



Highgate Highlights

Official Newsletter of Highgate RSL Sub-Branch
Returned & Services League of Australia (WA)
www.highgate-rsl.org.au

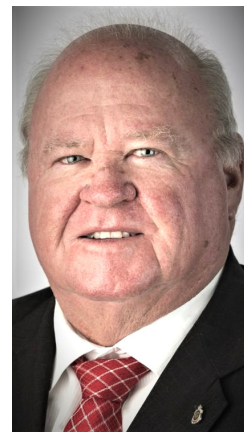
Issue 605 | February 2020

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Our March Guest Speaker Hon Graham Edwards AM

Our March guest speaker is Immediate Past President RSLWA, Hon Graham Edwards AM.

Born in Kalgoorlie, Graham attended Leederville Technical College, and worked for five years as a railway fireman before joining the Australian Army in 1968.



Hon Graham Edwards AM

He was posted to Vietnam as a member of the Assault Pioneer Platoon of 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

On 12 May 1970, near Route 326 between Tam Phuoc and Long My, Graham's platoon moved into an area where mines had been laid.

An M16 mine exploded, wounding three men, including Graham Edwards, whose legs had to be amputated.

However, he did not let his disability get the better of him.

Years later, he recalled a visit to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Canberra: "It was a humbling yet balancing experience particularly when you know that but for the Grace of God and a bit of luck, your name could well be up there with the others who lost their lives in that unfortunate war."

When Graham returned to civilian life, Veterans' welfare became a vital cause for him and he also moved into public affairs and politics.

In 1983, Graham Edwards was elected as a Labor Member to the WA Legislative Council.

After 14 years in State Parliament, he was elected in 1998 to the Federal House of Representatives as Member for Cowan. He retired prior to the 2007 election.

Graham Edwards was State President of RSLWA from 2012 to 2016, and made a Life Member in 2017.

From our President

During a recent weekend, I wrote an article expressing views on the media release by RSLWA on ANZAC Day ceremonies and Welcome to Country statements. It chronicled the chain of events that began the previous Friday with the lead item on ABC 0700 news and finished with the comment that while RSL members in no way condoned the alleged attack on the RSLWA CEO, it illustrated the depth of feeling over the issue.

On Sunday afternoon, the article went into the bin as the CEO and State President announced the policy had been completely withdrawn. Despite comments to the contrary, it was obvious the policy and the associated media releases were a huge error of judgement. The apparent justification for this policy was that some members (how many?) had told the RSLWA Board that they felt reciting the Ode in the Noongar language was inappropriate, as happened at an ANZAC Day service in Fremantle last year.

We are all aware they do things a little differently in Fremantle but that should not be the rationale for thrusting RSLWA into the

Continued page 2

BUMPER ISSUE!
Not many photos this month but lots of important information for RSL, ADF, Veterans and Families

Join our next Luncheon on Monday 16 March at the Karrakatta Club in Sherwood Court Perth

Located at the foot of Sherwood Court, on the corner of The Esplanade in Perth CBD. (Sherwood Court runs south off St Georges Terrace, directly opposite London Court)

Monthly luncheon bookings

Our luncheon meetings are \$40 per person (plus \$5 per raffle ticket if wanted) at 1200 for 1230, usually on the third Monday of each month. For catering reasons, bookings must be made no later than the preceding Thursday, please.

Three ways to book - Choose the best for you

1. Via the Highgate RSL website at <http://highgate-rsl.org.au> Click on *Next Luncheon*. Then click on *Luncheon Booking or Apology* and you'll be transferred to our booking sheet page. Electronic funds transfer details are also on the page.

Or... 2. Go direct to the luncheon booking sheet by pasting this link into your browser: <https://forms.gle/QR9kNYLxPX3oYm2L8> (Note: A new link each month)

Via the electronic booking sheet, you can add guests, food intolerances, purchase raffle tickets, check friends; and also register a non-attendance apology. If you book your luncheon via our website or direct, you will receive an email a couple of minutes later confirming your booking.

Or... 3. Via Committee Member: If you do not have internet access, please call Margot Harness on 9349 2847, or any Committee member, and they will help you book in.

AND if you want to check who is coming or to confirm your registration is listed, check here (read only, with a new link each month): <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15NriZ-x5hhAS3fudWyyqUKJoUhzmbF-xKMMN2tt7oho/edit?usp=sharing>

Important dates & events | please diarise now

- 1100 | **Mon 16 Mar** | Committee Meeting - Karrakatta Club
- 1200 for 1230 | **Mon 16 Mar** | Luncheon - Karrakatta Club
- 0700 for 0730 | Sat 25 Apr** | ANZAC Day Gunfire Breakfast Weld Club
(No Committee Meeting and no 3rd Monday Luncheon in April)

Last Post | Lest We Forget

We remember with deep sadness and affection all our departed Members and convey sincere condolences and sympathy to their families and friends





From our President *(Continued from page 1)*



Bill Munro

spotlight with a new policy publicised by a widely-distributed media release. It raised the inevitable questions: What were they thinking, and did they not foresee the consequences?

