and I have a hymn of praise to Mungo, in the book. When I say it's a hymn, it's a prose that tell Mungo's story. That's ancient Australia slowly entering our imagination. This is good for the relationship between us and the first Australians. And I think things are getting better but still, as I say in the book, every time something happens that might benefit Aboriginals, such as Mowbray judgment, which was the most important judgment. I mean, it created a new vision of Australia. Every time something like that that validates the ancient culture comes up, people sneer at it and piss on it. And I can't go along with Malcolm Turnbull's libertarian proposition to create an elected advisory body for Aboriginals, would be to create a third privilege house.

*GTR:* No, a lot thought that was rubbish.

*TK:* ... in which only Aboriginals can vote. I mean, give us a break. It would be, if we did it for white protestant stockbrokers but in any case they've got their advisory councils. That was the culmination for me. Look, all my life I've been interested in Australia Day. We used to barely celebrate it in the old days- and then I said, the Australia Day council doesn't a bad actually, in that Aboriginality is always honoured on Australia Day. And there've been some great people who've been chairs of the Australia Day council, but just get rid of that. I thought the time would come when we'd find a third day and stop slogging Aboriginals.

*GTR:* Yep. Yep. Yeah. I think the date is probably a bit of a problem for a lot of white Australians also and I-

*TK:* Also. So why not get one... Instead of trying to hit everyone over the head, get one that unites. And I can think of a few. The first attempt at reconciliation we're still working on.

*GTR:* Yes. And that would open the doors to more learning of historical matters that matter in that regard too, Tom. . With Australia Day with the current date, we do see an unfortunate emphasis on the flag being wrapped around young Australians as though that gives them the right to something. But I'm not sure what that means.

*TK:* Yeah. It's often someone on the side who wants to assert their humanity

by tell a full story so that people will read the novel and They'll say, "Jesus. He's going through exactly the same crisis I'm going through, and therefore he's my brother." That's an important aspect of writing, I think. It's broadly cultural. But I think when we begin writing, Okay. We get all these characters together in a room. It's like inviting everyone for a party and then finding out you've got no liquor, no food. And you just want them to get on with each other, relate other each other, and do something useful. And the answers to this come from writing, beginning to write. Because when you begin to write, you begin to access what Jung called a collective unconscious.

*GTR:* That's right.

*TK:* In the collective unconscious we have all the stories, all the avatars. There's nothing new. What we write, the people might have Jewish or African or Australian faces, but the stories are part of the vast Alexandrian library called the collective unconsciousness. So I started to believe in the unconscious when I write, because the process of writing. You begin to write a scene, and you feel like death. And you begin the writing process because you must. It's got to be... "You wasted time and now it's five past 10, and other men and women are working an honest day and you're doing nothing but crosswords, so get on with it, Tom." And then you start to work out of... And often, unexpected sentences, unexpected insights into characters. Things you didn't know you know.

*GTR:* Yes, it's true. And it's a great revelation.

*TK:* I was a failed priest. Not a good social place to start from. So I felt I've let down my... I whose guilty and I whose marginalised. And I started writing out of that, trying to find a voice and place for my soul.

*GTR:* Oh, I see. I see. And it's a good thing you told us that too, Tom. Because of course we're grateful that you were a failed priest, and you went on to try and understand... I think someone once said too, "Writers don't write to be understood. They write to understand."

*TK:* They're in the process of doing that. And that's particularly so even though some of these old guys' stories in my book might sound fairly self-

"I THINK THE BEST THING IS I'VE BEEN I THINK,  
A DYNAMITE GRANDPARENT. I'VE DONE ALL  
SORTS OF STUFF I WOULDN'T HAVE DONE  
IF I HADN'T HAD GRANDCHILDREN."

confident. In fact we're all pilgrims, and everything we say is a question. I'd look into God too, having been a seminarian.

*GTR:* Yeah. Of course, the status of women and climate and climate change. There's a whole lot of stuff there too, Tom. It's an amazing book.

*TK:* Yes. Thanks, that's the case. Saints get martyred but sinners sometimes do good by... You see I'm talking like an old priest. Saints, that's a-

*GTR:* No that's all right. Actually, you know I saw you in The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, I think it was. On, what was the one with Simon-

*TK:* Yeah. Work. It was Devil's Playground.

*GTR:* Yes, exactly. What a beautiful film. And you played a priest in there. So it brings me to this final question to you, Tom. You've done so much. Australia is better place for your being here and gene part of the Australian history. What amongst everything... I

mean, that's Jimmie Blacksmith and Schindler's List and everything, and the Miles Franklin Award. All of that stuff. Tom, what would you consider as far as you... What's your greatest achievement?

*TK:* Well, look, I think above all... You know how you get to an age... Men are full of... My God, I think the technical term is piss and vinegar, ambition. We often are a bit tone deaf to relationships and so on. I think the best thing is I've been I think, a dynamite grandparent. I've done all sorts of stuff I wouldn't have done if I hadn't had grandchildren.

*GTR:* That's right. Do grandchildren encourage you to be brave despite yourself?

*TK:* Yes, indeed. And you get to do things. You sometimes get things to do, you wouldn't have done when you were a kid, like the tubes of death. So I have a whole thing about grandchildren in there. It's a very chemical infatuation between grandchildren

and grandparents. And you end up conspiring with them against their parents because their parents are the ones who gave you all that trouble, their mum and dad.

*GTR:* Tom, its been an amazing conversation. This could go... I was just contemplating a series of conversations with you about many subjects because you are an almanac of information and advice to all Australians of all generations. So thank you so much for being part of this and we bless you and your new book.

*TK:* Yes. And I hope those who have the time and patience to read it really enjoy it. There are lots of weird stories in there.

*GTR:* Yeah. So I found it intriguing, entertaining, laughing, serious, and so many things that I agree with on that. But that's giving way too much of my views I guess, and that's not what its about. So thank you once again, Tom.

*TK:* Thank you for this opportunity. ■

## self

i had anticipated  
my decline into poverty  
would be worse than is

typhoon of failure  
washing over me  
could disintegrate ability  
stifling me  
into almost non-existence

fortunately  
i have found the contrary

from my financial decimation  
associated shame  
abandonment by some deemed  
near  
and messy complication of nil  
self-worth  
the splendid has emerged

on this empty beach  
sheltering from winter  
in tent and car i now call home  
acceptance  
nurtures me more each day

i embrace it  
aware  
this unwelcome lesson  
in letting go  
is a disguised gift  
to be cherished  
forever

privileged man i am  
in silent reflection  
by endless sea

alone  
with nature  
and self

finally free  
from whatever i was  
before



STEPHEN HOUSE

Stephen House.  
Photo supplied.

## Coffee break monologue

Broken Shrewsbury biscuits – how bloody annoying! They don't dip very well into coffee, as it is. I remember the Gingernut days – marvellous biscuit for dunking. I'd have an extra cup of coffee, just so I could dunk an extra two or three bikkies. I can't remember an exact scene of that taking place, but I have an extraordinarily strong sense of the spicy smell of the biscuit, the action of dunking and the wet coffee-soaked bite collapsing between my tongue and upper palate. I would always be thinking 'More please'.

And now, here I am – looking at a little pile of Shrewsbury debris on the plate. A little pile of crumbs, a kind of demolition. Funny how the things you did years ago, come back at you. I'm not the same, but neither is the world. People ask – where did it all go? All that role-playing and opening of the heart? Why – into the great hole of course! The world is only 'the world', with all its nooks and crannies, right? There's something else drawing us forward – as if the universe is insatiable, with a terrible thirst way beyond our knowledge of wine, money, politics, birth – and biscuits.

**JEREMY ROBERTS**





## The Jillaroo

There was a jarring in the stirrup, after eight hours in the saddle, sore muscles. Right at the mainstay.

It was mustering time at the station that was as big as a country, almost.

Alarm at 5am. No time to shower, but dirty jeans and a top. Mud-encrusted boots. So cruddy, it turned her on.

Living the life of a Ringer, a Jillaroo. The country's tough and the mob of cattle are wild on the station.

It ain't about the money.

Heat. Flies. Moving camp, setting up camp.

Some guy from Europe cooking Lasagne.

But at Beer o'clock, she figures she's the luckiest ringer in the Top End.

Dirty and smelly this is, and not for the city Princess. The Head-Stockman speaks to all of them. And, from his mouth, the immortal words, "If you don't reach your potential in life, what's the use of living?" She figures she's the luckiest girl in the Top End.

A cowboy makes a tough call, a cowgirl too. To have a go is the best that you can do.

Fencing jobs. Shit jobs. Any jobs to keep the team together. Working long hours, you're gonna sweat a lot and be pushed some distance from your comfort zone. Hands dirty.

A Stockman's belt.

A large Bear knife.

Boots. Sturdy boots. The days are never dull and sharing a joke will carry the day.

The luckiest girl is a Jillaroo. She takes off her dirty jeans and her top and her mud-encrusted boots, for her cowboy. When the time comes to leave, you won't see them for dust, these two. The cowboy, doing what all conquerers do. He buried his past and turned vices into virtues for her. Their world became more twisted than any lasso rope. Their love-life, dirtier than any boots.

Wrapped in tissue paper with a bow on top, he bought presents for her.

They howled, under the outback sky.

She wore gumboots when they went to bed.

**RORY C CALHOUN**



EDITED EXTRACT FROM  
**GREYFIN**  
 BY JOSH FRANCIS, RED DIAMOND PUBLICATIONS

extract

With one swift and smooth continuous motion, Cav turned the handle and pushed on the door, stepping back as Kryton quickly moved past him as he entered the house. Cav quickly followed.

They commenced their room clearing drills. A practice they had completed incalculable times in training at Holsworthy Barracks as young soldiers, as well as globally on numerous real-world missions.

They exited the small laundry which was the first room, before entering the kitchen. Across the other side was a man sitting at a table reading a newspaper, unaware of the intruders that were now in his presence. A small pistol sat on the table in front of him.

Kryton walked quickly towards the man, who looked up in shock.

The man went to grab the pistol, but was instantly stopped by the two rounds that Kryton put into his chest, causing red matter to spray across the table.

The Australians continued moving. They entered the dining room, which was adjacent to the kitchen, and split into the corners as per their well-practiced drills. Suddenly, another man, this time armed with an AK-47, stormed into the room.

Kryton and Cav fired simultaneously into the target, causing him to fall over a small coffee table before coming to rest as a motionless lump in the corner at Kryton's feet.

The two operators slowly moved up the hallway, clearing the rooms one by one.

"Hmmpf," came a loud groan from a room down the end of the hallway.

Cav led Kryton as they moved slowly towards the origin of the noise. They gently approached the room and stopped a few paces short of the doorway. They had cleared the rest of the house, and they knew there was still one tango unaccounted for.

Well, at least one that they knew of.

There was no need for hand signals anymore; their presence in the house was now obvious.

"Go," said Kryton.

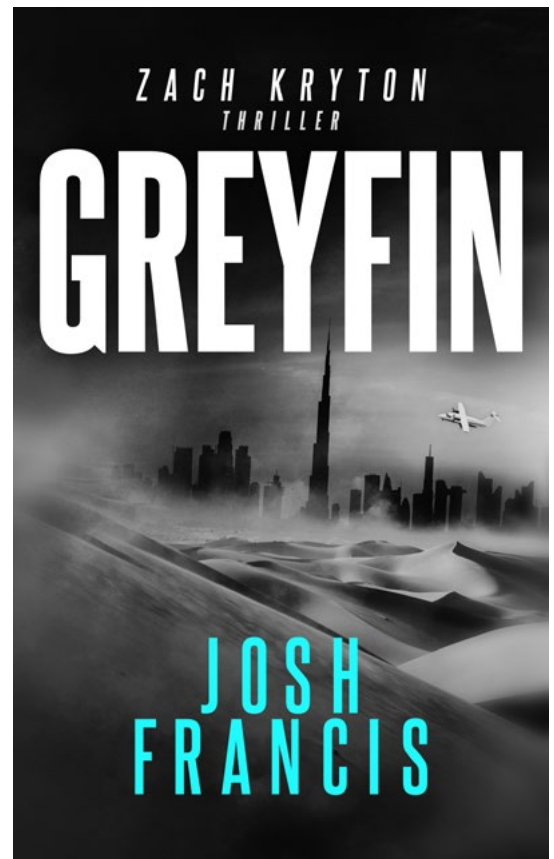
Cav stormed the room, immediately turning to his right and clearing the long end of what appeared to be the master bedroom.

Kryton entered mere milliseconds after Cav. He trained his rifle along the short end of the room until he was inside enough to turn rapidly to assess for any threats in the main part of the open clearing.

Cav had literally stumbled into a man armed with a pistol. Both of them were too close to engage with their weapons, and a struggle quickly ensued.

Kryton made an appreciation of the rest of the room, which was devoid of any furniture except for the far corner where he saw a man armed with a knife kneeling next to a woman tied up on a chair. He recognised the hostage immediately.

It was Jo.



## 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 the Zach Kryton introductory series, with the first book titled *Pegasus*. He has now followed this up with *Greyfin*, the first in a new Zach Kryton trilogy. 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 *Pegasus* story 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.

## outline of the zach kryton series:

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.

# Jane Caro

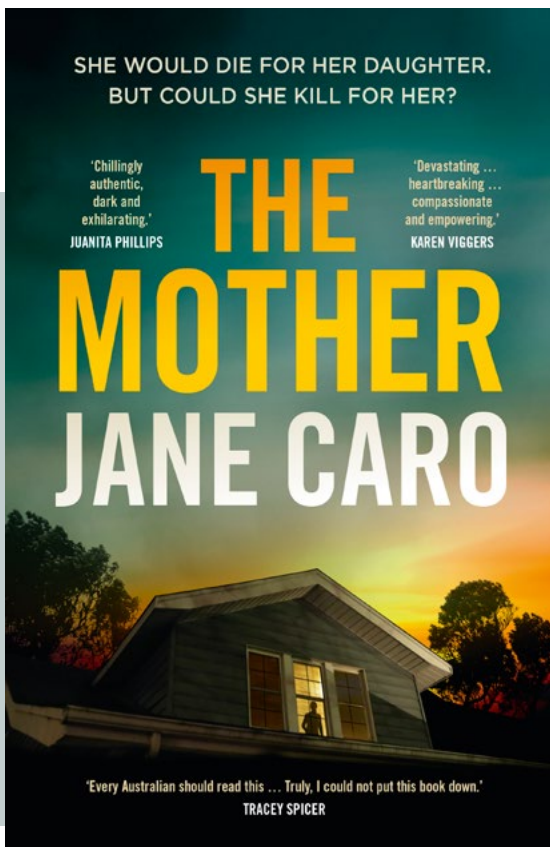
Jane Caro AM is a Walkley Award-winning Australian columnist, author, novelist, broadcaster, advertising writer, documentary maker, feminist and social commentator.

Jane appears frequently on Q&A, The Drum and Sunrise. She has created and presented five documentary series for ABC's Compass, airing in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. She and Catherine Fox present a popular podcast with Podcast One, Austereo 'Women With Clout'. She writes regular columns in Sunday Life.

She has published twelve books, including *Just a Girl*, *Just a Queen* and *Just Flesh & Blood*, a young adult trilogy about the life of Elizabeth Tudor, and the memoir *Plain Speaking Jane*. She created and edited *Unbreakable* which featured stories women writers had never told before and was published just before the Harvey Weinstein revelations. Her most recent non-fiction work is *Accidental Feminists*, about the fate of women over 50.

*The Mother* is her first novel for adults.

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



## THE MOTHER

BY JANE CARO, ALLEN & UNWIN

From feminist icon, social commentator and Walkley Award winning journalist, Jane Caro, comes a gripping domestic thriller with a moral dilemma at its core. 'A timely, tense and important story that takes you to the heart of a toxic relationship, fighting to get free.' Michael Robotham Just like the garden, the fuse box, the bills, bin night and blown light bulbs, this was just something else she'd now have to take care of herself. Recently widowed, Miriam Duffy is a respectable North Shore real estate agent and devoted mother and grandmother. She was thrilled when her younger daughter Ally married her true love, but as time goes by Miriam wonders whether all is well with Ally, as she moves to the country and gradually withdraws, finding excuses every time Miriam offers to visit. Their relationship has always had its ups and downs, and Miriam tries to give her daughter the distance she so clearly wants. But is all as it seems? When the truth of her daughter's situation is revealed, Miriam watches in disbelief as Ally and her children find themselves increasingly vulnerable and cut off from the world. As the situation escalates and the law proves incapable of protecting them, Miriam is faced with an unthinkable decision. But she will do anything for the people she loves most in the world. Wouldn't you?

*GTR*: Welcome to The Last Post, Jane Caro. Thank you very much for joining us here. You've done many things over your career and still a lot to go. Walkley award-winning columnist, author, novelist, broadcaster, documentary maker and social commentator. You've had a lot of books out too, Jane, I think 12 or 13. Is that right?

*Jane Caro*: Yeah, something like that. Yeah, it'd be nice if I could make up my mind what it is I want to do.

*GTR*: Join the club. Join the club. I think this is your debut adult novel, *The Mother*. Is that right, Jane?

*JC*: Yeah, that's right. I've written young adult fiction before, but this is my first novel that is specifically designed for grownups, I suppose you could call us.

*GTR*: Yes. Well, sometimes, sometimes. Jane, the theme, the topic, the guts of the book is about domestic violence. What drove you to write this? I know you've been a commentator and observer of the issue for many years, but what actually drove you to sit down and take the time to write something like this?

*JC*: Well, it happened after one of those particularly horrendous news stories, that happen with monotonous regularity, where a man murdered his wife and children and then killed himself. The story follows a kind of trajectory now, doesn't it, where it rolls on for a few days. People who knew the family make comments and the news media speculates. Everyone says, somebody's got to do something, and then we move on to the next story. I saw a photograph of the woman in question and her young children, with an older woman. It wasn't her mother. It could have been her grandmother. The older woman's face was pixelated out. I'm a mother and a grandmother. So, I looked at this picture and I thought, oh, how must this poor woman be feeling now, after this really horrendous thing? Then I suddenly thought, how would I feel if it was my daughter and my grandchildren? I thought, what would I do? And then I thought, well, I know what I'd want to do. That's when the idea hit me, and basically it wouldn't let me go. This is my experience with fiction. With nonfiction, it's more intellectual. You want to put forward a perspective of, you want to be persuasive. But with fiction, it's more gut level than that. The story insists you tell it. I got a literary agent. She asked me to write eight chapters, and so I began.

*GTR*: Miriam was born.

*JC*: Miriam was born, yes, fully thought.

*GTR*: Yes, indeed. Well done. I suppose there's a lot of things when reading a book like this... I know that we've been pushing the awareness of domestic violence now, for a number of years, through the magazine. We've done interviews on it. So, it's all very relevant.

*JC*: Sadly, as you point out, sadly, it remains relevant in the community. There's a sadness. There's an anger. There's a wish to do something beyond the pages, but it does instigate some thinking about the subject, those that may not have been moved enough to think about it previously.

*GTR*: Was that the plan, to widen the umbrella, to get people to really look at this?

*JC*: Well, I'm not sure it was a plan exactly, but it was certainly something I thought about. And before I really began this, I did go and ask a few people who work in the sector, particular Annabelle Daniel, who runs Women's Community Shelters, which is a wonderful organisation in this space. I went and talked to her and basically said, is it appropriate to write a novel about this? She was very enthusiastic. She said, "I think it's a really great idea because it'll bring in a different audience." I mean, all of us concerned about domestic violence and abuse, owe a huge debt to Jess Hill and her magnificent book, *See What You Made Me Do*. I certainly used that as a resource for the novel and say so and pay tribute to her extraordinary research. But I think a thriller reaches a different audience from a nonfiction book. And the more we get this story out to as many people as possible... not my story in particular, but stories about how relationships can go horribly wrong and the signs that might indicate that something like that is happening, the more we can get people to viscerally engage with this, get out of their heads and making judgements like, why didn't she just leave? Why was she attracted to a man like that, in the first place? And the worst and most damaging perhaps of all, well, perhaps she shouldn't have stopped him seeing his children then, should she? All those judgments, if we can get people away from that superficial judgemental thinking and by... A successful thriller, the reason people get absorbed by it, the reason they really enjoy reading it, is because they actually go on

the emotional journey that the characters go on. So, they feel the same fears and dread. They are bewildered at the right time and they struggle with the same dilemmas. Once you've gone through that kind of emotional journey, it's much harder to judge and you tend to have more compassion and more empathy for people who-

*GTR:* It brings you closer to the reality of the situation.

*JC:* Correct. I think story has always been a really powerful way of communicating social issues. I mean, when I was at Uni, I studied the Victorian social novel and Dickens, Gaskell, Mrs. Elliot, George Elliott, people like that. That was very influential on me, that you could change the world through writing novels. I think feminists have long done it. There's an enormous tradition of feminist novels that have really had a huge effect on women and the way they're regarded in society. So this is a long and honorable, I think, tradition of using stories, imaginary stories to push change.

*GTR:* Yes, that's right. That's been going on for centuries, that idea of storytelling to engage. So, we thank you for touching on this subject, a realistic assessment. I guess it deals, also with mental health a lot too, because we see the outcomes through homelessness and domestic violence. We can get back to mental health and I guess the toxic culture that breeds this too, Jane. What is it that does this?

*JC:* Look, I'm sure there are lots of reasons, but I think we have to recognise that we have a culture, which in the very way that it differentiates gender roles and polices that differentiation, actually creates a situation where we make women vulnerable to being victims and men vulnerable to becoming predators. Which is awful and not a society, I think, that any of us would actually want to create, but we do. Even in the way we talk about romance, we call it the chase. We talk about conquest. We talk about possessing or having the other person. We idealise and we teach women and young girls to idealise lover, above all else, above respect, above anything else. I don't believe that a love that doesn't include respect, is actually love. It's something else. It might be obsession. It might be a desperate desire to control someone, but it's not love. Because love ought to be a freeing and liberating experience for the person who is loved, not to turn them into a prisoner, a captive, a kind of conquest who has to be invisibly bound to the other person. Because it seems to me that, that's what coercive control in particular does. It basically strips the person who is being controlled, of their independence, their agency, even their ability to have their own thoughts of their own reality. One of the techniques that is so powerful in coercive control, which I go into a bit in the book, is gaslighting, where someone's sense of what's real and what's not real is totally undermined. So then, the perpetrator gets to define reality for the person they are controlling. This can make you feel like you're crazy. You're not crazy. You're being made to feel crazy, but nevertheless, you may buy that explanation for why you're going through what you're going through. It's an incredibly insidious form of torture. Jess Hill described it brilliantly as being what was done, the kind of brainwashing that was done to prisoners of war by the North Koreans, during the Korean War, back in the fifties. And that somehow, coercive controllers, without ever being trained in these techniques, know exactly the way to control almost the thoughts of the person that they are supposedly sharing their lives with. I think it's to do with this idea, that

to be the man, the classic man that little boys are taught still, unfortunately to live up to, is to be totally in control and dominant. And that any sense that this person you're with may have their own thoughts or beliefs or ideas about the world that are different from yours, is a threat to your ability to dominate them and therefore, a threat to your sense of yourself as a man, which is probably very insecure, in reality.

*GTR:* Yes, that's right. It is, and it does reflect an insecurity. There's a book called *Let My Voice Be Yours*, by Emily Archer, who I interviewed a couple of years ago. She came out to Australia, Emily with her husband. Everything had been sweet and they'd been... But once they came out here, she found it difficult to get a job. He started with financial control, and then he ended up stabbing Emily. Of course, she's now a free and independent woman. But I guess with women, it teaches them to believe in themselves enough to install some independence and for men, on the other side, to respect a woman's independence. I mean, personally, an independent woman is to me, the most appealing thing, because you don't want to be controlling. Then you've got two lives. You've got your own life, and then you've got the idea that you're controlling someone else's life, too. How difficult is that?

*JC:* It feels like it would be very hard. I think it is very hard. Yeah. But clearly, these people have a sense in which I think there's some terror involved too, that they might lose the person. Obviously, they're actually on some level, extremely dependent on them, even though they're systematically destroying the very thing they're dependent on. But it feels like a kind of infantile terror of losing the female in their life and their children. It gets all tied up with a whole lot of other toxic beliefs, ideas, feelings that are unexpressed, not dealt with, not faced up to. So, just reacted to and acted upon, without any kind of understanding of what's happening. I think it also has a lot to do with narcissism. A sense that these men, everybody is just there to feed their sense of themselves. They don't actually exist as separate people. They're just there to feed their sense of themselves. I mean, we've seen that in a few world leaders recently, that narcissistic tendency and how destructive it can be, because they have no shame. They're ruthless. They don't care. Nobody else really exists. Therefore, they don't really matter. If they do something that might upset you, well, then they deserve everything they get because you're the only real person in the world. I think there's an awful lot of stuff that's going on in it. I didn't try to get inside the head of the perpetrator in the book because I didn't feel expert enough to do that. And also, I was more interested... I specifically had Miriam as someone who is watching this happen, on the outside, watching this happen. We don't know anything in the book, that Miriam doesn't know. She has to be told what's going on. I did that because I felt that she was us and we were her, because if you haven't had lived experience of this, that is what you are doing. You're watching it from the side. We don't want to believe that this is happening. We're bewildered by this behavior. We do have a tendency to believe quite easily, that women, particularly when they're pregnant and lactating and therefore hormone, oh, well, they could be crazy. Maybe their sense of things is not real. We're very quick to accept that women are a bit hysterical. And if a man puts on a good front, we're quite quick to believe the way he presents the world to us, because Nick

"I THINK WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE THAT WE HAVE A CULTURE, WHICH IN THE VERY WAY THAT IT DIFFERENTIATES GENDER ROLES AND POLICES THAT DIFFERENTIATION, ACTUALLY CREATES A SITUATION WHERE WE MAKE WOMEN VULNERABLE TO BEING VICTIMS AND MEN VULNERABLE TO BECOMING PREDATORS. WHICH IS AWFUL AND NOT A SOCIETY, I THINK, THAT ANY OF US WOULD ACTUALLY WANT TO CREATE, BUT WE DO."

doesn't just gaslight Allison. He gaslights Miriam as well. He does it very successfully and very plausibly, for quite a long time. So, I'm also looking at how our knee jerk and ancient responses to the reliability of what women say and the reliability of what men say, also affects how these situations are able to develop and get really bad. We've seen amongst particularly police... Not so much now. Their training is a lot better. But certainly when I was a girl, the tendency was to believe first, it's not our business. She probably deserved it, and she's probably lying anyway. There was a dismissal of the woman's experience. That's changing and that's important. It needs to change.

