

# SIT ○ REP

Your Defence Community Magazine

JULY/AUGUST 2018



The price of liberty is eternal vigilance

# MUSEUM AND INTERPRETIVE CENTRE



The Museum is located inside the RSL Club, upstairs in the Kokoda Hall. Our opening hours are Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 4:30pm.



# FREE ENTRY





The Returned & Services League of Australia  
**Cairns Sub-Branch**  
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# CONTENTS

- 4 President's Report
- 5 Secretary's Report
- 6 Meet the New Board of Directors
- 10 News Briefs
- 14 PAWS News
- 16 Kokoda Hall Museum Report
- 20 Ex-Service Organisation Reports
- 22 Roy Hartman – Life Member
- 26 Profiles – Volunteers, Successful Veterans, Sub-Branch Members
- 28 Events – Anzac Day
- 34 Member Submissions
- 42 Calendar of Events

#### COVER:

Roy Hartman OAM –  
Cairns RSL Sub-Branch  
Life Member.  
*Images from Roy's collection*







*RAAF Hudson memorial service*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Firstly, a big shout out and THANK YOU to all our wonderful Volunteers! Without your passion and consistent efforts day in, day out, we wouldn't be able to achieve all that we have for our Defence Family and their families.

I am pleased to bring my report to you through the new look Sit-Rep. The modernisation of our premier FNQ Defence Community Magazine is part of our Moving Forward strategy for reaching out to our wider Defence Family.

Sit-Rep was established in 2005 by the late Ex-President Peter Turner and the first edition was published in January 2006 as, The Newsletter of the Cairns Sub-Branch Returned and Services League of Australia. I'm sure President Turner would feel more than proud to see that what started out as a humble 20-page booklet is now the FNQ Defence Community Magazine.

The importance of supporting and assisting our members through engagement with their families and communities cannot be overstated. For the RSL to be relevant in the future we must support not only our current members but also those who will hopefully become future ones. This will be achieved through increased engagement with Service Members, Schools and the ongoing promotion of what the Sub-Branch can offer through its Advocacy and Wellbeing services and programs.

The Cairns Sub-Branch is ably supported by its team of staff who bring a range of skills and experiences to our work. Their motto of Continual And Never-ending Improvement (CANI) enables us to keep ahead of the challenges, and on the path to success.

This month will also see the launch of the Younger Veterans Report that was commissioned last year. This report has made a number of recommendations for which the Board will be developing some strategic responses. These will advise us how better to engage with and support Younger Veterans.

As this year marks the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day. It is an exciting time for the Sub-Branch. There are a range of new initiatives that the Sub-Branch will be undertaking, in partnership with Edge Hill Sub-Branch, Far Northern District Branch and RSL Queensland, as well as further initiatives outlined in the Board Directors' reports and still in the planning stages.

Sincere Regards,

Edmund (Buster) Todd  
President  
Cairns RSL Sub-Branch



# SECRETARY'S REPORT

As I continue to learn and understand the workings of the Sub-Branch, every day fills me with new experiences, challenges and rewards. I am especially rewarded on a day to day basis as I interact — have a chat, discuss, ponder life in general, with many of our dedicated volunteers. The camaraderie that exists within the Volunteers is built from that shared Defence Family experience of Service, and is certainly the glue that binds the sum of the parts that make up this great Sub-Branch. There are many roles being undertaken by our Volunteers, and none of them are more or less important than any other, as they all have one common important factor — they are here for the greater good of the Defence Family.

The Sub-Branch is ably lead by its Board and Staff, who are professional in their approach and dedication to ensuring that the interests of members and their families are prioritised. There have been, and will continue to be, a number of challenging issues moving forward. However, none of these are insurmountable if we take the strength-based approach to these challenges, and view them as issues for resolution, rather than problems.

In moving forward, we are changing the way some things are done. This will ensure that we remain transparent and accountable in everything we do. I understand that for some, change can be challenging and difficult, however we are here to help, guide and support everyone through this transition. I am only too happy to discuss any of the changes or issues with you, therefore I welcome you to contact me directly through the Sub-Branch phone 4051 5254, my direct email, [secretary@cairnssrlsubbranch.com.au](mailto:secretary@cairnssrlsubbranch.com.au) or drop in for a cuppa and chat.

We are developing a range of innovative programs and services, that will not only positively embed this brand of the RSL in the wider community, but also provide our Defence Family with a greater awareness of our presence, and the great work that is being done. One of the opportunities that has arisen is the recognition of our Volunteers by providing them with a title that reflects what they do in their work with our members and their families. These Volunteers will now be known as Wellbeing Support Officers. The changeover of ID Cards etc., will take place over time. This innovation will enable others to easily recognise the Volunteers and understand their role within the Wellbeing arm of the Sub-Branch.

Mal McCullough  
Secretary  
Cairns RSL Sub-Branch



## Coffee connections

### Join Cairns Defence Community Organisation for a coffee!

ADF partners and families of Cairns are invited to join us at our monthly Coffee Connection. Take the opportunity to link up with other families, share experiences, laugh and enjoy meeting new people. Children/prams welcome. Find out about family services that assist with the mobile military lifestyle.

#### WHERE

Various locations around Cairns

#### WHEN

Friday, 10am, once per month.

To find out when our next Coffee connection is on visit

[www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco)

or join Cairns DCO Mailing list

[dco.cairns@defence.gov.au](mailto:dco.cairns@defence.gov.au) or 07 4053 9300

 Follow Defence Community Organisation to receive updates.

Celebrating Australia and its National Interests  
[www.defence.gov.au](http://www.defence.gov.au)



**Thank You Veterans Day**

**FREE\* HAIRCUTS**  
to all returned Servicemen and Women  
this August!

- SAUSAGE SIZZLE operated by RSL Cairns -  
- Face Painting for Kids by Crazybron -

**Date: Sunday 12th August**  
**Time: 10am til 2pm**

**BOOK NOW: 07 4054 1459**

\*This offer is available for the whole month of August. Bookings are required.  
You must present your White/Gold/Orange/Sub Branch Card to receive this offer

 **B' Hive**  
Hair & Beauty

[bhivehairbeauty@hotmail.com](mailto:bhivehairbeauty@hotmail.com)  
Shop 8 / 381 Mulgrave Road, Bungalow

 Find us on Facebook



# *new* MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Introducing the 2018 Board of Directors for the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch. We are very fortunate to have seven young veterans out of eight directors on the board.



## **PRESIDENT – EDMUND 'BUSTER' TODD**

Edmund 'Buster' Todd enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force as a Cat2B trainee in 1972, and elected to discharge in 1992. During his service he worked on a variety of operational Squadrons and military Aircraft, which included 82 Wing F4E Phantom, 482 Sqn F111C, 75 Sqn Mirage 111O, FA18 and 2FTSMacchi jets. He served at various RAAF bases, including Amberley, Pearce, Darwin, Wagga Wagga plus overseas postings to Butterworth and Lae, Papua New Guinea.

He later worked as an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (AME) with Executive Air in Darwin until 1996 and joined Hawker Pacific in Cairns as a AME, following his discharge from the RAAF. Since joining Hawker Pacific, he completed his CASA studies and exams to become a Licenced Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (LAME) on a variety of civilian Aircraft. In 2012, he took up a position as Safety and Compliance Coordinator with Hawker Pacific in Cairns, then later accepted the position of Safety and Compliance Manager in 2016.

He joined the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Board in 2004 as a director, served as Vice President for eight years until being elected President in 2015. The Sub-Branch members re-elected him as President in 2018.



## **VICE PRESIDENT – PETER HAYTON**

Peter Hayton enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force in May 1977 and was discharged in January 2002. During his service he worked at a variety of operational Squadrons: 5 Squadron AS-350B Squirrel and UH-1H Iroquois helicopters from 1986-1990 and 37 Squadron C130E Hercules aircraft, CH47B Dakota aircraft.

He was selected to train with Lockheed Martin for the acquisition of the C130J Hercules Aircraft. Peter worked with Lockheed Martin and brought the first Australian crewed C130J back to Australia in October 1999. Peter was then posted to develop 285 Squadron Training for all C130 aircraft utilised by the RAAF: C130E Hercules, C130H Hercules C130J Hercules.

Peter served at various RAAF bases throughout his service, including Wagga Wagga, Laverton, Amberley, Fairbairn, Pearce, Richmond and Townsville. Following his discharge from the RAAF in 2002, he worked with Queensland Health as a Payroll Officer and later as Assistant Manager Clinical Administration. In 2007 Peter joined Department of Housing and Public Works as a Program Officer until his retirement in 2013.

In 2012, Peter joined the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Board as a director for five and a half years and was voted in as Vice President in 2018. For two years Peter worked with the Yarrabah Chapter of the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch, and in 2016 thanks to Peters assistance Yarrabah became their own Sub-Branch. Peter is currently assisting Torres Straits to also become their own Sub-Branch.



### **TREASURER – BEN HEMPHILL**

Ben Hemphill commenced his career as a graduate from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1994 and rose to the rank of Lieutenant. Ben obtained his Seaman Officer qualification in HMAS *Cessnock*, to which he would later return as the Executive Officer. In between these postings, Ben served as the last Navigating Officer of a Western Australian Patrol Boat in HMAS *Geraldton* before he was part of the crew that relocated the Patrol Boat to Darwin. Ben's naval career was heavily involved in Operation Cranberry and Operation Relax. After completing his time in Patrol Boats, Ben was posted as a Divisional Officer for the New Entry Officer's Course in HMAS *Creswell*. From there Ben undertook a two-year posting as the Maritime Surveillance Advisor to the Republic of Marshall Islands. Upon his return to Australia Ben was appointed to the Commanding Officer's Course, after which he decided to leave the Royal Australian Navy.

Ben is an experienced business professional with a Bachelor of Arts Systems Technology, Diploma of Business, Diploma of Government, Diploma of Business Technology, Advanced Diploma of Management Systems and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessing. Working in the corporate world, Ben has been exposed to new leadership and management styles and believes these are beneficial to the Sub-Branch.

Ben was elected to the board of Directors as the Treasurer in 2015 when he joined the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch in 2008 as a member. As Treasurer, Ben is responsible for the financial management of the Sub-Branch. His main objective is to keep the Sub-Branch fulfilling its key business of Pensions, Advocacy and Welfare and ensure the longevity of the Sub-Branch financially.



### **DIRECTOR OF PENSIONS, ADVOCACY AND WELFARE – KRISTEN RICE**

Kristen Rice enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy as a Commissioned Officer and a Midshipman in 1997 serving for just under 20 years as a Marine Engineering Officer. Kristen saw several operational deployments to the Middle East Area of Operations, peacekeeping in the Solomon Islands as well as several missions to the Southern Ocean as well as the Northern Australian Area of Operations for suspected illegal entry vessels. Kristen is also one of the Compensation Advocates at the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch, therefore she is up to date with the latest issues facing veterans when transitioning out of the Australian Defence Force.

Kristen is thrilled to be part of the team at the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch which continues the 100-year legacy of enacting the predominant object of the RSL: looking after both serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their dependents with what is arguably the most established and well recognised ex-service organisation in Australia – the Returned Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch).





### **DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE – JOHN PATERSON**

John was born and educated in Melbourne and joined the Regular Army in 1976. He served in the Infantry and Special Forces and saw operational service in Malaysia, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, Lebanon, Israel, Syria, East Timor and Afghanistan. He commanded an infantry battalion and has filled senior management positions at the Royal Military College, the Combat Arms Training Centre and in Special Operations Headquarters. In 2004, John took a year's long service leave and worked as the Manager of the Tourism and Hospitality Faculty at Cairns TAFE.

John left the Army in 2014, taking up a position as the Dean/CEO of the Aviation Australia Riyadh College of Excellence, a start-up technical college in Saudi Arabia delivering English and aviation maintenance training to young Saudi men. Since returning to Australia, John has worked in his consultancy business and part-time with the Australian Electoral Commission and the Army Reserve.