I received an appropriate email from Highgate member and author, Jeremy Buxton, who put the issue succinctly: *"It is plain dumb for conservative institutions to fight the wrong battles the wrong way. Knowing the ethos of Fremantle, I wouldn't have thought that an Ode in Noongar (alongside the English version) was such a big deal. Nor does it make sense for the RSL to withdraw support, which presumably leaves the errant local government in full possession of the commemorative service. A bit like stupid purist Christians 'withdrawing' from Christmas and Easter because of secular influence."*

"The battle the RSL may need to fight is when left-wing fools and mischief-makers try to extend ANZAC Day to include the so-called Frontier Wars of European Settlement. In retrospect, these are now civil wars and sensible countries don't celebrate them alongside wars against external enemies."

"In the meantime, a lot of conservative people need to lighten up when it comes to non-aggressive Aboriginal symbolism. Welcome to Country is not an ancient custom - it is an invented ritual, just like 75% of so-called traditions."

The other issue which loomed large over the last month was the Extraordinary General Meeting convened by the RSWA State Board

and held on 06 Feb 20. The purpose of the meeting was to reduce the number of elected members on the RSLWA Board from eight to five; to prevent more than one nomination for positions from a Sub-Branch; and to extend the term of Board members from three to four years.

Highgate saw these constitutional amendments as not being in the interests of Sub-Branches and campaigned strongly against them. Many Sub-Branches agreed with the Highgate position, either by attending and voting against them, or by giving their proxies to Highgate.

The amendments did not get up.

While the meeting was held in a congenial manner, there were some extraordinary examples of management of the voting procedure: There was no independent Returning Officer and there were no scrutineers to ensure votes were entered into the computer correctly. Some of the proxies held by Highgate were deemed invalid although that decision has been questioned. If the amendments had been successful, I could well imagine the meeting would have been subject to a hearing at the State Administrative Tribunal.

On a lighter note, Highgate has organised its annual Gunfire Breakfast which will be held at the Weld Club, 3 Barrack Street, Perth at 0730 after the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. Cost is \$50.00 per person and ladies are most welcome at the breakfast. We are limited to around 80 guests, so I recommend you respond to the invitation and notice, once released.

Regards – Bill Munro

Safe Zone Support for Veterans and Families

Veterans and their families reluctant to seek mental health care due to concerns about anonymity can now access Safe Zone Support, a free, anonymous counselling line for vulnerable Veterans and their families.

The support line will provide mental health care and assist with managing stress, trauma or significant life challenges, with a particular focus on the Special Forces community.

Veterans and their families can call 1800 142 072. More information on the new service at <https://www.openarms.gov.au/green-zone-support>. Safe Zone Support is in addition to the existing Open Arms 24/7 Counselling 1800 011 046.

Coping with Trauma Mental Health Booklets

Five new booklets have been developed to support Veterans and their families to cope with the effects of trauma.

The five booklets are free to download at www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/resources/coping-trauma-military-family

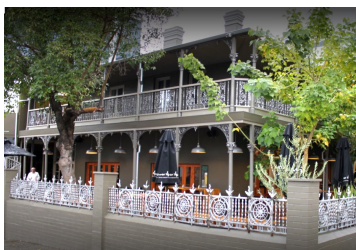
Highgate RSL Gunfire Breakfast ANZAC Day

Our guest speaker for the ANZAC Day Gunfire Breakfast on 25 April is Hon Kerry Sanderson AC - Warden of the State War Memorial. It will be at the Weld Club at 3 Barrack Street, Perth at 0730 after the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. Cost is \$50.00 per person and ladies are most welcome at the breakfast. We are limited to around 80 guests, so book early.

Grosvenor Hotel donates \$50 food/drink vouchers for our luncheon raffles

Our sincere thanks to the Grosvenor Hotel for generously donating several \$50 food/drink vouchers for Highgate raffle prizes. Located on the corner of Hay and Hill Streets (just down from the Perth Mint), the

Grosvenor is a stately Victorian terrace with a stylish dining room and a beer garden, serving upscale pub grub. We also thank member Peter Heeney for organising the vouchers, and encourage members to visit if in town.



RSLWA 104th State Congress

Government House Ballroom - Sat 13 June

Congress motions are to be received by Fri 24 April. Motions to be State or National in character, of an affirmative nature and accompanied by adequate preamble and support material.

Sub-Branch motions for consideration by State Congress must be approved by a majority vote present at a properly constituted meeting of that Sub-Branch and signed by not less than five financial members of the Sub-Branch present at that meeting.

For more information, please contact Nola Keen at RSLWA HQ on 9287 3799 or admin@rslwa.org.au



Lack of leadership lethal to the League

By Geoff Hourn | Highgate RSL Warden & Immediate Past President

One of recently-deceased June Dally-Watkins etiquette maxims was "Keep your elbows moisturised, everyone – and off the table". Other advice from June included "If you cannot say something nice about someone, say nothing".