*GTR:* Well, it is changing, Jane. I mean, you've continued to involve yourself in many issues regarding women. I think the elder abuse conference we met at, in 2019, where the vulnerability has to be addressed. Therefore, but it engages change in society. We thank you for being part of that and for raising the voice and continual battle that we hope one day, within our lifespan, will be something that we can say has been achieved. If so, then we thank people like yourself for that.

*JC:* Well, that's kind of you to say. I think I'm just one of many who is raising the alarm. Also, a lot of survivors who are speaking about their experiences, telling the truth about their lives. I think that's incredibly important. I think you could mark that change, literally from 2017 and the hash Me Too movement, which then kind of liberated people to say what had previously been unsayable. It had been unsayable because we put the shame for sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual humiliation and harassment on the people who were abused, harassed and humiliated, which was ridiculous. It belonged to people who did the harassing and the humiliation and the assaulting. The same thing with domestic violence. She was almost a joke, the woman with the black eye. Oh, I walked into a door. It was her shame. Somehow she hadn't pleased her man. She hadn't done the right thing by her man. So, the shame of the failing marriage and the difficulty and how she couldn't find the right set of words or actions or the behavior that would take him back to the person that she married, or she first went into a relationship with. That shame again, for far too long, was carried by the woman, instead of being handed back to the person who was doing the damaging. I think I'm just one small part of, really a kind of worldwide feminist movement, which is all about saying, let's all grow up. Let's stop having these rigid demarcations between men and women, between black and white, between straight and gay or between Catholic and Protestant, for goodness sake. We love slicing and dicing human beings into different groups, but there's that old French thing, *Vive la difference*. Well, actually, it's *Vive la similarity*.

*GTR:* Correct. We're much more the same than we're different. We connect through our emotions, which are the same. The reason you feel fear may be different than the reason I do. The triggers may be different, but the feeling's the same.

*JC:* I mean, that will remain the same. I mean, you can't change that. But to focus on the similarities, will remind us that we are in this, all together. And that an act of domestic violence is perpetrated by someone who really has a low respect for themselves and those around them. So we've got to find some way of improving that, I guess, about respect.

*GTR:* We were brought up to respect women, by our mother. A single mum brought us up. So this is part for me too. I struggled to find why this happens or how it can happen. But anyhow, we'll get there if we keep talking about it. So, yeah.

*JC:* Yeah. Well, look, we also need perhaps, to start to hear from some of the perpetrators. There have been, occasionally in the past, some men have come to an understanding about why they went from... I think it's often, that we've taught... Here's my theory, for what it's worth. We've really, in the classic bringing up a boy to be a man, quite a rigid thing, we've really only allowed those men and boys to express one emotion, anger. It's acceptable for men to be angry, but they can't cry. They can't admit weakness or vulnerability. Now, I'm exaggerating to some extent, but that this is the way we train men. Now, anger is a secondary emotion. Anger is a response to a primary emotion. So, if you feel afraid or hurt or humiliated or vulnerable, and you're not able to express those because you've been literally forbidden-

*GTR:* Yeah. You can't cry. So, you get angry instead.

*JC:* You get angry instead. Therefore, it's not a long way to go to whack your wife or torture her psychologically because your pain and hurt, you can't express it directly. So in a way, you create it in the person closest to you, so they can express it for you. That's the danger with cutting off all the emotions and only allowing men to access one, anger.

*GTR:* That's exactly right. I've seen that. I've seen that with men, myself, who can't express themselves and therefore, reach out for new ways to express. A lot of it's negative. But geez, you've got to learn how to express yourself. Because otherwise, what's going to happen there?

*JC:* It just goes bomb. One day, there'll be something that happens, that will affect those loved ones around you as well. We see that. That's exactly what we're watching. Never say to a little boy, "Stop crying, you big girl." Never say that. You are creating a walking dangerous person. Crying's fine. Crying's the way we actually dissipate our negative emotions, in a harmless action. Tears hurt no one. A punch in the face or psychological torture can, in the end, be fatal, and we've seen where it can be. So yeah, we have to allow our boys to be the full human beings they were always meant to be. Because yes, we are different, but we're not different because we're men and women. We're just different from one another, because we're different from one another right across the spectrum. We're not different because we're black and white. Yes, there might be cultural differences. Yes, there might be religious differences. I don't know. But we're not fundamentally different.

*GTR:* Yeah. Do you think it's true? They say the two emotions are love and fear. If there's no love, there's fear, of some degree.

*JC:* Yeah. I think that's right, but I've always seen them as hope and fear. Those are the two emotions that change behavior because they're the two future-oriented emotions. If you look to the future with a sense of hope, then you've got a positive attitude and you feel good. If you look at the future with a sense of fear, then it's the exact opposite. You're going to spend your time trying to stay safe, as safe as you can. So, maybe we're seeing a bit of an explosion in

"IF YOU LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH A SENSE OF HOPE, THEN YOU'VE GOT A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND YOU FEEL GOOD. IF YOU LOOK AT THE FUTURE WITH A SENSE OF FEAR, THEN IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE. YOU'RE GOING TO SPEND YOUR TIME TRYING TO STAY SAFE, AS SAFE AS YOU CAN. SO, MAYBE WE'RE SEEING A BIT OF AN EXPLOSION IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND MAYBE THAT KIND OF EXAGGERATED TOXIC MASCULINITY, BECAUSE THERE IS A SENSE OF FEAR."

domestic violence and maybe that kind of exaggerated toxic masculinity, because there is a sense of fear. I mean, I don't think anyone in the world today is looking at the future with as much hope, as perhaps we did 20 or 30 years ago. We tend to be looking at it more with sense of fear, particularly when we look at what's happening with the climate and all that kind of thing. There is hope there, and some people are very good at grabbing it. But I can understand why the world becomes more and more toxic, as we get more and more into a fear-based way of looking at the world. There are a lot of people who want to hold onto power, who are ramping up fear, who are manipulating our fear. Who are gaslighting us in the way Nick gaslighted, Allison and Miriam, using fear.

*GTR:* Yes, exactly. They rely upon that for their survival. And because of the narcissism, then that becomes the primary reason for spreading fear and with no regard to what it's doing to people around them or the world in general. So, yeah. Your book, *The Mother* is out through Allen & Unwin. It's your first adult novel. It looks at the important issue of domestic violence and what happens when a woman feels

the law can't protect the women involved in this. Thank you so much, Jane. It's been an absolute pleasure, as always. We wish you the best of the luck with the book.

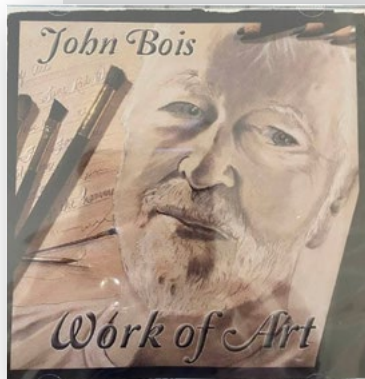
*JC:* Can I just add one little thing? Because it's too good an opportunity to let pass. I am also, at the moment, running for the senate in New South Wales, for Reason Australia.

*GTR:* Oh, that's right, of course. I had heard of your entry to politics.

*JC:* We've got no money. The David's are fighting Goliaths. So, I am taking every opportunity I can, to say to people, do consider voting for me in the Senate. If you want to progressive house of reps, I absolutely agree we need that, but it will be not as much use as it could be if we have a reactionary Senate. We need a progressive Senate as well. So, do consider voting for me in the Senate.

*GTR:* It's a positive addition to the political scene, to have you involved, Jane. We wish you well in that. So, thank you very, very much.

*JC:* Thank you, Greg. Thanks for having me. ■



## John Bois – Work Of Art

John Bois' third solo album, *Work Of Art*, lives up to its title in spades. A fiercely maverick body of words and music, *Work Of Art* straddles genres, tells stories and creates a song cycle full of intrigue and nuance. *Work Of Art* is also a genuine family affair – co-produced by John's guitarist son Alex while daughter Matilde made solid input with harmony vocals across much of the

album. *Work Of Art* opens with the graceful sweep of *Cherry Blossom* where the warm twang of an electric guitar and a ghostly B3 organ from New Yorker Kenny White subtly frame John's impassioned, but unaffected, vocals. The artfully plainspoken title track adds atmospheric guitar from John's longstanding cohort Kerryn Tolhurst (*Country Radio*, *The Dingoes*) that lifts the emotive quotient but allows the expressive vocals to remain front and centre.

As a whole, *Work Of Art* goes way beyond standard singer-songwriter fare – a playfulness leaks into the Reggae slanted *I'm The Full Forward*. An ode to John's love of Aussie Rules, *Full Forward's* lyrics dig deep into football nomenclature while Melbourne guitarist Paulie Bignell (*The Detonators*, *Paulie Bignell & The Thornbury Two*) fills in the blanks with some wildly ambient guitar. *Fine Red Wine* shifts gears into torch song territory – John's jazzy croon is given wonderful support from Maryland jazz trumpeter Vince McCool who blows like the ghost of Chet Baker.

As a songwriter, John can chronicle the offbeat and the unpredictable with lyrical flair – *Letter From Peru 1532* is an

eloquent tale about the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire. Built around a border music soundscape, all steel strings and accordions, John delivers a storyline so rich in detail that it would have Gordon Lightfoot grinding his teeth with envy. *Little Albert – Bring Down The Hammer* goes deeper into the esoteric. Delving into the dark side of science, John picks up on American psychologist and behaviourist John.B. Watson's infamous "Little Albert Experiment" of 1919 where children were conditioned to fear distinctive stimuli such as loud noises and furry objects. *Little Albert* goes places where songwriters rarely venture – John's son Alex breaks open the track with some crunching blues rock informed guitar before John's arch vocal spills out – a parable that reveals some of the most mordant wit this side of Randy Newman.

The stark piano balladry of *Until The Call* gets its inspiration from a tree John climbed as a child near his home in leafy Surrey Hills. A charming throwback to the uncluttered songcraft of David Ackles and Tim Hardin, *Until The Call* segues seamlessly into the instrumental coda of *And So The World Is Not As Wild As It Once Was*, a sonically rich homage to David Attenborough. Trumpet, piano, pipes and a near Motown bassline swell into something akin to a lost John Barry soundtrack before John's daughter Matilde closes the passage with a wistful vocal that lets everything drift off into the mystic.

Fifty years after *Country Radio's* *Wintersong* and over forty years since *The Dingoes* disbanded, John Bois still refuses to run with the pack or let himself choke on history. *Work Of Art* is all about a singular musical communicator aging with amazing grace.

**MICHAEL MACDONALD**

Photo: StockSnap.

## Bar story #13: the older you get, The fading you know

The summer was dry and hot.  
Vagabonds were frying in the butter  
of their own souls.

A dog's leg stuck out  
of  
a  
cloud.

Sitting in the bar, I was beyond thirsty –  
but was ignored by the alluring young waitress.  
She hadn't got over the fact that the night she asked me out,  
I was busy.

Normally, she had the mind of a luxury hotel in PR mode,  
but today she was more than a little intimidating.  
Nonetheless, I was hooked.

How do you make the comeback?

I could have told the funniest, filthiest joke she'd never  
heard, or offered to draw a diagram of rapture.

But what I really needed to do was to demonstrate  
fearlessness and self-rule –  
things I'd actually possessed once, for about five minutes –  
twenty years before.

Bugger.

**JEREMY ROBERTS**

— INTERVIEW —

# Peter FitzSimons

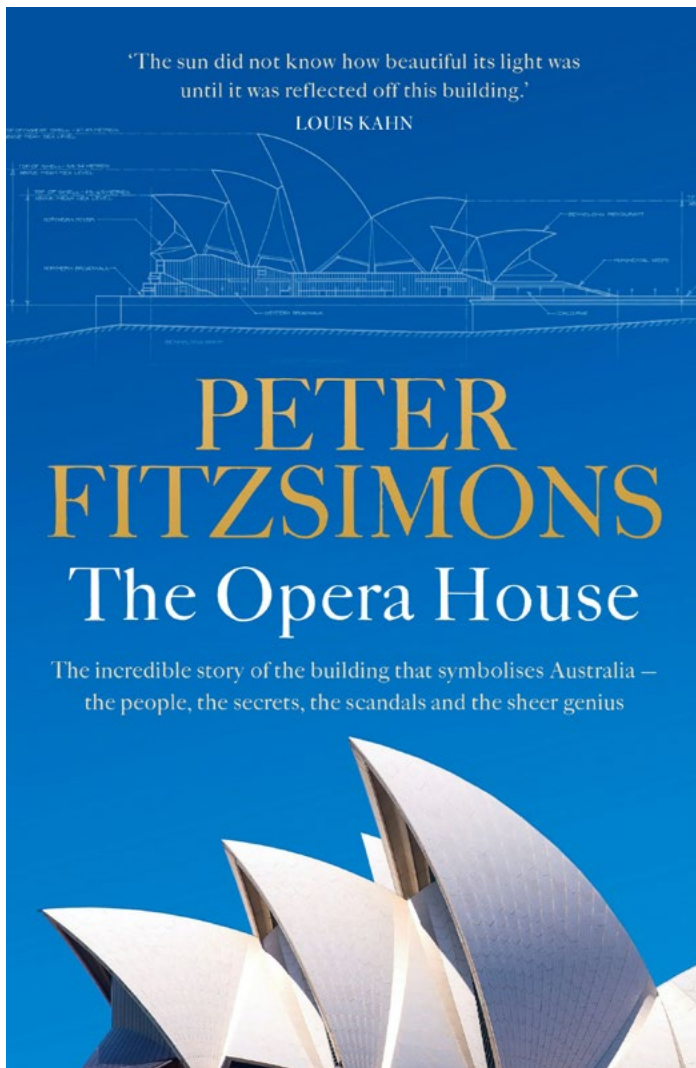
Epic and engaging – Peter FitzSimons captures the drama and history of Australia’s most iconic building.

Peter FitzSimons is Australia’s bestselling non-fiction writer, and for the past 35 years has also been a journalist and columnist with the Sydney Morning Herald and the Sun Herald.

He is the author of a number of highly successful books, including *Breaker Morant*, *Burke and Wills*, *Monash’s Masterpiece*, *Kokoda*, *Ned Kelly* and *Gallipoli*, as well as biographies of such notable Australians as Hubert Wilkins, Sir Douglas Mawson, Nancy Wake and Nick Farr-Jones. His passion is to tell Australian stories, our own stories: of great men and women, of stirring events in our history.

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





## THE OPERA HOUSE BY PETER FITZSIMONS, HACHETTE AUSTRALIA

If only these walls and this land could talk ...

The Sydney Opera House is a breathtaking building, recognised around the world as a symbol of modern Australia. Along with the Taj Mahal and other World Heritage sites, it is celebrated for its architectural grandeur and the daring and innovation of its design. It showcases the incomparable talents involved in its conception, construction and performance history.

But this stunning house on Bennelong Point also holds many secrets and scandals. In his gripping biography, Peter FitzSimons marvels at how this magnificent building came to be, details its enthralling history and reveals the dramatic stories and hidden secrets about the people whose lives have been affected, both negatively and positively, by its presence.

He shares how a conservative 1950s state government had the incredible vision and courage to embark on this nation-defining structure; how an architect from Denmark and construction workers from Australia and abroad invented new techniques to bring it to completion; how ambition, betrayal, professional rivalry, sexual intrigue, murder, bullying and breakdowns are woven into its creation; and how it is now acknowledged as one of the wonders and masterpieces of human ingenuity.

In *The Opera House*, Peter FitzSimons captures the extraordinary stories around this building that are as mesmerising as the light catching on its white sails.

*Greg T Ross:* Peter FitzSimons, thanks very much for joining us here at *The Last Post*. You and I have had the chance to interview or speak with each other before. But this time we're discussing your new book, which is a wonderment in itself, nearly as good as the Opera House itself. The Opera House, out through Hachette. What drove you to write this?

*Peter FitzSimons AM:* Yeah. I suppose my instinct through my writing career has always meant to take on new challenges, and when I first started writing, I collected Herald works, and I could have done that forever. Then I did a rugby book on Nick Farr-Jones, and I could have done rugby books forever. Then I did political books with Kim Beazley and I've done a lot of war books. And I suppose, always when I feel comfortable in a particular genre, it's to take a hard right turn or a hard left turn and try something new, which indeed is where journalism came from and writing books after playing rugby. And on this one I read in 2015, there was an article in the *Paris Review* about a brilliant American writer, who in the '60s, had written a book about the Brooklyn Bridge, which had become an American classic. And the idea was, you all know this iconic bridge, it's absolutely fantastic, but where did

it come from? And I thought to myself, well, it just so happens that I live on the lower north shore of Sydney, and every day without exception, when I'm driving, I go three minutes or four minutes out of my way to go down to the harbour, and I gaze across the waters at the Sydney Opera House. So, I put a researcher on it saying, "See what you can find, how much new ground can we break to discover stuff?" He went into the archives. We called him Noel the diary mole because he was brilliant at coming up with new stuff. And he came back, and I had breakfast with myself and another one of the researchers, and he started telling us stories, and I said, "Right. Let's go. Let's start to put this together." And it's the most challenging book I think I've done. But also the one that I wanted least to let go of because I just loved it. Loved it from the first. And I wanted to call, are we allowed to swear on your...

*GTR:* Yes, of course.

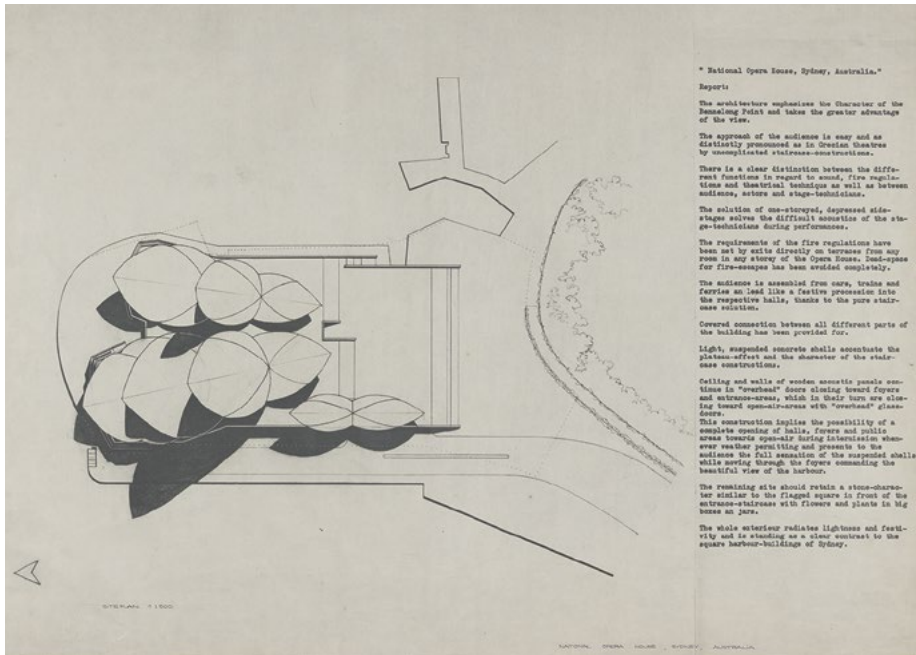
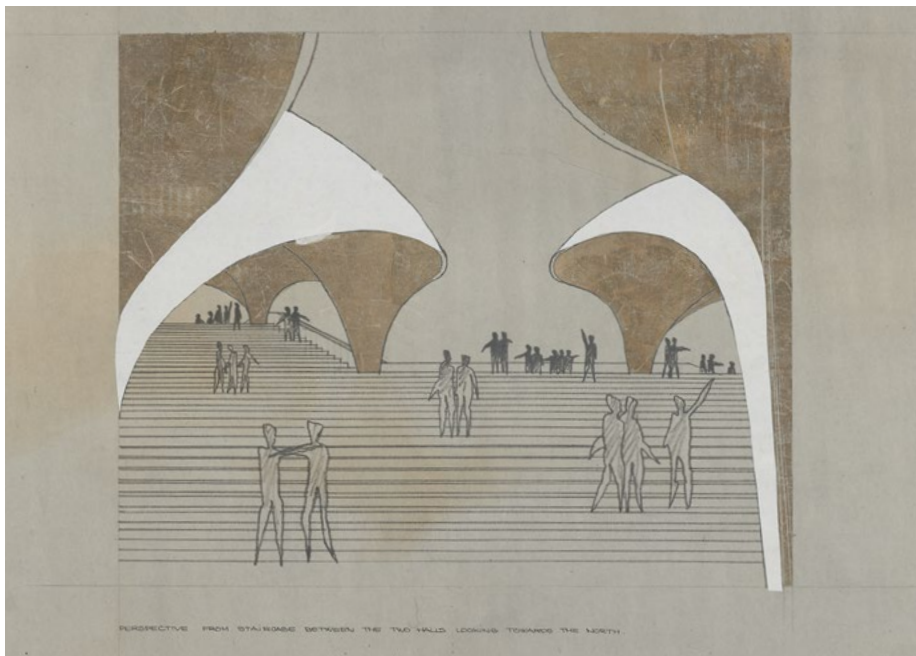
*PF:* Okay. Well, I wanted to call the book on the front cover, I wanted to call the book, "The Opera House, Where the Fuck Did This Thing Come From?" As a serious question, where the fuck did this come from? How did, and that's the question I set out to answer.

How did 1950s Australia conceive the idea that we not only wanted an Opera House? 1950s Australia was surrounded by a white picket fence. Everybody ate meat and three veg.

*GTR:* That's right. The staple diet.

*PF:* Those days were particularly conservative, never took a chance, never took a risk, very few, some did. As a nation not known for artistic endeavours, we were great cricketers, and we'd done wonderfully well in the second World War and so forth, but artistic stuff, what? And so, I wanted to know how it was that 14 white fellows and the New South Wales Cabinet saw a scale model of the Opera House and said, "Yep. Yep. We'll build that bastard. What about that?"

*GTR:* Right out the blue, it was, Peter. And you spoke about going three or four minutes out of your way to have a look at the Opera House, and I guess, you mentioned in your book too, there's a quote from someone there about, it being the temple for Sydney, a spiritual temple, and the foresight that we're just beginning to speak about there with Joe Cahill and all the other politicians and I architects got involved with this. It was right out the blue, it's like a strike of lightning. It just came from, where did it come from?



Original competition drawings submitted by Jørn Utzon, 1957.  
Image: NSW State Archives.

“THIS WAS REALLY UTZON’S LIFE WORK. IT WAS THE CULMINATION, THE FULL FLARING OF HIS GENIUS. AND HE DID MANY OTHER BUILDINGS, BUT THIS WAS THE ONE.”

that could come up with something of that genius, was not necessarily a brain that was managerial brilliant. And it’s significant that when Utzon left in early 1966, he resigned thinking they’ll say, “come back, come back, come back.” He wanted to crack the whip and say, if you don’t do what I say and let me give me the time I need I’ll leave. And to his astonishment, they said, “Taxi, please take Mr Utzon to the airport.” The Opera House again, and the fascinating stuff that later on, when it was built and it was so wildly acclaimed. This was really Utzon’s life work. It was the culmination, the full flaring of his genius. And he did many other buildings, but this was the one. And he wanted to come back to see it, but he didn’t want the hoopla of Utzon’s back in town. And at one point he considered, he said his daughter to have a look at it. And she was warmly greeted. And his idea was maybe he should fly into Sydney, go to a hotel, dress as a woman and wander all over the Opera House.

GTR: Exactly, he’s got. I tell you what, when you talk about things like that, you’ve delved into you take the reader into the book and into the Opera House with your relevance and reminders of what was going on at the time, the kidnapping of Graham Thorne. Geez. And, of course, you have ambition, betrayal, professional rivalry, sexual intrigued, murder bullying, etc. If they turn this into a telly series, it will go as long as Neighbours.

PF: Yeah, but you couldn’t put it in an hour. You couldn’t put it in a two hour movie. This is Breaking Bad. This is so many twists and turns along the way. And they said stuff too. The Graham Thorne murder was just shocking and it was Sydney coming of age into the nasty modern world. At the time Joe Cahill was the Premier and he pioneered the idea of Opera House lottery instead, of 10,000 pound first prize. We have 100,000 pounds. And people came from everywhere to be a part of it, huge profits every time. And we were so innocent and naive, we said, “Look, okay, well, we’re Australia. We don’t have Lindbergh kidnappings in this place. So people won, and they’d be happy to be photographed on the front page. This is who they are, here are their beautiful children, this is where they live.” And the Thorne family of Bondi won. Fantastic, and their photo was on the front page. Two

PF: And look, the thing with Jørn Utzon that was fascinating, like Jørn Utzon was a young Danish architect of noted genius, but he did not have a track record of building big buildings. He had a track record, winning architectural competitions. He’d won seven international competitions. None of them had been built and then he won this one. That’s terrific. And then they said, “Okay. When did you start?” Okay. And so that was part of the thing too, because the actual architectural engineering process to build this. Like it’s one thing to have come up with a vision, but the engineers then said, “Well, what’s the angle? What curves do we have here?” And he famously got a plastic ruler bent it and said like that. And to which the answer from the engineers was, well like that doesn’t work for us, we need absolutely specific. And it’s one thing for you to have in Australian men have pulled this out of your ass, which is not what he did, of course, but that was the

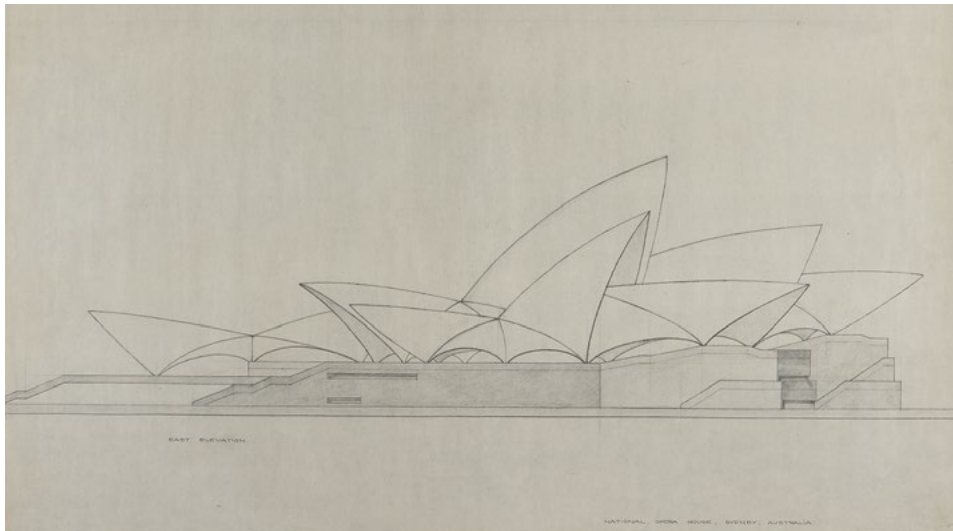
Australian vernacular was it’s one thing for you to have come up with this, but we need to know that it can stand. That it will be able to stand against every now and then. Sydney has 100 mile an hour winds. It’s got to, so one day there may be 120 mile an hour wind. We’ve got to be able to build something that will not fall down. And it was a very, very long process to do that. And in the end, Utzon, I cannot overstate how brilliant Utzon is. And I’m he...