John has been a director of private companies for over thirty years, is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and has completed the Company Directors Course (2004) and the CDC Update (2017). John holds a Master's Degree in Defence Studies, a Graduate Diploma in Management Studies and a Diploma of Resource Management. He hopes to contribute to the Sub-Branch's corporate governance practices and initiatives in support of younger veterans.



### **DIRECTOR OF MARKETING – KATHERINE YOUNG**

Katherine joined the Navy in 1995 and spent eleven years as a Medic predominantly based out of Cairns in Far North Queensland. The highlight of her Naval career came when she helped train Peace monitors in Bougainville. Valuable time was spent in the Torres Strait teaching basic first aid before trekking through jungle, sleeping in hutchies and living on ration packs.

After completing her Master's degree in Health Sciences, she left the Navy to work as a Nurse at Cairns Private Hospital on the Medical Ward.

Later, she returned to the Australian Defence Force to serve not in uniform this time but as a civilian Rehabilitation Co-Ordinator. The Defence Rehabilitation Program evolved while she worked and studied for her Master's in Human Services in 2011, taking the reins as the primary Rehabilitation Consultant in Cairns.

She thoroughly enjoys this work with the coverage of the Australian Defence tri-services in Far North Queensland distributed between HMAS *Cairns* and the 51st Battalion. Her clients are diverse in their range of injuries with a spectrum of short-term issues to complicated physical injuries, or complex mental health cases ranging from PTSD, Major Depression, to Anxiety and Personality disorders. She is passionate about providing a holistic approach to recovery and return to work, or transition from the Australian Defence Force with the incorporation of innovative health care to aid in providing members with alternative options for recovery, if and when available.

She has been an active Reservist since her discharge from the Navy in 2005, and has now served a total of 23 years in the Navy.







### **DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIPS – ROB LEE**

Rob 'Brucey' Lee joined the Australian Army in 2001, serving for ten years as an Infantry soldier before transferring to logistics where he spent the remainder of his 16 years of service as a Company Quartermaster Sergeant. Rob saw operational service in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan as well as deploying on training missions to Malaysia and Germany. After a brief hiatus in New Zealand working as a contracts administrator for a civil engineering firm, Rob returned to Australia and established the Cairns Mates4Mates branch.

After working for 18 months establishing the Mates4Mates brand working as a Liaison Officer, Rob moved into the sales department at Pacific Toyota. Rob wished to transfer skills learnt through his military career and experience in dealing with veterans with physical and psychological injuries, to Mates4Mates to the Cairns RSL sub-branch. Rob is excited to join a team with a wealth of knowledge and skills within the ex-service persons' community, and continue the RSL's work as the premier ex-service organisation.



### **DIRECTOR OF YOUNGER VETERANS – MARK RIX**

Mark enlisted in the Navy in 2003, and has seen a number of deployments around Australia and the world. His first posting, following basic training, was in Western Australia on HMAS *Darwin*, where he served for four years and rose to the rank of Leading Seaman. Whilst based there he was deployed on operation Relex, Relex 2, Resolute and Operations Catalyst in the Middle East. Mark was subsequently posted to HMAS *Success* as a Leading Seaman where they conducted Operation Resolute and Rimpac in Hawaii. In 2009, Mark was posted to FSU HMAS *Cairns* for two years and then sent to Ardent 6 on board Bundaberg and Childers. Numerous Operation Resolutes were carried out and whilst there, he experienced his first dose of stardom in the final season of Sea Patrol. He enjoyed a quick stint on HMAS *Toowoomba* for another Gulf trip, before being promoted to Petty Officer on his return and posted to Ardent 5 as the Chief Boatswain's Mate on board Launceston and Wollongong. In 2016, after being posted off with a severe neck injury and a long stint in rehab, Mark was posted to HMAS *Cerberus* as the lead Survival-at-Sea Instructor. On returning to Cairns, he was posted to Cape Inscription Port as the Chief Boatswain's Mate. Mark has recently received and accepted an offer of promotion to Chief Petty Officer and will be posted to Darwin in January, 2019.

An active sportsman, Mark gives back through his coaching particularly with sporting teams. In 2016, he coached the Cerberus Football club to a premiership win and the RANFA Women's National team to numerous victories. He has also successfully completed the AARTS programme culminating in singing a Metallica cover on stage in front of hundreds of people.

Mark has been volunteering at the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch since 2016, and was elected to the board of Directors in 2017. He is the only currently serving member on the board of Directors. With a wife and two young children, Mark understands the challenges faced by currently serving personnel. As the Director of Younger Veterans, he hopes to contribute to the Sub-Branch by being the voice for the new generations of veterans. We continually re-evaluate our priorities and services while forging a positive legacy with the team to ensure that veterans needs are met. He is focused on promoting RSL's message by ensuring that the RSL and its Sub-Branch remain relevant today and for generations to come.



### **SECRETARY – MAL MCCULLOUGH**

Mal has an extensive thirty-year community service management background, in community development, youth work, homelessness, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. He brings the experiences of his own Infantry service, as well as a long and rich family military history from WW1 to present day conflicts.

He believes that bringing these community and military worlds together will assist him in moving the Sub-Branch forward. Bringing about long lasting positive social and economic outcomes, not only for our Defence Family but also for the Sub-Branch as an organisation.



# NEWS Briefs

April – June 2018



## DEFENCE FAMILY FUN DAY

Cairns RSL Sub-Branch in partnership with Defence Community Organisations hosted a Family Fun Day on the Esplanade. The less-than-average weather didn't stop over fifty excited Defence children from joining us for a fun day of Face painting, making slime, jumping castles, sausage sizzle, games and a presentation ceremony. President Buster Todd welcomed the families and CMDR Dave Hannah from HMAS *Cairns* presented the children with their medallions. Each child received a Military Kids Medallion, *For Perseverance on the home front during your parents' deployment*. The event was a great success, and it is one of many new initiatives that the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch is taking to engage with younger veterans, currently serving personnel and their families.

## TRANSITION AND WELLBEING

The first stage of research into the health and wellbeing of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel during service and following their transition can be found at [www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/social-research/transition-and-wellbeing-research](http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/social-research/transition-and-wellbeing-research)

This research is part of the largest study ever undertaken to examine the impact of military service on mental health, relationships, employment and the effects it has on transitioning to civilian life.

## TINGIRA AUSTRALIA

On Monday, 21 May Tingira Australia Association held their first get together at the Cairns RSL Club. If you are a Tingira boy and are interested in future events for Far North Queensland, contact Rod [rod.howard@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rod.howard@optusnet.com.au)







### LITTLE DIGGERS ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY

Cute little furry animals, slime, and a petting zoo are not normally activities you associate with military personnel, but once a year for Defence Families, Little Diggers host a Family Fun Day. The event was held on Sunday, 3 June at the Fun-e-Farm, and over fifty parents and their children turned up to join in the fun. It's a great opportunity for Defence families to meet, in particular those with partners on deployments. The Cairns RSL Sub-Branch was the major sponsor for the Annual Family Fun Day and our Director, Katherine Young and Sub-Branch Volunteer, Sandra Groborsch joined in the fun.

### CAIRNS COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

Every Monday from 9:00am – 1:00pm, Cairns Community Legal Centre will be providing an outreach service at the Sub-Branch. They can provide you with information and referrals, legal advice, and in some circumstances ongoing casework assistance. This is a free legal service and can assist in the following areas:

- General legal service
- Disability discrimination legal service
- Cairns mental health legal service
- Consumer law service
- Family law service
- Seniors legal and support service
- Domestic and family violence duty lawyer service
- Community education.



Bookings are essential so please phone Cameron on (07) 4051 5254 or email [admin@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au](mailto:admin@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au)



### REASONS TO LIVE: Combating Suicide, Mental Health and PTSD

Every year in Australia, 2,500 men and women take their own lives. In an effort to destigmatise and open up conversations about mental health and PTSD, we hosted a Q&A style event. The guest speakers were:

- Graeme Bint - local photographer, former Aid worker and Paratrooper
- Jas Rawlinson - Brisbane author
- Mal McCullough - Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Secretary
- Royal Flying Doctors.



### 30% DISCOUNT FOR SUB-BRANCH MEMBERS ON BOARD PASSIONS OF PARADISE

Passions of Paradise Reef Cruises is offering all Sub-Branch members 30% discount on all tours. Simply phone Passions and let them know you are a Sub-Branch member when you book your tour and present your Sub-Branch card.

If you are a Defence friendly business and would like to offer special rates for current and ex-serving defence personnel, please contact [Rebecca.marketing@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au](mailto:Rebecca.marketing@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au) to organise to have your business featured.





## CAIRNS RSL SUB-BRANCH RACE DAY

John Cameron, general manager of the Cairns Jockey Club contacted the Sub-Branch and offered us partnership for the ANZAC Day races. This was a kind gesture that demonstrated their support for those who have served our country. All Sub-Branch members and RSL members received free entry on the day as well as full race-day naming and the naming rights to one race.

Two of our newest board Directors Rob Lee and Kristen Rice along with two of our Sub-Branch members Fiona Gallacher and Andrea Wheeler presented the winning trophy for the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Open Handicap. This was a great day out and a fantastic opportunity for us to promote our advocacy and welfare services to the community.



*Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Race Day*



*RAAF Hudson memorial service*

## DEDICATION AND COMMEMORATION TO THE CREW AND PASSENGERS OF RAAF HUDSON A16-118

A memorial service was held on Saturday, 26 May, 2018 to remember and honour all the servicemen who tragically lost their lives in the air crash of Royal Australian Air Force, Hudson Serial A16-118 which occurred near Machans Beach, Cairns on the 5th March, 1945.

The Memorial Service is to respectfully honour all eleven Servicemen who tragically lost their lives. Their names are:

### CREW:

F/Lt Donald J. Bassett Service No 406465

F/Off Gordon Thomson Service No 400573

WO Berrol S. Frieze Service No 409400

LAC John D. Moore Service No 77157

### PASSENGERS:

Maj-Gen George A. Vasey Service No VX9

Maj-Gen Rupert M. Downes Service No VX57673

Colonel Robert H. Russell Service No NX168

Lt-Col George A. Bertram Service No NX324





RAAF Hudson memorial service

F/Lt John W. Newell Service No 404543

Lt William Riggall Service No VX80932

Cpl Edward L. James Service No NX4011

The newly constructed memorial is a permanent reminder for present and future generations of the ultimate sacrifice that was made by these eleven brave servicemen.



Vietnam Veterans Day

## VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

Will be held on Saturday, 18 August at 1100hrs followed by a light lunch and drinks in the Catalina Room. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Khe Sanh one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War, and perhaps a diversionary tactic for the so-called *Tet Offensive*.

## MARK "TANGLES" MCGRATH MEMORIAL

On 13 March 2018 there will be a dedication and unveiling of a plaque honouring the memory of PLTOFF Mark "Tangles" McGrath, RAAF.

Mark was a young Sabre pilot in 79 Sqn who tragically died in Ubon whilst attempting to land his Sabre aircraft on 3 January, 1968. Mark McGrath marked the only operational death of an Australian serviceman in Thailand during the Vietnam War.

Bill Maconachie recalls his memories of Mark McGrath, "...a really top bloke, he used to come to the Naffi (yes we had a Naffi at Ubon) and have a few beers with his ground crew after work. I was on rotation back to Butterworth to 77 Sqn when "Tangles" met his demise. A very sad loss to the squadron. A shame it took so long to recognise this loss, never mind, it is now done. 50 years on and he has finally been remembered. "Lest We Forget!"



Mark McGrath memorial

## MUSEUM GUEST BOOK COMMENTS

*'Absolutely wonderful display! A job very well done and a good cross section of FNQ military history.'*

Tom & Cindy, Jacksonville, FL, 13 March 2018.