All her guiding principles hold true today but there are times when one simply has to speak plainly and state things as they are.

In the words of Edmund Burke, "There is a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue". And Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying "To sin by silence when they should protest, makes cowards of men".

In this instance, I prefer Burke and Lincoln to Dally-Watkins.

One pressing, and very public matter that needs to be acknowledged today is that RSLWA currently has poor leadership. There is no other way to describe that fact. Stating it is not meant to slander anyone but it has to be called out for what it is, for the sake of the RSL.

Everyone with a naval, military or air force background knows the difference between good leadership and poor leadership. We were taught the difference.

One example of good leadership would have been for the RSLWA executive to attend every recent Sub-Branch centenary celebration. Given they occur only once every 100 years, these are very special events in the life of the RSL.

Another example of good leadership would be for the RSLWA executive to fight tooth-and-nail to keep every existing Sub-Branch operating and ensure Sub-Branch premises are maintained.

But these are minor illustrations when compared to the most recent instance of poor leadership - the public relations disaster that has just been inflicted on all of us in the RSL.

It began with the hapless CEO, as the face of RSLWA, announcing a policy to not fly the Aboriginal flag or have Welcome to Country on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

When the ensuing tempest erupted, following the CEO's Friday interview



Geoff Hourn

on ABC Radio, the State President regrettably went 'Missing In Action' for two days.

The media industry, the general public and RSL members can be forgiven for asking, "Does the CEO or the State President run the RSL in WA?"

It was reported that Peter refused to take media enquiries on the Friday and Saturday. If there was a valid excuse, such as being indisposed due to illness or some other reason, it should be made public.

On radio, the CEO stated RSLWA had the backing of Sub-Branches on the issue of not flying the Aboriginal flag or having Welcome to Country on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

The CEO should not have made that assertion as Sub-Branch support has never been tested. Sub-Branches have never been consulted on the matter and it is unknown what they think. In typical fashion, RSLWA took Sub-Branches for granted.

The President of the Fremantle Sub-Branch immediately refuted the CEO's statement on the same radio program, saying his Sub-Branch did not agree with the RSLWA policy.

'...soon became a train wreck.'

From there, the public relations derailment soon became a train wreck. The CEO issued a media statement blaming the media for 'harmful' and 'incorrect' reporting. That also was regrettable, as people in the media industry have very long memories.

The editorial in the Weekend West newspaper on Sat 22 February accurately summarised the situation. In the words of the editorial: *"The Returned and Services League is the most significant of the organisations which address Veterans' welfare. The RSLWA has been doing a good job in recent years in aiming to modernise and to recruit and look after younger Veterans. But its move to set down rules opposing use of Welcome to Country*

ceremonies and the flying of the Aboriginal flag ... has set back its cause. ...It is out of step with community sentiment and created a problem where none existed."

When Premier McGowan turned up in Albany on the Sunday to present the last Government cheque for the National ANZAC Centre, the State President finally emerged. By then the RSL had been on a hiding to nothing for more than two days.

At that stage, having alienated the Premier, the WA Minister for Veterans, the Governor, the Prime Minister, some RSL State Branches and various other Australians, withdrawing the policy was the only sensible alternative. However, by reversing the decision and not standing firm, RSLWA then alienated that portion of the population that supported the policy. Talk about self-immolation.

Even the withdrawal statement, also from the CEO, was rambling and confusing. *"RSLWA accepts the policy may have been open to misinterpretation"* it read. *"Its advisory policy will be reviewed and relaunched in the near future following further dialogue with interested parties."*

Sub-Branches can only hope that RSLWA now includes them as 'interested parties'.

When this all erupted on Friday 21 Feb, RSL Victoria immediately put out a media release that was clear, concise and to the point. This contrasted with the various and confusing RSLWA media releases and directly quoted the RSL Victoria State President, Dr Robert Webster OAM. The Victorian statement concluded by saying: *"RSL Victoria supports the inclusion of the acknowledgement of country in the dawn service and services across the State. The Aboriginal flag is often flown at various services around the State."*

It is not the first time the RSLWA CEO has issued media statements, rather than the State President.

In 2018, the CEO issued the important media release in support of Ben Roberts-Smith VC. Although that media release was issued



Lack of leadership lethal to the League *From page 3*

weeks after the media trial of Roberts-Smith, it was widely welcomed. As I wrote in The West Australian newspaper at the time (*'We Must Stand By Our War Heroes'*, published 03 Oct 18), *"This was a pleasing statement to read and fundamental for a Veterans' organisation to issue"*.

The problem in that instance was that the media statement was issued over the name of the CEO and not the State President.

A statement from the RSLWA President would have carried more weight, and as he is the person elected to speak on behalf of the RSL in Western Australia, it is one of the President's responsibilities.

It is only the President who can speak with the authority of the Board, over which he or she presides.

Having someone else release the media statement and then speak on the matter, was a classic example by the State President of 'leadership from the rear'.