GTR: He was almost as stylish as the Opera House, Peter.

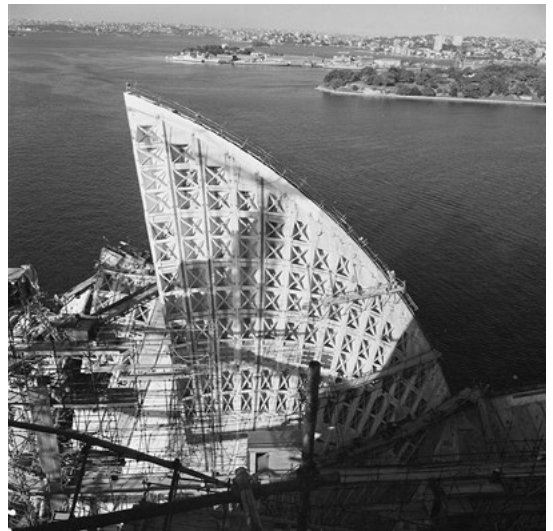
PF: About that.

GTR: Yeah.

PF: And a decent, very good, very generous spirited man, who was very good to his staff. But I think if you were lining up the attributes of this man, you wouldn’t say, managerial, the capacity to manage dozens and dozens of draft people and keep engineers going, and to, it was the same brain



Original competition drawing submitted by Jørn Utzon, 1957.  
Image: NSW State Archives.



Shell base construction.  
Image: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

days later, they send their eight-year-old son off to school, as they always did, never to be seen again, kidnapped found the body with a ransom note, found the body a month later, and the story of the forensic investigation and the policeman who didn't give up and brought the kidnapper and murderer, not that he actually intended to murder Thorne is not the thought, but it's one of the many amazing stories in it.

*GTR:* Yeah, indeed too, Peter. The whole thing, as we go back to 1950s Australia, that transformation. I think there was a book released recently or a couple of years ago about how people talk about the '60s, but it was actually the '50s, that really laid the foundations for the change that took place in the '60s. The '50s are often overlooked, but there were a lot of people, and thank heavens, there are enough people there to give strength to this idea and of the Opera House. What does it mean to Australia? We've seen it commented on about being one of the great wonders of the world, architecturally. What does it mean to Australia?

*PF:* Enormous significance. Prior to the Opera House, our image around the world would've been the sheep. Australia rides on the sheep's back. The Uluru, then known as Ayers Rock, boomerangs were beloved around the world. But there was nothing that modern Australia had created that raised a single eyebrow, let alone a gasp of admiration and the Opera House it's our Eiffel Tower, it's our Empire State building. And it is look at what the Australians are capable of creating. And it just highlights, my favourite quote is on the front cover of the book, and it was an American architect who said. "The sun did not know, how beautiful its light was until it shown up on the Opera House." And in terms of its significance too. Greg, where are you from? You're not from New South Wales or are you?

*GTR:* Yeah, I'm down at Long Beach, just north of Batemans Bay.

*PF:* Okay. So you will remember you and I are probably of an age. But back in the '70s, late '70's particularly, we

Sydney sliders were very proud of our Hilton hotel. Because you could go to the theatre and you could go up the escalator turn left, and you could get apple strudel and a cappuccino at 11 o'clock at night, and then something bigger and brighter came along, and it was the Regent Hotel, which opened circa 1982, and everybody went. "Look at that Regent Hotel. It's now the Four Seasons bottom of George Street. How fantastic?" And the truth of it is it was fantastic. But 40 years later, that Regent Hotel, Four Seasons looks like a wet Wednesday afternoon. It so dull, it is so drab, it is so appalling. And there is the Sydney Opera House, opened 10 years prior to that, conceived 20 years prior to that, 25 years prior to that, and it looks like a sparkling Sunday morning in the year, 2525, it'll never get old. And it's just this jewel, that people like me, who've got no interest, no background in architecture whatsoever, no knowledge particularly, but people just look at that Opera House and just go, "Wow."

*GTR:* Yes, it's beautiful. And I guess, we spoke before. The sense that we had overseas people coming into Australia to help this construction worker's new ideas. So there was an opening up of the doors in many ways, we were bringing all these people from overseas to help, we had Utzon, of course, and the opening up and the willingness to bring in these ideas from overseas, it was almost like an opening of the Gates.

*PF:* Yeah, it was also like a perfect storm in a good way, in that, one of the other reasons that Sydney got to have this thing is we had the backing. We had the multiculturalism, yes, but before that, we had the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Now, so the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which was open, we've just gone through the, what is it? The 90th anniversary, not opened in 1932. And that had also had a long gestation period. Huge controversy, should we shouldn't we?, will it work?, will it stand?. And Sydney, after the war had the confidence, after the great war had the confidence, okay, let's build it. And we did build it. And it was

fantastic. So right away, Sydney had, we can do great things and achieve great results. And so then the Opera House, okay, well, let's do this, we did. But then, the skills to build such a thing. We did have the flowering of multicultural Australia. We had Indian people working on it, we had Portuguese people, we had artisans from France. We had people from all over the world and Utzon also took his inspiration in many, but a lot of it was Asian. A lot of it was from the Middle East. He took his inspiration, a lot of it was South American, not just Danish, but he was somebody who grabbed in the best of the world of architecture and not just contemporary from history. And it all came together, Greg, in our Sydney Opera House.

*GTR:* Absolutely beautiful. Been a long point and bringing in everything like that, the opening up the bridge.

*PF:* Before you let me go, can I interrupt? I know this is your show, not my show. But tell me, you've read it, and I'm fascinated from some of the thread. What did you think?

*GTR:* Well, it's got a seductive charm like the Opera House itself, Peter, I'm turning the pages and I'm looking at everything and I'm bringing, you've got all these different things, this is why I talked about, what was going on at the time, in the '50s and the '60s in Australia. It's a seductive charm. It's like every time you go past the Opera House on the ferry, you'll take a photo, and you think how many photos I've got at the bloody Opera House. But the book itself is beautiful. It stands as one of your best, and I've read a few of yours, because I get them delivered here all the time. But a seductive charm that equals the beauty of the Opera House. It's a great book, Peter. I would recommend it as a good read for anyone out from Hatchette.

*PF:* Hatchette, tell everyone. Thank you. Bye-bye.

*GTR:* Thank you, Peter. Cheers mate.

*PF:* Thanks mate, I appreciate it. Bye-bye. ■

# War Correspondents

The War Correspondents Memorial honours the journalists, photographers, film and sound crews, writers and artists who have travelled to war zones to record the horrors of battle and the Australian experience of war.

It was created by architects Johnson Pilton Walker (JPW). The key element to JPW's design is a large and highly polished granite oculus that evokes a camera lens or a human eye, and is suggestive of the act of observing or bearing witness to an event. The oculus is 2.4 metres in diameter, with a single line of commemorative text engraved around the circumference, and is set within a landscaped setting, including pavers.

The curved granite form is shaped to collect and reflect the distant images of the Hall of Memory dome, individual memorials, as well as the surrounding trees and sky. A low semi-circular retaining wall differentiates the site from the surrounding sloping grounds and provides seating.

A series of grass mounds suggesting ripples radiate out from the paved space and symbolically evoke the transmission of ideas, or sound waves, and helps mark out the memorial to passing visitors.

The following words are inscribed on the oculus:

AMID DANGERS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN WAR CORRESPONDENTS REPORT WHAT THEY SEE AND HEAR. THOSE WORDS AND IMAGES LIVE BEYOND THE MOMENT AND BECOME PART OF THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA.

[www.awm.gov.au/collection/ART96849](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/ART96849)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL ART96849  
The War Correspondents Memorial. Photo courtesy AWM.

## NEIL DAVIS



Neil Davis. Photo courtesy AWM.

Neil Davis, one of Australia's most respected combat cameramen, was born on 14 February 1934 in southern Tasmania. He was a good student, a keen sportsman and took up photography in his high school years.

He left school at 14 to work in the Tasmanian Government Film Unit. At the same time he became a professional footballer and, later, a runner. He contracted polio in his late teens, but recovered to return to his film work. In 1961 he joined the ABC as a cine-cameraman but left in December 1963 to take a job as Visnews's cameraman and correspondent for south-east Asia, based in Singapore.

In early 1964 Davis went to Borneo to cover the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaya. It was his first Asian assignment - the first of many - and his first war, but he saw no action. Shortly afterwards Davis made his first visits to Vietnam and Laos. Although he reported from across Asia, he is best remembered for his long association with, and reporting on, the war in Indo-China.

Unusual among foreign correspondents, Davis chose to film the war from the South Vietnamese perspective, shooting acclaimed combat footage on many occasions and

acquiring a reputation for skill and luck. He was driven by the desire to obtain the best film he could and was well-known for his neutrality, crossing, on one occasion, to film from the Viet Cong side. Davis's main preoccupation was with filming the effects of war and combat on individuals. His neutrality notwithstanding, Davis earned the ire of United States military authorities, but this did not stop American news networks seeking out his film.

In September 1968 Visnews sent Davis to London, but he returned to Vietnam at the first opportunity, to film a war that was now being left increasingly to the Vietnamese to fight. A keen gambler and relentless womaniser, Davis was also a philanthropist who gave generously to victims of the war.

Between 1970 and 1975 Davis spent increasing amounts of time in Cambodia and he moved to Phnom Penh in 1971. He was severely wounded on several occasions, once almost losing a leg, but was fit and determined enough to recover and continue his work. In June 1973 Davis left Visnews and became a freelancer. He was forced to leave Phnom Penh when that city fell, but remained in Saigon to film North Vietnamese soldiers entering the Presidential Palace, the symbolic end of the war.

After Vietnam, Davis based himself in Bangkok, but travelled widely to cover stories in Angola, the Sudan, Uganda and Beirut. On 29 January 1977 he married Chou Ping, but the couple separated in 1980. The following year he was briefly imprisoned in Syria, accused of spying for Israel.

On 9 September 1985, Davis was killed by shrapnel while filming a coup in Bangkok.



Tim Page out with the P.R.U.  
Photo courtesy Tim Page.

## TIM PAGE

Tim Page left England at 17 to travel across Europe, the Middle East and to India and Nepal. He found himself in Laos at the time of the civil war and ended up working as a stringer for United Press International. From there he moved on to Saigon where he covered the Vietnam War for the next five years working largely on assignment for Time-Life, UPI, Paris Match And Associated Press.

[timpage.com.au](http://timpage.com.au)

He also found time to cover the Six Day War in the Middle East in 1967. The role of war-photographer suited Page's craving for danger and excitement. He became an iconic photographer of the Vietnam War and his pictures were the visual inspiration for many films of the period. The photojournalist in 'Apocalypse Now', played by Dennis Hopper was based on Page.

The Vietnam War was the first and last war where there was no censorship, the military actively encouraged press involvement and Page went everywhere, covering everything. He was wounded four times, once by 'friendly fire' and the last time was when he jumped out of a helicopter to help load the wounded and the person in front of him stepped on a landmine. He was pronounced DOA at the hospital. He required extensive neuro-surgery and spent most of the seventies in recovery.

It was while he was recovering in hospital in spring 1970 that he learnt that his best friend, house mate and fellow photographer Sean Flynn, son of Hollywood actor Errol, had gone missing in Cambodia. Throughout the 70's and 80's Page's mission was to discover the fate and final resting place of his friend and to erect a memorial to all those in the media that were either killed or went missing in the war. This led him to found the IndoChina Media Memorial Foundation and was the genesis for the book 'REQUIEM'. With his friend Horst Faas, photo editor for Associated Press and double Pulitzer Prize winner, they co-edited the book and commemorated the work of all the dead and the missing, from all nations, who were lost in the thirty-year struggle for liberation. REQUIEM the exhibition is now on permanent display at the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City.

Tim Page is the subject of many documentaries, two films and the author of ten books. He spent 5 months in 2009 as the Photographic Peace Ambassador for the UN in Afghanistan and is the recipient of many awards. He was recently named one of the '100 Most Influential Photographers Of All Time'. His interest and passion now is covering the aftermath of war and bringing the world's attention to the plight of the innocent victims – the bystanders. He returns regularly to Viet Nam and Cambodia to run photo workshops, do assignments and to photograph the mines - and the maimed that are still being injured 30 years on and the still, devastating effects of Agent Orange. Since arriving in Australia Tim has also covered East Timor and The Solomon Islands. He now lives in Northern New South Wales and is an adjunct professor at Griffith University.



Legatee Eric Easterbrook, Chairman Legacy Australia (left) and Graham Boyd, CEO Legacy Australia (middle) and Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin, Defence Family Advocate of Australia with Jack.

## RememBEARance campaign to honour families this Anzac Day

This Anzac Day, Defence Families of Australia (DFA) is working with Legacy Australia and marketing partner RSL Australia to recognise and honour the strength, sacrifice and service of Defence families.

As part of the RememBEARance campaign, those attending Anzac Day commemoration events are encouraged to lay a small teddy bear beside their wreath to acknowledge veterans, current serving members and their families.

DFA has purchased Legacy Bears for its employees to lay with a poppy remembrance wreath at Anzac Day Ceremonies around Australia.

If the public choose to lay a Legacy Bear, they will also be helping raise funds for Legacy Australia to support the families of veterans, reducing instances of financial or social hardship.

Legacy Australia Chairman Legatee Eric Easterbrook said that this was an easy initiative to support but has a big impact in commemorating our veterans and their families.

“Laying a teddy, such as the Legacy Bear, with a wreath is a beautiful symbol to help commemorate the sacrifices that our military families make for our country.”

RSL Australia is supportive of placing a tribute bear at commemorative services on Anzac Day where possible in support of Defence families.

This partnership between Legacy, RSL and DFA is an example of a positive collaboration between agencies which support and pay respect to veterans, current serving members and their families.

“Families are essential to supporting a stronger Australian Defence Force,” said Defence Family Advocate of Australia Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin.

“Our Defence capability thrives when families are valued and supported during and following their military service.

“We hope this campaign will give Defence and veteran families the recognition they deserve, but don’t always get, for their secondhand service to our nation by supporting their ADF member.”

Legacy Bears can be purchased online through [www.legacyshop.com.au](http://www.legacyshop.com.au) or by contacting your local Legacy Club via [www.legacy.com.au/clubs](http://www.legacy.com.au/clubs)

### About Legacy Australia

As one of Australia’s oldest and most iconic charities, Legacy supports 43,000 families of Australian Defence Force personnel who have given their lives or their health in service to their country. Legacy is dedicated to enhancing the lives and opportunities of our families through innovative and practical assistance, aimed at protecting individuals and families’ basic needs, advocating for their entitlements, rights and benefits, assisting families through bereavement and helping people thrive, despite their adversity and loss.

### About Defence Families of Australia

Established in 1986, Defence Families of Australia (DFA) is the official group representing the interests of families of current serving ADF members. As the official families advisory body to the Minister for Defence Personnel and Chief of the Defence Force, we advocate for ongoing improvement in policy and practice. Our team are located all across Australia, and are family of current serving Defence members. Our advocacy drives change to decrease the negative aspects, and to support the positive aspects of Defence life.

### About RSL

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL Australia) was formed in 1916 in response to the lack of a unified approach to the organisation of repatriation facilities and medical services for those returning from the Great War. Since its formation, RSL Australia has evolved into the nation’s largest Ex-Service Organisation, operating through a federated structure of State and Territory Branches and 1,135 Sub-Branchees, and representing approximately 150,000 members.



Those attending Anzac Day commemorative events are encouraged to lay a small teddy bear beside their wreath to acknowledge veterans, current serving members and their families as part of the RememBEARance campaign.



Australian  
Red Cross

# A lasting legacy

Hope. Courage. Second Chances.  
Connection. Humanity.  
What will you pass on?



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."*

Visit our [website](#) to request your free Wills guide.  
Phone 1800 733 276 or scan the QR code.



SCAN ME

## — INTERVIEW —



Shirley Gash

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

*Greg T Ross:* Good morning, Shirley Gash, how are you?

*Shirley Gash:* I'm very good. Thank you.

*GTR:* Shirley, you have had an attachment. There are many things, I guess, that make people inspirational, but you've had an attachment to Red Cross, Australian Red Cross of course, and a number of other things during your life. Tell us a little bit about your background and what led you to be working with Red Cross and your involvement with them? And I guess it does become a spiritual thing because of course you're helping lots of people through your actions too.

*SG:* Yes, that's true. Actually, my attachment to the Red Cross is probably mostly because of my own father... he was the inspiration for me to take such an interest in the Red Cross. But as you say, I mean, I have a background of being first in business in the travel industry, but then secondly, I went on to doing full-time Christian ministry. And I worked as a speaker and an assistant pastor for many years. But those were not really the influences necessarily for me to be involved with the Red Cross. With the Red Cross, it was much more about my father and his life.

*GTR:* Yes. Your father was a medic in World War II. Tell us a little bit about that too, Shirley, if you can, and how that affected you and your family life.

*SG:* Yes, sure. Well, my father was a medic in World War II. In fact, he was, I don't know of many people have seen the movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, but he was probably a little bit of a down under *Hacksaw Ridge* man. Because he didn't want to take lives. He'd become a Christian himself in his teens. And so he didn't want to take lives, but at the same time he wanted to save lives. And so he volunteered to go with Red Cross into the war and because he had objected to the idea of carrying a gun. He was actually put in the front lines for years. So he was at El Alamein, he was in the battle of Cassino. And so yes, these were two very important battles and it took its toll on him too. I think he returned from the war

Shirley Gash was born in New Zealand but now lives in Melbourne. She spent twenty-two years of her working life in the travel industry, most of it managing a corporate travel office.

A radical shift from this moved her into over twenty years of Christian ministry. She spent these years as an ordained minister and Christian speaker. Over these years she also wrote educational material for a hospitality and travel school. She earned her doctorate in practical ministry and is now semi-retired and working on writing.

Her interest in the work of the Red Cross began because her father had been a medic in WWII with the Red Cross, and he had respected this well-established organisation and strongly encouraged Shirley to always remember the work they do.

Leaving a legacy has become even more important as she also battles an aggressive leukemia, a reminder that none of us can take anything with us.

in his late twenties and probably had post traumatic stress. But back in the day, I don't know if he really know about the depth of that, or anything like that. They were getting told, get married, have a family and that. He marriage was my brother, he was the oldest. And I'm not sure whether it was partly due to the trauma of my father had been through or whatever else, but today, he would've been diagnosed as having low functioning autism, I would imagine.

*GTR:* Right.

*SG:* They didn't have a name for it back then, but he was definitely a challenge. My sister came along two years later and then five years later, I came into this family that was struggling very much, his demons, if you like, that had come from the war and also with what was happening in the family. But by the time I was four, my brother actually had run away from home and was lost for a week. And so it was one of those stories that you often see today that I always feel such compassion for.

Eventually he was found. I actually grew up in New Zealand, you may be picking up a little bit of the accent here.

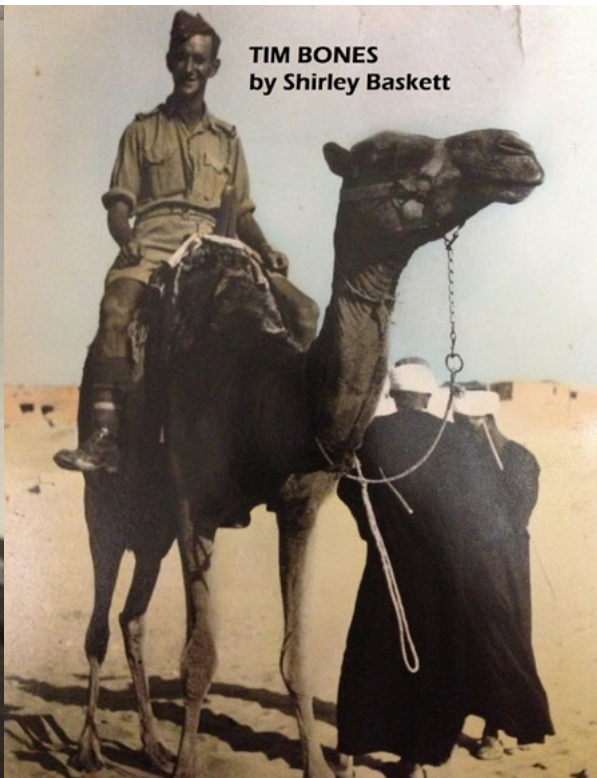
*GTR:* Just a little bit.

*SG:* And he was found in one of Auckland's harbours. And so this created a lot more trauma for my family, of course. And my mother never really came out of that. My father tried to deal with things by probably trying to find his own peace. And that meant that he took up doing yoga and all sorts of things, often say it was back in the day when New Zealanders would've thought that was something you ate with breakfast. But anyway, but he was, before his time, looking through these things of meditation and whatever else. He never spoke about his war years until he was much older. In fact, probably that was a good thing because I would not have appreciated it, until I was old enough to understand what he was talking about. He did tell funny stories at the end of the day, he would talk about people who had, during the times of battle, where he'd be so exhausted and he'd find just some camp stretcher to flop out and sleep on and then wake up in the morning and discover that he was lying with all the dead. And so, fortunate he wasn't carted off. And he told stories about having to hold a man's leg while it was being amputated without an anesthetic. Then he said that the worst operation he ever had to help with was, somebody was having an ingrown toenail fixed. I think perhaps we relate to that kind of pain even more. So he was actually a stretcher bearer. He talked about how they were so close to the Germans during the battle of Cassino that they could actually hear them speaking. And they had to whisper as they were taking men out. Other things he talked about was trying to stretcher bear between two tanks firing at each other at Al Alamein in the desert. And he talked about scorpions going into his Tanton, talked about how one time his Captain or whoever, was over him had asked him to come and see him. And so he got out of his tent, he was in the middle of writing a letter, feeling a little annoyed that he'd been interrupted, but just as he left his tent, he was screaming, Mimi came down, obliterated it. And so all that was left of his things in the tent was a bent spoon. So these were the sorts of stories. He told a funny story about a new recruit that had turned up in the desert, and when the aircraft went over, you dived for cover wherever you could. And so this man saw two tins that were

sitting there. So he put his head between these two tins to try and protect his head. So these were some of the stories that I heard about. But he also talked about having been in the Red Cross during the time of the war. He grew to have such a respect for this. He said sometimes it was a sad thing that even, despite the fact that it was a Red Cross on and I do have a lot of black and white photos that he brought back with him and it's really rather interesting looking back over those things and trying to imagine what he went through.

*GTR:* Your role and what you're doing with Red Cross and what you have done with Red Cross, Shirley. So when did you first get involved with Red Cross?

*SG:* Well, as a matter of fact, that really happened probably at my father's funeral. We had a memorial service for him and he had asked if I would take it, which was a big ask, but actually I found it such an honor and my father after the war, because of his great respect for the Red Cross, he'd gone on wanting to raise funds for the Red Cross. And he was a bit of a character. And so, when my mother passed away at 84, he became very involved in trying to raise funds for the Red Cross and what he would do. He was a musician, if you can call an accordion player a musician. Anyway, but he loved playing accordion music and he played Italian music that he'd learn from the war. And so he would go out to different rest homes and he would play music for the old people... , when he was in his eighties. He also used to go on the radio and do a little show at two o'clock in the morning, musical memories of the 20th century anyway. But after that, he got himself a Busker's license so that he could go down to the main streets in Auckland and play his piano accordion and raise funds for the Red Cross. And he would wear his army band with the red cross on it. And people would say, "What war were you in?" He'd say, "World War II." And so he'd been doing this for a while. And then when he got too old and just didn't feel that he could carry all this equipment with him, he found that there was a Red Cross Goodwill shop around the corner, an opportunity shop. So he went around and he volunteered to help in the shop and worked there too. And so he'd always had this passion for trying to help the Red Cross and all through my life, I had heard, "Do not forget the Red Cross. Do not forget the Red Cross." So when he had his memorial service, I invited some of them along. And they



"...MY ATTACHMENT TO THE RED CROSS IS PROBABLY MOSTLY BECAUSE OF MY OWN FATHER... HE WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR ME TO TAKE SUCH AN INTEREST IN THE RED CROSS."

LEFT: Shirley's father in WWII, and Tim Bones the book Shirley wrote about her father.



A photo from Shirley's father's WWII album.

told us about him and talked about his involvement. And so I realised that to honour him, I needed to honour the Red Cross. And so after that, I moved to Australia and went on with Christian ministry here, but I thought, well, how can I do this? And how can I help with the Red Cross? And so I thought, well, like a lot of people, I'm probably asset rich and cash flow poor because when you're trying to pay off a house, but I thought one thing I can do is I can leave a legacy to the Red Cross. And so I decided that I would do that. And then, because I'd done that, they asked me, why are you wanting to leave this legacy? And my story came out about my father. And so I found myself beginning to speak at different Red Cross functions and that sort of thing, just to describe why it was important to me. It was important to me because of my faith too, because as my father said, the Red Cross was started by a Christian and that the ethos is there where they don't discriminate. They go into every country, they look for wherever there is need, and they're helping people, there are a very established *organisation*. And so it's one of, dare I say it, the few that I would trust. And so there in my will, there is a legacy to the Red Cross. And now that I have been diagnosed with an acute leukemia, then that legacy may well be a little quicker coming to them. I guess I've got to wait for my husband too, but he feels the same as I do. And so there it is set in paper that that's something that's very important to me.

*GTR:* Yes. Indeed, and we salute you your service and your legacy too, when that happens for all, all people will benefit. And I guess this is the idea behind the Red Cross, too, Shirley. How important is the message of the Red Cross? You must be pretty used to talking about the Red Cross, but how essential is the message of the Red Cross in today's uncertain world and a world with violence obviously too?