*'A world class museum.'*

Christine, Shrewsbury, England, 29 March 2018.

*'An honour to be here.'*

Marise, Parliament House Canberra, 11 April 2018.

*'The visit was wonderful.'*

David, Brisbane, QLD 16 April 2018.

*'Thank you for remembering our heroes! Captain Ernest Girault Granddaughter.'*

T.G., Koah, 26 April 2018.

*'You should be very proud of this great museum!'*

Ray and Chris, East hills, Sydney, 9 May 2018.

*'A very impressive museum to visit.'*

CPOZ Fraser HMAS Vancouver - Esquimalt BC  
7 June 2018.

If you have a story to contribute for the News Brief please contact Rebecca  
marketing@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au



# PAWS NEWS

## Pensions Advocacy and Welfare Services



### HMAS BENALLA (II)

The AGSCs HMA Ships HMAS *Paluma* (IV), HMAS *Mermaid*, HMAS *Shepparton* (II) and HMAS *Benalla* (II), generally operate in pairs, and are designed for hydrographic survey operations in the shallow waters of northern Australia. Their twin hulls provide good stability in heavy conditions, and good living room and space below the main deck. In addition, the catamaran hull sits well out of the water, the ship drawing only 2.2 metres - a favourable characteristic in shoaling and reef waters where the ships are required to operate.

Each SML carries the latest in navigation aids and survey and computerised hydrographic data processing equipment. All data collected by the ship is stored on CD-ROM and forwarded to the Australian Hydrographic Office for subsequent publication in navigational products ranging from paper to electronic charts.

Through the recently launched RSL Education program, RSL Queensland are making sure that the young Australian School children are aware of the sacrifices that have been made. The program aims to educate and inspire children through animations, slide shows and research projects. It allows students the chance to explore the impact of Australia's involvement in the conflicts of the past century, the impact it has had on society, and on the health and wellbeing of those who have served in the Australian Defence Force. All materials are free to use,

and they all align with the Queensland curriculum.

If you would like to know more or have the President of your local RSL Sub-Branch visit your school go to [www.rsleducation.com.au](http://www.rsleducation.com.au)

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Adrian Eddy of HMAS *Benalla* arranged for his crew to volunteer at the Sub-Branch whilst the ship was in port.

A number of crew members visited veterans, war widows and legatees at their homes to lend a helping hand with the garden and house maintenance.







RECAP

May - July

# CAIRNS RSL SUB BRANCH

## WE SUPPORT OUR DEFENCE FAMILY WITH:



**133** home & hospital visits



**156** clients were assisted with **DVA** claims



**193** cases of **welfare** assistance



**498.5** hours completed by a team of **38** dedicated volunteers



**9** RSL Poppy Services

Whether you are a member of the RSL or not, we're here for you. We can assist in real and practical ways including but not limited to; help with compensation claims through DVA, bereavement assistance for Defence families who have lost loved ones, peer support groups, visits to the sick, injured and lonely at home or in hospital, emergency financial assistance, emergency accommodation.

FOLLOW US ON



@CairnsRSLSubBranch



@cairnsrcslsubbranch

CAIRNS RSL SUB BRANCH | 115 The Esplanade Cairns | admin@cairnsrcslsubbranch.com.au | (07) 4051 5254



# KOKODA HALL MUSEUM | REPORT

Bill Maconachie — Curator

It may appear to the casual observer that nothing much is happening in the Kokoda Hall Museum. On the surface, it appears progress has slowed to a snail's pace. However, nothing is further from the truth. There is considerable activity going on in the museum; our volunteers are working behind the scenes contributing as much time as they can. There is still a way to go before we achieve our original development goal. Time is our greatest enemy, but the work is progressing.

Some of the projects presently underway are as follows:

- Bob is developing a memorial board for HMAS *Manoora*, funded by the N.Q. Independent Living Organisation. There is a lot of detail involved in this project. Bob is also working on obtaining the specs to obtain the correct IT program to complete the touch screen component of the Interpretive Bunker
- Murray is coordinating the development and production of the four north wall photo artwork canvasses, depicting Cairns at War- 1939-45. To obtain suitably clear photos to be reproduced for each subject is a somewhat daunting task
- Craig is working on the presentation of a typical army flag of WWII — a Japanese flag inscribed with Japanese and English signatures. He is also completing other projects including the restoration of a number of uniforms fitted to mannequins to be displayed in the museum
- Tony, Ralph and Allan are tackling the mammoth task of sorting and collating our huge collection of books. Our stalwart, Roy, has had to temporarily drop out, due to medical issues and we wish him a speedy recovery. The crew are presently picking the eyes out of the collection, which could be housed in the museum library. We have discussed having a book sale at nominal prices in the near future to dispose of excess and duplicate copies. Proceeds of the sale would go towards further development of the museum and ensure that books went to good homes
- Mathew is our fix-it man. He did an excellent job of reinforcing the frame of the German U-Boat ensign which Murray erected in the Armoury. Matt is also working on having some models built on behalf of the museum, but is presently away at the Invictus Games
- Bill Mac is working on the restoration of an historic battle honour banner for HMAS *Kanimbla* (donated by Lyn Warwick) and a Luftwaffe staff car metal Eagle, whilst fermenting ideas for follow-on pop-up exhibitions to succeed the current Tribute to Bomber Command created on Saturday, 26 May. Subjects to follow include Vietnam Veterans' Day, 75th Anniversary of Operation Jaywick, RAN and RAAF in the Battle of the Atlantic, RAAF WWII, Catalina operations in Cairns, the RAAF in Ubon, Thailand and more RAN and Army displays yet to be devised. This will involve copious research to produce the necessary display materials
- Dave provides back-up for research, text writing and proofreading for material to be displayed in and associated with the museum
- Gerry, our Weapons Licence Holder, once again arranged an excellent portrayal of the reversed .303 Rifle, bayonet and steel helmet for ANZAC Day ceremonies, and has already applied to the QPS to display the L1A1-SLR Rifle, bush hat and GPs for Vietnam Veterans' Day on 18 August. Gerry, when time permits, has also been cleaning and preserving the weapons on display in the Armoury
- Fred provides back-up to all, where and when required.



## Recent Achievements

The move was successively made from the store room at Quinny's to our new micro-mini-warehouse off Anderson Street. Many thanks to Bob, Murray, Matt, and Les for the use of his ute.

The Catalina anchor, related story-boards and image of the Catalina aircraft The Dabster have been erected on the front wall of the club, facing the Esplanade and Cenotaph. Many thanks to Craig and the Club for funding and organising the placing of this impressive and important relic for all to see. More importantly, this aircraft would have operated from Cairns before being lost with all nine crew in action in the Philippines during December 1944, (story to follow):

- The Sword Cabinet has been erected in the Armoury and the lighting installation is imminent
- The German U-boat ensign frame has been strengthened and mounted in the Armoury
- The model of M.V. Krait has been completed by local model boat maker, Neville Wicks, as he has a model of the kayak Folboat. MV Krait sailed from Cairns via Exmouth Gulf to Singapore, to carry out the Operation Jaywick attack on Japanese shipping. These items will go on display for the 75th Anniversary of Operation Jaywick in September
- A coloured sandwich board advertising the Kokoda Hall Museum has been received thanks to Rebecca's creation of the excellent artwork. It has been agreed that this board will be located on the footpath adjacent to the Main Entrance of the Club whenever the museum is open for visitors
- Bob provided a one-hour information service on the Sub-Branch's role in the Cairns

Community, to Year 11 Students at the Woree State High School. The event, held on 28 May, was also attended by Legacy and a number of other service organisations.

## Going Forward

It is planned that by year's end, the major part of the initial development of the Kokoda Museum will have been completed:

- The Cairns at War artwork canvasses will be completed, stretched over frames and mounted on the north wall
- Reconfiguration of the centre piece WWI Centenary display cabinets will have been completed. They will be repositioned against the north wall — having been split in two — beneath the Cairns at War artwork canvasses
- The Interpretive Bunker system will be functioning with full access to relative YouTube programs as required, along with the facility to play relevant DVDs in the museum library
- The south wall will have been fully utilised with display items and/or pictures.

## Conclusion

We have a great tri-service and civilian crew as volunteers in the Kokoda Hall Museum. They all work very well together in a good spirit of mateship, each has their own speciality, or can mix and match with others to complete a project. We welcome any like-minded others who will help develop this small museum into a top-line display of military memorabilia, with particular focus on our local region and personalities.

PVA – The Museum Curator job is always up for grabs, as I am more than willing to go back to the hangar floor at any time. Full Speed Ahead!



Over the past few months we have had the honour of hosting the following visitors and functions in our museum.



*Janet and Edmund (Buster) Todd, Marise Payne*

## **The Minister for Defence – Senator the Hon. Marise Payne**

The Sub-Branch were fortunate to have a visit by the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Senator Marise Payne. The Minister joined the Board of the Sub-Branch in the Kokoda Hall and enjoyed the company and hospitality of the Board and Members of the Sub-Branch. Also present were members of the Cairns Business Women's Club's President, Ms. Jules Steer and other members of the CBWC, Warren Entsch MP, Cairns City Councillors and President and General Manager of the Cairns RSL Club.

The Minister was given a tour of the Museum by Curator Mr. William Maconachie, after which she delivered a heartfelt speech on the importance of the RSL and its advocacy, support and welfare to its members.

She made special mention that the Cairns Sub-Branch had five young veterans on its Board to help move the organisation forward in 2018.

President of the Sub-Branch, Mr. Buster Todd thanked the Minister for her visit and speech and for her recognition of the Sub-Branch's achievements and goals. The Minister spent the rest of

the evening meeting the Sub-Branch's members and their partners.

## **Son of Henry (Harry) Dalziel VC – Dave Dalziel**

Henry (Harry) Dalziel VC (1893-1965)

Locomotive fireman, soldier farmer, miner and songwriter.

"His magnificent bravery and devotion to duty was an inspiring example to all his comrades." (citation for the recommendation for the Victoria Cross)

Locomotive fireman, soldier, farmer and songwriter, Henry Dalziel was born on 18 February, 1893 at Irvinebank, Queensland, son of James Dalziel, miner, and his wife Eliza Maggie, née McMillan, both of whom were Australian-born. He was educated at Irvinebank and became a fireman on the Cairns-Atherton railway.

Harry Dalziel enlisted on 16 January, 1915, and in July he went to Egypt with reinforcements for the 15 Battalion, serving with this unit in Gallipoli. Following the evacuation of Gallipoli, the 15th trained in Egypt until 31 May, 1916, when they sailed for France.

During the Battle of Hamel, the 15th Battalion had been given the task of capturing a position known as Pear Trench. Artillery fire had rained down on Pear Trench but proved ineffective as it failed to damage the strong wire entanglements that protected the enemy position; neither the trench nor its garrison were damaged enough to diminish their resistance to the Australians.



*David Dalziel, Bill Maconachie and John Hardy*





Dalziel saw this, left his gun in the able hands of one of his team, and, drawing his revolver, he singlehandedly rushed the German machine-gunners, shooting two and capturing a third.

Dalziel, who lost his trigger finger when it was blown away by a machine gun bullet during the action, was ordered to the rear. He made as if to obey, but later when Pear Trench was finally stormed and taken, Dalziel was discovered still in the thick of the fight.

Again he was ordered back to the regimental aid post, but went instead to retrieve boxes of ammunition which had been parachuted onto open ground, but were inaccessible due to the enemy's constant fire. Ignoring the enemy fire, he proceeded to fetch the ammunition a case at a time. He had just loaded his Lewis gun when he was shot in the head.

Dalziel's actions, for which he was later awarded the Empire's highest bravery award, the Victoria Cross, occurred on July 4 and was the 1000th such award made to a Commonwealth serviceman.