The RSL deserves better. An old ADF leadership aphorism sums it up: *If you are going to be a leader, lead – or get out of the way.* This most recent public relations catastrophe has shown the absence of good RSLWA leadership in an even starker manner.

I wrote in the last edition of Highgate Highlights (*In the Guise of Good Governance*) about how the current RSLWA leadership has lost the confidence of many Sub-Branches.

They did this by, among other things, proposing constitutional changes that would have restricted Sub-Branches from any direct participation in the running of RSLWA.

Regrettably, the RSLWA leadership has now lost the confidence of the State Government and the general public.

Everyone, particularly the media, will be very closely scrutinising the number of attendees at the 2020 ANZAC Day Dawn Services to get some possible indication of the damage inflicted.

How the recent RSLWA actions will affect Sub-Branch membership is

also of great concern.

In the last edition of Highgate Highlights, I also wrote about how constitutions could be manipulated to ensure the continued rule of small leadership factions.

That article was not intended to slander anyone but to emphasise the damage that would be done by entrenching a small leadership clique and marginalising Sub-Branches.

The article was meant to be hard-hitting and it was!

The subsequent way the EGM was conducted justified that concern. Although both motions were defeated, many of those who attended the EGM were appalled by the way the proceedings were steered.

No independent Returning Officer was appointed, no scrutineers were permitted, those running the meeting did not know the Rules of the RSLWA Constitution, and proxies of five of the Sub-Branches that voted against the motions were wrongly disallowed on the day.

The outright defeat of both EGM motions (with the five Sub-Branch proxies wrongly ruled ineligible) was a vote of no confidence in the leadership of RSLWA.

In line with the principles of good governance, the leaders of RSLWA should react accordingly.

Stories are now coming out of ANZAC House that Highgate Sub-Branch is trying to take over RSLWA. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As our President, Bill Munro, has said, our stand on behalf of all Sub-Branches illustrates that Highgate has a strong sense of ethics and of 'doing the right thing'.

Bill believes that if it hadn't been for Highgate rallying the smaller Sub-Branches, the proposed constitutional amendments would have sailed through.

One particular point that needs rebutting is the State President's wrong assertion that Highgate is over-represented on State Executive.

Peter wrote: *"What has occurred in the past (is) where two to three Board members came from the one Sub-Branch."*

"That occurred at least twice in recent memory, with former State Executives/Boards comprising three members from the same Sub-Branch – Highgate and City of Mandurah."

We cannot speak on behalf of the City of Mandurah Sub-Branch but the last Highgate member to sit on the Board of Directors was the greatly-respected Brigadier Duncan Warren.

Duncan resigned from the Board in 2013, on principle, when he did not agree with an action the Board intended to take.

Before 2013, Highgate did not have a member on the Board of Directors for many years and we have had no one on the Board since 2013. It is also highly improbable that Highgate, since being founded in 1947, has ever had three members on the Board at any one time.

Highgate does have two members who are RSLWA Trustees, Don Blair and Wayne Tarr. The Board of Directors appoints Trustees and both Don and Wayne have been Trustees for many years. But Trustees are not members of the Board and do not have any voting rights.

Like other Sub-Branches, Highgate does not have any say in the nomination or the appointment of Trustees.

Don and Wayne were re-appointed by the current Board of Directors, and have been re-appointed by previous Boards of Directors going back 20 years.

The view of the Highgate Committee has generally been that Sub-Branches should be involved in nominating suitable candidates for Trustee renewal.

In the best interests of the RSL, the Board of Directors should be required to select Trustees on the basis of nominations from Sub-Branches.

Leadership is always a difficult art and when the term of office of the current RSLWA leadership team concludes, they should be warmly acknowledged and thanked for their years of service.

But the RSL ship must sail on with a new crew.

Sub Warden Duties | 2020

Wreath Laying Services | State War Memorial Kings Park

POC: Geoff Simpson OAM RFD
Deputy Warden State War Memorial



Sun 29 Mar 1200 for 1230 Greek National Day

Planning and arrangements for overseas ANZAC Day services

In the lead-up to ANZAC Day, persons planning to attend services overseas are encouraged to register their attendance and travel plans.

ANZAC Day is very important to all Australians, and DVA is still planning to deliver dawn services overseas at Gallipoli in Turkey and Villers-Bretonneux in France. DVA will also support services at Hellfire Pass in Thailand, Sandakan in Malaysia, and Isurava and the Bomana War Cemetery in Papua New Guinea.

The services in the Pacific region will take on greater significance this year as we mark 75 years since the end of the Second World War.

Many are concerned about the outbreak of COVID-19 and its potential effect on international commemorative services.

The Government is continuing its planning for the services. However, as this is a rapidly developing situation, it will rely on the most up-to-date expert medical advice. In the lead-up.

Those attending are reminded to register on the DVA website and strongly encouraged to read the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel advice for security and COVID-19 updates at the [Smartraveller website](#), and to subscribe for updates, as security and health situations can change quickly. Travellers are strongly encouraged to obtain travel insurance, and to monitor DFAT travel advice before and during their journey for both their destination country and all countries they intend to transit.