*SG:* Well, I think that it's becoming more and more essential. At the moment, we are watching all the sabre's being rattled in various parts of the world. And to be honest, I can see probably World War III coming up very quickly. I fear for the United States and for us here in Australia, I fear for our allies and I fear for people in countries that are not our allies and because there's going to be so much pain coming up. And of course we live in a nuclear era and we can't imagine what kind of suffering may well be ahead. So an organisation like a Red Cross already has established places all over the world. And even in countries where the Red Cross itself would not be a necessary welcome symbol, they found ways to be represented there too. What I like about them is there's no discrimination. And of course personally, in my own belief, I believe that all people were created by God in His image and that all people need their dignity of knowing that someone could be there for them if they're going to suffer. So I think the work of the Red Cross is becoming more and more essential and in the days to come. I hope that many more people do recognise it.

*GTR:* Yes, that's true, Shirley. Essential too, I would say, for younger generations to know the message of Red Cross. I was a Junior Leader with Red Cross in primary school. And on Red Cross camps, we would look after

the kids that were a few years younger, but of course we learned the message of Red Cross from a very early age and it became a part of who I am. And because of that, we are very happy to be associated with the Red Cross and to wonderful people like yourself. What about the kids today coming up? How important is it for the children, the kids today to also learn that message?

*SG:* I think it's very important. And I have been pleased when I have been to functions that I have seen that there are young ones there. And so obviously the message getting through to some, but I wish that it could get through to a lot more. Perhaps things like this should be part of a component of what is learned in schools and to just know who is out there and how do we actually look for who you can trust. But also I think that the work of the Red Cross is something that can challenge and inspire young people to go and do something because of course, it's not just overseas. It's also locally here too, where the Red Cross do look after people who need care here as well. And so they're looking out for older people, they're looking out for people who have no families and that sort of thing. So it's not just an overseas work. And I think if younger people can get involved in that at a local level, then however they can, I'm not sure, but I'm sure the Red Cross would have open arms for anybody who would like to put in some kind of voluntary work.

*GTR:* Yes, indeed. Shirley. And I think that's the important thing. I know that the message will continue you through generations. And I guess also the message of the Red Cross is very similar to what you preach. And also, I guess the magazine, *The Last Post*, too, Shirley, because not glorifying war, but at the same time, not stepping back from looking after those that have been affected.

*SG:* That's right. Absolutely. And that's the thing. I mean, people who go to war on either side, believe that what they're doing is for their nation. So I think that was part of my father's motivation. The fact that the people who were in the war were often there because they were serving their nation. It's not necessarily because they wanted to go obliterate people. And in fact, it's a sad thing when we make some group of people become the enemy and we demonise them in some way or vilify them in some way so that they become non-human.

*GTR:* Yes, yes. I understand what you're saying.

*SG:* Because if we can learn about people, if we can listen to them, if we can hear peoples hearts, we'll find that we are all humans, we are all people who want to love our families. And of course my message would have to be that we could also love our God. I mean, to me, that's my highest motivation. And in fact, in doing that, then I want to love people. So it's kind of vertical and horizontal if you like.

*GTR:* Yes, we understand that.

*SG:* The two go together. And so the motivation is to try and find, well, how can we best help people? How can we best help everybody? Not just those that we agree with. And if we could all do that, maybe there would be no wars, but I'm sad to say, I don't think that as long as the earth continues the way it is that we will be free of conflict.

*GTR:* No, that's right. I think there will always be a place for Red Cross and there will always be a place for people with similar views to yours and of course what the magazine espouses too. And I think this has been the wonderful thing about speaking with you, Shirley, is the common ground that we have. And through that Red Cross, both our attachment to Red Cross and your attachment to assisting human beings, find some peace and also assisting those affected by war, which Red Cross does. So we thank you very much for being an inspirational Australian woman, Shirley...even if you're born in New Zealand.

*SG:* Well, I hope it turns out well for you and thanks for the chat. ■

On ANZAC Day,  
we recognise the courage,  
perseverance and mateship  
of those who served, fought  
and gave their lives.

*Commemorating the past,  
looking to the future.*



**Your local club**





## *Sew long Iris, fly high.*

104-year-old Legacy beneficiary Iris Terry passed away on 28 January 2022. She was a former RAAF seamstress and World War Two Widow who lived a long life of joy. Iris worked hard in her impressive tailoring career, ensuring high flyers looked their best.

At a filmed interview in December 2021, she still exuded style, grace and a spirited glow – living proof that you reap what you sew!

Iris's story was previously shared in the Winter 2020 Legacy publication, Torchlight. This was adapted from an article by Steve Meacham originally published in the March 2020 issue of RSL NSW newsletter, Reveille.

At the end of 2021, Jemma Pigott sat down with Iris and her carer, Fay Poulter, documenting their remarkable connection spanning more than half a century! Fay also introduced Jemma to Dominic Arrivolo, a 96-year-old former RAAF technician who, like Iris, narrowly escaped a fatal plane crash in 1944.

Story by Jemma Pigott. Filming by Kathleen Ferguson.

### **A Good Life**

To quote Sydney Legacy President Nikki Hollis, "There are few people who enjoyed life as much as Iris." During the December interview, she was radiant company; full of energy, compliments, gratitude and laughs. "I've had a good life, a very nice life," beamed Iris, just one month before her passing.

Mrs Iris Terry (nee Pfitzner) was born on 14 May 1917, in Griffith, NSW. She had eight siblings – four sisters and four brothers, including her twin,

Edna, who sadly passed away at just 45. Their father, Adolph, was a country vet, and their mother, Isobel, was a gifted woman who taught her daughters to sew and ran a home laundry during the Depression.

Iris was only 14 when she started working. Most women in her rural region had their babies at home, and young Iris helped in their recovery. She would stay on their properties, assisting the mothers with domestic duties and helping look after any other children while their fathers worked. "You had to work all the time in those days," explained Iris.

In April 1944, aged 26, Iris joined the RAAF as an aircraftswoman. She worked long hours as a seamstress; they were sometimes given as little as 24 hours to fit an entire squadron before they boarded ships to the front line. "Sometimes we worked all night," recalled Iris.

After the war, she met and married her husband Emerson – a dashing Army serviceman who had resumed his occupation as a master builder. Iris looked dazzling in her wedding gown which she made, assisted by a friend. The young newlyweds purchased land at Carramar, where Emerson built their home. They lived happy years together; working hard and enjoying ballroom dancing.

Iris's post-war tailoring employment was close to Wynyard. Every weekday she caught the train to Central Station, walking all the way to King Street and back after work. She was still commuting for this work at age 83! This is because when she first applied for a pension she was knocked back. It wasn't until Iris came to a Legacy meeting and her Legatee friend, June Young, said, "You were a service person – you should be on a pension," that it was resolved. June got onto the matter straight away, securing Iris her pension.

### **Tailored support was the best fit**

As an accomplished seamstress, Iris knew custom made clothes were superior. The support she received through Legacy was cut from the same 'bespoke design' cloth. Her Legatees were husband and wife Ken and June Young, and they delivered Legacy support tailored to her needs. Ken is a Vietnam Veteran, and pushed Iris in her wheelchair for the 2021 Anzac Day march. Both Ken and Iris were in uniform that day; their service medals proudly on display.

After Iris had a stroke in 2016, her carer Fay Poulter became what Fay describes as Iris's "Legacy partner". In this capacity, she took Iris to all her Legacy meetings and engagements. Fay explained that prior to 2016, Iris

Nationally, Legacy receives less than one percent of its funds from government and relies on the support and generosity of the public to help us keep the promise to always look after those left behind.

Naming Legacy in your Will is a powerful way to honour and make a lasting tribute to the heroic men and women who gave their lives in service to our country.

By leaving a gift in your Will to Legacy, we can continue our vital work and provide the financial, social, and developmental support our veterans' families depend on each day.

Learn more here: [www.legacy.com.au/get-involved/gifts-in-wills](http://www.legacy.com.au/get-involved/gifts-in-wills)

went to all Legacy functions on her own; "she was a very independent person."

Fay observed firsthand Legacy's positive impact on Iris, and she would know – having known Iris for 57 years, ever since Fay and her husband moved across the street. The Terrys were unable to have children but were devoted Godparents to the Poulter's daughters, who loved them dearly.

As Iris's carer and "Legacy partner," Fay reciprocated the neighbourly love the Terrys had provided her and her family. In recent times, she visited Iris two to three times a week; taking her out, running errands and facilitating social activities.

She explained, "I take Iris to her Legacy meeting every month to see her friends.

We go on bus trips, out to lunches and to parties which she loves. I think without Legacy Iris would be very lonely."

At 104 Iris was still quick-witted, gregarious and keen to engage in lively banter. She did struggle in the formal interview though, due to her Dyslexia and having suffered two strokes. She was told after her last stroke she would never speak again.

Iris defied this and spoke with joy, but had some difficulties in our filmed set-up. For this reason, we ended up interviewing Fay and Iris together.

Fay came as Iris's support person after all but she was more than that; she understood everything Iris was trying to say, and knew the details of all the stories she wanted to share. It was also clear that Iris loved having her there.

### ***Iris's high flying fashion – a career and passion!***

Iris dressed to impress for our filmed interview. She wore a custom-made Air Force service dress and hat, presented to her by RAAF Squadron Leader, Del Gaudry, in 2021, the RAAF's centenary year.

Iris's service medals were pinned to the upper left of her tailored jacket; her late husbands' displayed on the right, as per protocol. Her hair and make-up were done perfectly, reflecting her independence and style. "She still gets up and puts her face on, and I've never seen her in a tracksuit," explained Fay.

Indeed, style was Iris's profession, and she projected it to the end. Her skills were honed during World War

Two, fitting Airmen with exceptionally tailored uniforms. The centenarian ensured they looked resplendent in Australian military apparel.

Iris's appreciation for the uniforms motivated her to join the RAAF. Most of her siblings, including her twin, joined the Army, but Iris was drawn to the smart blue suits worn by our soldiers of the sky. "I liked the uniforms," she said with a chuckle and twinkle in her eye.

After her RAAF days, she made workwear for other 'high flyers', including judges, barristers, businessmen and Prime Ministers! One client stood out in her memory because he came from Western Sydney like her, and appreciated well-made clothing. Paul Keating, "the boy from Bankstown", was very particular about his suits, insisting the buttonholes be hand-sewn. He was clearly a fan of her abilities, and according to Fay, sent Iris a Happy Birthday message when she turned 100.

### ***A blast from the past***

In 2021 Iris met fellow former RAAF member Dominic Arrivolo. He was 95 at the time and had seen Iris on TV. The story touched on a fatal plane crash on 20 December 1944 at Richmond Airbase, which she narrowly escaped. Dominic avoided the same fate.

"When I heard about this girl, I had to meet her – so I got onto the television station", said Dominic, now 96.

It was ultimately Fay who facilitated contact, inviting Dominic to Iris's 104th birthday in May 2021. Iris had a wonderful time at the party, delighting guests with her dance moves! She also loved meeting Dominic. Afterwards, Fay said he made regular phone calls, checking on Iris.

The 1944 crash was a test flight and pre-Christmas joy ride. Iris was supposed to be the only woman on board but was busy with her workload. In a gesture of goodwill, she let her friend, Aircraftwoman Nancy Ralph, go instead. Dominic had actually boarded the plane but disembarked just before take-off, confessing he hadn't completed documentation. He was an honest 18-year-old who'd recently qualified as an aircraft maintenance man.

His supervising Corporal and seven others, including Iris's friend, were killed in the tragic accident. Dominic is grateful he met Iris, commenting after she passed, "I never knew there was

anyone still around who shared my trauma, given my ripe old age of 96".

Fay is commended for uniting the former RAAF members after all those years.

### ***A relationship and charity honouring promises***

Reflecting on her role as Iris's carer, Fay said, "I always said to Iris when she helped with my kids, 'You're here for me now, and when you get old I will look after you'. I've always kept that promise". Fay's loyalty evokes the noble battlefield pledge on which Legacy is built, propelled by mateship.

It was in the trenches of Pozieres in August 1916 that a soldier said to his dying comrade: "Never worry my friend. We'll look after your family".

### ***Iris and Legacy the past century***

The battlefield promise on which Legacy is built was made nine months before Iris was born, and she turned six the year Legacy was founded in 1923. She was serving Australia herself during World War Two when Legacy really "came into its own".

2022 marks the 80th anniversary of what is now called Legacy Week; the iconic charity's largest annual campaign. It culminates with 'Badge Day' (the first Friday in September every year). This year Legacy Week runs from Monday 28th August to Friday 3rd September. It began as a War Orphans Appeal in 1942, raising funds for Widows and children of deceased soldiers.

After Iris's ex-serviceman husband passed away prematurely at 60, Legacy stepped in to support her. At 104, she was one of the oldest Legacy Widows.

### ***"I'm alright, don't worry about me" – Iris's catchcry and legacy***

Throughout our December interview, Iris said this reassuringly with a laugh at the end. "That is her big catchcry," explained Fay, to which Iris reiterated joyfully, "I'm alright." It's a very Australian thing to say. Indeed the "she'll be right" sentiment has defined us, from ANZAC to today.

For a 104-year-old woman in the midst of a pandemic, her selfless words were very moving. Fay held fast to her promise to care for Iris in old age, and her Legatees held fast to the promise on which Legacy is built; to look after the families of deceased Veterans. Iris's carer and Legatees "worried" about her until the end, in the devoted manner of a true blue friend.

Iris passed away just over a month after our interview. Her 'life of the party' personality and warm heart will be fondly remembered by those blessed to have known her. Thank you for your service, Iris. May you rest in peace. Fly high bright seamstress for the sky! Lest We Forget. Goodbye.



# Defence Families of Australia

## A fresh new look for Defence Families of Australia

The national advisory body for families of current serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members is undergoing a process of transformation to elevate its advocacy work and improve governance.

Defence Families of Australia (DFA) has also unveiled a fresh new logo and is working on releasing an updated version of its website, [dfa.org.au](https://dfa.org.au), to be more mobile-friendly and responsive.

DFA began its organisational transformation process in 2021 with a comprehensive review, highlighting the growing focus on families as pivotal to Defence capability.

Building on this review, DFA will release its Strategic Plan for 2022-2024 outlining the organisation's future direction, planned new governance framework and operating model.

The organisation's head and the first Defence Family Advocate of Australia, Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin, said the team was excited to realise the full potential of DFA in driving positive change for the Defence community.

"Defence families have varied needs as they navigate this unique life, supporting their loved one in uniform," Mrs Laaksonen-Sherrin said.

"We are here to make sure families' voices are heard and considered from the highest levels of government to the operational level across Defence to effect sustainable, long-term policy changes."

In recent weeks, DFA also released its second quarterly Advocacy Map, which outlines current advocacy work to provide transparency and invite other stakeholders to further inform and collaborate in ongoing advocacy efforts.

"In our 35-year history, every ADF member and their family has in some way been impacted by DFA advocacy, whether through policy change or individual support," Mrs Laaksonen-Sherrin said.

"We are families advocating for families."

DFA recently contributed to the reinstatement of Relief Out of Country Leave (ROCL) or Relief Out of Country Fare Assistance (ROCTFA) for members on overseas deployments.

During the pandemic, DFA also successfully lobbied several state governments to remove restrictions which prevented ADF families from accompanying their serving member on posting relocation to some regions, provided all pre-departure requirements (quarantine, COVID testing and vaccinations) were met.

This saved more than 1,000 families from living separately from their ADF member (MWDU).

"We work closely with stakeholders like Defence Member and Family Support, and Defence Housing Australia to investigate and resolve a broad range of issues affecting families," Mrs Laaksonen-Sherrin said.

"In the past 12 months DFA has directly supported more than 450 individual Defence families with highly complex issues. This is in addition to thousands more supported through general advice. This is part of the work rarely seen, but has a huge impact."

[dfa.org.au](https://dfa.org.au)





Ian and Frank. Photo: Megan Spencer.



The Lampard family. Photo: Megan Spencer.

# Honouring Lawrie Lampard

Lawrence Murray Lampard was born at Raukkan on 28 April 1948, one of twelve children born to a family with Ngarrindjeri and Kurna heritage.

When Lawrie was about ten years old his family broke up and he spent the rest of his childhood in boys' homes and foster care. He completed second year of high school in November 1964, then worked as a labourer for the next three years. On 11 December 1967, he enlisted in the regular army, aged 19. Lawrie was trained as an infantryman and in June 1968 was posted to the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. When Lawrie joined 6 RAR, it had begun preparing and training to deploy to South Vietnam in mid-1969. On 8 May 1969 the battalion departed by ship for South Vietnam. Lawrie was posted to Medical Platoon as a stretcher bearer, and was attached to 10 Platoon, Delta

Company. During its time in South Vietnam, the battalion undertook nine major operations and 10 Platoon was involved in several successful ambushes and major contacts with the Viet Cong. Three members of 10 Platoon were killed during the tour, with more than half-a-dozen wounded. The battalion flew back to Australia in mid-May 1970. Lawrie was discharged from the army in September 1970. He died in tragic circumstances on 21 December 1972, aged 24.

On Thursday 18 November 2021 at West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide, Lawrie's previously unmarked grave was dedicated by Aboriginal Veterans SA and the Lampard family. Lawrie was the younger brother of Aboriginal

Veterans SA Co-Chair, Uncle Frank Lampard OAM. The grave dedication project was supported by Veterans SA, Adelaide Cemeteries and Reconciliation SA, and follows on from several similar projects, including one for the grave of World War I veteran Herbert Milera in March this year. Along with RSL State President Mrs Cheryl Cates, half-a-dozen former members of 6 RAR were in attendance, and representatives of many ex-service organisations and current serving members of the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, who are based at Edinburgh.

## IAN SMITH

*Co-Chair Aboriginal Veterans SA*

# Keeping our Promise to families like Amy's

For Amy and her three sons, Sam (18), Luke (16) and Ollie (14), Anzac Day is another important reminder of the man they lost to leukaemia, eight years ago.

When he was alive, Tim served in the RAAF 77th Squadron. He was a corporal and a gunnie. But above all, he was a loving husband and dad.

"We weren't expecting it. Losing Tim was the worst-case scenario and it happened." Amy.

"It had come back. No sign, nothing. The childhood leukaemia, something had brought it back 20-plus years later." Amy.

After Tim passed, it was on a Legacy Family Camp that Amy met other mums who had been through what she had been through. And it was from these women that she learned what could be made possible with the help of Legacy.

One of the things that had been playing on Amy's mind was how she

would be able to afford to keep the boys at the school that Tim had dearly wanted them to attend. After all, she only had her single income and no widow's pension to rely on. But thanks to a multi-year education grant which Amy successfully applied for through Legacy, a quality education for her boys was once less thing she had to worry about.

"I'm so thankful for everything Legacy has done for my mum. Legacy helps with a lot of the financial side of things... and I think that would make Dad really thankful, too." Luke, 16.

The support of Legacy has meant that Amy and her children have had assistance with buying school uniforms, laptops for Sam, Luke and Ollie so they have the tools to succeed

at school, helping with costs to keep the boys in Footy and keep playing the sport their Dad loved so much, as well as medical expenses when they have needed them. It has meant that Amy can also save funds for other things to like holidays too, so they can have fun as a family.

"It's a recognition of the impact that Anzac Day has on me, my family and other families. I felt really proud to be able to lay the wreath... and thankful. Because without Legacy our lives would be a lot harder. Especially for mum." Sam, 18.

"Never in a million years did I think our family would be the ones who needed Legacy's support. And I'm so grateful for it. I can't thank you enough, really." Amy.





Emily is the Senior Case Manager at Melbourne Legacy, and for the past 4 years has been working with the rest of the case management team to provide ongoing care and support to families of veterans.

Emily and the rest of the case management team have all been working tirelessly to provide ongoing care and support to families during COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria. In fact, our case managers have been working harder than ever this year – since the start of the pandemic, the number of veterans struggling with mental health issues has risen by 30% per cent which has led to more families needing our help.

None of the support given by Emily, or other members of her team, would be possible without the support of our generous donors. We are stronger together.

Before coming on board as a Case Manager with Melbourne Legacy, I had over 13 years experience volunteering and working in the social care sector, and so I brought with me an ability to coordinate different services, alongside an understanding of the concepts of client empowerment and self-determination.

As Case Managers at Melbourne Legacy, we have the opportunity to be part of our beneficiaries' progress and to witness the positive changes that can occur in their life.

It's about listening to people and being able to provide understanding and a helping hand. We are required to be patient and supportive when applying strategic planning, and assess each family's needs depending on their unique circumstances and then develop a plan to best support the family. The plan may include help with education costs, emergency financial assistance, counselling services or support and guidance for alternative housing. However, our service delivery is not limited to just these services, as here at Melbourne Legacy we really believe that there is always something we can do to help.

Uncertainty is a common issue for many of the people that we speak to and being unable to do many of the things that have been positive coping strategies for them in the past is taking its toll. Anxiety and stress levels have increased, due to fears and concerns around what's happening and what the future might hold. Many of our veterans' families have reported relationship issues and some, sadly, are dealing with domestic violence.

Hearing about the struggles that veterans' families are facing is hard. Life can be really difficult for those we support, without the added complication of lockdown measures as well. In recent months we have seen an increase in complex cases and an increase in families experiencing difficulties with mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence.

Our work with beneficiaries like Jennifer\* really highlights the interventions we put in place to address the complexities of our community:

Jennifer\* reached out to us after leaving her veteran partner due to his mental health illnesses.

Once eligibility was confirmed, I conducted a holistic intake and assessment. During this process, this beneficiary disclosed to me that for the past 10 years she had been experiencing financial abuse and domestic violence. This had now escalated to the point in which this beneficiary feared for her life.

This was the first time this beneficiary had ever disclosed the abuse she had been experiencing.

As I have over 7 years' experience of supporting victims of crime and women and children fleeing family violence, I was able to provide referrals to several Client centered, Collaborative and Holistic Case management supports. An example of this is a referral to a family violence service in order to apply for the Escaping Family Violence Payment.

However, we were advised that it will take 8 weeks to obtain any funding. Fortunately, in this case this beneficiary moved in with a friend she felt safe with and will eventually be using this government funding for bond and rent in advance.

I then referred this beneficiary to Australian Money Mentors for a financial assessment. This information

supports Case Managers to determine which funding requests are essential, and to then provide this funding.

An added feature of our Australian Money Mentors program is the opportunity for ongoing money mentorship, providing the beneficiary the opportunity to gain financial independence, and Jennifer\* is engaging with this service.

Our Case Managers work collaboratively with our Veteran Liaison Officers who will support them with pension advocacy and well-being supports, as well as links with other ex-service organisations and the community as a whole. For example, to support Jennifer's\* emotional wellbeing, I referred her to Open Arms and she is now engaging in free and ongoing counselling.

I also spoke with her about her employment and education goals. She is considering completing a course in aged care and is aware that Melbourne Legacy provides education funding assistance to assist her to reach her goals. In these ways, Jennifer\* will continue to receive long term case management supports, which will strengthen her journey towards self-reliance and Post Traumatic Growth.

Now in a place of stability, and with an understanding of Melbourne Legacy's services and who to reach out to for support, I received this feedback from Jennifer\*:

*"To Whom It May Concern,*

*I recently left my partner who is a veteran after 18yrs, due to his mental health illnesses. My whole life was turned upside down.*

*I have a limited income, two large dogs and at the time felt it was unsafe to stay with family and friends.*

*I had rung numerous organisations and quite popular organisations too. Nobody helped me, in some cases I didn't even get a phone back!*

*I felt hopeless, stressed out and really embarrassed! I didn't know what I was going to do. Until I rang Melbourne Legacy!*

*They explained to me what help and support they can provide me. I expressed to them that this means nothing to me unless they were actually going to do what they have said! (My exact words were "whatever, I don't trust anyone at the moment")*

*I was given straight away a Case Manager Emily and a Money Mentor Tony.*

*The first thing they said was "what are your priorities and how can we assist you"*

*I needed help with paying for food, petrol, dog medication and storage. Within a week they delivered on their promises to me.*

*They have been in communication with me throughout this whole time. It hasn't been a struggle for myself to get in contact with them.*

*If it wasn't for Melbourne Legacy and especially Tony and Emily, I'm sure this process for me would have been a lot worse.*

*I can't thank you enough and I hope that this organisation continues doing great work and support for people in need.*

*Thank you again.*

*Jenny\**



# foreword

Matt Kean MP

NSW Treasurer, Minister for Energy

This year more than ever I am looking forward to joining my loved ones at dawn to commemorate ANZAC Day, to be reminded of what courage is after a tough two years for this country.

As the grandson of a World War II veteran, it brings me great pride to recognise the significant role that our brave service men and women have played in shaping this nation. It's important to honour the unsung female heroes of the First World War - theirs are the names we must never forget.

And we must also remember the women who stepped up on the home front during World War II, entering the paid workforce in record numbers to keep the Australian economy afloat. They worked on farms, in factories and in shipyards in previously male-dominated roles. In meeting the challenges of war, they redefined traditional notions of "women's work."

Today, it's encouraging to see the progress being made in defence to open up career opportunities for women.

Our country is built on the huge contribution of generation after generation of Australian women.

Together, we have built one of the world's greatest democracies, an egalitarian society, which believes that all people should be safe under the rule of law, free and afforded the opportunity to succeed based on the quality of their contribution.

But for too long our country's covenant has not been kept for more than half of our population.

Women are underrepresented in our trades, our offices and our boardrooms, and for NSW to be more productive we need everyone who wants to work to be able to do so.

Too often we see women leave the workforce or reduce their work hours – not by choice but by necessity.

The percentage of women in the NSW workforce is still about 10 per cent lower than men, and women retire with around two thirds of the superannuation saved compared to men.

It is impossible to say that our country is honouring our ideals if more than half the population is weighed down in pursuing their aspirations by bias that is built in to our culture, employment entitlements, services and tax system.

That is why the NSW Government has commissioned the *Women's Economic Opportunities Review* – to improve the economic security and wellbeing of women across their lifetimes.

As the defence force empowers women to excel in their careers, more broadly across the workforce the Review aims to support more women to enter, re-enter and stay in the workforce.

If women's participation reached parity with men's over the next 20 years, the NSW economy would be eight per cent larger by 2060-61 (that's \$22,000 more annual income per household, measured in today's dollars).

Through the Review, an Expert Reference Panel is considering the barriers to women participating in the workforce and will propose reform opportunities, including improvements to the accessibility, quality and affordability of early childhood services and early childhood education outcomes.

The panel is also considering ways to reduce salary and superannuation discrepancy, create a more even gender mix across industries, increase workplace flexibility and support female entrepreneurs to run their own businesses.

Women's economic equality is good for society and good for business. When more women are empowered to work, our economy grows. The right structural support can not only improve women's economic security but help fuel an economic boom for our State.

That means we need more inclusive workplaces where women receive the same salary, training, vocational development and leadership opportunities as men.

Let's share a resolve to honour our country's covenant that a girl born today has the same opportunities in life as the boy born in the hospital room next door.