The Australians and Americans who witnessed Dalziel's bravery despaired at his seemingly inevitable death. Yet, this was not to be, as arduous but skilful treatment in England saw him fit enough to leave Britain for Australia on 5 January, 1919. He was subsequently discharged in Brisbane in July,

1919. After the war, while travelling home by train, he received a hero's welcome at every station from Townsville to Atherton.

He died in Oxley, Queensland on 24 July, 1965 aged 72 years. He was cremated at the Mt. Thompson crematorium, Brisbane. In a park in Atherton, a mounted First World War artillery piece stands as a memorial to Pte Harry Dalziel VC. His name is commemorated at Dalziel Avenue in Atherton. Harry Dalziel is one of only two Australian Victoria Cross recipients who fought in World War One and World War Two.

### Two War Time Walking Tour groups

If you are interested in learning about the military history of Cairns during WWII join us together with Cairns Libraries as we tour the Cairns CBD. The tour ends at the Kokoda Hall Museum where morning tea will be provided. The cost is \$5.00 per person and all funds raised are donated to the Museum. Please see below for future tour dates. To find out more information, please contact the Cairns Library on 4044 3720.

**Friday 27 July**  
**Friday 24 August**  
**Friday 28 September**

### HMAS Cairns Invitational Rugby Team



*HMAS Cairns Invitational Rugby Team*



# EX-SERVICE ORGANISATION REPORTS



*Battle of Coral Balmoral*

## **MALANDA RSL SUB-BRANCH**

On the 16th May, a group of ladies from the Tablelands Veterans Partners' Support Group travelled to the Cairns Aquarium thanks to a welfare grant provided by FND. This group consists of Veterans' wives, partners and War Widows from the 5 Sub-Branches located on the Atherton Tablelands. The ladies wish to thank all those involved and look forward to further adventures in the future.

On 19 May, the Malanda RSL Sub-Branch held a service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Coral & Balmoral South Vietnam at which more than 60 people were present. Sub-Branch members were honoured to have two Vietnam Veterans who had taken part in these engagements, Mr Bruce Craven of Mossman and Mr Roger Colclough of Dimbulah. Local school children also attended the service reading a poem titled The Final Inspection and the Dedication of Purpose. The Sub-Branch thanks all of those who attended the service.

## **EX-SERVICE WOMEN'S SUB-BRANCH**

Cairns & District Ex-Servicewomen's Sub-Branch recently hosted the annual Cairns combined Women's Services Club Dinner. This was held at the Cairns RSL Club and was attended by fifty-five ladies from various organisations from Cairns and surrounds. Guest speaker was Sarah Young, welfare



*Fay Mitchell and Jan Kersnovske welcoming guests*

officer from Townsville RSL. It was a great evening and was enjoyed by all.

## **MURIEL QUINN**

Ex-servicewoman Muriel Quinn recently turned 100 on 19 May. Muriel joined the Air Force shortly after WWII broke out, and served as a transport driver at RAAF Richmond. However, whilst travelling to RAAF Amberley for her new posting, she was one of three girls who fell from the train when it suddenly jerked. After five weeks in hospital, Muriel was discharged. After her discharge at the end of the war, Muriel took over the lease of the Cairns City Council Kiosk at Anzac Park and remained there until she retired.





*Muriel Quinn presentation*

Muriel is shown receiving a certificate of appreciation from RSL Qld with FND President Peter Sterling and Cairns & District Ex-Servicewomen's President, Marion Hayton. Well done, Muriel!

### DAY CLUB REPORT

The Day club has been powering along with large turnouts at our regular Tuesday morning meetings at Farnorha. It was very busy for several weeks as four of our regular stalwart volunteers were away.

However, we were very grateful for Mr Chris Courtney's help with pick-ups and home deliveries in his own vehicle. Many thanks, Chris. Lots of the club members have asked when you will be returning.

On April 17, during the very busy ANZAC week, we decided to have a BBQ luncheon. The fine spread included delicious chicken kebabs, sausages and four salads which made a very enjoyable end to a day of games amongst friends.

During the month of May, we welcomed several new people to our friendly weekly games and morning teas. The month concluded with an eagerly-awaited outing to the Cairns Aquarium with a special morning tea at the Aquarium Restaurant.

We would like to thanks the staff at The Aquarium and Restaurant for making the day so enjoyable for us all.

During the last few months at the Day Club we have lost two valued members due to illness: Beryl Robb and Do Nelms. They will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with their families.



## CAIRNS AQUARIUM





# ROY HARTMAN

## Life Member

For Roy Hartman, volunteering brings love and happiness to his life along with benefits to the community.

For Roy Hartman, volunteering brings love and happiness to his life along with benefits to the community.

The elevation of a Service Member to Life Membership is an honour bestowed upon those who have gone above and beyond their call of duty. And on Sunday, 8 April 2018, Roy Hartman was awarded this honour. An honour greatly deserved for his outstanding service to the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch for over 50 years of service.

It is interesting to note that when Roy first tried to join the RSL in 1960, he was refused on the grounds that he was not a Returned Member. In 1971, he was having a beer with his cousin when the then Secretary asked him why he wasn't a member. Upon informing the

Secretary of the previous application and subsequent refusal, he was signed up on the spot. Since then Roy has dedicated thousands of hours to volunteering at the Sub-Branch in the following positions:

- **BOARD DIRECTOR**

Roy was on the board of the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch from 1999-2009

- **FUNERAL SERVICES**

Roy has been attending funeral services for the last 26 years. During some weeks he might have five funeral services to attend. Roy has developed a very good relationship with all the funeral directors in the region. For each funeral, he has to initiate contact with the funeral director to ensure correct procedure of the RSL Service.



Roy Hartman Remembrance Day

## MUSEUM

In the early days, Roy was a one-man band, preserving and curating memorabilia. Our collection of memorabilia would not be what it is today if Roy hadn't dedicated his spare time to meeting and communicating with people to arrange the generous donations of various pieces of memorabilia for our museum. During the renovations of the RSL premises, the memorabilia had to be moved to an off-site storage location. Roy was part of a dedicated team of volunteers who photographed and catalogued every piece of memorabilia. He was instrumental in being at the forefront of this painstaking operation.

Later down the track, the board decided that it would be a great idea to display and share our collection of memorabilia with the public, and thus the museum was born. From 2001-2015, Roy was the curator of the museum, and worked eight hours a day with his fellow volunteers, coming in five days a week to ensure the completion of the museum by the 11th November 2016. Although Roy stepped down as curator in 2015, he is still actively involved.

We were lucky enough to receive a century ANZAC Grant to showcase four men from this region: Henry (Harry) Dalziel, Caleb Shang, Harry Doyle and Ernest Austin Ainslow, all who fought in WW1. On Remembrance Day 2016, Roy had the honour of opening our museum and unveiling our WW1 display. This would not have been possible without Roy and the memorabilia committee who cheerfully volunteered their time, working tirelessly to complete their mission and welcoming many noteworthy people to the opening.

The museum is open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and can be opened outside of these hours if organised in advance. Roy is always able and willing to accompany various groups — Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, etc., on tours through the halls. For a period of time he was conducting at least two tours a week. We have an American Tour Group called Golden Circle Tours who regularly visit this site. Roy always makes himself available whenever he can.

Cairns Regional Council and other tourism organisations now recognise the museum as a tourist destination. Since early 2016, Cairns Libraries, as part of a Cairns Regional Council initiative, have run a walking tour of WWII places of interest around Cairns CBD. The final stop is the Cenotaph and Museum where Roy, along with other volunteers, meet the group to tell stories and explain the history of the RSL and Cenotaph. To start from humble beginnings to being recognised as renowned tourist destination is no mean feat; it is a reflection of Roy's hard work and dedication.



*Roy Hartman and wife Dawn*



*Life Members from left Mervyn Hains, Roy Hartman and Stan Carswell*



*Unveiling of the Roy Hartman (OAM) Lounge*



## DINE WITH A DIGGER

Dine with a Digger is an RSL and Rotary initiative taking place prior to ANZAC Day, and Roy worked with admin for a period of ten years from 2002-2012. Anyone who has been in a conflict area is invited to this dinner event at the RSL. Cairns RSL is heavily involved in the planning and organisation of this event which is funded by Rotary. Many hours are required from Roy in the weeks leading up to the dinner; at least two or three days a week.

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Roy was a Master of Ceremonies for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day from 1996-2011. Roy needed to spend a great deal of time at the RSL in preparation for these events.

## CHAIRMAN OF ANZAC DAY COMMITTEE

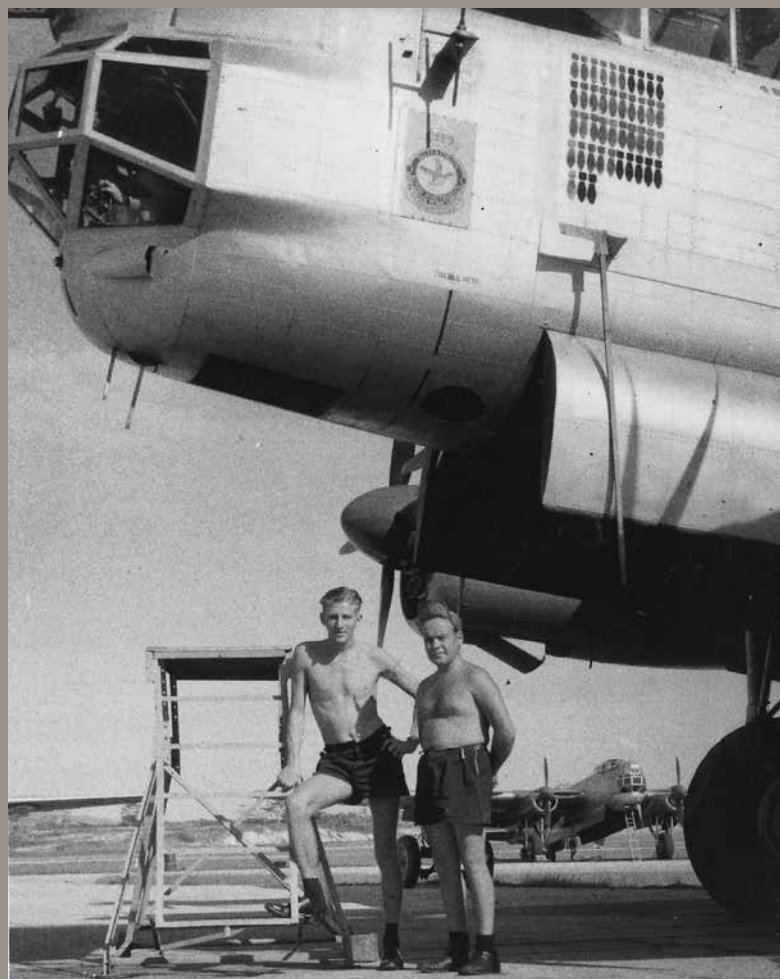
Roy was the Chairman of the ANZAC Day committee for five years. This committee was comprised of people from Cairns Regional Council, Navy, Army, Cadets, Bands and other ESOS.

Along with his significant contribution towards the RSL, Roy has also played a noteworthy role in providing voluntary work to the services and ex-services community through the following positions:

- **WELFARE.** Roy was a Legacy Welfare Chairman in the mid 1990s for eight years, assisting ex-service personnel and widows of service men. This involved the allocation of funds to Widows for welfare purposes. During his time, he was able to set up policies and procedures to ensure that all Widows and Welfare people received what they needed
- **NATIONAL RAAF ASSOCIATION.** In 1980, Roy was awarded National Life Membership to the RAAF Association which he had joined in 1960. He is still an active member today
- **AIR CADETS.** Roy was an Instructor for 22 years in the Air Cadets and a Commanding Officer for 17 years
- **PROBUS CLUB.** Roy was heavily involved in the Probus Club of Cairns Trinity for 25 years and is a Life Member.