While these services are run by the Australian Government, all need to be mindful they are delivered in countries other than our own and we need to respect any decisions those countries make in relation to COVID-19.

ANZAC Day services in Turkey and France hold a special significance for many Australians who have relatives that fought and died there

during the First World War and the government is closely monitoring the situation and will provide updates as they come to hand.

Australians travelling to Gallipoli will need to prepare for conditions on the peninsula, including taking enough food and water, preparing for extreme weather and allowing enough time to transit through security checkpoints.

The service is held in an isolated area within a national park which has no permanent infrastructure or shelter. Visitors are exposed to the elements for up to 24 hours and should prepare accordingly.

For the ANZAC Day Dawn Service in Villers-Bretonneux, visitors need to be well-prepared as the Somme weather in April can be close to freezing in the morning and hot in the afternoon, and they should also allow enough time to transit through security checkpoints. Visitors are also reminded to book their tickets to visit the Sir John Monash Centre early at [sjmc.gov.au](#).

Security screenings at both services are similar to airport security, and Turkish and French authorities are responsible for security at ANZAC Day commemorations in their respective countries.

DFAT will continue to organise local ANZAC Day services at Australian High Commissions and Embassies around the world. Additional information on the commemorative services for ANZAC Day in Turkey and France can be found on [DVA's website](#).

Commemorative grants available for Victory in the Pacific Day

Community groups are encouraged to apply for grants up to \$10,000 that help conduct commemorative activities to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day (also known as Victory over Japan (VJ) Day) on 15 Aug 20.

Victory in the Pacific Day marked the end of the Second World War. Nearly one million Australians served in the Second World War. Of these more than 39,000 died and another 30,000 were taken as prisoners of war.

Guidelines for the *Saluting Their Service* Commemorative Grants have been expanded to focus on WWII and later wars, conflicts and peace-keeping operations. The guidelines now fund a diverse range of projects including documentaries, digital projects and podcasts, community memorials, and wartime memorabilia preservation.

Commemorative projects play a key role in helping Australians learn about the crucial role of our Service personnel and their courage and sacrifice. With this expanded funding, communities can hold their own commemorative service or look at other creative ways to mark Victory in Pacific Day in their home town, leaving a lasting legacy in communities and educating the next generation so the memory of Australian Service men and women will live on. Applications for *Saluting Their Service* Grants are at [www.communitygrants.gov.au](#), closing 31 March.

Tips for successful community grant applications

- Register at [www.communitygrants.gov.au](#) for alerts/updates so you don't miss closing dates
- Read the guidelines even if you've applied before, as they may have changed.
- Tailor your application to meet the criteria and ensure you are eligible.
- Know your organisation's grant history – acquittals, active grants and your ID number.
- Include plenty of detail in your project plan – who, what, where, why, when, how.
- Include plenty of detail in your budget breakdown, particularly for high cost items.
- Include a needs analysis - clearly explaining consultation with the Veteran community to determine the need AND clearly explain why there is a need AND how you meet it the need.
- Ensure Veterans' and their families are the main target group for your project.
- Know attachment limits and accepted file types, as outlined in the guidelines.
- Attach necessary documents and allow plenty of time for the assessment process.
- The DVA Community Support team can assist you with discussions about project ideas, consulting with the Veteran community, and in understanding the guidelines.



Congratulations - Murray Lampard AM



We congratulate Highgate RSL Member, Murray Lampard AM APM JP who was appointed a **Member of the Order of Australia (AM)** in the recent Australia Day awards. Murray is currently a Sub

Warden of the State War Memorial, Presiding Justice of the Peace, and Adjunct Professor of the Sellenger Law and Justice Centre at Edith Cowan University.

In an extraordinary and varied career, Murray was previously Professor of Public Safety and Professor of Security at ECU, following his retirement as WA Deputy Police Commissioner.

At various times, Murray has also served as Independent Chair of the Road Safety Council, Chair of the Defence Reserve Support Council WA and then its National Vice Chair, Chairman Strategic Advisory Board Child Health Promotion Research Centre at ECU, Patron of the Homicide Victims Support Group, Patron of the United Nations Overseas Police Association (WA), Councillor for the Royal Automobile Club, as well as involved with the WA-Australia Day Council, Hobbs Artillery Foundation Board,

Consultative Committees for ECU School of Forensic Psychology, School of Management and School of Law and Justice.

Murray Lampard holds an MBA and Graduate Diplomas in Business, Management, Policing, Applied Management, Criminal Investigations and Executive Leadership.

He is an executive graduate and visiting fellow of the Australian Institute of Police Management, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and also of the FBI Academy Quantico, and invited back as a Visiting Fellow. He was awarded the Australian Police Medal and the Centenary Medal.