Because doing so will improve the lives of every person in this State.

# Review to boost women in the workforce

Empowering women and improving their economic opportunities will be the focus of the NSW Government's landmark *Women's Economic Opportunities Review* and Expert Reference Panel.

Premier Dominic Perrottet said the Review will focus on supporting women to enter, re-enter and stay in the workforce, including through identifying opportunities to reduce salary and superannuation discrepancy and improve access to and affordability of childcare.

"The time has come to level the playing field, making sure more women have more choice and opportunities when it comes to their careers," Mr Perrottet said.

"We know there is more work to do to improve conditions for more women to succeed in the workplace and have greater choice in their lives. This Review will help find ways to increase women's leadership opportunities and enable flexibility for working parents."

Treasurer Matt Kean said the 2021-22 NSW Intergenerational Report found the economy would be 8% larger by 2060-61 if women's participation reached parity with men.

"Women are underrepresented in our trades, our offices, and our boardrooms, and for the State to be more productive we need everyone who wants to work to be able to do so," Mr Kean said.

"I want to make sure a girl born today has the same opportunities as a boy born in the hospital room next door, which has not been the case for their mothers and grandmothers before them."

Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor said the NSW Government is committed to creating a more even gender mix across industries, supporting female entrepreneurs to run their own businesses, and increasing workplace flexibility.

"Too often women leave the workforce or reduce their working hours out of necessity, not choice. It is, therefore, no surprise that women have only two-thirds of the superannuation saved compared to men," Mrs Taylor said.

"If we increase the number of women in the workforce we will improve their economic security and wellbeing across a lifetime, bringing enormous social and economic benefits to everyone in NSW."

Minister for Education and Early Learning Sarah Mitchell said the Review will develop recommendations to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of childcare and early childhood education for families.

"The Review will provide key insights into the childcare needs of working parents, which will contribute to the broader early learning reform work that I am undertaking, designed to create greater educational outcomes for our littlest learners."

The Review will be conducted by the NSW Government and supported by an Expert Reference Panel. Sam Mostyn AO, President of Chief Executive Women will chair the panel. The other members are:

- Maha Abdo OAM, CEO Muslim Women Association;
- Blair Comley PSM, Partner EY Port Jackson Partners;
- Jillian Kilby, CEO, and Founder of The Infrastructure Collaborative and The Exchange;
- Leslie Loble, Co-Chair of the Council on Early Childhood Development; and
- Daisy Turnbull, writer, and teacher.

In addition to the Expert Reference Panel, the Review will be informed by strong external consultation including with the NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity.

Women's participation in the workforce continues to increase but remains lower than men's. In November 2021, ABS data showed the average participation rate of men in NSW was 70% and for women, it was 61%.

[nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au)

Learn more about the Women's Economic Opportunities Review and the terms of reference:

[www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/women-opportunities-review](https://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/women-opportunities-review)



## Anna Maria Lang

As the Founder of Women Veterans United, it is my pleasure to be writing this and sharing with you the journey of how this organisation came about, what we are doing to assist women veterans and how you can help.

I am a woman veteran myself and served as one of the first women in my role enlisting in 1996 and discharging in 2005. During my time serving I travelled the world, the country, was airborne, deployed to East Timor and spent four and a half years in Defence Force Recruiting. During this time, I developed a passion for helping women to succeed and have since volunteered for many charities including the Returned Services League, Legacy, United Nations Women Australia, Global Empowering Women Organisation (GEWO) and my church. I have studied Neuro Linguistic Programming, Human Behavioural Science and Counselling.

During my time learning about what women need, it occurred to me that there weren't any specific welfare organisations for women veterans.

It happened that I have had experience with boards and developed Women Veterans United, established the board of directors, and chaired the board for almost one year while now I focus on advocacy and women's rights to enable the veteran community to be more inclusive. This has been a somewhat successful activity to date and my advocacy on the most part has been received quite well.

The role of Women Veterans United is to provide services to women veterans that are tailored to their specific needs. We have hosted events such as Veterans' Health Week and International Women's Day events while also mentoring groups for women veterans. This work is imperative as the number of women serving and leaving the Australian Defence Force is increasing,

therefore the need over time will increase. Additionally, my advocacy is ensuring that women veteran's profiles are raised, their needs are met by other Ex-Services Organisations and the true demographic of the veteran community is represented with statues in prominent places and women veterans further included.

There is much you can do to show your support and that is through thanking a woman veteran for her service, become a member (it is open to men and women) or make a tax-deductible donation to at the below link. We are always seeking partnerships within the veteran community as there is a need for collaboration. There are volunteer positions available and if you are this way inclined, you may wish to be a future member of our board of directors.

You can source more information, donate, or become a member at the following link [www.womenveteransunited.org](http://www.womenveteransunited.org)



L to R - Gordon Briscoe, Michael Johnson, Rose Murray, Ian Cameron, Rosie Logie, Reg Murray, Gabi Hollows, Trevor Buzzacott, Associate Professor Dr Kris Rallah-Baker, Jilpia Jones, Jeff Birk, Samithra Para. The group were in Bourke in 2016 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program.



Gabi and Jilpia in 1970.

Jilpia in 2016, while on a trip to Bourke to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program.

# *Gilpia Nappaljari Jones AM*

The Fred Hollows Foundation pays tribute to trailblazing Aboriginal nurse and life member Jilpia Nappaljari Jones AM.

The Fred Hollows Foundation is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Foundation Life Member and pioneering nurse Jilpia Nappaljari Jones AM.

Jilpia was a Walmadjari woman and one of the first registered nurses to work at the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) in 1971. She was a key member of the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program, where she worked closely with Fred and Gabi Hollows.

Jilpia graduated in General Nursing, Midwifery and Ophthalmology and obtained a Churchill Trust Scholarship to study and work at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London.

While on the program, Jilpia was unexpectedly reunited with her mother Penny Luck in Fitzroy Crossing, who she was forcibly removed from as a young child.

In 2008, while being interviewed for a book about the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program, Jilpia spoke fondly of her experiences.

"My time with the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program was a very influential part of my life," Jilpia said.

"I got the job at the AMS and so began a strong and committed relationship towards the provision of community-controlled health care to my people.

"Fred Hollows taught me to believe in myself and to be equal among all people, even if you walked where others feared to tread.

"The ophthalmologists who worked with the team taught me a lot and I like to think that we in turn taught them about us. It was encouraging how many were willing to learn from us, and that they respected our culture. This was reconciliation in action."

Gabi Hollows paid tribute to her great lifelong friend.

"Jilpia was a darling friend and a beautiful sister who had an amazing life. She was godmother to our daughter Ruth and a member of our family," Gabi said.

"Jilpia was a trailblazer who paved the way for improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She was also one of The Fred Hollows Foundation's original Life Members.

"[During the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program] we often camped under the stars on the side of the road, recapping our day's work whilst sitting around the campfire.

"Jilpia helped awaken in me, and in those who knew her, a deeper understanding of our First Australians.

"She will be missed by everyone who knew her."

The Foundation and the Hollows family offer their sincere condolences to Jilpia's family and friends.

# Carers are not saints.

## Why we need to change the narrative about support work.

Let me clarify up front. Carers are not saints, but they are people who have a very important job and work hard to make life better for millions of Australians.

The COVID-19 pandemic has really brought into the spotlight just how critical support workers are. Be it in aged care or disability support, we saw how quickly shortages of these workers negatively impacted on the lives of many, and in some cases critically.

So given its importance, why is the support worker or paid caring role so underappreciated both in terms of wages and in aspiration? We don't grow up wanting to be carers. With the average hourly wage for a support worker being less than a bartender, shop assistant or cashier, it's no wonder.

Given all that we know about the problems in aged care, it is encouraging to see that getting aged care right is finally a key issue for voters. This includes the plight of support workers whose working conditions and pay are making it hard for them to meet the basic costs of living. It's such valuable work that they do yet it's one of the lowest paid, and the jobs are highly casualised.

Unlike disability support work, which has come a long way and is seeing more people, and a more diverse range of people, attracted to the role, aged care support work remains the 'ugly duckling' of social services.

I can't help but think this is another consequence of ageism. Where we don't value older people as much as we should, and this trickles down to how we value the jobs which support them.

For older people a low paid and casualised workforce means all the things that you don't want:

- Inconsistency of staff – having to explain your life and routine and getting to know someone new repeatedly
- Staff shortages – there is less time to spend with you as staff rush to make up the shortfall
- Staff who may be stressed and tired from working long hours or several jobs to make ends meet - which is not conducive to happy staff or environment.

Aged care support also gets that general workforce moniker of 'unskilled labour', which I think is a poor and misleading description of the role. It is anything but. Formal qualifications are not required, but you will also find support workers who have either or both years of experience and Certificate level qualifications.

It's a role that requires great empathy, flexibility and interpersonal skills. Care workers are your support when you are upset, they are the person who notices when you need medical care, they are your concierge, grief counsellor and often spiritual supporter. If you think of the spectrum of roles in aged care, from the cleaner to the clinician – support workers are everything in between.

The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety outlined the framework for what needs to be done to create a better aged care system that respects the dignity of human rights of older Australians. But without willing, skilled and capable aged care workers no system, however good, will work well.

The case for a 25% pay increase for aged care workers currently with the Fair Work Commission is necessary and a start to attracting more people to the role and reducing staff turnover.

But there are other things to consider. Service delivery models also need to change. We need to move from a focus on basic health and daily physical needs to a focus on individualised care which meet individual needs for physical and mental wellbeing.

Key recommendations from the Royal Commission such as set staff to client ratios, increased support hours and individual care management all support this person-centred approach, and will allow support staff to become more involved, proactive and provide active support.

This means more room for the good things - relationships, laughter, sharing stories, learning new things, and learning about history and culture from our older generation. It's these relationships which are central to quality care and is what workers tell us they love about the job.

So, while the government and the sector will need to talk workforce planning, modelling, education pathways and minimum qualification requirements, as advocates we hope this ultimately leads to a change in the perception of value, and the money value, attributed to these roles.

We need to be able to change the narrative. Less on the 'saintliness' and more on 'good pay', 'excellent job prospects', and 'a rewarding career'. It's what support workers and older people deserve.

We encourage you to exercise your rights and ask for the things that you expect from your aged care service and the people who support you. Advocacy organisations across Australia are available to provide free support to help you uphold your rights in aged care and ask for changes to the things that aren't working for you.

Phone OPAN on 1800 700 600 to be connected with an advocate in your state or territory.

### GEOFF ROWE

*Geoff Rowe is the CEO for Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia, the Queensland aged care advocacy provider. Geoff's career in the human services sector spans more than 30 years, including fifteen years in senior and executive positions in the Queensland Government, and over 20 years in the not-for-profit sector. Geoff has a strong interest in social justice, human rights and inclusion.*



## Your say, your rights in aged care

Free, confidential, independent support to help you resolve issues and uphold your rights in aged care

Freecall: 1800 700 600  
[www.adaaustralia.com.au](http://www.adaaustralia.com.au)





# Veterans with PTSD need individualised treatment

War stories are as old as human memory. It appears that every generation experiences a level of war, none left untouched. The Iliad and The Odyssey are journeys of war and coming home from war. In The Odyssey, Homer's soldiers take 20 years to get back home and when they arrive, their loved ones no longer recognise them.

If that sounds familiar, then it is. We know that PTSD is a work injury suffered by so many who have served. We also know that there is moral injury. We do not know how many are impacted by this. We know from the previous and current Royal Commissions that more often than not, moral injury is an important factor in the health of our military and veterans.

More recently still, there has been talk of "post deployment alienation disorder". The military is a unique environment, it is not a workplace like any other. Transitioning out of the ADF has traditionally had little support, although in recent times, there has been an improvement in this (I have been told).

So, given all of these factors, is it any wonder that our military veteran suicide rates are high? That homelessness and addiction issues are common? When the government spends millions on consultants to address how to become more efficient, while not addressing actual concerns, then is the government really serving our veterans well?

As a psychologist who has worked with veterans for 20 years, I see the end result of a government that effectively says to veterans: "you are no longer of use to us, so please go away". The government has decided

to only fund ONE research department at a university, withdrawing funding from all others. The government has decided to ask veterans to prove over and over again that they have been injured in the workplace, even when the records the government holds clearly show this. The system is punitive and discourages veterans from pursuing claims, leaving people with broken minds and bodies to fend for themselves.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has insisted on particular treatment protocols such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy, despite a meta-study by the US Veterans Affairs/ Department Of Defence finding that there were no particular benefits of these treatments for PTSD in veterans. They recommended that veterans have more choice over the type of therapy they have and that barriers to getting into treatment be removed.

The question remains: when will the Australian government put veterans' health before the budget and provide real support? When will veterans be able to access therapy that is individualised, not manualised?

## DR VALERIE VAN LOGGERENBERG

*Psychologist, Member of the Australian Association of Psychologists*



**Suncare**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Your first choice for Home Care Packages

**We all know there is no place like home.**

We can help you to stay in your own home, connected to your community and in control of your lifestyle. With a Home Care Package you are in the driving seat, we are just here to offer support and a helping hand.

**1800 786 227**  
**suncare.org.au**

*Making people's lives better*

# Remembering a fallen medical research hero

"He was a rare genius, a gift of the gods."

"For the science of medicine around the world, the loss is irreparable."



When Dr Gordon Clunes Mackay Mathison died at Gallipoli on 18 May 1915, the loss was shattering. Not just for those who loved him but to medical science and the Australian research community, which he had been destined to lead.

Dr Mathison was appointed the inaugural director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, now known as WEHI, shortly before the Anzac Day landings. He was to take up his post on his return from service as a battalion doctor, but never had the opportunity to fulfill his exceptional potential.

Born at Stanley, Victoria, in 1883, Gordon Mathison was one of six children but the only one to reach his 10th birthday. His father died painfully at home when Mathison was 12. It was these early experiences that likely influenced his decision to study medicine.

Mathison was drawn towards medical research, where success came quickly. "No man I have ever known possesses the genius for research so highly," said one of his many admirers, the director of London's renowned Lister Institute, Charles Martin.

A passionate advocate of what he called "true bedside research", Mathison saw medicine as not just about healing a patient but working to truly understand the disease, to prevent and treat it.

Captain Mathison landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. In the chaos of the first few days, he was cheerful and tireless. On 9 May, he was shot and died on a hospital ship nine days later.

Although his life was tragically cut short, Mathison's brilliance laid the early foundations of excellence in medical research at WEHI. The Institute began through a bequest established by Eliza Hall after the death of her husband Walter. Since then WEHI has flourished, thanks to the support of thousands of donors, many of whom have left gifts in their Wills.

Mathison's own mother, Mary, left a bequest to WEHI, which has supported numerous research projects in his honour for more than 100 years.

As former WEHI director Sir Gustav Nossal AC has said: "It is often gifts in Wills that... ensure brilliant discoveries made at the bench are translated to the bedside". It's this generous support over generations that has enabled WEHI scientists to keep alive Mathison's vision for research, collaborating and innovating to make the medical discoveries that will help people live healthier, longer lives.



---

Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)  
1G Royal Pde Parkville 3052 VIC Australia.  
[www.wehi.edu.au](http://www.wehi.edu.au)

TOP: An internationally acclaimed medical scientist, Dr Mathison had just been appointed the initial Director of Melbourne's Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

BOTTOM: School portrait of Dr Gordon Clunes Mackay Mathison, taken in 1899 (Caulfield Grammar School).

# Over 100 years of discoveries for humanity

For more than 100 years, medical researchers at Melbourne's WEHI – Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research – have been making life-changing discoveries so we can stay healthy as we get older.

Our success has been a shared journey supported by thousands of donors, many of whom have made gifts to WEHI in their Will.

These generous gifts help us tackle the world's most complex health problems, including dementia and neurodegenerative diseases so we can all live healthier, longer lives.

**Together we can ensure future generations of Australians continue to benefit from world-class medical research and treatments.**



To make a confidential enquiry about leaving a gift in your Will, contact Anne Rady, Manager Future Giving

03 9345 2929 | [rady.a@wehi.edu.au](mailto:rady.a@wehi.edu.au)



Associate Professor Grant Dewson (pictured) is leading a research collaboration to develop improved treatments for Parkinson's disease.

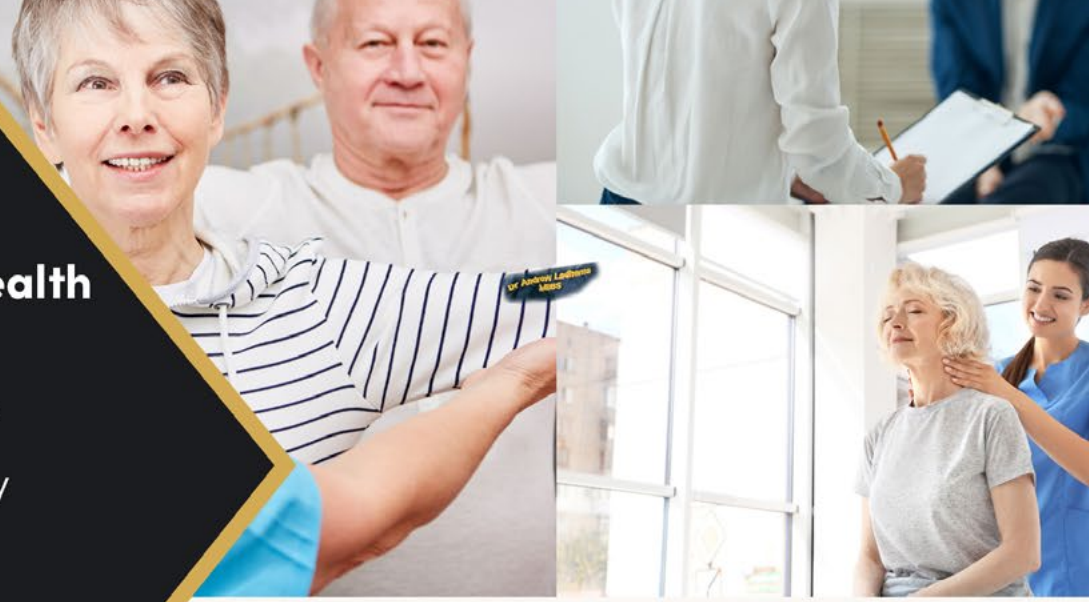


VETERAN BENEFITS AUSTRALIA

## Accessing DVA Approved Allied Health Is Easy With VBA.

Veterans have put others before themselves for such a long time that they often don't realise that they need care too!

As an eligible DVA White or Gold card holder, accessing an accredited exercise physiologist could be easier than you think!



## What Services Can You Be Eligible For?

Allied health, such as:

Psychology and mindfulness practice

Physiotherapy

Exercise Physiology



## Who Is Eligible For Services?

**DVA Gold Cardholders are able to access a VHC free of charge.**

**DVA White Card Holders with accepted mental health conditions.**

## Which Is The Best Service To Start With?

Our most effective service is exercise physiology.

Studies show that incremental exercise when performed under the care of a professional is MORE effective than when you simply exercise on your own.

The benefits are beyond JUST the physical.

Participating veterans tell us that they feel more connected to themselves and their community when they're part of an ongoing exercise program.

Having appointments to keep and look forward to, connecting with an Exercise Physiologist and then being able to access gym facilities keeps you more motivated and encourages higher participation in the program.

## What's The Next Step?

Book a time for a call back from our team!

**Visit Our Website To Register**

**[www.veteranbenefitsaustralia.com](http://www.veteranbenefitsaustralia.com)**





Lifeline is Australia's leading suicide prevention service, with 41 centres around the nation. The service responds to over one million requests for support each year, creating an average of 120 safety plans to keep a person experiencing suicidal ideation safe every day.

You can phone Lifeline to speak to a Crisis Supporter on 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days), text 0477 131 114 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or chat to Lifeline online at [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) (24 hours/7 days).

## How lifeline can help if you are struggling with distressing current events and headlines

With distressing events continuing both at home and overseas, Lifeline is reassuring the community that it is normal to be experiencing some level of psychological distress.

Patron John Brogden said it's critical that every Australian knows they can access services like Lifeline when they are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping or staying safe.

"Our thoughts go out to anyone directly impacted by the floods in Queensland and NSW. Our 13 11 14 crisis line is available 24/7 and our Lifeline Centres on the ground are ready and primed to provide practical and psychological help at a local level."

"The vision and stories of war in Europe are very distressing to us all – more so for Australians whose family, friends and homelands are at war."

Mr Brogden revealed Lifeline has received approximately 192,000 calls and 32,000 text and webchat contacts since January 1st, 2022 and continues to see elevated call volumes compared to those before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During January and February, calls to Lifeline were up 5% on the same months last year. We are consistently seeing this trend towards increased help seeking behaviour, and I am pleased to say that Lifeline's call answer rates remain around 90%," said Mr Brogden.

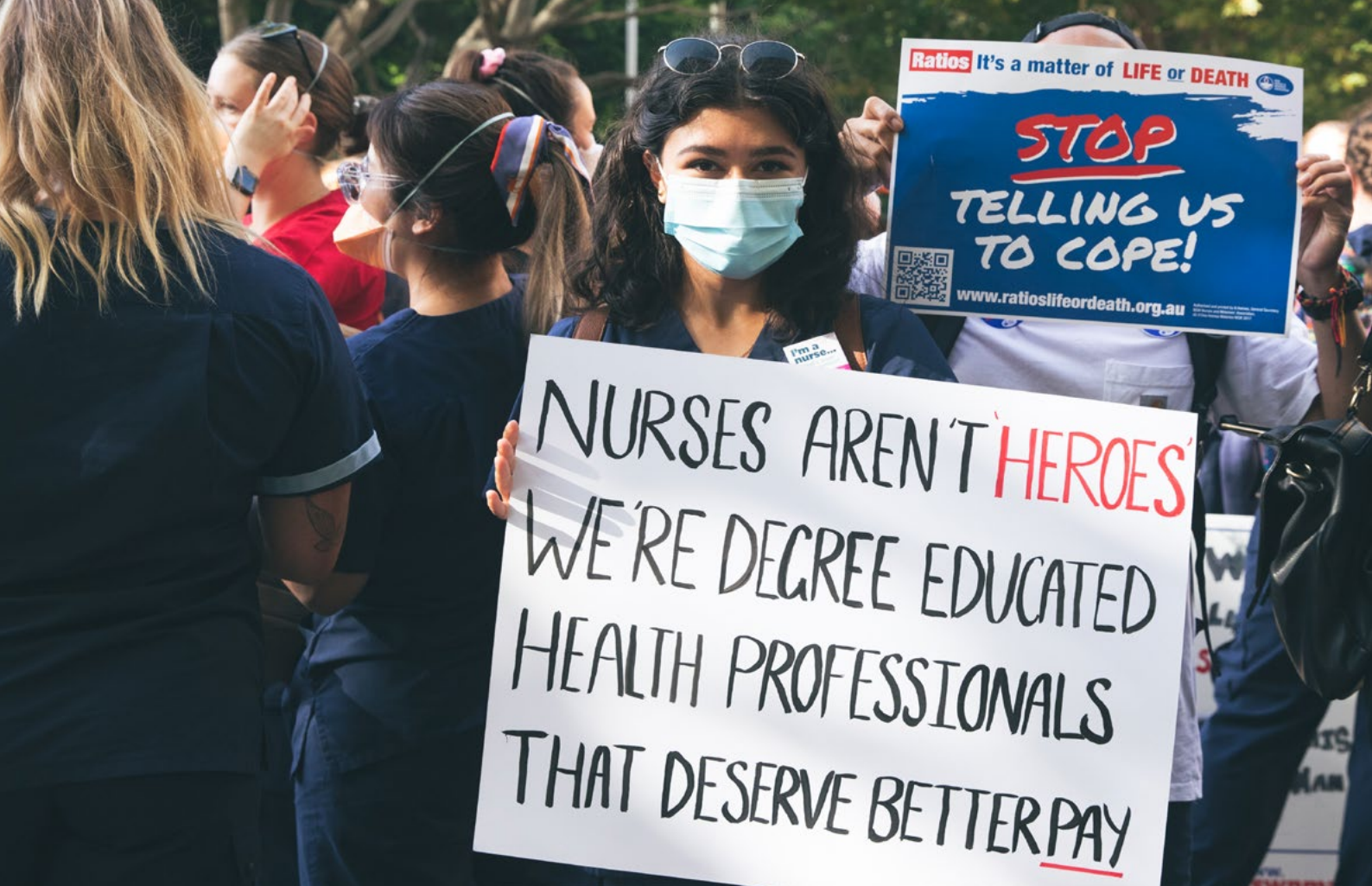
"Even for the most resilient of us, some of the news we are reading and images we are seeing at the moment are very confronting, and we know there will be an increasing number of people who will be struggling with heightened anxiety and distress."

"If you are feeling overwhelmed, I encourage you to connect with Lifeline in the way you feel most comfortable, whether that be on 13 11 14, or via our 24/7 text and webchat services".

"Our trained Crisis Supporters are ready and waiting day and night to listen without judgement, chat about your needs, worries and feelings and work with you to explore the best ways to stay safe and get support in your community."

Lifeline has also developed a range of free toolkits to provide you with practical information and assistance during challenging times. Anyone can browse, print or and download them at [www.lifeline.org.au/resources/toolkit-downloads](http://www.lifeline.org.au/resources/toolkit-downloads).

There is tailored support for anyone being impacted by floods at [www.lifeline.org.au/floods](http://www.lifeline.org.au/floods).



## NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

Run by nurses and midwives with the aim of advancing the industrial and professional status of its members, the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) is a part of Australia's largest registered health union.

Founded in 1931, the NSWNMA represents the professional and educational interests of nurses and midwives employed in public and private health, aged care and disability sectors.

With a membership of over 73,000, the union campaigns to promote a world class, well-funded and integrated health system by being an advocate for all members performing nursing and midwifery work. This includes registered nurses, nurse practitioners, enrolled nurses, and midwives, at all levels including management and education, as well as assistants in nursing, assistants in midwifery and students.

The NSWNMA has spent the better part of nine decades pressing for improvements in nurses' and midwives' pay and conditions. It has developed greater career opportunities for nurses and midwives, achieved professional rates of pay, successfully fought for occupational superannuation, achieved the 38-hour week for nurses, and achieved the

establishment of Nurse Practitioner positions in NSW – a first in Australia.

The nursing and midwifery professions are complex, multi-faceted and often very demanding, drawing on a wide range of specialist skills, expertise and experience. Much of the clinical knowledge and professional resolve of nurses and midwives has been brought to the fore during the recent health pandemic, along with the need to invest in nursing and midwifery for global health and economic security.