As you can see Roy Hartman is a very deserving recipient of Life Membership. He has dedicated his life to the service and ex-service community. Without all the voluntary hours Roy has given over the past 50 years, along with other Volunteers, the RSL would not have been able to function and provide the services we offer today.

# Thank you, Roy



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# THE SPIRIT OF ANZAC POETRY COMPETITION

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This year on November 11th, 2018, marks the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day, the end of World War One. Cairns RSL Sub-Branch will be running a poetry competition for all school aged children from year 7 to 12 in the FNQ District to write a poem that reflects the Spirit of ANZAC.

## **Fancy seeing your Spirit of ANZAC Poem published?**

The top poems from each year level will be published in The Spirit of ANZAC Centenary Book. 100 poems will be published alongside images from World War One.

The winner will receive flights and accommodation for two adults and two children to a significant ANZAC Day Commemorative Service in 2019.

All registered participants will receive a certificate.

Registration and Entry closes: **Friday 21st September 2018**

The winner will be announced on Saturday 10 November 2018

## **Terms and Conditions**

All poems must be originals. Any plagiarisms will result in instant disqualification. Poems must be present on one A4 size page and submitted in a word document. For inspiration visit <https://rsleducation.com.au/>



# PROFILES

## Volunteers, Successful Veterans, Sub-Branch Members

### Eunice Neale

If you have spent any time in the Cairns Private Hospital over the past twelve years, there is no doubt that you would have seen this wonderful lady making her rounds. Her calling card – a couple of butterscotch lollies and a copy of the latest Sit Rep.

Eunice has been visiting sick and injured veterans in hospital since she saw an ad calling for volunteers in one of the first editions of Sit Rep. Eunice had been told by RSL Care that volunteers were no longer required so, feeling unwanted and no longer useful, she had walked away after years of volunteering for RSL Care – until she phoned the number on the ad and met Peter Turner. Peter explained that there was no link between the two organisations, and the Sub-Branch would be honoured to have Eunice as part of the team.

In the early days, Eunice would drive from Fishery Falls to visit patients, collect their washing to

take home and clean, later returning it to them. Eunice recalls a time when she visited a lady who looked awfully down. Through the course of the conversation Eunice learned that the lady had been rushed to hospital by ambulance but hadn't have a chance to get underwear or her false teeth, which had been left in a glass beside the bed. The poor lady had no clothes, could hardly talk and couldn't eat without her teeth. The lady lived in a retirement village, so Eunice marched down there, spoke with the manager and was able to get the false teeth and some clean clothes to take back to the hospital.

Eunice recalls another time when a lady was stressed and anxious as she had been rushed into hospital. Eunice asked if she was ok and needed anything and they lady responded saying that her little dog had been left at home and her neighbours wouldn't know where she was. Eunice found out where she lived, found the house and spoke to the neighbours.



*Cairns RSL Sub Branch volunteers Lance Armstrong Waters, Eunice Neale and husband John*



Brian Whaling

When people are rushed to hospital unexpectedly they don't have time to pack clothes or tidy their affairs at home. Eunice is all too happy to help where she can: going to the shops to purchase hospital clothing, charging phones, letting the patient's neighbours know what has happened so that pets can be cared for. However, Eunice informs us that although having been asked on multiple occasions to bring in booze and women, that is where she draws the line.

When asked why she does it, she said, "Getting a smile on people's faces. With all the pain that people are in, putting a smile on their faces by helping them forget that they are sick for just a few minutes, is priceless."

### Thank you, Brian Whaling, for 50 years of service

If you have attended the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Dawn Service over the past 50 years, there is no doubt you would recall the wonderful sounds of the bagpipes bellowing over the crowd as people walk forward to pay their respects and place their wreaths. The man behind the bagpipes is Brian Whaling. Brian was recruited in the early 1960s by Richard G. Penny who was a former Major and the Honorary Secretary of the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch at the time.

After 50 years of service and at the sprightly age of 82, Brian has decided it's time to hand the reins over. Brian recalls his first Dawn service. "There was a crowd of only about 51 people," says Brian. Today, it's a different story. This year over 3,500 people attended the service to pay their respects and listen to Brian play the bagpipes for the final time.

We would like to thank Brian Whaling sincerely for his 50 years of service in playing the bagpipes at the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Dawn Service, and wish him all the best in his retirement.

# 96%

of volunteers say that it  
"makes people happier"

### IN 2017, WE SUPPORTED OUR DEFENCE FAMILY WITH:

**219**  
home & hospital visits



**\$3,000+**  
donated to **PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**



Assistance with

**460**  
DVA claims



**4,000+**  
hours completed by a team of

**65** dedicated volunteers



**FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND'S LARGEST**  
research project into  
**YOUNGER VETERANS**  
and their needs



**100+**  
cases of welfare assistance

### DID YOU KNOW?

**OUR SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL**  
former and current service men and women, not just RSL members

At our **SUB BRANCH** we have highly skilled Advocates that can assist you with DVA Claims

We have a **WAR MUSEUM** which is open Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm **FREE ENTRY**

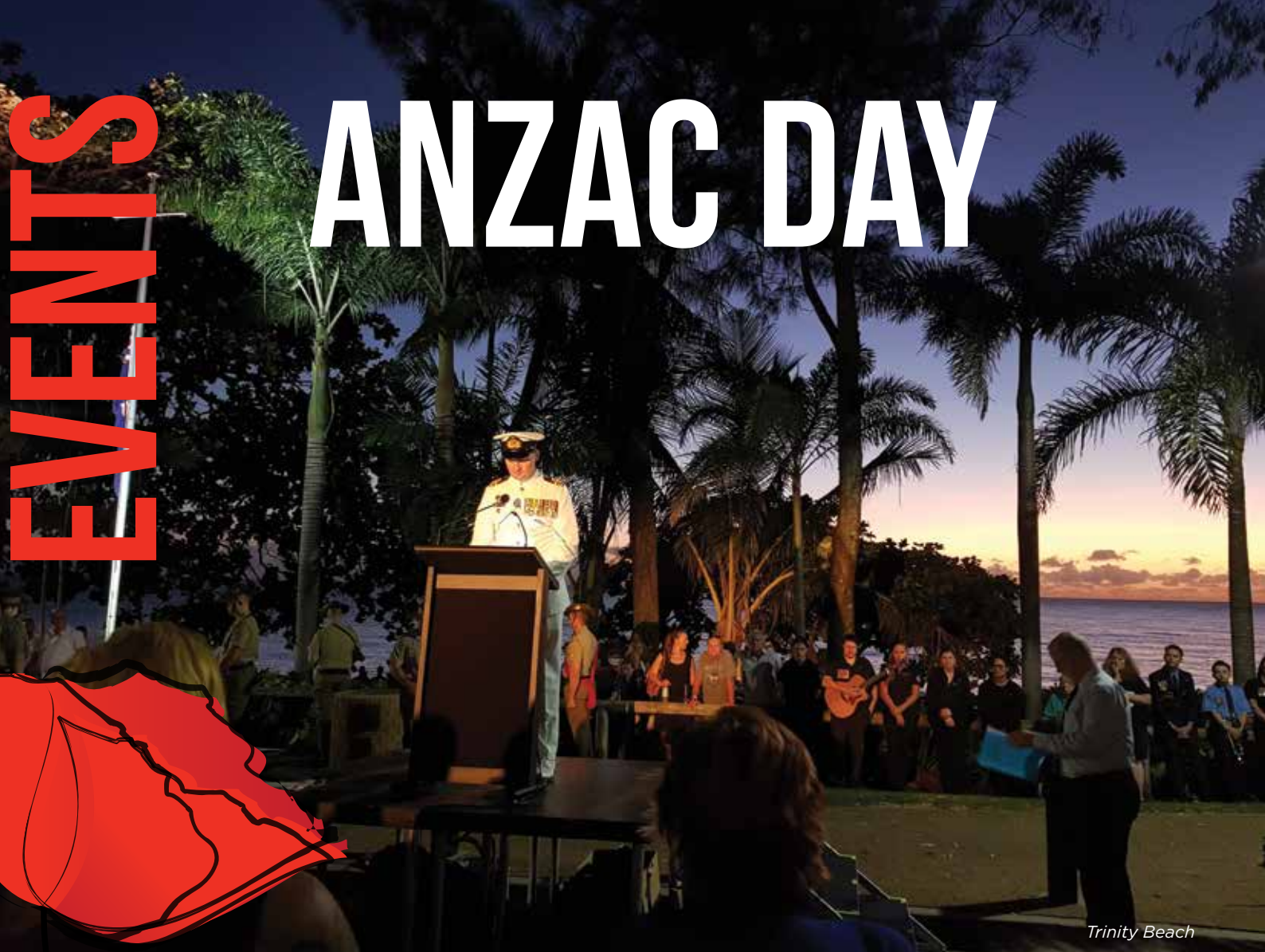
**7 OUT OF 8**  
of our board members are **YOUNGER VETERANS**

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# ANZAC DAY



For anyone who has attended an ANZAC Day dawn service, there is no denying the sense of respect and reflection that the service inspires. And this year was no different, except for the number of jackets and jumpers worn by those in attendance!

Over 3,500 gathered in the dark, cold, still of the morning of April 25 to stop, pause and reflect on the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have defended our nation and our values. This year's ANZAC Day marked the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, a battle fiercely fought but won through excellent strategic planning and execution by the Australian 13th and 15th Brigades with the help of the 51st Battalion. A victory that British officer, Brigadier General Grogan described as, "perhaps the greatest individual feat of the war." However, it is also a time to reflect upon the thousands of lives cut short by war and conflict throughout the centuries, from the Boer War to Afghanistan. We also paid tribute to those members of the Australian Defence Force currently on active service overseas, or awaiting deployment. These men and women, past and present have served our country with honour, selflessness and bravery for the safety and freedom of our nation. And for this, we will forever be indebted.

The day began with the traditional Dawn Service commencing at 5.30am with young veteran and Board Director Rob Lee acting in the highly-esteemed role of Master of Ceremonies. Rob opened the service with the following speech:

"This morning we are gathered here to pay homage to all the men and women who have served in defence, whose supreme sacrifice has contributed to the success of Australia being a safe and free country among the community of nations.

These are the men and women who, without hesitation, willingly wrote a blank cheque made payable to Australia for an amount up to and including his or her life. They showed courage, selflessness and resilience in proudly defending our country for the safety and freedom of others. This is the ANZAC spirit — the same spirit that has been handed down through the generations of Australian Defence Personnel since WW1. That same spirit is alive now in the diverse group of veterans gathered here before us today.

We also pause to acknowledge all current and former serving members of our defence forces: the brave men and women who represent our country on a daily basis. At this very moment there are one thousand, eight hundred and four Australian defence personnel deployed across eight different operations in various theatres around the world. That means there are nearly two thousand families waiting for their family member to come home as I speak. Sadly, coming home is not a guaranteed luxury for these brave men and women.

Since 2001, 42 Australians have lost their lives and 241 have been wounded as a result of combat in Afghanistan. To this day only physical wounds are included in official casualty statistics. It is difficult to comprehend the grief and loss associated with losing a partner, parent, child or sibling during war, or upon them returning home with unseen wounds that will still be present long after the conflict has ended. Those that have returned home with these psychological scars, walk among us. There are no Australians left untouched when a member of our Defence Family is killed or wounded in action.

We must not forget today's veterans: the young men and women who are returning from duty in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. We have seen

them serve with courage, self-reliance, resilience and proud mateship. These same qualities that were showcased on the battlefields of Villers-Bretonneux 100 years ago today, earning the Aussies and Kiwis the ANZAC name. A title bestowed upon them by Allied Forces command. A title that forever more will echo greatness.

We have the ability to face challenges together and overcome them, to put community before self, to be courageous, determined, self-reliant and strong. We should be proud of our heritage. This is the spirit of ANZAC: the spirit that we must pass on for all generations to come."