Policing achievements included introduction of Crime Stoppers, vehicle immobilisers, chairing the National Burglary Taskforce Working Group, key leadership in the National Immigration/Law Enforcement Working Group, WA representative on the National Counter Terrorism Committee, and Inter-Governmental Chairman of the Gordon Inquiry delivering nine multi-functional government facilities to Indigenous Communities in remote and regional WA, with the project winning a Premier's Award.

Married to Toni, they have two adult children.



Highgate Chaplain in new parish role

By Bill Munro

Highgate members trekked to Armadale recently to celebrate the commissioning of Highgate's chaplain, The Reverend Jeff Astfalck, as Priest-in-Charge of St Matthew's Anglican Church in Armadale.

It was a very proud occasion for Jeff, who until recently, had served as Assistant Curate at St Andrew's in Subiaco and St Edmund's in Wembley.

Armadale is his first parish, and one that Jeff will doubtless handle with skill. When asked if this was likely to limit his role as Chaplain of Highgate and of the Honour Avenues Group, he said Immediate Past-President Geoff Hourn had told him that regardless of the parish to which he was appointed, he was first and foremost a member of Highgate.

Jeff smiled as he recounted the story, but illustrates his commitment to our Sub-Branch and its members.

Highgate RSL wishes Jeff and wife, Tracy, every success in their new roles. *(And to refresh on Jeff's varied background, see his biodata in our December 2019 issue.)*

Supporting at-risk Veterans transitioning to civilian life

Programs supporting younger at-risk Veterans and Veterans transitioning to civilian employment are set to expand to hundreds more people, as part of a major Federal government funding boost.

An extra 170 young and vulnerable Veterans leaving the Australian Defence Force annually will get guidance and a single point of contact with 10 additional case coordinators backed by a \$4.8 million investment in the Coordinated Client Support program that already helps around 1,200 Veterans facing difficult circumstances.

The investment means the entire high-risk cohort of Veterans leaving the ADF will now be covered under the Coordinated Client Support program.

The Government will also boost the resources of the Personalised Career Employment Program by \$5.6 million and expand its eligibility to another 1,600 ADF members each year who are looking for career development and job placement support as they set up for civilian life. The Personalised Career Employment Program currently supports Veterans aged 17-24 who have served less than four years by providing them

with greater opportunity for job placement. The new investment will extend this up to 30 years of age, as research shows Veterans aged under 30 involuntarily discharged become at higher risk of suicide than the general population. The program is therefore designed to ensure they also get support as they navigate the range of available government services.

Under the Coordinated Client Support program, DVA works closely with Defence to identify Veterans at risk before they transition out of service and provide them with a single point of contact, a client coordinator who can ensure a seamless continuation of support as they leave the ADF, assist them to access appropriate health treatment, and finalise their DVA claims.

The Australian government invests a record \$11 billion to support 280,000 Veterans and their families each year, is reforming DVA - with more work under way, has cut waiting times for claims, and also launched the Australian Veterans' Card and Lapel Pin, so Veterans can be appropriately recognised, including by businesses with special discounts and offers.



Powerful new body to tackle ADF and Veteran suicides

To help save lives, a powerful and enduring independent body - the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention - is being created to investigate all suspected Veteran and ADF suicides and causes.

The comprehensive measures have been developed to find the most effective and practical ways of better identifying, preventing, understanding and acting on suicide and suicide risks among our Veterans and Service men and women.

The National Commissioner will have the enduring power, scope and resources to investigate suicides and related issues as they arise, rather than being restricted by a once-only review looking at past practices.

The National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention will be an independent and permanent public accountability body, with the powers of a Royal Commission to compel the production of evidence and summon witnesses, and make recommendations to Government on actions to prevent suicide and improve the mental health and wellbeing of ADF personnel and Veterans.

It will also monitor implementation of those recommendations. Public and transparent reporting will be delivered through an Annual Defence and Veteran Suicide Report. The new statutory Office of the National Commissioner will be fully operational by July 2021.

An interim National Commissioner will be appointed to immediately commence an independent review of historical Veteran suicide cases, focusing on the impact of military service and Veterans' post-Service experience.

The Commissioner will oversight a multi-disciplinary team which will undertake a once-only review and analysis of 419 suicides among Serving and former ADF personnel with service 2001-17, with the capacity to include additional suicides as appropriate.

The Review will draw upon the independence and expertise of the Australian Institute of Health and

Welfare and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and consider all relevant risk factors and trends, including military service and Veterans' post service experience, to improve understanding of systemic issues.

It will also consider available research and data on suicide attempts, the formation of suicidal ideas and self-harm in serving and former ADF personnel. Individual coronial findings will be used to inform this analysis along with other available data.

The families of serving and former members affected by suicide will be invited to participate in the review and share their stories and insights.

Families will be able to be heard in a safe, welcoming and supportive environment, should they wish to do so, and will have access to liaison and counselling services. The perspectives of these families will inform the review and its findings.

The review will deliver its interim report to Government within 12 months and its final report at 18 months. The outcomes of the review will influence policy-making, as well as the opportunity to drive a proactive, safety-focused culture.

The knowledge and expertise developed through the review will inform the ongoing work of the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention.