Under the leadership of its General Secretary, Brett Holmes, and Assistant Secretary, Shaye Candish, the NSWNMA is continuing its fight to achieve safe patient care within the NSW public health system through mandated nursing and midwifery staffing ratios, a system which exists in Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, and committed to by the new South Australian government. In February of this year, thousands of NSWNMA members held their first statewide industrial action in almost a decade. Many of those who participated had

never taken strike action in their careers. While around five thousand nurses and midwives marched on Macquarie Street to Parliament House in Sydney, rallies were also held in regional cities and smaller communities to highlight safe staffing concerns.

"Guaranteeing patient safety is too important to ignore and we are still campaigning for safer staffing levels on every shift inside public hospitals across metropolitan and regional parts of NSW," said Mr Holmes, a qualified registered nurse and midwife himself.

"A key issue is convincing our state government to allocate enough resources to meet the workforce demands on the system now and into the future by improving nurse-to-patient ratios and improving maternity staffing.

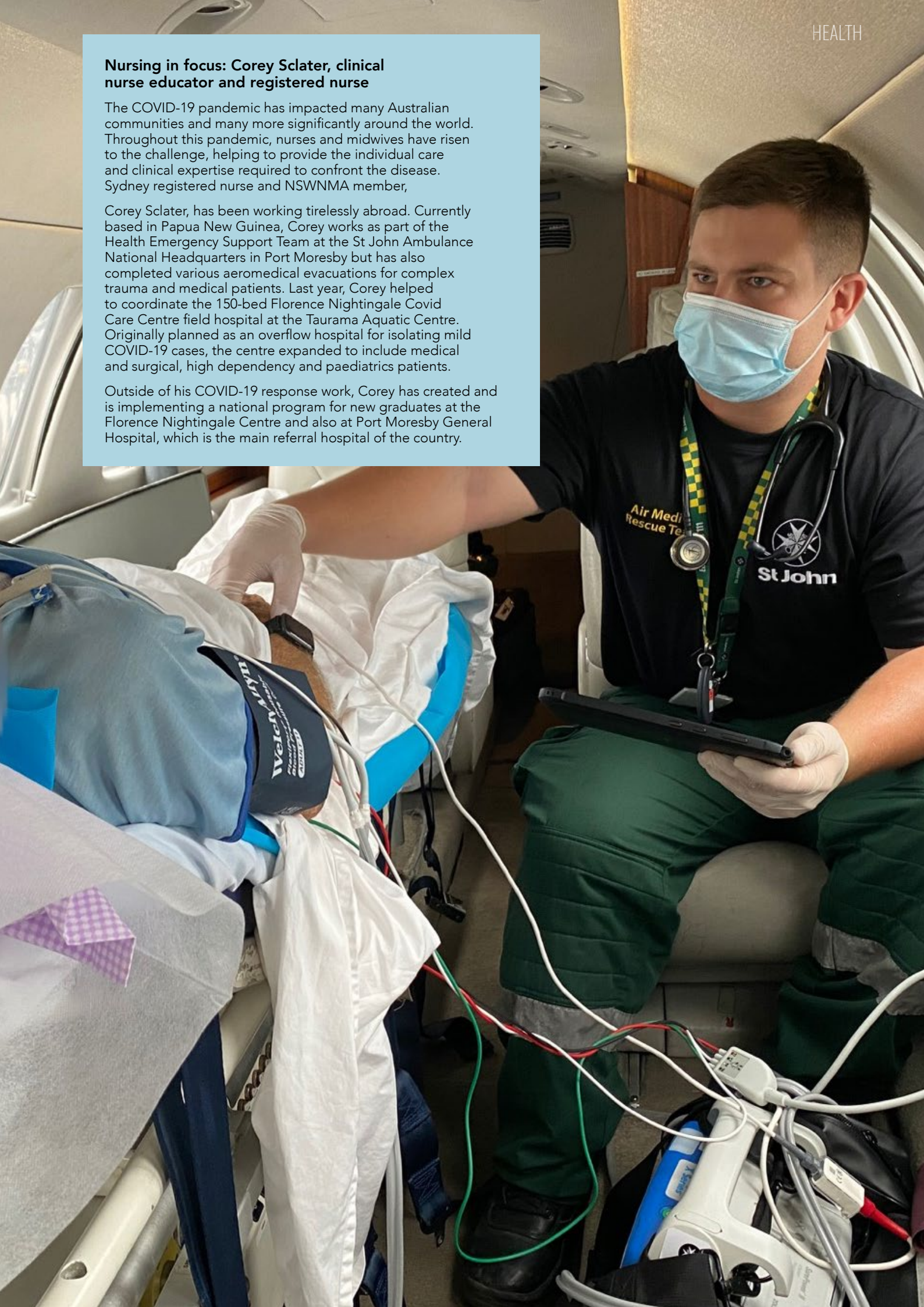
"The vulnerabilities in our health system, exposed by the pandemic, reinforce the need for governments to invest heavily in our nursing and midwifery workforce and bring about fundamental change. Our members are committed to improving standards of patient care, as well as the health of our national and global communities."

### **Nursing in focus: Corey Sclater, clinical nurse educator and registered nurse**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many Australian communities and many more significantly around the world. Throughout this pandemic, nurses and midwives have risen to the challenge, helping to provide the individual care and clinical expertise required to confront the disease. Sydney registered nurse and NSWNMA member,

Corey Sclater, has been working tirelessly abroad. Currently based in Papua New Guinea, Corey works as part of the Health Emergency Support Team at the St John Ambulance National Headquarters in Port Moresby but has also completed various aeromedical evacuations for complex trauma and medical patients. Last year, Corey helped to coordinate the 150-bed Florence Nightingale Covid Care Centre field hospital at the Taurama Aquatic Centre. Originally planned as an overflow hospital for isolating mild COVID-19 cases, the centre expanded to include medical and surgical, high dependency and paediatrics patients.

Outside of his COVID-19 response work, Corey has created and is implementing a national program for new graduates at the Florence Nightingale Centre and also at Port Moresby General Hospital, which is the main referral hospital of the country.





## Carers more isolated than most during pandemic

While the COVID-19 pandemic was an isolating experience for most, one group disproportionately affected was unpaid carers.

There are currently over 700,000 Victorians in unpaid caring roles. These people may care for a relative, friend, spouse or child who has a disability, mental illness, or is an older person with health needs. Anyone at any time can become a carer.

In a recent survey by Carers Victoria, 76% of carers reported increased levels of loneliness due to the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to 54% reported by the general public. A further 86% said their satisfaction with

life had declined. Even as we transition to “COVID normal”, carers continue to experience isolation, mental health issues, difficulties in accessing health services, financial difficulties, and a lack of available respite services.

One carer described his experience during the pandemic as, “Like carrying an elephant, barefooted and uphill on a never-ending track full of thorns.”

CEO of Carers Victoria, Judith Abbott says, “It has been a particularly challenging time for carers, who already had a complex and sometimes difficult role before the pandemic hit. As we rebuild and reconnect across Victoria, it’s important

that carers and the people they care for don’t get left behind.”

Carers Victoria has used its survey results to inform its 2022 election platform “Care for Victorians”. This report outlines recommendations to Government ahead of the forthcoming state election in November, and sets out priority actions across five key pillars to start building towards a future where carers are healthy and care relationships sustainable.

It is estimated that the economic cost of the support provided by Victoria’s unpaid carers is equivalent to over \$19 billion every year.

---

For more information, visit [carersvictoria.org.au](https://carersvictoria.org.au)



# How many Australians have had COVID-19?

Reporting of positive tests underestimates the true number of COVID-19 cases - serosurveys help us understand by how much. Photo: Australian Red Cross Lifeblood.

New research will estimate the proportion of the population who have been infected with COVID-19 - even if they didn't have symptoms or get a test.

Reporting of positive tests underestimates the true number of COVID-19 cases - serosurveys help us understand by how much. Photo: Australian Red Cross Lifeblood

Australia will soon have its first estimates of how many people contracted COVID-19 during the Omicron wave.

Routine COVID-19 reporting is based on a positive PCR or rapid test result and may exclude people who do not get tested or who are asymptomatic. But now, researchers are examining samples from Australian blood donors for evidence of COVID-19 antibodies, providing a basis to estimate the proportion of the population who have been infected with the virus, even if they didn't have symptoms or get a test.

This type of COVID-19 monitoring is called a serosurvey. It is being co-led by the Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) and will be conducted in collaboration with Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory at the Doherty Institute, NSW Health Pathology ICPMR and Murdoch Children's Research Institute. The study will establish important relationships and methods so that the surveys can be easily repeated.

"Samples for this survey were taken six weeks after the Omicron peak, which is sufficient for antibodies to have developed in people who were infected during that time," says Professor Kristine Macartney,

Director of NCIRS and Professor at The University of Sydney. "This, and regular future surveys including another planned in children, will mean we will be able to track the impact of changes in the COVID-19 response to better inform health policy."

The researchers will test for different types of antibodies to estimate both the extent that the virus had spread in the community and the proportion of the population who have some levels of immunity, either through infection or vaccination.

They will look for a part of the virus called the nucleocapsid, which is only present in someone who has been infected with COVID-19 (this is called natural infection). They will also look for spike antibodies, which are produced by both natural infection and vaccination.

The research team previously conducted a serosurvey following Australia's first COVID-19 wave and published the results in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*. While the study estimated that fewer than 65,000 Australians (one in 400) likely had had COVID-19 following the first wave in 2020, representing less than 0.5 per cent of people sampled in August 2020, the number was still substantially higher than the number of people who tested positive for the virus at the time.

"We know that relying on reporting of positive tests underestimates the true number of COVID-19 cases, particularly since high vaccine coverage has reduced the proportion of cases with symptoms. Serosurveys help us understand by how much," says Dr Dorothy

Machalek, lead investigator on the project from the Kirby Institute.

Serosurveys based on blood donor specimens have been successfully running in many other countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom for some time, with the data provided informing vaccine strategies and public health policy.

"Blood donors make up around three per cent of the population. Although they cannot be viewed as a random sample of the population, they provide a stable and accessible pool from which to analyse infection prevalence over time," says Dr Machalek.

The blood donation samples used are being taken from Lifeblood's blood processing centres across the country and will be delinked from any identifying information apart from age, sex and post code. Individual results will not be provided to blood donors.

"Australian Red Cross Lifeblood encourages anyone wanting to contribute to this type of research to become a regular donor. There are many benefits to donating, including finding out your blood type," says Professor David Irving, Director of Research and Development at Australian Red Cross Lifeblood.

This new research is being conducted with support from the Snow Medical Research Foundation and the Australian Partnership for Preparedness Research on Infectious Disease Emergencies. The previous Australian national serosurvey was also supported by those funders, as well as the Australian Government Department of Health.

# Call for overhaul to aged care with advance care planning

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Advance Care Planning Australia (ACPA) want older people to have more choice and control over their health and aged care planning decisions.

Both organisations are calling for advance care planning to be recognised as a fundamental component of quality aged care.

Alarming, only 14 per cent of older Australians aged 65+ have completed an advance care directive. Yet around 30 per cent of us will be too unwell to make our own treatment decisions at the end of our lives.

An advance care directive is a legal document outlining a person's preferences and instructions for their future health care.

The document comes into effect when a person is not capable of making their own treatment decisions.

However, advance care directives are only legal when signed by people with decision-making capacity.

Craig Gear OAM, CEO OPAN said "Advance care directives are a vital addition to upholding the rights, the independence and the dignity of older people.

"OPAN would like to see the voluntary completion of advance care directives become a regular feature of planning ahead to ensure older people's wishes are heard and upheld."

ACPA Program Director Linda Nolte said: "It's essential that we provide people the opportunity and support to plan earlier, while [older people] still have capacity to make their own decisions and clearly express their own preferences and choices".

OPAN and ACPA have partnered on a free webinar about advance care planning. Watch it here: [opan.org.au/videos/advancecare-planning](https://opan.org.au/videos/advancecare-planning).

For free, personalised advice, call the National Advance Care Planning Support Service on 1300 208 582 from 9am - 5pm (AEST) Monday to Friday.

Call OPAN on **1800 700 600** for free and confidential aged care advocacy and support or visit [opan.org.au](https://opan.org.au).



## Aged care support service

Chat with us - free and confidential

Do you need advice about your government-funded aged care services, either in your own home or in residential care?

Our experienced aged care advocates can help you with the following and other aged care issues:

- Aged care provider services or fees.
- Assistance with visits or services.
- Guardianship advice.
- Accessing or getting the most from your services.
- Concern that you may not be treated respectfully, fairly, or appropriately.

If you ticked any box above or you simply want advice regarding your government-funded aged care services:

**Chat With Us - 1800 700 600**



To find out more visit [opan.pub/lastpst](https://opan.pub/lastpst) or scan the QR code.

# Serving Those Who Served



**Home Care:** support and services so you can live in your own home with confidence. Ages 65+

**Ex-Service Accommodation:** at locations in Melbourne, Geelong and now Wodonga. Ex-service only. All ages.



**Award-winning Residential Aged Care:** homes at Bundoora, Brighton, Brighton East and Frankston South.

We are proud to offer services and accommodation that prioritise veterans and war widows.



  
**VASEY RSL CARE**  
SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

For more information on any of our services, contact us:  
T 1300 602 108 E [office@vaseyrslcare.org.au](mailto:office@vaseyrslcare.org.au)  
W [www.vaseyrslcare.org.au](http://www.vaseyrslcare.org.au)



# Zero deaths from breast cancer



**The National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) is Australia's leading national body funding game-changing breast cancer research with money raised entirely by the Australian public.**

Their mission is simple: stop deaths from breast cancer.

How?

By identifying, funding and championing world-class research - research that will help to detect tumours earlier, improve treatment outcomes, and ultimately – save lives.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation's (NBCF) community ambassador Maria opens up about her life-changing diagnosis and the importance of breast cancer research.

Maria was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2019. The news came as a complete shock as she was a fit and healthy martial arts instructor with no family history of breast cancer.

Unfortunately, Maria was one of the 20,000 Australians diagnosed with breast cancer each year. 1 in 7 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Maria describes her diagnosis as "surreal".

"The first two weeks were a blur, booking appointments for surgery and researching! I honestly had no idea about breast cancer. It was very overwhelming. I think you go through all the stages of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and finally acceptance, and then you try to put on a brave face so your family doesn't fall apart," said Maria.

Maria had a lumpectomy and full node clearance, followed by chemotherapy. She then became ill with pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital. She was extremely sick but thanks to the support of her loved ones, she made a full recovery.

Since NBCF's inception in 1994, the five-year survival rate for breast cancer has increased from 76% to 91.5% (and rising). It's proof that research works. Maria believes research is why she is still alive today.

"My doctor literally saved my life and I believe this comes down to the amazing researchers we have in Australia. NBCF's goal of Zero Deaths from breast cancer isn't a dream, it's real because of the research that continues today," says Maria.

"NBCF is not funded by the government so it is up to us in the community to continue to donate as much as we can."

**TOGETHER  
WE CAN BEAT  
BREAST CANCER**



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

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

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

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

**For information** please contact our Gift in Wills Manager on **02 8098 4848** or [bequests@nbcf.org.au](mailto:bequests@nbcf.org.au)



Anyone who suspects, witnesses or experiences elder abuse can call the free and confidential National Elder Abuse phone line 1800ELDERHelp (1800 353 374). In an emergency, call 000.

Visit [www.humanrights.gov.au/elderabuse](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/elderabuse) to download free elder abuse awareness posters, bookmarks and social media tiles to share with your community.

## Plan for the future and safeguard your rights

Do you have an enduring power of attorney in place? And do you keep it up to date? If you haven't done this and you lose decision-making capacity, someone may end up making decisions about your finances and property that are not what you would have wanted.

Enduring powers of attorney, as they are known in most states and territories, are documents that allow you to appoint a person to manage your financial and legal affairs, and continues even if you have lost the ability to make these decisions for yourself.

It is vital you and your appointed decision-maker properly understand your respective rights and responsibilities. It is also essential any enduring document you sign reflects your wishes and not the wishes of anyone else around you.

Enduring documents are powerful tools for safeguarding your rights and interests as you age, but they can also be misused and become instruments for abuse.

According to the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study published by the Australian Institute of Family Studies in December 2021, almost one in six older Australians reported experiencing elder abuse in the past 12 months.

It is critical you think carefully about who you appoint as your attorney and that you understand your rights – including your right to set conditions, modify or revoke your power of attorney. It can be very helpful to get legal advice from a lawyer who has relevant expertise. Other helpful resources include the Australian Guardianship and Administration Council's publication 'You Decide Who Decides' and the Compass website.

Appointed decision-makers also need a clear understanding of their responsibilities, including their duty to act in your best interests, keep your money and property separate from their own and maintain good records. Elder abuse sometimes happens inadvertently because an appointed decision-maker was not aware of their obligations or did not clearly understand them.

The importance of planning ahead and knowing your rights cannot be overstated. I encourage all Australians to take the necessary steps to plan for the future and safeguard their rights.

**HON DR KAY PATTERSON AO**  
*Age Discrimination Commissioner*



Bob and Judy Dent.  
Photo supplied.

“MORE THAN 600,000 TERRITORIANS ARE DENIED THE SAME END OF LIFE CHOICES AS OTHER AUSTRALIANS.”

# Death-bed discrimination

When it comes to choice at the end of life, why are some Australians treated like second-class citizens?

The past five years have seen momentous reforms around how we die in Australia.

Since 2017, five states have passed Voluntary Assisted Dying laws that give terminally ill people the option to seek medication to end their suffering.

It might feel good that Australia has joined New Zealand, Canada, ten American states and 85 million Europeans in allowing terminally ill adults choice when death is inevitable - but it's not quite true.

New South Wales – our most populous state – doesn't have an assisted dying law yet (although a Bill could pass very soon). And more than 600,000 people in the Northern Territory and ACT are still blocked from accessing the same end of life choices as other Australians due to an archaic federal law passed in the 90s.

It wasn't always this way. Back in 1995, thanks to some forward-thinking politicians, the Northern Territory became the first place in the world to pass an assisted dying law - but it was quickly overturned by the federal government. In the nine months it operated, four dying people made use of the law. The first of these - and the first in the world - was Bob Dent.

Bob, a former pilot and carpenter from Darwin, had prostate cancer. He lost 25kg and both testicles. He had a recurring hernia and a collapsed lung. The cancer had infiltrated his

bone marrow. He needed a catheter and leg-bag to urinate and was on 38 tablets a day. With his doctor and loving wife Judy by his side, Bob decided it was time to die - but not before writing a letter to all federal politicians:

*I read with increasing horror newspaper stories of Kevin Andrews' attempt to overturn the most compassionate piece of legislation in the world. (Actually, my wife has to read the newspaper stories to me as I can no longer focus my eyes.)*

*If you disagree with voluntary euthanasia, then don't use it, but don't deny me the right to use it if and when I want to.*

Thankfully, Bob was able to have the autonomy and death he desired - but Territorians since have not had the same choices. As laws have passed in almost every other state, Bob's widow Judy and others in the Territories have asked: Why must we be treated as second class citizens when it comes to deciding how we die?

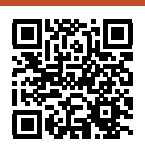
We need your help to repeal this discriminatory federal law, so terminally ill Territorians have the same choices as other Australians.

We also need your support to defend existing assisted dying laws and make sure they are accessible to the people they were designed to help.

The end of life may not be top of your mind today. But one day, the person needing this law could be you or someone you love.

Please donate to Go Gentle Australia or consider leaving a gift in your will to help make sure all dying people in Australia can access the compassionate choice they need.

**Voluntary Assisted Dying**  
Support the campaign  
to restore Territory rights



To donate and find out more  
scan the QR code or head to:  
[gogentle.org.au/territories](http://gogentle.org.au/territories)



 **Go Gentle**  
Australia

# GET DEAD SET.



*Dying  
to Know  
Day*  
8 August

## Australians to 'get dead set' on end-of-life, death and dying

- Australians want to talk about death more with 90% of adults agreeing that talking to loved ones about their end-of-life wishes is important.
- Preliminary research suggests people are experiencing grief more strongly than before the pandemic.
- The Dying to Know campaign encourages Australians to 'get dead set' on conversations and planning around end-of-life.

Leading not-for-profit, The Groundswell Project Australia, is calling on Australians to 'get dead set' around death and dying as part of its annual Dying to Know campaign.

This year, the national campaign asks people of all ages and stages of life to prioritise compassionate conversations and 'get dead set' around the reality of death and dying – because it's going to happen to us all. It outlines simple steps people can take around end-of-life planning, which is personal and unique to everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we live, die and grieve. Early studies suggest that people in Australia who lost a loved one during the COVID pandemic (from any cause) are experiencing more grief, anxiety and depression than before the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Research shows there is a risk that the support received by Australians dealing with death and dying is less than what is needed.

The Dying to Know campaign (which culminates on Dying to Know Day on 8 August) helps bridge this gap by improving death literacy and positivity in individuals, communities, healthcare workers and other professionals through local and community events. Death literacy is the knowledge, compassion and practical skills that enable supportive action and active decision-making around someone's end-of-life choices.

To 'get dead set' is to prepare for the unique circumstances every person will face at the end of their life. By asking Australians to 'get dead set', the

To register your Dying to Know event, find an event or access support for your end-of-life planning journey, visit [www.dyingtoknowday.com](http://www.dyingtoknowday.com). The campaign provides supporting resources and workshops to guide your discussions, and a toolkit to help promote your gathering or event.

campaign invites Australians to overcome their fears or discomfort around death and take action on end-of-life planning in a way that is right for them.

The benefits of planning for end-of-life are clear in the wake of necessary pandemic restrictions which impacted people's ability to see dying loved ones, arrange or attend important rituals like funerals and see friends and family for support. By being 'dead set' and prepared for end-of-life, Australians can:

- Have a 'good' death which reflects what mattered in life.
- Have conversations to ease the anguish of loved ones through the distress, uncertainty, and finality of death.
- Leave a positive legacy that is consistent with how we want to be remembered.
- Have their lives celebrated/remembered the way they choose.

"People often feel ill equipped to act or start a conversation. The risk here for us all is that we do not have the knowledge or understanding around how to best support a loved one who is dying, caring or grieving. Sadly, this can mean that end-of-life experiences are not aligned with an individual's values or wishes."

"By normalising conversations around death and dying, Australians can 'get dead set'. The pandemic has brought death and dying. Our mortality is a part of our collective consciousness like never before. This is an opportunity to continue to strengthen our collective approach to these important matters."

# Support and connection for our Veterans

Among the challenges faced by veterans when returning to civilian life, getting their financial wellbeing in order can be overwhelming for some.

Enter the Vets Hub, developed by David Wilton, a veteran himself and Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation's (CSC) National Manager, Defence and Veterans Liaison in early 2020. His vision is a network of services with a shared understanding and sense of the veteran community, where connection and centralisation of support allows for easier and simpler access to trusted services for veterans and families.

"Our vision is a single front door, one collaborative network that breaks down complex matters into simple truths that are easy to understand," Wilton says.

"There are thousands of ex-service organisations and veteran support organisations around Australia, all working for better outcomes for veterans and their families but sometimes it can become overwhelming for the veterans."

The Vets Hub works in collaboration with the veteran community to identify their needs, and better understand their circumstances. This process

assists the Vets Hub to tailor the support provided by CSC such as training for advocates, member education consultations, more direct access to claim specialists and dedicated support for families. The Hub also provides an opportunity to speak with CSC directly about what they need, and how they can be better supported.

"The veteran community is diverse and complex, therefore the best course of action for one veteran or military family might not be ideal for another," Wilton says.

"We want veterans and their families to be able to access the right support and information at the right time for them."

And the Vets Hub is well positioned to do exactly that. CSC is one of only a few organisations that builds a relationship with veterans from the day they join the ADF and that relationship continues on their journey through ADF service, to their transition from the ADF and into life after service, and then to retirement.



"The more trusted organisations that are connected to veterans and families on their journey, the more we are together supporting them for life."

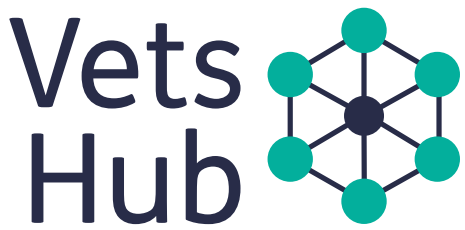
**The Vets Hub Community** is growing and now includes a regular e-newsletter with regular financial wellbeing information, veterans news, links to trusted support services, and stories from veterans.

**The Vets Hub web page** opens the door to help veterans and families get started on their pathway to financial wellbeing.



The Vets Hub Community: [yoursuper.csc.gov.au/vetshub](https://yoursuper.csc.gov.au/vetshub)  
The Vets Hub web page: [csc.gov.au/Members/Advice-and-resources/Vets-Hub](https://csc.gov.au/Members/Advice-and-resources/Vets-Hub)





# Your front door to financial wellbeing

Sign up to the Vets Hub mailing list for regular financial wellbeing information specific to veterans and their families. Vets Hub Community Registration

[csc.gov.au](https://csc.gov.au)



Commonwealth  
Superannuation  
Corporation

# Meeting the challenge of creating a more an inclusive society for people with disability

Over 4.4 million people in Australia – or 1 in 5 – live with some form of disability. People with disability are a diverse community and include those with acquired disability, intellectual and physical disability, and complex disability.

Our society has made great strides towards creating a more inclusive Australia, but there is still a way to go. On the one hand, our current Australian of the Year, tennis great Dylan Alcott, and his predecessor, victim's rights advocate, Grace Tame, are both people with disability. However, on the other hand, people with disability are still experiencing higher barriers to employment, housing, safety, financial security, and social connection than people without disability.

Achieve Australia is a disability services organisation based in NSW that is passionate about social inclusion.

"A strategic priority for us as an organisation is elevating the voices of people with disability through the way we deliver services but also through our advocacy and innovation agendas," explains Achieve Australia CEO Jo-Anne Hewitt.

"This year Achieve celebrates our 70th anniversary and we remain inspired by the legacy of our founders, a group of parents who envisioned a better future for their children with intellectual disability than a life in an institution so typical of the day," Ms Hewitt says.

"They were certainly trailblazers considering the attitudes at that time about keeping people with disability separated from the community to provide support in mostly medical and institutional settings," she explains.