Major David Hopgood from the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment was then invited to address the crowd, and he gave the following speech:

"This morning we honour the men and women who embody the very best qualities of humanity. Selfless, disciplined, and tenacious – Australian soldiers won a strategically significant battle at Villers-Bretonneux on the 25th of April, 1918. The 51st Battalion, originally raised predominately by men from WA, now located here in Cairns, was part of that battle. They helped stop the German offensive and hasten victory for the allies to restore peace in Europe and the wider world. It is hard to rationalise now how the region in France where the battle was fought – today so sombre and yet serene – could once have been the scene of a ferocious battle recognised as one of the great Australian victories of the First World War.

No longer the fresh, perhaps naïve boys of the ANZAC who landed three years before – the Australian Imperial Force of 1918 was battle-hardened, canny and fiercely brave."

One British officer, Brigadier General Grogan called the victory at Villers-Bretonneux,







Major David Hopgood

‘perhaps the greatest individual feat of the war.’

A British gunner wrote of the Australians: ‘The Australians held the line, and never was the line held better. Villiers-Bretonneux was held intact by an army of great-hearted men who were afraid of nothing on earth. I and the rest of us made friends forever of the loose-belted Aussies.’

Villiers-Bretonneux was part of that crucial transition during the First World War, when Australia came of age.

Sergeant Charles Stokes and Lieutenant Clifford Sadlier, both from WA, were awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Victoria Cross respectively for their bravery and leadership during the second battle of Villiers-Bretonneux.

Sergeant Stokes led a section of bombers against the machine gun positions and succeeded in putting two of the guns out of action and killing the crews. All of Sergeant Stokes’ section becoming casualties. Yet when he discovered another enemy machine gun still in action, he went forward and using his rifle attacked it singlehanded, killing or wounding the crew, and capturing the gun. The Company was able to continue the advance.

Lieutenant Sadlier’s citation for VC was very similar: for conspicuous bravery during a counter attack. Lieutenant Sadlier’s platoon had to advance through a wood where a strong enemy machine-gun post was causing casualties and preventing the advance. Although he himself was wounded, Lieutenant Sadlier at once collected his bombing section and led them against the machineguns, killing the crews and capturing two of the guns. By this time his party were all casualties, yet alone, he

attacked a third enemy machinegun with his revolver, killing the crew of four and taking the gun. In doing so, he was again wounded. The very gallant conduct of this officer resulted in clearing the flank and allowing the battalion to move forward, thereby saving a most critical situation. His coolness and utter disregard for danger inspired all.

This was the turning point of battles on the Western Front, as young Australians distinguished themselves in the defence of France, and in the defence of freedom.

Today, on the 100th anniversary of this action, the 51st Battalion colours will be flown in France, as part of their official commemorations.

But we should also remember those who fought in earlier battles in the Somme offensive which included Pozieres and Fromelles. These names live in the long and bloody roll call of conflicts that help forge the spirit and identity of the Australian nation.

Today, we have reason to be proud of what all those young Australians achieved almost a century ago, and of the bravery and courage they showed.

The individual experience of each soldier contributes to the greater story of the whole – of what happened on the Western Front and the battlefields of Turkey – and of the enormous sacrifices that were made in our nation’s name.

The loss of more than 60,000 Australian lives in World War I from a total population of less than 5 million at that time meant that few, if any, Australians were left untouched by the scourge of war.

Yet the war was no less than the crucible that forged modern Australia.

Over the four years of the First World War, Australia made an increasingly important contribution to the Allied cause.

At the end of the war, Prime Minister Billy Hughes confirmed Australia’s emerging sense of independence and nationhood by ensuring that Australia signed the Paris Peace Treaty in its own right, rather than as a member of the British Empire.

For those who survived, the contribution they made to the growth of our nation, our community, our culture and economy was immeasurable.

Returned soldiers make their mark in all walks of Australian post-war life: politics, business, professions, trades, on the land and in the military.

Many returned home to resume their lives of work and family, even though they bore the scars of their wartime service, in body, mind and soul.





Grace Forsyth, Mayor Bob Manning OAM and Bryne Van Stom



Allan Jamieson and Bob Browne



RSL Flag bearer Timothy Bell





We remember too that thousands of Australian women gave service in countless diverse roles.

This morning, we pay homage to those who survived the war and contributed to the success of Australia as a peace-loving country among the community of nations.

We pay tribute to those who died on those bloody fields.

Thousands of young Australian men lie forever buried in French soil.

But we know they lie in the care of friends.

They will never be forgotten.”

The wreath placing involved an official component representing the people of Cairns and the ex-serving community Mayor Bob Manning OAM and Cairns RSL Sub-Branch President Buster Todd, on behalf of the Armed Forces Australia Commander Dave Hannah and Command Warrant Officer Mike Burrows of HMAS *Cairns*, Major David Hopgood of 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment and Warrant Officer James Filkov Royal Australian Air Force, President of Cairns Legacy Club and President of the War Widow's Guild Alan Picone and Helen Atfield, and representing the Youth of Cairns, two students from Edge Hill State School, Grace Forsyth and Bryna Van Stom.

This was followed by the community wreath placing and accompanied by bagpipes. The bagpipes were played by Brian Whaling. After 50 years of playing at the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Dawn Service this was Brian's final service before retiring.

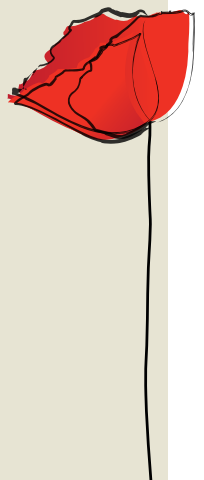


The time-old tradition of the passing of the torch was carried out by one of the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch's oldest female members, Carol Mills, and handed to younger serving member Seaman Lucy Fox from HMAS *Cairns*. The Ode was recited by Cairns State High School Captains, Mia Harris and Pranay Gulati.

Following the Dawn Service, the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch provided breakfast for all Veterans and their families. The Ecumenical service was then held at St Monica's Cathedral and saw great attendance. The march was lead this year by HMAS *Cairns* and the RSL flag was carried by veteran and currently serving member Timothy Bell. Tim joined the Royal Marines three days after leaving school in 1982. Since then he has served with the Australian Army and is currently serving with the Royal Australian Navy.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people who collectively made ANZAC Day possible. And to all the volunteers who dedicated hours of their time and energy to ensure that all Australian Defence Force personnel, past and present, were remembered and honoured with the utmost respect and dignity they deserve.

Stan Carswell  
Peter Hayton  
Chaplain Ian Lindsay  
Major David Hopgood  
Andrew Eather  
Brian Whaling  
Les Bassett  
Carol Mills  
John Lay  
Seaman Samuel Fox  
Russell Hayes



Damon Leftwich  
 Brucey Lee  
 Sandra Groborsch  
 51st Battalion, The Far North  
 Queensland Regiment  
 John Paterson  
 Fred Van Luyk  
 Regan O'Neill  
 Gerry Tooth  
 Ryan Hill  
 Tony L Leslie  
 Katherine Young  
 Bob Browne  
 Allan Jamieson  
 John King  
 Kristen Rice  
 Cairns Brass  
 The combined choirs of St  
 Monica's and St Augustine's  
 College  
 Cairns State High School  
 Captains - Mia Walsh and  
 Pranay Gulati  
 HMAS Cairns  
 Far Northern District RSL  
 Cairns Regional Council  
 Queensland Police Service  
 Queensland Ambulance Service  
 (QAS)  
 St John Ambulance Cairns  
 SES Cairns  
 Surf Life Saving North  
 Queensland  
 Daniel Pycroft  
 Prodig

## By the Left

For the first time in Australia's history of Anzac Day celebrations, female veterans and servicewomen led marches around the country. The new changes, brought about by an initiative called By the Left, encouraged all female military members and younger veterans to march together in this year's commemorative services.

The campaign was initiated to highlight contributions made by women to the Australian Defence Force, the right for males and female veterans to wear their medals on the left of their chest without question and to broaden the public's perception of what a veteran looks like.

Sadly, there is a misconception about what a veteran looks like. Majority of people when asked what a veteran looks like will respond with the statement 'an older looking male'. This results in people walking up to veterans saying 'you must be very proud that you're wearing your families' medals' when in fact, they are wearing their own.

Veterans and currently serving members Corporal Andrea Wheeler and Corporal Fiona Gallacher of 51st Battalion FNQR know this feeling all too well. Both being women, under 40 years of age and collectively having seen multiple tours to Afghanistan, East Timor, Solomon Islands and Netherlands/Ukraine, they often get questioned about wearing their medals.

"Many of our mates no longer march or attend services because of the fact that they don't feel recognised as a veteran" said Corporal Wheeler.

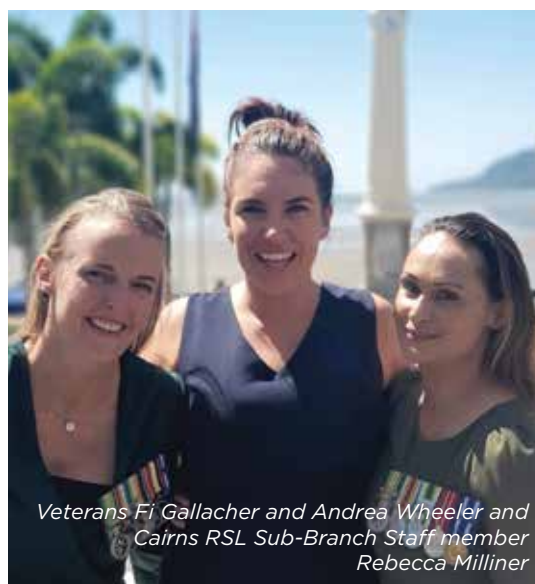
"It's not just the general public either. I get older veterans question my medals as well. They think how can I possible have these medals at my age" said Corporal Gallacher.

Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Director and Younger Veteran Rob Lee said "We need to broaden the profile of what a veteran looks like, we need to let people know that veterans are young/old, male/female, current and ex-serving who have served at home and overseas. No veteran should ever be questioned about wearing their medals on the left side."

Although commemorative services and marching is a personal choice and can be a very emotional time for a number of veterans, it is also a time for veterans to come together, support each other and commemorate those that have paid the supreme sacrifice for our country and they safety and freedom of those that live here.



Rob Lee



Veterans Fi Gallacher and Andrea Wheeler and Cairns RSL Sub-Branch Staff member Rebecca Milliner



Fiona Gallacher



# MEMBER

## *Submissions*

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We love hearing what our members have been up to.  
If you have a story you would like to share or something valuable you  
would like to let people know about, send your submissions to:  
**[marketing@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au](mailto:marketing@cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au)**

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### **VISITING WORLD WAR ONE – By Gerry Webb, Photographs by Carolyn Webb**

Recently, my wife and I visited parts of Belgium and France relating to Australia's involvement in World War One. We were following the service of my great uncle Clarence Hawkins, 31st battalion AIF. Unlike many, his story had a happy ending. Clarence met and married his bride, my great aunt Jean in France. After living in her village for several years they returned to Queensland where they lived long lives together.

As it is the centenary year of the end of the war it seemed the right time to go. We also wanted to visit the new Sir John Monash Centre which opened near Villers-Bretonneux on Anzac Day this year.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission takes care of over 1,000 First World War cemeteries in Europe and they are beautifully maintained. In addition, there are innumerable monuments, museums and landscapes to explore. It's not a vast area by Australian standards but is rich in history and commemoration. Unless unlimited time is available visitors will need to choose which sites to visit.

One option would be to follow the history of particular persons or unit. The Australian Government Remembrance Trail is a useful source to help plan

a tour. (See the link at the end of this article.) We searched for the graves of some local Cairns servicemen; actually finding them was very moving.