The Commissioner will also provide an ongoing investigative function of individual cases of suicide, working with each State and Territory coronial office, and making recommendations to Government.

The Government will invest an initial \$40 million to support the Commissioner's work and this can be expanded to ensure provision of whatever resources are needed.

The Chief of the Defence Force and each Service Chief have committed to being open and transparent, and to support improved health outcomes for ADF personnel and Veterans.

A Veteran Family Advocate will also be appointed to directly engage with the families of Veterans in order to improve the design of all Veteran programs and services, including mental health supports and services.

The new **Veteran Family Advocate** will focus on mental health and suicide prevention, and contribute to understanding risk factors relating to the wellbeing of Veterans and their families, particularly during transition from the ADF.

The **Advocate** will represent the views of Veterans and their families by engaging and advocating to help shape policy and the administration of Veteran benefits and support.

The **Veteran Family Advocate** will place the perspectives of families at the heart of policy and decision-making, promoting better mental health outcomes for Veterans. The **Advocate** will meet with families to hear their views on a broad range of issues affecting the wellbeing of Veterans and their families, to help shape Veteran policy and the administration of Veteran entitlements. The establishment of the **Advocate** will be undertaken through the existing Repatriation and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commissions structure enshrined in DVA portfolio legislation, so it can be established immediately. The **Advocate's** engagement with families will include a focus on mental health and suicide prevention, and contribute to an understanding of risk and protective factors relating to the wellbeing of Veterans and their families, particularly during transition from the ADF. The **Advocate** will focus on advocating for policy and system changes, rather than managing or mediating individual complaints, as there is an existing, dedicated mechanism through the Commonwealth Ombudsman for serving and former Defence members to lodge complaints regarding administrative matters with the ADF, Defence, DVA and Defence Housing. The **Advocate** will work closely with the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention so that findings can be rapidly translated into action to eliminate suicide risk factors associated with DVA's service delivery.

Suicide is a complex and multi-factored issue. Improved understanding of suicide in the context of military service will support more tailored and effective Government action and investment.

Help is also available now and it can make a difference. Open Arms-Veterans and Families Counselling provides support and counselling to current ADF members, Veterans and their families, contactable 24/7 on 1800 011 046.



Flight Lieutenant's ID tags return home after 76 years



RAAF pilot Flight Lieutenant Kevin Fell's identification tags have been presented to family members, fittingly at the Australian War Memorial, 76 years after his death during WWII.

Flight Lieutenant Fell was praised as a brilliant pilot with zeal and determination to get on with the job.

The tags were recovered from a previous French Red Cross headquarters and in 2019 returned to the Sir John Monash Centre at Villers-Bretonneux by the French Remembrance Committee in Héricourt. The Office of Australian War Graves then undertook the difficult task of tracking down Flight Lieutenant Fell's descendants, allowing the identification tags to now be presented to his half-brother and nephew, both also named Kevin Fell, and half-sister Mrs Gai Winter.

"Although we never knew him, my sister Gai Winter and I both witnessed as children the grief experienced by our father, Lindsay James Fell, and his pride and love for his eldest son," said Flight Lieutenant Fell's half-brother Kevin.

"We remember also today his young widow Elsie Fell, who never remarried, and the loss of her beloved husband," said nephew Kevin Fell.

Both men acknowledged their family's experience of loss is one that was shared by tens of thousands of Australian families in WWII.

On 15 March 1944, Flight Lieutenant Fell joined a large-scale attack on Stuttgart, Germany, but his Halifax failed to return to base in Yorkshire, and the British Embassy confirmed his death.

On 17 March at 11pm, Flight Lieutenant Fell's name will be projected onto the exterior of the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial.

Replacements for medals lost in bushfires

Medals lost or damaged in the fires across Australia may be replaced under the Defence Honours and Awards Replacement Medal Policy.

Current and ex-Serving members of the ADF are entitled to one replacement set of medals. Holders of a deceased family member's medals are also entitled to receive one replacement set, provided replacements have not already been issued.

Even if you do not know exactly what medals were lost or damaged, as long as you have the original recipient's full name and date of birth, Defence can fulfil the request.

To apply for replacement medals, visit: www.defence.gov.au/medals and complete the Defence Medals Online Application Form, selecting *Replacement Medals* as the application type.

Replacement medals cannot be issued if any compensation for their loss or damage has already been received via insurance claims. Replica medals may be purchased from a range of sources such as coin and medal dealers.

New Affiliate Member

We welcome new Affiliate Member, Peter Reed to Highgate RSL. Peter schooled at Watheroo, Mount Lawley Senior High School (which has a close association with Highgate RSL) and Muresk Agricultural College, before working with Dalgety's as an auctioneer and then later in the insurance industry. While working interstate for many years, Peter became a member of the Waverley RSL.