In 1952, Achieve's founders secured a piece of donated land in the Sydney suburb of Ryde where Crowle Home was built. A school was soon added, which flourished for 26 years. In the 1960s, the organisation established housing in Sydney's north for young women with intellectual disability and in the 1980s Achieve clocked up another first by creating housing for people with disability set within the community. And about a decade ago the organisation set a new standard when it sold the Crowle Home and grounds to a developer to build an apartment complex that includes 25 platinum-level apartments for people with disability owned by Achieve. Today Achieve provides 24/7 NDIS supports to residents in these contemporary, accessible apartments serving as a great example of inclusive living.

Achieve employs about 1,200 staff and supports more than 570 people with disability in Sydney and the Northern Rivers region of NSW. Services include providing support to people in their homes, running activity centres that people with disability attend on weekdays, and operating Summer Hill House to offer short term accommodation in a home-like setting but with 24/7 specialist nursing staff.

## Meet Achieve Australia's CEO in our next issue of The Last Post

In our next edition we meet Achieve Australia CEO, Jo-Anne Hewitt, as part of our series on inspiring women.

On ANZAC Day, Ms Hewitt acknowledges all the men and women who have served in our military, particularly those who live with physical and mental health issues related to their service.

Ms Hewitt started her career directly supporting people with disability before moving into leadership roles. She is also the great niece of Mr Tedda Brooks who fought in Gallipoli in the battle that created the ANZAC tradition.

"Uncle Teddy was injured with shrapnel in his right leg and was decorated for bravery. Luckily, he survived the war and went on to live until the age of 101," Ms Hewitt said. "He devoted his life to the RSL and The Gallipoli Legion and was even an advisor on the film, Gallipoli."

"The Turkish Ambassador attended his 100th birthday and Uncle Tedda used the milestone to highlight the importance of the enduring friendship between our nations. Despite his recognised heroism, he was a lifelong advocate for peace," Ms Hewitt said.

"Uncle Tedda's service and beliefs certainly influenced me and helped me to understand that respect and honour for those who have fought and serve is not a glorification of war, but rather a reminder of the vital need to maintain peace with our fellow man."



Supporting people with disability to live life to the full and exercise choice and control over daily decisions - large and small - is central to the Achieve approach to service delivery.

"The people we support include those with complex disability. Our staff are committed to ensuring the needs of each individual are central to service delivery, particularly in the homes where people live in small groups," Ms Hewitt explains.

"Our staff support our clients to make daily decisions from menu planning, choosing outings and what to plant in the garden to planning to visit or host family and friends," she says.

Other services Achieve Australia provides include Support Coordination to help individuals and families navigate the NDIS as well as meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability at Achieve's social enterprises. The Sewing Basket sells high-quality donated fabrics and sewing and craft supplies through its stores in Balmain, Caringbah, Newington and Kincumber. AchievAble Enterprises is a commercially successful packing and assembly service based at Newington near Sydney Olympic Park.

Achieve is also investing in the future to bring inclusion to life on a bigger scale. In 2019, Achieve became a joint venture partner in Inclusive Housing Australia, to develop fit-for-purpose accommodation for people with disability and reduce the critical shortage of suitable housing. An exciting project in Casino is in the planning stage including direct consultation with people with disability and their families.

Last year was a big one for Achieve as it launched three important innovations – Quality Champions, the Co-Design Program and The Achieve Foundation.

Quality Champions is a new team at Achieve who interview clients about their experience with the organisation's accommodation services to help drive continuous improvement. Client interviews are carried out by pairs – a Quality Champion, who has lived experience of disability, working with a Quality Champion Partner. The pairs started work in late 2021 and have already made some great recommendations for service improvements. If you get a chance, view the video about the program: [achieveaustralia.org.au/quality-champions](https://achieveaustralia.org.au/quality-champions).

Achieve has also been running the Co-design Program where staff are working alongside young people with disability and their families to create a fresh and inclusive service offering for a new generation of clients.

Another bold move was the launch of The Achieve Foundation to advance research and innovation to remove barriers to inclusion for people with disability and create a disability-focused philanthropic network.

The Achieve Foundation, which has its own Executive and Board, is leading research and providing grants in two key areas - housing and supports for people with complex disability and shifting attitudes towards people with disability. Learn more by visiting [theachievefoundation.org.au](https://theachievefoundation.org.au).

"The Foundation can take on inclusion in a way a service provider like us cannot. The Foundation is currently mobilising a strong network of researchers and philanthropists to advance work that will make a significant contribution to improving the lives of people with disability around Australia," Ms Hewitt says.

"Whether it is in small ways in our daily service delivery or advancing future innovation through the Quality Champions, Co-Design and supporting the Foundation, we are honouring our legacy to realise an Australia where people with disability feel welcomed and included," she said.



## Quality Champions are here to be your voice

After a successful trial, Achieve Australia have launched an awesome and unique program called the **Quality Champions**. For the first time in Australia, people with disability are evaluating services delivered to people with disability.

A team of two with lived experience of disability, interview and **evaluate the services and give extensive feedback to the provider**. The Quality Champions become **the voices of people with disability**.

Scan the QR code to learn more about how Achieve Australia is improving lives and **bringing inclusion to life**.

**achieve**  
australia

**QUALITY CHAMPIONS**  
A voice for positive change

# 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



As the Australian Government expands defence force personnel, it's important that the wellbeing of not only serving ADF, but also their families is front of mind.

Recently the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation received an additional \$13.7million in funding from the Australian Government to support the unique needs of serving and ex-serving ADF families who are impacted by mental illness. Our programs empower young people aged 8-18 years to thrive beyond the impacts of family mental illness with a focus on mental health education in a recreational setting – meeting the kids on their terms and on their turf. Best of all it's fun!

Our programs are proven to improve mental health literacy and help seeking behaviours, whilst fostering a meaningful connection with their peers.

If you know someone who would benefit by joining our programs, please contact us to find out more:  
[bit.ly/AKKFdefencekids](https://bit.ly/AKKFdefencekids) | 1300 566 525

# TAKE ONE STEP CLOSER TO A **BRIGHTER FUTURE** FOR UPPER GI CANCERS

Upper gastrointestinal cancers, including pancreatic, liver, stomach, biliary and oesophageal cancers, have some of the lowest survival rates out of all major cancers.

## **We're on a mission to change this.**

By participating in Unite for Hope, you'll be helping Pancare Foundation take one step closer to a brighter future by funding vital cancer research and supportive care services.

### **SYDNEY**

Sunday 29 May 2022

### **BRISBANE**

Sunday 26 June 2022

### **MELBOURNE**

Sunday 13 November 2022

## **PLUS, OTHER LOCATIONS!**



Fun for the whole family,  
including kids  
entertainment



5km walk/run or  
challenge yourself to the  
10km run



Help raise vital funds  
for upper  
GI cancers

## **REGISTER TODAY!**

[pancareuniteforhope.com.au](http://pancareuniteforhope.com.au)



Lismore flood damage.

# An Ongoing Focus on the Health and Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families

**Update from RSL Australia National President Greg Melick**



In my Christmas address of last year, I wrote that 2021 had been a tumultuous time for many Australians.

Unfortunately, difficulties and challenging times have continued to plague many of our communities already through 2022, with severe flooding on the East Coast. Our State Branches and Sub-Branches have risen to meet this challenge and been quick to provide help. Members have contributed financial support to veterans in flood affected areas so they could buy essential items, clothing, food and fuel.

For over 100 years, an ethos of compassion and service has been the motivating influence of the League.

Our network of 150,000 members, 1,135 sub-Branches and dedicated staff will continue to work to meet the wellbeing needs of our nation's veterans and their families.

The RSL is pursuing this through:

- The promotion of advocacy training with the Department of Veterans' Affairs – with nearly 600 volunteer compensation and wellbeing advocates spread across the country, providing Veterans with more than 400,000 hours of assistance each year to access services, compensation and support.
- The development of a digital 'Catalogue of Services' in partnership with Servulink to help connect veterans and their families with local services in their communities. Read more about the Catalogue of Services on page 86.
- Helping to expand the nationwide network of Veterans Wellbeing Centres.
- The development of the RSL Active program to provide a way to connect with other veterans and develop social networks, share ideas, tell stories, enhance support circles, and improve physical and mental health.
- Supporting veterans, their partners and immediate family members to find rewarding work through the RSL Veterans' Employment Program.
- The implementation of the RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative in partnership with Open Arms.

A key area of focus for us in the first quarter of 2022 has been supporting and following the critically important work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. During the first three Hearing Blocks the Commissioners pursued a broad and comprehensive line of inquiry, exploring key themes including a thorough understanding of suicide and suicide prevention, a lifetime wellbeing approach for Defence members and veterans,

transition and life after Service, the operations of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and interactions between Governments, non-government support organisations, such as ESOs, and veterans and their families.

In the third Hearing Block in Sydney we heard for the first time from the Chiefs of the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force: Lieutenant General Rick Burr, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan and Air Marshal Mel Hupfield. This block focused particularly on the culture of the ADF, the information provided showed that although improvements were being made in this area, there is more work to be done.

The Royal Commission has so far received more than 1,300 submissions and 250 requests for private sessions from across the country. The significance of the lived experience testimony to the conduct of the Royal Commission cannot be underestimated. It is a solemn reminder of the real-world impact of mental health and suicide on Defence Members, Veterans and their families, and the importance of the Royal Commission in achieving its aims of reducing or eliminating Defence Member and Veterans' lives lost to suicide.

The RSL is also there to provide support to any Veteran or their family that needs it during the Royal Commission process. If you are testifying, thinking about testifying, need support after listening to the hearing blocks or reading the media, or any other kind of help, we can provide support or direct you to the appropriate support for your needs.

The RSL understands the fundamental importance of the work being done by the Royal Commission and will embrace its role in ensuring that it learns from the process and evolves to better meet the needs of its members, Veterans, Defence personnel, and their families. We will work with government, the ESO sector and veterans to coordinate the response needed to minimise risk of suicide and maximise the wellbeing of Australia's Defence member and Veteran community.

While 2022 will continue to be a disrupted return to normal as we know it, we remain committed to assisting veterans and their families, developing services to support our community, and leading the nation in commemorative services that help all Australians to remember the fallen. We're encouraged that after two years of disruption, this year Anzac Day services will be able to go ahead, largely without restrictions and we very much look forward to the Dawn Services and Marches that will take place around the country.

# RSL Australia Mental Health Initiative

RSL Australia, in partnership with Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, is offering free suicide intervention and mental health literacy training opportunities to those seeking to help family, friends, co-workers or others in the veteran community.

These workshops are being delivered in RSLs and major Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) around the country.

For more information about the workshops offered, visit [www.rslaustralia.org/mhi](http://www.rslaustralia.org/mhi) or email [RSLAVeteransWelfare@rsl.org.au](mailto:RSLAVeteransWelfare@rsl.org.au).



## RSL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

*Rewarding work for every veteran and their immediate family*



Looking for work? Changing careers?  
Take advantage of free career support services and gain access to our employer network.

**Make your move today: [rslaustralia.org/employment](http://rslaustralia.org/employment)**



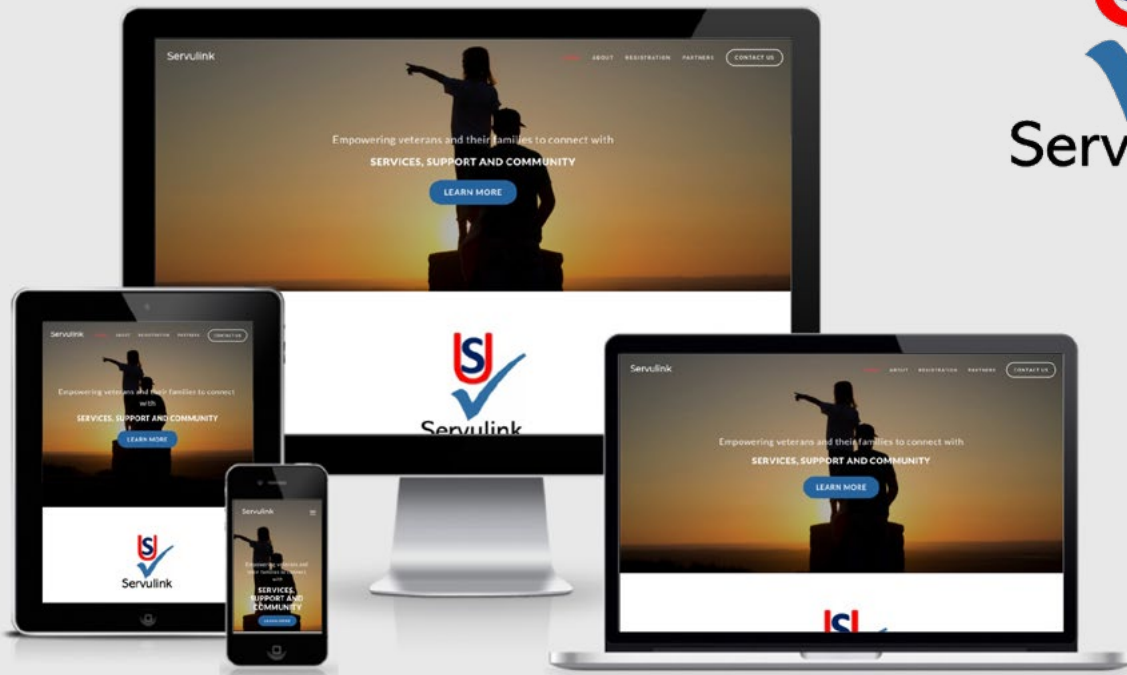
-  CAREER TRANSITION
-  CAREER NAVIGATION
-  CAREER COACHING
-  CV & COVER LETTERS
-  INTERVIEW SKILLS
-  PATHWAY PROGRAMS TO UPSKILL
-  EMPLOYER CONNECTIONS



**RSL**  
Australia



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



## Servulink: 'Empowering veterans and their families to connect with services, support and community'

Servulink, an Australian veteran-owned technology provider, has built a new capability: a digital services catalogue, enabling all veterans and their families to easily access vital services and support at any time, from anywhere in Australia.

This agile, user-friendly innovation has been welcomed and endorsed by RSL Australia, who have agreed to further develop and deploy the technology in a Pilot program over the next 12 months.

The digital 'Catalogue of Services' offers both in-person and online support with an in-built geolocation capability to simply find, access and navigate quality service information. In addition to providing support for veterans and their families, the catalogue will greatly assist veteran advocates, case workers and peer supporters to proactively find complementary services and support to best meet the unique needs of their clients.

RSL Australia and Servulink will work together to expand the platform to include over a thousand RSL sub-branches across Australia, searchable by location and the unique services they provide. This focused effort will add further depth and quality at local, state, and national levels to the

diverse range of high value organisations already registered with Servulink: committed and united in supporting our veterans and their families.

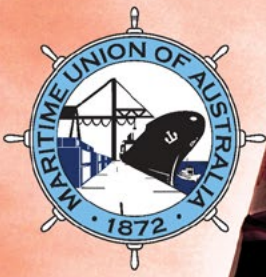
The RSL-Servulink 'Catalogue of Services' has been endorsed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and Defence and is supported by other leading national veteran support organisations: Legacy, Bravery Trust, Soldier On and War Widows, who also recognise the need for a 'one stop shop' resource to help veterans and their families access and navigate the network of services and support available to them.

This commitment from RSL Australia to further develop and enhance the Servulink technology supports the need to deliver new and better, proactive solutions for veterans and their families. It provides an opportunity to ease the complexity involved in navigating information within the sector: transforming the national veteran support landscape.

Find and follow us at [www.servulink.com.au](http://www.servulink.com.au),  
on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

If you're a service provider and want to be part of our digital service catalogue, please register at [www.servulink.com.au/registration-welcome-2021](http://www.servulink.com.au/registration-welcome-2021)





# SAVE AUSTRALIAN SHIPPING BRING OUR JOBS HOME

**WATCH THE MV PORTLAND  
DOCUMENTARY ONLINE AND LEARN  
ABOUT HOW AUSTRALIAN SEAFARERS  
ARE BEING DRAGGED OFF THEIR SHIPS  
AND REPLACED BY FOREIGN CREWS.**

*Join our campaign online  
via [SaveAustralianShipping.com.au](http://SaveAustralianShipping.com.au)*



**SCAN TO WATCH  
ON YOUTUBE**

Throughout times of crisis – whether that’s during war, natural disaster, or even geopolitical tensions throughout our region – Australian seafarers have been the eyes and ears of our nation around our coastline.

In fact, during the Second World War, 1-in-8 Australian merchant mariners lost their lives to the conflict while transporting vital supplies and equipment around our coast.

Obviously, more than most nations, Australia is dependent on seaborne trade. Shipping accounts for 90 per cent of the international goods trade but 99 per cent of our imports and exports of goods, including fuel.

Alarmingly, Australia is now in a situation where less than half a per cent of our seaborne trade is carried by Australian ships, forcing us to rely on foreign governments and companies for our essential imports.

For the past eight years the Federal Government has stood idle as large multinationals dumped Australian flagged and crewed vessels so they could hire foreign crews that are paid as little as \$2 per hour.

This has destroyed the jobs of Australian seafarers and created a situation where none of the vessels our nation relies upon to deliver its essential supplies of crude oil, aviation fuel and diesel are registered in this country or crewed by Australians.

The loss of Australian fuel refining capabilities further underscores the importance of rebuilding a sovereign shipping capability to secure our supply chains.

COVID-19 has shown us how vulnerable supply chains can be to external events, while the risk of global or regional conflict leaves us vulnerable to the actions of foreign powers.

Without a strategic fleet, Australia’s essential supply lines – including fuel imports – are vulnerable to the decisions of foreign governments or the whims of international shipping companies.

The Maritime Union of Australia has been campaigning alongside the Anthony Albanese-led Labor Opposition to enhance Australia’s economic sovereignty and national security by creating a Strategic Maritime Fleet to secure our access to fuel supplies and other critical resources, even in times of global instability.

These vessels would be Australian flagged and crewed, but crucially, they would also be available for requisition by the Defence Forces in times of national need, whether that be natural disaster or times of conflict.

The Maritime Union has been ringing the alarm bells about the state of our national shipping capacity for many years, but our efforts have fallen on deaf ears in the current Federal Government.

We urge you to join our campaign to restore Australian shipping capacity, restore Australian jobs, and protect our national interest.

[www.saveaustralianshipping.com.au](http://www.saveaustralianshipping.com.au)



# Discovering hidden strength

Former Army Major Nicole Bradley discovered her strength was working with people.

This Anzac Day veteran Nicole Bradley will commemorate the sacrifices of her fellow servicemen and women while also marking two years since starting her own business with the help of Prince's Trust Australia.

On April 25, 2020 the former Australian Army logistics officer registered Nicole Bradley Counselling, something she couldn't have imagined when she discharged from the military in 2015.

Nicole joined the Australian Defence Force in 1993 and during her 22-year career deployed to East Timor and the Middle East, posted to seven different locations and spent six months on Palm Island as part of the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Programme (AACAP).

But despite the skills and experience gained through two decades of service, being a mum of two and supporting her husband in his Army career, Nicole doubted her ability to find professional success outside of the ADF.

"I didn't know I actually had anything to offer," she said.

"As a logistics officer I didn't have a clue about what my skillsets were (because) I was a general service officer. I didn't specialise in anything."

The former Army Major gravitated towards counselling post-service, as she found her best results while in the ADF came from her work with people.

One career highlight was as a troop commander on AACAP in 2003 where she was able to help her soldiers through their personal struggles.

"I felt I was really able to help them bridge some of their challenges and I ended up having a big welfare role in amongst those people," she said.

"Even in the later parts of my career, as a 2IC of the Army School of Health, my office was like a revolving door where I'd have people just coming in to tell me their problems.

"(Becoming a counsellor) just seemed to be a natural fit."

Nicole completed a graduate diploma in counselling and was undertaking a placement at a community service organisation when Covid hit.

Thanks to the pandemic, she couldn't return to her placement and the thought of applying for jobs was overwhelming.

"I was searching for something else where I could forge my own path in a sense, but I didn't have any plans for a business," she said.

"There are very few people I know that have a business of their own and the concept of it was incredibly daunting."

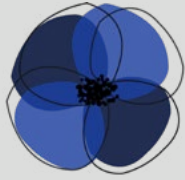
A friend told Nicole about Prince's Trust Australia's free Enterprise programme, designed to help veterans and military spouses start and grow small businesses, and she decided to check it out.

Nicole went into the programme with a "vague idea" of what she could do, and a hope Prince's Trust could prove her self-doubt wrong.

"I found there was a real encouragement in that group," she said.

"I got to thinking about things which I hadn't really considered, and I felt like (starting a business) wasn't that complicated in the end.

"It was just that you don't know what you don't know. I didn't know how I could apply my skills.



Nicole Bradley  
— COUNSELLING —

Visit Nicole's business:  
[nicolebradley.com.au](http://nicolebradley.com.au)

### 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 Wade Stothart DSC AM CSC.

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

"But what I found in Prince's Trust is they draw this thread around all these skills you have in Defence that are usable outside - skills I hadn't thought of because you just live it, you don't see it - and that woke me up to what I could offer others."

While completing the programme Nicole also found training for offering counselling online and the idea for her business was born.

Today Nicole Bradley Counselling provides one-on-one counselling to clients throughout Australia and New Zealand.

"I'm chugging along quietly," Nicole said.

"I'm very aware that I don't want to end up in a place where I'm either strained and I can't give my clients the best of me, or I don't have time to prepare."

But she does have plans to expand her offerings.

"I want to do more for people who don't necessarily want to do one-on-one work, but they want develop themselves," she said.

Nicole has herself found strength in self-development can happen at any age.

At 42, Nicole was introduced to powerlifting which led to three masters bench press records, a Gold medal in the US Department of Defense Warrior Games, a Silver medal in the Invictus Games 2018 and serving as Co-Captain of the Australian team at the Invictus Games.

"I'm now really strong and I'm being recognised as being valuable for being strong".

And she happily recommends the Enterprise programme to other veterans and Defence spouses.

"The thing Prince's Trust does, once you leave the Defence Force, is give you this sense that you can still be important when you're not in the service," she said.

"Very often the sense of who you are is so tied to the uniform that being reminded you're still important and you're still a value to the community outside of uniform is really comforting."

Article written by Courtney Snowden, ADF partner and Programme alumna of Prince's Trust Australia.

INSPIRING OUR VETERAN  
COMMUNITY TO EXPLORE  
SELF-EMPLOYMENT

LET US HELP YOU GET STARTED. ➔



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



CONFIDENCE  
SKILLS  
NETWORK



Prince's Trust  
Australia

REGISTER NOW FOR OUR FREE  
ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

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

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



# Wagga honours Empire Air Training role

A memorial honouring the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) is nearing completion at the entrance to RAAF Base Wagga, in recognition of the contribution to the RAAF by many local communities.



Air Force personnel who trained as part of the Empire Air Training Scheme in World War II have been depicted on murals commissioned as part of the Air Force 2021 Centenary at RAAF Base Wagga. Photo: Wing Commander Tony Wennerbom.

The new memorial located within RAAF Base Wagga's Heritage Precinct honours the local towns and aviators who were part of the scheme between 1940 and 1945. The memorial at the base now forms another of the permanent legacies created during the Centenary of Air Force program (AF2021).

The EATS memorial highlights the significant role that regional towns played in support of the RAAF during World War II.

RAAF Base Wagga AF2021 base liaison officer Wing Commander Tony Wennerbom said the memorial was commissioned in recognition of the Centenary of Air Force and was designed in a way that fulfilled the expectation required from AF2021.

"Particularly, engaging with the community and veterans created ownership and pride amongst locals through highlighting the regional contribution the Riverina played in supporting the war effort, and finally inspiring a younger generation," Wing Commander Tony Wennerbom said.

RAAF Base Wagga commissioned mural artist Sam Brooks, and collaborated with the local RSL sub-branch and its veterans to deliver the project.

"The role of EATS was a critically important project for RAAF Base Wagga to include in Air Force's Centenary year," Wing Commander Wennerbom said.

"It represented the biggest growth period in its 100-year history. It also represented the single largest combined undertaking of the Commonwealth air forces during World War II and remains to this day an incredible example of a coordinated global wartime mobilisation."

More than 200 training bases were constructed throughout the Empire for the scheme, including 37 in Australia and nine such bases across the Riverina region in NSW. The RAAF Base at Forest Hill aerodrome was developed in direct response to the infrastructure requirements of this mobilisation.

When the memorial project is completed, it will include storyboards and a memorial stone detailing the locations where EATS activities were undertaken around Australia. With the support of Air Force's History and Heritage Branch, the storyboards will specifically detail the locations across the Riverina where aircrew were trained with airmen and the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force employed in support of EATS.

The other aerodromes in the Riverina where training was located include Narrandera, Temora, Cootamundra, Uranquinty, Parkes, Narromine and Deniliquin.

Tocumwal also played a significant role during this period, being the home to the RAAF's heavy bomber support and operational conversion units.

More than 27,000 aircrew were trained in Australia through EATS before being sent to Britain for employment with the British RAF. A further 9600-plus personnel completed their training in Canada, along with nearly 600 who received pilot training in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In total, just short of 40,000 young Australians were trained under the scheme.

Based on the initial feedback and social media interest (exceeding 80,000 views in the first week), the RAAF Base Wagga Heritage Precinct is expected to become a significant tourist attraction for those visitors who follow the Silo Art Trail.

"The significance of EATS is best summed up by then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, where he is reported in July 1943 to have said: 'The fact that Australia has been over here ... some of their very best airmen, and the share they have taken in the Empire Air Training Scheme, leaves us heavily in their debt'," Wing Commander Wennerbom said.

The official opening of the EATS memorial is planned for 8 June 2022, marking the 82nd birthday of RAAF Base Wagga's formation.

To view more photos visit the Defence image gallery [images.defence.gov.au](https://images.defence.gov.au).

# Welcome Back to Flanders Fields



“It’s not the same without our visitors, we miss you” is the catch cry from the locals in Flanders Fields.

Located in the west of Belgium, the region of Flanders Fields is synonymous with the Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the Third Battle of Ypres) and some of the most treacherous battlefields of World War One. There were approximately 38,000 Australian casualties from campaigns fought in Flanders during 1917.

Despite the devastation of the region over 100 years ago, today Flanders Fields is a beautiful and serene area, interspersed with charming cobble-stone towns and villages. Roughly one third the size of Victoria, visitors can see and do a lot in a just a few days in the compact region.

At the heart of Flanders Fields is Ypres or Ieper (the Flemish name, pronounced ee-per) as it is officially known. There is something inexplicable about the connection many Australians feel to Ypres, whether it’s a sense of living history, a family association or the warm welcome from the locals, it’s a special place that goes straight to the heart of travellers.