We met groups touring the battlefields by bike, car and bus. The terrain is generally flat and roads are good, so cycling is a practical option. Commercial tour operators will take visitors to sites in small groups or by the coach load. A hire car really is necessary for independent touring. Rail services between major towns are excellent and will transport you and your bike, but may not be able to get visitors to all the places they wish to go.

Accommodation is plentiful for all budgets but booking

ahead is wise. An event or anniversary can fill up a location unexpectedly. Visitors are very well supplied with eating and drinking establishments; the local cuisine is a highlight. We based ourselves in the town of Albert, near Amiens in Northern France, and drove out from there to various sites, including Poziers, Mouquet Farm, Theipval and Beaumont-Hamel.

You may be glad of wet weather and/or warm clothing depending on the time of year and season. Visitors will spend a lot of time outdoors and the weather can change quickly. We were always easily recognised as Australians by our broad-brimmed hats.

One of the pleasures was the warm hospitality and welcome



*Villers-Bretonneux, France*



*School children learning history in preserved trenches, Beaumont-Hamel, France.*



*The Sir John Monash Centre near Villers-Bretonneux stands below the Australian national Memorial.*

from the local French and Belgian people. In addition, we regularly met others doing as we were, Australians and New Zealanders, British, Canadian, South African, American. It was worthwhile chatting and exchanging information. We met one couple on a guided tour who were doing the same as we were. It turned out their great uncle and mine joined the same battalion in the same draft of reinforcements and sailed together to Europe on the same troop ship. Most likely they knew each other.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission staff are on hand at some of the larger cemeteries to help visitors. The Canadian Government provides a program of young interns at their national memorial at Beaumont-Hamel. Every cemetery, large or small, has a record book at the entrance gate, where visitors can look up and locate a specific grave.

Ypres in Belgium was a major focus of fighting throughout the war. It has been rebuilt into a beautiful and welcoming town and makes a fine base to visit surrounding battlefields. Every evening the last post ceremony is held at the Menin Gate, through which so many marched out to the battlefields. The gate holds inscriptions of more than 54,000 lost souls who have no known graves.

Further South in the Somme region of France, the new Sir John Monash Centre near Villers-Bretonneux stands below the Australian National Memorial. While it starts and ends with the story of Australian commander, Sir John Monash, the exhibit seeks to tell the full story of Australia's involvement in the war from beginning to end, and after. The state-of-the-art displays include audio visual displays and short films of high quality.

Many of the sites and, of course, the cemeteries are very sad places to visit. The scale of the loss of life is evident from the endless rows of gravestones, and the names of the missing engraved on monuments. Finding the grave of a relative is likely to be an emotional experience. Museum displays can be confronting and graphic. But researching individuals, their stories and the history of what they did can be tremendously rewarding.

It is possible to research without leaving home. The following on line resources are a great help.

The Australian War Memorial site is a good place to start. Their site has a link to 'people.' A name, and possibly a service number and unit if you



*Laurence Boutle of Abbott Street Cairns was 19 when he was killed in action. His grave is in the Australian National Memorial near Villers-Bretonneux*

know them, will get you started. It can take you to embarkation records, rolls of honour and records of awards. The AWM site also has scans of original unit diaries, so you can follow day to day events. The level of detail is remarkable. All the original documents are there, including hand written unit records and maps: [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)

The Australian Government Remembrance Trail is a useful planning tool to work out where to go and what to see: [www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australians-western-front](http://www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australians-western-front)

National Archives of Australia has a collection of scanned service records. If you have a name and perhaps a service number you can use the search function to view scans of original service records of an individual from enlistment onwards: [www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx](http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission can help you find details of those who did not return. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)





*The Governor General and myself*



*Government House NSW*

## **TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ON AND WE ARE THE SAME OLD HUMBLE SOLDIERS – By Brian Little**

Operation Solace Twenty-five-year Reunion: Twenty-five years ago, a battalion strength contingent commanded by LT Col David Hurley (now the NSW Governor General), was requested by the then Prime Minister Paul Keating to provide humanitarian assistance to those suffering famine in Somalia: Operation Restore Hope — known as Operation Solace for the Australian contingent. For years since the ending of the Vietnam war the First Battalion trained mainly for jungle warfare. Until the appointment of LT Col Hurley every commanding officer (CO) had operational warlike service experience.

I was posted to the First Battalion in June 1989, and from the beginning had to learn the ropes the hard way: had to earn and know my place in the platoon. As soon as you marched in you were a junior, a newbie and the jube. I copped every duty which the senior soldier avoided because they had 'time' in the platoon, or as I was told 'time in the battalion.' I was told to get some time up in the battalion before I could earn some respect.

I was an infantry soldier in Four Platoon, Bravo Company. Every financial year, The First Battalion and Second/Fourth Battalion rotated as the Battalion to be ready for operational deployment. The battalion whose turn it was to be operationally ready had the responsibility to be fully manned while the other battalion operated with a skeleton crew. There were six battalions in the Royal Australian Regiment but the other four battalions were lucky to raise two full strength companies.

Every year, funding was being cut, and you had that feeling that one day there would be no full-time Army. In 1990, during a live-fire exercise our platoon, Four Platoon, was judged to be the best one to have completed a live-fire platoon attack stand. For the next couple of months our platoon demonstrated that scenario for politicians and VIPs. Senator Ray was one of those who observed our demonstration, but all the government did at the time was change and end the superannuation scheme DFRTB.

At the end of 1991, Bravo Company was promised a trip to Germany or England. It was a sure thing.

Yet upon our return from annual leave in 1992, Bravo Company, full of anticipation, was told that our trip had been cancelled. So our company was given Malaysia to compensate. But as usual, two Major Generals argued about whether it should be a three-month or four-month posting. Well tails lost, and four months would be the period that the company should be posted to Malaysia. Because it was our battalion's turn to be operationally ready and a one-month period overlapped the Malaysia posting, our trip was cancelled once again. There was a rumour that our company would be training with the marines on a US Aircraft Carrier off the coast of Western Australia, but instead that posting was given to Alpha Company. Then suddenly, the company uplifted one Friday morning and we spent a weekend on Norfolk Island. All we had to do was secure the airport as an exercise carrying live ammunition in full marching order. At that time, I was knifed as the Officer Commander's (OC) driver which removed me from being a rifleman in Four Platoon. As a bonus, on the Saturday we did not have to do the ceremonial battalion birthday parade as the company was still on Norfolk Island.

At the end of 1992, our battalion was ready to go on leave. On the first week of leave my best friend Steve Dingley and I spent a week walking the Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island. After that I returned to Cairns and not expecting anything out of the ordinary, I turned the television on in the morning. It was the morning of the 15th December, 1992. The Government of the day decided to deploy a battalion strength group to Somalia. It seemed likely to be the First Battalion as we were the only battalion close to full strength. Within an hour I received the phone call to return back to the battalion.

Within a week both our company vehicles were fully loaded with stores and equipment and loaded on the HMAS *Tobruk* bound for Somalia. Alpha Company and various supporting elements were transported by both the HMAS *Torbruk* and *Jervis Bay* (GT 203) to the port of Mogadishu via the Island of Diego Garcia.

On 9 January 1993, the advanced party departed on C130 Hercules and the rest of the contingent left on two chartered Qantas flights; one on 15 and the other on 17 January 1993. Prior to our battalion contingent's departure from Townsville, we did

some gas training, zeroing our weapons, improvising training, then some time for last drinks. I left on 15 January and our flight was famous for being greeted by sniper fire on the tarmac while our weapons were still in the cargo hold of the Qantas chartered flight. We all sprinted for cover.

Our battalion contingent, comprising elements of various companies, suffered sleep deprivation due to lack of manpower and resources necessary to complete our tasks, yet by the end, our group completed these objectives effectively and efficiently.



Disturbingly, our group had thirty-three unauthorized discharges of the Styer — our assault rifle— and it was reported that our rifleman were incompetent and lacked the professionalism and discipline of an Australian soldier to handle our weapons correctly. I remember that during a fourteen-day period I averaged two hours sleep a night, if I was lucky enough to have that. You had to expect times when you were not going to get sleep; that was a part of our duty. Our battalion operated in changing shifts and long hours without rest breaks most of the time. If you got a day off, most of the time you were asked to carry out another task that needed attending to.

The Somalia deployment was the largest since Vietnam. It came from nowhere. Our battalion was the closest thing to full strength and had to be bolstered by members of the Second/Fourth Battalions especially in the rifle sections. One of the rumours that surfaced whilst our group

was still in Somalia was that we did not deserve recognition of our time there or the awards we received. That was coming from within the army itself. I felt that on my return, during the brief period before I discharged and even to this day there is still some kind of resentment. I suppose you would expect that from those who missed out on the Somalia deployment. Brigadier George Mansford said in his address to the young veterans' forum that he asked members from Somalia how things were going after a march during Operation Trek back in 1993. The response George got was that nobody thought



Operation Solace deserved it. After that, George started the Rifleman's Lunch to promote equality and recognition of service within the Defence Force.

I am neither a young veteran nor a senior veteran. Maybe I am just the 'forgotten.' Forgotten in time and never mentioned. I marched on Anzac Day under 'Somalia' last year and read the lips of a young teenager. She pointed at the sign for 'Somalia' and said, "Somalia, when did we go to Somalia?" Her mother shrugged her shoulders as if she didn't know either. You have this feeling that RSLs, Politicians and military organizations choose to ignore deployments such as Somalia because they don't value them or understand the significance of our efforts there. Dr Timothy White pointed out in the Queensland RSL magazine, "UNITAF Written Out of Military History." They, Queensland RSL, page 36 Queensland RSL News, Ed #4, 2017, mistakenly published an article on Operation Solace as a United Nations Mission. When

you have organizations such as the Queensland RSL who misinform the public on our deployment UNITAF — Unified Task Force Somalia Sanctioned by the United Nations — how do we get proper recognition for our efforts?

But that was twenty-five years ago. The Operation Solace Group decided to hold our twenty-fifth anniversary reunion in Sydney. That included a march on Anzac Day and a meet and greet and afternoon refreshments at the NSW Governor General's residence on the 26 April.

I arrived in Sydney on the 23



April. After unpacking, I went down to the hotel bar for a meal and a beer. I received a message from Albury Mace to meet up at Harpoon Harry's opposite the Travelodge on Wentworth Avenue. We were both members of Four Platoon with myself being the senior digger and Albury the youngest member of the platoon. We both hugged each other and shook hands and drank some beer. Suddenly, the stories came back of our time in the platoon and on Operation Solace. Ray (Meat) Hemmings and his partner Nickie, joined us later that night. Ray was in Four Platoon as well. We all hugged and shook hands. We talked of the old days and drank more beer. Ray wanted to cut my hair because it was too long. I laughed and dared him to try it.

At our age we need to pace ourselves. Harpoon Harry's is our new boozier, or a central location to meet. The next day after watching a movie at the Events Cinema, I once again ventured down to Harry's. I got out of the taxi at the Travelodge



which is across the road from Harry's. I looked over the road and thought, "are we this old." One by one other members from Operation Solace Group turned up: Rade Djokic, Grant Batty, Adrian Eels, Scott Ansell, Tas Ranson and Murray Bobbin, all Four Platoon members at one stage. This was our meet and greet. Those who wisely left Harry's early attended the Dawn Service.

The next day our Operation Solace Group formed up at Phillip Street north of Hunter Street. Our order of march was number seventeen. The NSW Governor General David Hurley led our march with Padre Martin Flemming holding the sign that introduced the crowd to Somalia 1992-1994 UNSOM 1 & 2 Operation Solace 1993. The walk was approximately one kilometre. Dick Smith was there and he held up a sign saying, 'Thanks.' That was the first time I marched as the Operation Solace Group after I came back from Somalia on the HMAS *Torbuk*. For some of the other members, it was the first time they had marched on Anzac Day. And like me it was very strange to appreciate the clapping. Mark Braeckmans marched with his two grown-up daughters, Suzy and Dazz who are very proud of their Dad. Members of the Somalia operation marched alongside their partners and children. Army, Navy and Airforce involved in not only Operation Solace but also 1992-1994 UNSOM 1 & 2 were there.