Members celebrating their Birthday in March include:

Geoff Simpson, Tony Wills, Rodney Halcombe, Robert Mitchell, Frederick Brown, Robert Arnold, Henry Lodge, Geoffrey Stooke, John Pope, William Ritchie, Michael Bradford, Richard Adams, Anthony McKay, Ian McGuckin, Doug Webb, Shane Edmonds, R E Mees, Norman Coleman, Sarah Freeman, Ronnie Leigh, John Farrell and John Maltas

Support for Veterans affected by bushfires

DVA support is available to the over 50,000 Australian Veterans living in communities affected by unprecedented bushfires, including assistance with financial, general health and mental health, and home insurance.

Veterans and their families requiring emergency counselling support should call Open Arms on 1800 011 046 (24/7). There is also information on recovering from trauma or dealing with triggers on the Open Arms website.

For Defence Service Homes Insurance information and claims call 1300 552 662 or visit the website.

DVA clients eligible for income support and Service pensions may be eligible for a once-only crisis payment (see Factsheet IS121 - Crisis Payments).

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is a once-only payment managed by the Department of Human Services. For eligibility information and how to claim visit the website or call 180 22 66.

Veterans' Access Network (VAN) can be contacted on 1800 555 254 to assist with a wide range of issues, including replacement of aids and appliances, ensuring availability of pharmaceuticals, and arranging transportation to medical appointments.

In addition, the Australian Government is providing \$76 million through the National Bushfire Recovery Fund for mental health services and support. This includes funding for free counselling sessions, extra Medicare and tele-health consultations, an expansion of headspace services for young Australians, and community recovery initiatives.



RSLWA

Friday, 22nd May





Operation Hammersley remembered 50 years on

The service of our Vietnam Veterans was honoured at a national commemorative service for the 50th anniversary of Operation Hammersley, held at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on ANZAC Parade in Canberra on 18 Feb.

During the Vietnam War, Australian troops were sent to the Long Hai area of Phuoc Tuy Province from Feb 1970, to secure a quarry site at the foot of the Long Hai Hills, the target of previous operations and air strikes.

Despite early successes and the support of armoured vehicles, the Australians were hindered by the rugged terrain and the enemy's expert knowledge of the land, and in March 1970, the operation concluded.

Tragically, this operation saw 12 men killed and 59 wounded with a further two killed in the following days.

We owe these Veterans and the almost 60,000 Australians involved in the Vietnam War respect and recognition for their bravery and dedication.

Detailed information on Operation Hammersley can be found at the Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/operation-hammersley-50th>

KARRAKATTA CLUB PROGRAM

Highgate Highlights readers are welcome to attend other special events at our luncheon venue,

The Karrakatta Club

RSVP essential to
reception@karrakattaclub.com.au
or 9325 8111

1130 Morning tea | 1200 Presentation
1300 À la carte lunch (*own cost*)
Lyceum: Members/guests \$10
Non-members \$17

International Engagement for Women

Tue 10 March | Robyn Nolan - President
National Council of Women Aust & WA

Art then Fashion

Tue 17 March | Megan Salmon
Artist & Clothing Designer

Back to the Days of Genghis Khan

Tue 24 March | Judith Amey
Mongolia & Trans-Siberian Train

Women Supporting Women

Tue 31 March | Leanne Barron
CEO Starick | Domestic Violence Support

Getting Family History Published

Tue 07 April | Gail & Helen Thomas

Empowering Women Through Sustainable Development

Tue 14 April | Carol Hanlon

Art as a Weapon

Tue 21 April | Tania Ferrier

A Tale of Two Islands

Tue 28 April | Robyn Godley

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Honouring our National Servicemen

National Servicemen's Day was held on 14 Feb, honouring those who put their lives on the line and served our nation through compulsory military service.

Australia has had four periods of compulsory military service, with the most recent two schemes 1951–1959 and 1964–1972.

The last national service scheme was introduced at a time of heightened regional tension with Australia's ongoing involvement in the Vietnam War, with the Government taking this significant step to increase the size of Australia's military.

This was not full-scale conscription. Instead, National Servicemen ('Nashos') were chosen from men of 20 years of age using a ballot system held twice a year. If your birthday was drawn from the ballot and you met certain security and fitness

criteria, you could be selected to serve two years in the Army, followed by three years in the Army Reserve. In August 1971 the two-year term was reduced to 18 months.

From 1964 to 1972, more than 804,000 men registered for national service, with more than 60,000 called up.

Of these, over 15,000 served in the Vietnam War, where some 200 were killed and more than 1,200 wounded.

All Australians should reflect on the unique nature of the service and sacrifice of our National Service men and ensure they are always remembered with pride and honour.

Disclaimer Highgate Highlights source material is edited to remove inappropriate content, and clarify, shorten or standardise where needed. Although normal tests for accuracy are undertaken, you should not rely on any of this material without carrying out your own validity checks. Opinions are not necessarily those of RSL Highgate Sub-Branch or RSLWA.

Newsletter contributions are always welcome.

Please send to our Editor - roger.buddrige@highgate-rsl.org.au



This newsletter is printed as a service to the Veterans Community by the Office of the Federal Member for Perth