Outside of Ypres in the nearby surrounding region, there are many points of interest for those looking to follow in the footsteps of the AIF. Highlights include, CWGC Tyne Cot (the largest military cemetery in the world), Hill 60 including the memorial to the Australian Tunnelling Division, Polygon Wood and CWGC Toronto Avenue cemetery (the only all Australian cemetery in Belgium) nestled deep in a secluded wood.

Stephen Lodewyck, Director of the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres says, “Since 2020 we miss our visitors from abroad, especially our Australian friends who travel to the other side of the world to share their history with us on the former battlefields, under the Menin Gate during the Last Post and in the “In Flanders Fields Museum” in Ypres. But out of sight is not out of mind, on the contrary, during the lockdown in 2021 the In Flanders Fields Museum added a completely original Australian uniform to its display. The uniform belonged to a member of the 24th Infantry Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) This unit, part of the 2nd Australian Division, lost 168 men on Belgian soil, a third of them at the Battle of Broodseinde (04 October 1917), part of the Battle of Passchendaele.

Aside from WW1 history, Flanders Fields is also well known for being home to some of the best breweries in Belgium and some excellent chocolatiers. There are also numerous walking and cycling paths available for those looking for an active way to discover the region’s history.

Flanders Fields looks forward to welcoming you soon – whether it be a first time visit or to reconnect with the region.

## VISITFLANDERS

See [www.visitflanders.com](http://www.visitflanders.com) for more information.

follow us @FlandersFields14\_18



For assistance in booking your trip to Flanders Fields please contact:

- Boronia Travel Battlefield Tour Specialists (Melbourne)  
[www.battlefieldtourspecialists.com.au](http://www.battlefieldtourspecialists.com.au)
- Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours (Sydney)  
[www.battlefields.com.au](http://www.battlefields.com.au)
- Travel Prospects (Adelaide)  
[www.travelprospects.com](http://www.travelprospects.com)

## Welcome Back to Flanders Fields Pass

Available for travel until 30 September 2022, the “Welcome Back to Flanders Fields Pass” offers visitors discounts or free entry to museums, day tours, tour guiding and more.

Simply book an overnight stay with a participating accommodation facility in the region.

For more details visit:  
[www.visitflanders.com/en/themes/flanders\\_fields/welcomeback](http://www.visitflanders.com/en/themes/flanders_fields/welcomeback)



© Westtoer

Flanders Fields

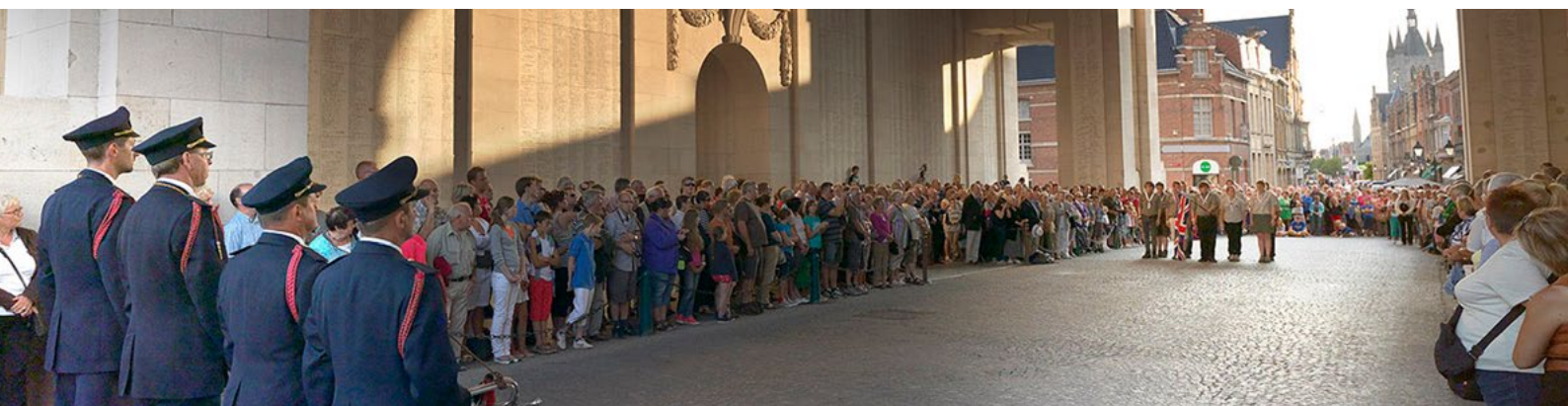


Ypres



© Thierry Caigrie

CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery



The Last Post at the Menin Gate

VISITFLANDERS



For more information:  
[WWW.VISITFLANDERS.COM](http://WWW.VISITFLANDERS.COM)

 @flandersfields14\_18

# The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary



The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary is a partnership between Port Stephens Council and Port Stephens Koala Hospital, a volunteer group that aims to provide the world best practice standards of care to sick, injured and orphaned koalas to give them the best opportunity to be returned to the wild.

Opened daily from 9am the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary includes the following features:

- Koala Centre – visitor admissions and guest reception areas
- Sanctuary Story Walk - offering visitors an immersive educational experience of the koala habitat
- Koala Hospital - Visit the state-of-the-art Koala Hospital with Intensive Care Unit treatment rooms and holding pens. Take a look through the hospital viewing window as veterinary staff carry out \*examinations and administer treatment to koala inpatients' (\*subject to treatment times).
- Newcastle Airport SKYwalk and elevated viewing platform - offering a unique treetop perspective into the koala's natural habitat, a perfect photo opportunity
- Fat Possum Café - offering a range of 'grab and go' eats and treats, great barista coffee and a range of quality souvenirs in a tranquil bushland setting
- Deluxe 4 star accommodation - guests will be able to wake up with the koalas by staying in onsite four star glamping tents.

**Donate towards caring for endangered animals as it takes time and lots of money, so your financial support is invaluable and your donation will help in saving our precious koalas.**

Vet Dr. Don Hudson has worked for many years contributing his expert medical care as an important element of a koala's rehabilitation. A not-for-profit organisation, the Port Stephens Koala Hospital relies on both member subscriptions and generous donations to help save koalas. Your donation will help to ensure we have a safe, healthy koala population in Port Stephens for generations to come.

To make a donation visit:

**[portstephenskoalas.com.au/product/donate](http://portstephenskoalas.com.au/product/donate)**

**02 4988 0800**

**[portstephenskoalasanctuary.com.au](http://portstephenskoalasanctuary.com.au)  
[koalasanctuary@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:koalasanctuary@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)**

## **DAY VISITORS TO THE SANCTUARY ENJOY:**

- Unique experiences with koalas in a natural and idyllic bushland setting
- Tailored education sessions from local guides on koala care, rehabilitation and eventual return back to the wild
- A new opportunity to directly contribute to the preservation of local koalas in Port Stephens.

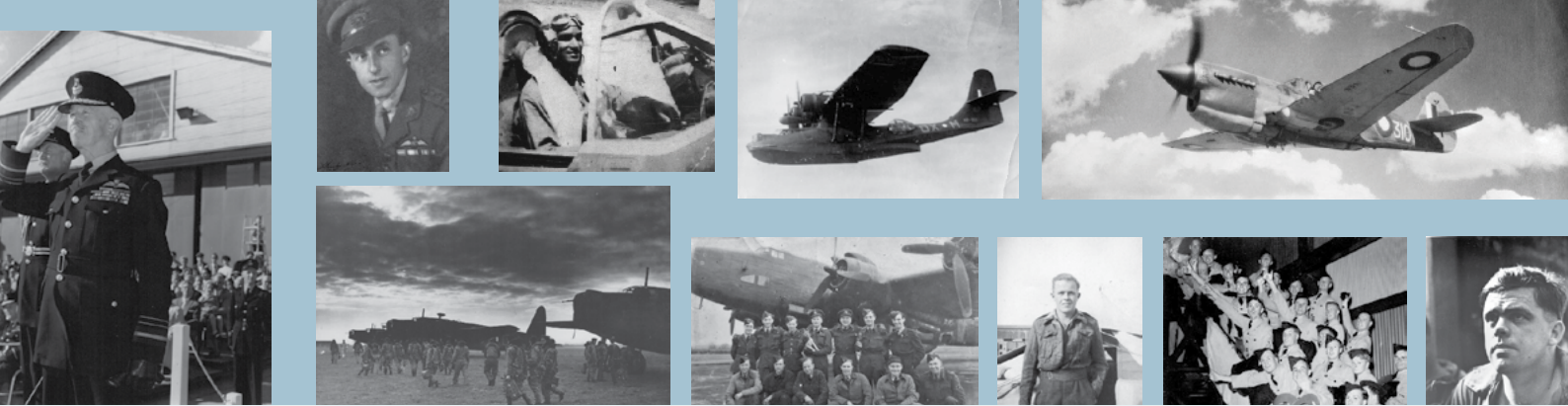
## **NATURAL SETTING**

Unique experiences with koalas in a natural and idyllic bushland setting

## **NEWCASTLE AIRPORT SKYWALK & Viewing Platform**

The Newcastle Airport SKYwalk and viewing platform is a 225 metre in length elevated pathway and viewing platform, offering a unique 'tree top' perspective into the koala's natural habitat, a perfect photo opportunity and educational experience.





## AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRES

Most military aviation enthusiasts would know the RAAF Museum at Point Cook Victoria as the iconic place to learn about RAAF aviation history. Air Force also has a number of regional Aviation Heritage Centres (AHCs) located at air bases in NSW and QLD. AHCs were established to reflect the Air Force's historical relationships in local and regional areas. Therefore, the AHCs provide Air Force with a medium to educate Air Force personnel and visitors of the importance and roles that the respective RAAF Base has provided to the community and in the defence of the nation.

### RAAF TOWNSVILLE

In 1939, Townsville City Council transferred the city airport to the RAAF with RAAF Base Townsville being formed on 15 October 1940. The principal function of the base at that time was to provide fighter defence of Townsville. By 1942 it had become a significant operational base for both the RAAF and United States Army Air Force (USAAF) in operations against the Japanese in the South West Pacific Area.

Today, RAAF Townsville is one of northern Australia's primary Defence installations used for training and exercises as well as a mounting base/forward operating base for military, humanitarian, and peacekeeping activities through the region. The Base has a long and proud association with the people of North Queensland.

Major themes for the collection are:

- RAAF (and the USAAF) in the SW Pacific 1939 – 1946
- Maritime operations
- Support to Army tactical operations
- Units and people of RAAF Townsville and the Townsville area

**Temporarily closed for refurbishment.**

### RAAF AMBERLEY

In 1938 882 acres were gazetted for defence purposes and on 17 June 1940 RAAF Base Amberley was formally opened.

Throughout World War II it supported flying training, aircraft assembly, salvage and repair, and squadron staging post. By 1948, RAAF Base Amberley became the RAAF's major base for bomber aircraft operations and aircraft maintenance.

The Army's No 16 Light Aircraft Squadron was formed at the Base in 1960 and Amberley was their operational base until 1968.

Today, RAAF Amberley is Air Force's largest operating base and home to heavy lift and fighter aircraft, as well as major aircraft maintenance and overhaul facilities and Air Force Security Force training.

Major themes for the collection are:

- Vietnam War era aircraft
- Units and people of RAAF Amberley and South East Queensland
- Ground Defence and Security Forces
- Ground support equipment
- Simulators

**Open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and the third Sunday of the month via pre-arranged bookings.**

### RAAF WAGGA

In 1939 "Allonville", a 300 acre farm was purchased and RAAF Station Forest Hill was opened on 29 July 1940.

Throughout World War II it supported flying training as part of the Empire Air Training Scheme. In 1946 RAAF Forest Hill became the home for all ground training and in 1952 changed its name to RAAF Station Wagga to identify with the broader community.

Today, RAAF Wagga delivers technical and non-technical initial employment and postgraduate training that is fundamental to the delivery of military air and space power in support of national objectives.

Major themes for the collection are:

- The Empire Air Training Scheme
- Trade Training in the RAAF (especially Technical Training)
- Units and people of RAAF Wagga and the Riverina

**Open on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays 10am to 4pm.**

### RAAF WILLIAMTOWN

RAAF Station Williamtown was established on 15 February 1941 to provide protection for the strategic port and steel manufacturing facilities of the Hunter Region. During World War II a number of Empire Air Training Scheme squadrons were formed at Williamtown.

Following World War II, Williamtown was retained as the RAAF's main fighter base.

Major themes for the collection are:

- RAAF Fighter Aircraft
- Air Defence
- Forward Air Control
- Units and people of RAAF Williamtown

**Open every day (except Christmas Day).**



# Unique 4 Star Accommodation in the centre of Sydney's CBD

The Hyde Park Inn and RSL NSW is proud to announce a loyalty program for all current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force to access preferred rates at the Hyde Park Inn.

The Defence Family Loyalty Club will replace the rates previously available to RSL NSW members.

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.

For information on the DFCL please email: [enquiries@hydeparkinn.com.au](mailto:enquiries@hydeparkinn.com.au).

*All rates include free parking (on or off site),  
light continental breakfast and unlimited wi-fi.*



**HYDE PARK  
INN**

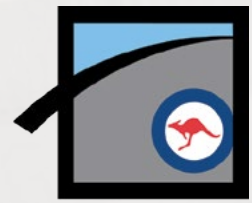
**Hyde Park Inn**

271 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney NSW  
1800 221 030

[hydeparkinn.com.au](http://hydeparkinn.com.au)  
[enquiries@hydeparkinn.com](mailto:enquiries@hydeparkinn.com)



HYDE PARK INN IS PROUDLY OWNED BY RSL NSW



**RAAF MUSEUM**  
POINT COOK

Located at historic RAAF Base Point Cook, the birthplace of the Royal Australian Air Force, the RAAF Museum is home to an amazing range of beautifully preserved historic military aircraft.

Here you will find a treasure house of priceless artefacts and fascinating stories of past deeds, giving visitors an understanding of the rich history and traditions of this arm of the Australian Defence Force.

Our Heritage Gallery incorporates multimedia technology and hands-on experiential activities to take the visitors through time from the Australian Flying Corps operating during World War I through to the RAAF's peacekeeping and civil aid missions to the present day.

The displays are augmented by a large variety of historic aircraft from the entire history of the RAAF

Models, books, patches, clothing and mementos can be purchased at the Museum shop.

RAAF Museum is currently closed for renovation. Please check our website and Facebook page for reopening and booked attendance requirements anticipated for late 2022.

Tel: (03) 8348 6040

Email: [RAAF.MuseumInfo@defence.gov.au](mailto:RAAF.MuseumInfo@defence.gov.au)

Web: [www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum](http://www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/RAAF.Museum](http://www.facebook.com/RAAF.Museum)

Shane Warne of Australia acknowledges the crowd at Edgbaston during the 2005 Ashes series.  
Photo: Getty.



# Vale Shane Warne

Shane Warne was the bloke who got away with it all. Until he didn't.

He was the very naughty boy with a touch of genius about him who always had the whole school talking.

Who could forget when he quit smoking to promote nicotine patches? And then got sprung smoking, like a kid behind the shelter sheds, among his lesser misdeeds.

Lord, though, he was exotic. He had one green eye and one blue eye, as if he was made to bewitch.

Bamboozled batsmen and quite a lot of admirers didn't stand a chance.

No one could take their eyes off him. Where there wasn't outright adoration or ruffled affront, there was often envy of his apparent impunity from established rules.

Back in the day when Shane took the ball, got the wrist flexing and loped towards the pitch it was, somebody once said, like a Led Zeppelin concert revving up.

Shane Warne was never going to get old. He couldn't do it – why, one of his last tweets announced he was embarking on Operation Shred to get his body back to that of an Adonis.

Anyway, the rest of us wouldn't allow him to age. He was always supposed to be the blond-haired boy from down the street suspected of blowing up letterboxes and forgiven, mostly, because his God-given talents made the rest of us feel good about living in his proximity while never daring to risk such devilry as him.

He understood it and, when he started losing that hair, he turned a profit on it by signing up to a hair restoration company to boast about a new thatch.

He had a talent for turning to his benefit the sort of things that would make the rest of us shrivel and seek a desert island.

More than 20 years before Tim Paine lost his captaincy of the Australian cricket team for sexting, Warne lost

his vice-captaincy in 2000 for sending erotic messages to a British nurse.

Paine wept in public and begged forgiveness. Shane? No worries. He went on to make a motza promoting a phone messaging company called Messages on Hold.

Tongue firmly in cheek, his message to customers was: "Trust me with this recommendation – I know a thing or two about spin."

Having been caught on film wearing nothing but his underpants while cavorting with two women, he launched his own underwear company called Spinners.

His passion for playing poker late into the night with mates turned into a contract that lasted seven years, requiring him to appear at poker events around the world.

Warne was a man who didn't mind a drink. Naturally, there was a gig with a beer company, and he bought into a firm that distills gin.

And there, apart from the ability to bowl a cricket ball in ways that mere mortals could only watch in open-mouthed bewilderment, was what set Shane Warne apart.

He never tried to camouflage the fact that he was a bit wicked and, when he got caught, he turned it to his advantage and let us all in on the joke.

We could laugh with him, or we could laugh at him, or huff in high indignation. He seemed OK with it all because he had the supreme confidence of a born showman.

But no one laughed, except in astounded joy, at the one pursuit he took seriously. Whatever else he got away with, or didn't, no one can take this away from him: he was the greatest spin bowler of all time.

**TONY WRIGHT**

*The Age*



# Unconquered at the Invictus Games

Invictus means Unconquered, and this attitude was personified by Team Australia at the Invictus Games The Hague that took place from 16th – 22nd April in the Netherlands.

Working in partnership with the Australian Defence Force, Invictus Australia sent 26 former-serving Defence members as part of the 32-strong team, along with two supporters per competitor, as part of the 'Family and Friends' program. The intention is to recognise and thank friends and family for the role they play in supporting wounded, injured and ill veterans in their journey of rehabilitation and recovery. Having been postponed twice due to COVID-19, the team

ZERO600.COM.AU



**1 - 10 MAY, 2022**

**WILL YOU RISE FOR  
AUSTRALIAN VETERANS?**

were thrilled to compete on the international stage, with the support of their biggest cheerleaders.

The Invictus Games use the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for wounded, injured and ill veterans, which we witnessed over the seven days of competition. This philosophy influences Invictus Australia's purpose, to impact a broader audience including all veterans and their families, with an estimated 613,000 veterans in Australia.

The immediate priorities for Invictus Australia are to extend its reach to provide sport recovery services in all states and territories, reaching as many of Australia's veterans and their families as possible, as well as support Team Australia at next year's Invictus Games Düsseldorf, and beyond.

Life changed drastically for Adelaide veteran Kerrie Tessier in 2012.

A significant shoulder injury resulted in her being medically discharged from the Army and Kerrie knew that she would never be able to work as a physiotherapist again. Some of her most fulfilling work had involved helping injured soldiers to get back to operational duties or find new adventures outside of the ADF, so this physical injury also led to mental health challenges, as Kerrie searched for meaning beyond the military.

"I faced losing everything I had worked towards and was unsure what I would do in my future."

Through the power of sport Kerrie learned to run again with her injury and joined her local parkrun community at Christies Beach. Here she truly found her tribe that helped reinvigorate her love of sport and her community spirit.

With this support Kerrie was able to access the Adaptive Sports Program and get involved in a range of sports that didn't leave her sore all the time.

She took to cycling and with the support of Invictus Australia (then known as Veteran Sport Australia), she made it to Florida with a team of veterans competing at the Warrior Games across five sports. Which then led Kerrie to represent Team Australia again at the Invictus Games.

Like most competitors, Kerrie believes the Invictus spirit & Games is not about winning gold. 'For me, getting to the Games is a massive win. Being there shows me I can achieve anything I set out to achieve and I can look after myself as well as others.'

Sport not only supported Kerrie's health, but inspired a career change. "I studied medicine, which was hard and without re-discovering sport through the ADF Adaptive Sports Program I would not be able to do what I do every day. Sport gets me out of bed in the morning." Now fully qualified as a Doctor, Kerrie is true testament to the power of sport to transform.

---

To support the veteran community, both internationally and locally, Invictus Australia is launching the ZERO600 Morning Routine fundraising challenge this May. To find out more head to [www.zero600.com.au](http://www.zero600.com.au). Invictus Australia relies on the generous support of government, corporate Australia and the general public. Supporting ZERO600 will help us deliver future Invictus Games teams, plus support veterans in all communities.



CITY  CLUB



# RAISE YOUR GAME

**THE RIGHT CLOTHING IS ESSENTIAL,  
TO GIVE YOU THE EDGE**

For enquiries or to locate your nearest stockist:

**t:** 1800 653 332

**e:** [customer.service@cityclub.com.au](mailto:customer.service@cityclub.com.au)

**w:** [cityclub.com.au](http://cityclub.com.au)



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!



# Return to Service



From subtropical rainforests and tranquil waterfalls of Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland to gritty deserts in Iraq and Afghanistan, a whirlwind swept Tay across Australia and around the world. When the dust settled, Tay was left proud, broken, and wondering what he had left to give.

Signing on as a Light Horseman in the Australian Army's Cavalry Regiment, Tay Sukhantapree achieved the first of his boyhood dreams at only 20. Fuelled in equal parts by service and adventure, the proud Australian son of Thai immigrants was a natural soldier.

When the adventures started, they gathered momentum that soon warped into a blur of missions, friends, training and foreign lands, crystallised forever in vivid moments of triumph and grief.

Pukapunya, Shoalwater Bay, Al Muthanna, Urugzan. Laughter and battle. Friendships forged under the toughest of circumstances, friends sadly lost to the same.

It is a familiar story for the modern Australian combat soldier that echoes the Anzac experience of over a century. Yet when one chapter is over, the story, as it does for all of us, goes on.

Returning to Australia for the final time to young children he had barely seen, with a body broken by hardship, Tay had the courage to leave his beloved service life though was unprepared for what followed.

Moving from job to job, Tay searched restlessly for a renewed sense of value, purpose and pride. Caught off guard by a series of visible and invisible injuries, after five years he finally found his calling. Starting a successful property maintenance business on the Sunshine Coast, Tay was driven and determined once again. He amassed a client base across hundreds of kilometres delighted with his skill and attention to detail, and happy employees who valued his leadership.

Tay Sukhantapree has become a beacon for what can be achieved in modern, post-service life, where service simply cannot end. Since selling his business and joining HomeFront Australia, Australia's biggest provider of DVA Household Services, Tay now serves and inspires Veterans and vulnerable Australians on a daily basis, Australia-wide.

Surrounded by other veterans at HomeFront, 10 long years after returning to Australia, Tay has finally come home.



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.

[homefrontaustralia.com.au](http://homefrontaustralia.com.au)

## WATER WATER EVERY WHERE

It seems crazy after so much drought to be complaining about too much water. But here we are! Everyone will be experiencing higher humidity and this brings insects. Now is not the time to leave things hidden away, unchecked. Remember moths and carpet beetle eat protein which includes wool, feathers, alpaca, silk, hair, cashmere, gelatine (book-bindings).

Silverfish in Australia are interested in cellulose but can only digest it when it is damp. So if you see silverfish start looking for a leak or breach in wet seals of bathrooms.

Professionally we freeze infested DRY items for 10 days at minus 10 degrees C, however please do not stuff items in a domestic freezer they have a cyclic defrost which thaws long enough to keep insect eggs viable. This is building resistance in our pest populations.

After fires we gather the precious small things which are left. Fire takes everything, but floods and water don't. It is then up to us to decide what can we save and what does actually need to be thrown away.

Most people throw away the things that they cannot fix themselves. This is a challenge for a conservator as we cannot fix what is gone!

If you are able to get items to a conservator fairly swiftly following a flood then do not dry them out. That will enable us to clean, rinse and shift dyes back to where they belong. If you cannot get things to a conservator then rinse and dry them slowly. A fan or breeze over the item will prevent mold from sprouting, as will 15 minute exposure to unfiltered sunlight (both sides please).

Carpets, rugs and tapestries are a challenge to get clean and rinsed and usually do need the attention of a specialist textiles conservator with experience in these items in particular.

Photos are perhaps the saddest loss in any disaster, and they do need to be laid out to dry. Once dry, a conservator can clean and assist in digitalising them.

A great tool in our kit is a mixture of 70% methylated spirits and 30% water in a spray bottle. This will kill mold and spores, BUT obviously alcohol can cause a lot of damage to shellac, paints, pigments and dyes so you need to be careful not to just spray everything. Test in a discreet location first.

Metal items will flash rust and a little WD-40 will buy you some time until it can be seen by a professional. DO not use olive oil or other food oils as they can really do damage.

Floods bring tears, but also disease. Please be careful and make sure your vaccination for tetanus is up to date and that you seek medical attention early if you experience any illness or redness on the skin.

While you clean up, take a lot of photos. You may need to itemise for insurers what needs to be covered and replaced and prove that you owned it.

One of the worst things about floods is they often repeat. Once the soil is waterlogged and cannot uptake additional moisture, any rain at all can become a flash flood. If you have managed to save precious items, get them out of the location to be cared for off-site so they do not get caught in subsequent disasters.

Remember the hardest thing is letting something go and then regretting it later when you discover that it could have been fixed.

These indigenous acrylic paintings on canvas were kept in a storage container the owner was unaware had filled with water. The artworks were literally wet and mouldy for 6 months and one even had mushrooms growing on it. Once cleaned, treated for mould and then dehumidified and flattened, the paint could be consolidated and the losses infilled. They are good enough to frame and live a new life of appreciation.

VICTORIA PEARCE



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

**Write in to [LastPost@endangeredheritage.com](mailto>LastPost@endangeredheritage.com) to get a response in the following issue.**



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

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

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

## KEY SERVICES

Legal Representation including Migration Services (MARN 1796927)

Mediation services

Royal Commission Submissions

Internal Auditing and HR Support



## QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES OF THE TEAM INCLUDE:

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

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

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

**Company Directors Diploma** plus Diplomas of Intelligence Analysis and Policing

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

**Graduate Certificates:** Management, and Strategic Intelligence

**The College of Law:** National Assessment & Training, Mediators

**Additional:** Certificate IV in Training and Assessment,

SAI Global qualified Internal Auditors, Mental Health First Aid Australia



## CONTACT DETAILS:

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

Email: [enquiries@gaplegal.com.au](mailto:enquiries@gaplegal.com.au) | [www.gaplegal.com.au](http://www.gaplegal.com.au)

Unit 7, 24 Iron Knob Street Fyshwick ACT 2609

*Joebananas*  
AUSTRALIA



SYDNEY | MELBOURNE | NEW YORK

AUTHENTICALLY AUSTRALIAN  
NATURALLY INSPIRED  
HAND CRAFTED  
ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUALIST

[joebananas.com.au](http://joebananas.com.au)