After the march the whole group went down to Harpoon Harry's once again. It was time to meet the rest of the battalion group; those you dined with in the mess, ran the ten-kilometre cross-country with, attended sports days both at a company and battalion level. The battalion is a big group made up of four rifle companies, Support Company and Admin Company, supporting elements from 3/4 Cavalry and Four Field Artillery, Engineers and Supporting Elements. Lots of faces to remember. Lots of stories to catch up on. Not just Operation Solace, but our time served together as brothers in the battalion itself.

From the moment that Ray Hemmings saw my long hair he was threatening to cut it off. I said if you want to cut my hair, I will do it for charity. Vince Creagh who was my platoon commander in 1992 offered \$1000.00 to get it shaved. I had to turn up to the NSW Governor General's reception the next day with my head shaved. I had no hesitation in taking up that offer. Rade Djokic took my phone when I rang the president of my Lions Club, Cairns Barrier Reef Lions to secure the deal. My president Norm McMullen said, 'done' and all he had to do was send the BSB and account number.

Ray Hemmings and Richard Grant and a few of the lads went to the Roosters verses the Dragons game at Alliance Stadium. Ray and Richard were shown on Fox television during the minute's silence. But there were still a few of us drinking at Harpoon Harry's till lock out, and I was one of the last to leave with Adrian Eels, Albury Mace and Tas Ranson.

After breakfast the next day, it was off to the barbers. I paid ten dollars for my hair cut and the barber was happy because it was only a three-minute job for him. Later, we met up at Harpoon Harry's for a quick beer and it was off to Circular Quay for lunch. It was the usual gang: Ray Hemmings, Rade Djokic, and Grant Batty with Jimmy Mimi. After a few more beers it was off to the NSW Governor General for the afternoon gathering of all the Somalia contingent.

There we all are at the entrance of the NSW Government House. It is such a grand structure made of stone. General David Hurley made the family and friends of the Somalia Contingent welcome as guests. Once again, we all gathered and spoke to one another. We were treated to afternoon refreshments and beverages.

General Hurley gave a welcome address to his guests. General Hurley, like the rest of those who deployed to Somalia, is a humble well-spoken gentleman. He said words to the effect of, "Somalia influenced my career in the Army, and where I am today. But I would not have made the journey without those who were under my command. It was you who made Operation Solace a success. I thank you. And the Army training itself would not have advanced because new training had to be written based on our success in Somalia. We went to a place with no training for that environment, but we adapted and got the job done." That was not General Hurley's exact words but that was what he meant.

Liz Hann, the mother of Lance Corporal Shannon Macliney who was our only casualty, a true brother who we lost on the 2 April 1992, spoke to the gathering. Liz is a well-spoken lady and she thanked the battalion and those who went on Operation Solace, for her much-needed support since Shannon's passing. But it is Liz who still gives us support in our time of need. If we have a problem or are in distress since our return, Liz is there for a kind word and a shoulder to cry on. Anzac Day and Remembrance Day is time for me to reflect on Shannon's passing.

This was a great gathering for us all. It has been twenty-five years since all three-services had a chance to reflect on our efforts from 1992/93 onwards. I would like to think all three services that attended the ANZAC Day march and the invitation at the NSW Governor General's residence, as the offer was open to all those who were deployed to Somalia. After the reception had finished, it was once again back to Harpoon Harry's for one last drink and farewells, until the next time.

When I stayed in the Mercure Sydney Hotel a receptionist saw my T-Shirt saying Somalia. The young gentleman asked if I was deployed to Somalia. I said yes. He told me that his father was Commanding Officer of the Pakistani contingent that had been stationed in Mogadishu. It was a great thrill for me to meet him and to be

remembered during our reunion week in Sydney.

I believe the Operation Solace veterans of today are a humble bunch; easily recognised when they talked with each other. When I got into a taxi on ANZAC Day in Sydney to go the Somalia form-up, a taxi driver told me that last year two servicewomen army personnel had stated that they shouldn't have to pay because it was ANZAC Day. I said that is so wrong because ANZAC Day should not be used as a personal gain to solicit gifts and/or favours. If you do that it soils the reason why we commemorate ANZAC Day. I joined the Army but in my true belief I never served the nation. The taxpayers gave me a roof over my head and three meals a day. When they define a veteran, I cannot see how I fit into the full definition of that category. I never served my country but voluntarily joined the Army. We all had different reasons. For me it was to make myself a better person with more discipline. Discipline is what I lacked before I enlisted. There is no reason to clap for me when I march on ANZAC Day nor is there a need to say thank you as I did nothing special in my time in the Army. I certainly never gave anyone freedom. I don't have to be liked but it would be nice if deployments such as Somalia, Cambodia, Namibia and Rwanda were remembered on ANZAC Day. I am a Somalia Veteran, humble, and proud of my time in the Army during peace time and in Operation Solace (Operation Restore Hope). One of the best things about joining the Infantry and the Army is the mateship. That's what made our twenty-fifth reunion really special; you can remember all the good times you had over a quiet beer, or two.

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### **I'm A Somalia Veteran**

I'm a Somali Veteran  
A proud but humble soldier  
I'm not a nation's hero  
Because I've never been to war  
I've witnessed a nation's battle  
And even seen its war  
I've had to intervene in fighting  
Facing threats of landmines, snipers and ambushes  
We sometimes shoot our rifles  
Because of a bloody war  
I'm a proud Australian soldier  
Who answered my nation's call  
But never got a mention  
Because I never went to war  
My feats have been heroic  
I saved a starving generation  
But paid an ultimate sacrifice  
Because of the horrors of war  
I never gave my country freedom  
By fighting any war  
The pain I have inflicted upon myself  
By seeing a nation's war  
I'm a Somali Veteran  
I'm not a nation's hero  
But every night I go to sleep  
I see a bloody war.

by Brian Little  
Bravo Company 1 RAR  
Somalia, Operation Solace 1993

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# MUSEUM

## MONTHLY MESS

LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

@ 4:00PM

KOKODA HALL, CAIRNS RSL CLUB

\$10.00PP

FREE PARKING BEHIND THE RSL CLUB



This is an opportunity for veterans (serving and ex-service) and their families to get together whilst enjoying an early knock off!

To assist us with catering please RSVP to [admin@cairnsrcslsubbranch.com.au](mailto:admin@cairnsrcslsubbranch.com.au) or 4051 5254 with numbers of adults and children attending.

Please note: Food and non-alcoholic drinks will be provided. Alcoholic drinks will be available for purchase at your own expense.



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ROOM



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EXPERIENCING DISADVANTAGE

**1800 062 608 | 4031 7688**

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

**All Enquiries  
Welcome**



The team at the Cairns Community Legal Centre encourages enquiries from community members who cannot otherwise afford legal advice.

The Seniors Legal and Support Service (SLASS) is part of the Cairns Community Legal Centre and provides free legal and social work support for Senior's. You may have worries around Centrelink; residential care (costs and charges); family problems, experiencing physical or psychological abuse; neglect or mistreatment; or your money may have been taken without your knowledge and/or consent. SLASS can also explain Wills, Powers of Attorney and Advanced Health Care Directives as well as many more areas that are relevant to Seniors.

In addition to offering in-person (office) appointments with our solicitors and a social worker, the Centre offers home visits and to places such as retirement villages and hospitals. The SLASS team can also provide community education talks for groups - for example in clubs, retirement villages, residential care facilities and libraries. These are informal sessions which provide Seniors and others, such as carers and their families, with the opportunity to ask questions about matters affecting Seniors, as well as providing information on how to access the Centre's services.

**The Cairns Community Legal Centre  
offers free legal advice and social work support for Seniors.  
For an appointment please call 07 4031 7688 or 1800 062608.**





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information on events visit [www.cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au](http://www.cairnsrslsubbranch.com.au)  
or our Facebook page @CairnsRSLSubBranch

<b>1 July – 30 November</b>  <b>Centenary Documentary</b> Cairns RSL Sub-Branch	<b>July – 4 November</b>  <b>The Spirit of ANZAC Poetry Competition</b> Cairns RSL Sub-Branch	<b>18 August</b>  <b>Vietnam Veterans Day</b> Cenotaph	<b>18 August – 26 August</b>  <b>Queensland Seniors Week</b> State Initiative
<b>24 August</b>  <b>2018 Positive Ageing Fair</b> Cairns Jockey Club, Cannon Park Racecourse	<b>24 August</b>  <b>Wartime Walking Tour</b> Cairns CBD and Kokoda Hall Museum	<b>1 September – 30 November</b>  <b>Christmas Care Package Launch</b> Cairns RSL Sub-Branch	<b>22 September</b>  <b>Veterans' Health Week – Oh Kale Yeah!</b> Esplanade, Cairns
<b>20 September</b>  <b>Volunteer Function – Drinks and Canapes</b> Kokoda Hall Museum	<b>28 September</b>  <b>Wartime Walking Tour</b> Cairns CBD and Kokoda Hall Museum	<b>20 October</b>  <b>Defence Family Fun Day</b> TBA	<b>20 October – 28 October</b>  <b>Invictus Games</b> Sydney
<b>4 November</b>  <b>ANZAC Trail Treasure Hunt</b> Cairns CBD	<b>11 November</b>  <b>Remembrance Day</b> Cairns Cenotaph	<b>19 November</b>  <b>International Men's Day</b> Cairns RSL Club	<b>7 December</b>  <b>Volunteer Christmas Party</b> TBA

# EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE



Cairns Total Physio now offers Exercise Physiology services to the public! Simon Spinks is an Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP), who specialises in the delivery of exercise for the prevention and management of injury and long standing health conditions.

## Why see an Accredited Exercise Physiologist?

- **FURTHER ENHANCE** physical performance and reduce risk of injury
- **REDUCE** the pain and increase movement of those with osteoarthritis
- **IMPROVE** recovery rates after different types of surgeries
- **REDUCE** the amount of fatal heart attacks by up to 50%
- **HELP** you recover from cancer treatment quicker
- **IMPROVE** the breathing of those with lung disease by up to 70%
- **REDUCE** the risk of type 2 diabetes by almost 60%
- **HELP** combat depression and the effects of medication

## What makes Accredited Exercise Physiologists different to other exercise professionals?



They are university qualified



They undertake strict accreditation requirements



Eligible with Medicare, DVA, Work Cover and most Private Health Providers



They can treat and work with all types of people, from athletes to the elderly



AEPs have the skills and experience to prescribe exercise for chronic disease and injury



## ONLINE BOOKING AVAILABLE 24/7

**WESTCOURT** 268 Gatton St, Westcourt | P: 07 4051 3252 | F: 07 4051 3129

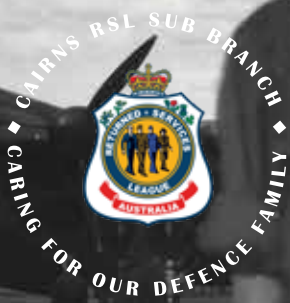
**MT SHERIDAN** 6-8 George Cannon Dr, Mount Sheridan | P: 07 4045 6870 | F: 07 4045 1022

**REDLYNCH** Redlynch Medical Centre, Larsen Rd | P: 07 4051 3252 | F: 07 4051 3129

**MAREEBA** Essential Fitness, 117 Mason St | P: 07 4051 3252 | F: 07 4051 3129

E: [info@cairnstotalphysio.com.au](mailto:info@cairnstotalphysio.com.au) | [www.cairnstotalphysio.com.au](http://www.cairnstotalphysio.com.au)





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