



Robyn Collins
General Manager



As this issue will arrive with Christmas around the corner, on behalf of the DefenceCare team, I'd like to thank you for your support for veterans and their families when they are in need.

In 2014, DefenceCare received 4,194 calls for assistance. As at the end of September, calls had totalled 3,702 and at the current rate of over 400 a month, we could go close to 5,000 for the year.

Each and every donation is making a difference and our sincere thanks to all who have donated, volunteered or contributed to fundraising efforts. Without your generosity we couldn't change lives.

Just over three years ago the Trustees of RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution made a brave decision to change – to invest in a new way of helping veterans and their families in times of injury, illness and crisis. Thank you for embracing DefenceCare, supporting our new direction and most importantly, responding with such a generosity of spirit to help those who need a hand.

As many of you know, a DVA claim is the often the start of a challenging journey for a Defence member. By helping with claims, DefenceCare provides important support to current and ex-serving men and women and their families.

In the year to end June 2015, DefenceCare lodged 1,143 claims with the DVA - 812 MRCA, 123 SRCA, 185 VEA and 23 Incapacity. We provide claims advice on four Defence bases – Williamstown, Singleton, Holsworthy and Kuttubul – as well as at ANZAC House, visiting veterans at home and sometimes by email and phone when face to face contact is not possible.

Please feel free to call DefenceCare for help if you are struggling – we will do our best to help if we can.

Our very best wishes to RSL NSW members and their families during the Christmas and New Year holiday period – stay safe and wishing you all the best for a happy and healthy 2016.

PEOPLE WE HAVE HELPED

A veteran coping with the loss of loved ones...



Now retired, Alfred joined the Australian Defence Force to gain technical qualifications whilst visiting parts of Australia and the world.

During this time his wife and two children remained at home.

Alfred entered the Navy in 1967 and spent 32 years in the Permanent Naval Forces. Throughout that time no two days were the same. He visited most countries in the Far East, North America and many in Europe. For Alfred, there was travel, interesting work and security of employment.

The most vivid memories that Alfred has of his time in service were during Cyclone Tracy in Darwin and when his ship ran aground in the Whitsunday Islands in Queensland.

Alfred's return to civilian life was difficult. He returned when he became ill with cancer and he was unable to continue working. Alfred's wife cares for him and in addition she also cares for their daughter who has Multiple Sclerosis.

In addition to caring for her family, Alfred's wife, Anne-Marie is an extraordinarily talented quilter and donated her time and skill to sewing the Lest We Forget Quilt together from quilting squares made by Women's Auxiliary members across NSW. This quilt was raffled to raise money for DefenceCare in 2014.

DefenceCare was alerted to the family's need for assistance by an RSL Women's

Auxiliary Council Member. It was during this time that Alfred's daughter became quite ill and had to be hospitalised. His daughter is only able to walk with the aid of a frame due to the chronic pain that she faces with Multiple Sclerosis.

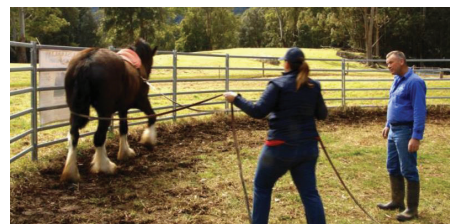
DefenceCare was able to assist Alfred's family by providing a lifting chair for Alfred, so that he is able to move between a standing and a sitting position. DefenceCare was also able to assist Alfred's daughter by providing her with a specialist chair to make her more at ease when walking is difficult and she requires somewhere comfortable to sit.

"I am the very grateful recipient of largess from DefenceCare in the form of an exceedingly comfortable 'Lift Chair' and I wish to convey my deep respect and gratitude to you and your Administration. DefenceCare's collective excellence and their manner and attitude by which they have discharged their functions and support mindful of my situation is much appreciated.

"I single out no individual, nor will I name any, for all have contributed their strengths and characteristics that have built the whole result that I find both excellent and most satisfactory. All have contributed equally and most favourably in the formation of my opinion.

"For this I commend to you each and every individual involved. My commendation to you is without reservation."

CEDARS EQUINE PROGRAM



DefenceCare joined with Cedars Equine Program to offer veterans with PTSD and mental ill-health the opportunity to spend

time with horses in the peaceful Kangaroo Valley, just south of Sydney. Our first program for three men and three women was held in early October.

Horses and humans have a lot in common. Horses mirror human behaviour and are very responsive to body language and seem to have a sixth sense in mental awareness and communication.

The Cedars Equine Program has been developed for people with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and who are somewhat emotionally isolated and distanced from other people. It gives them the opportunity to get acquainted with, touch and handle horses. The experience can bring tears to the eyes of a soldier who has had limited contact with others for some time.

The program offers five days of hands-on training under the care and guidance of Scott Brodie, an accomplished trainer, horseman and ex-serviceman himself.

A morning and afternoon session daily of two hours each, covers the very basics of initial respect and introduction to natural horsemanship through to lunging, halting and backing up the horse. This develops strength and confidence and understanding. The Cedars Equine program is an introduction to horsemanship and offers an opportunity to those interested in furthering their interest in horses and acquiring jobs in the industry.

"I think the week was a smashing success. All of the participants involved themselves on all sorts of levels," said Scott Brodie of the program.

"The feedback from the guys was awesome - there is no doubt they all got real value from the experience. Most have indicated they will continue with some involvement with horses, initially via volunteer work. (One) has already been down to spend the day with us yesterday; she was glowing in her praise for the week and now feels she has found a real way forward with her issues and hadn't had any

anxiety since coming back which she tells me is pretty exceptional.

"I have initiated an employment opportunity for another participant, who is also going to come and spend some time with us at Canterbury."

The experience and close encounters with horses is healing and confidence building.

One of the participants wrote of her experience, "Until this week, our anxious minds and traumatised souls seemed to rule the day. Then we met with a horse. We dropped our shoulders. We steadied and opened our body. We calmed our being. The past withered away, future losses vanished, the present moment encapsulated within confidence and empathy creating mutual respect.

"Then, in the midst of that arena, an incredible connection happened: a dual heartbeat joined as one. the first thing we learned was that being with a horse is not about riding it; in fact, riding a horse is like riding a motorbike without having a lesson."

Each program costs \$2,000 per veteran and any donations to help us run another program would be very much appreciated. You can donate on our website at <https://defencecare.worldsecuresystems.com/> donate and select Equine Program under Cause to donate to or call Jill Rocchi on (02) 8088 0388.

NSW CLUBS

DefenceCare would like to thank and acknowledge the following NSW Clubs for providing funding to support veterans and their families.

Ashfield RSL Club, Avalon Beach RSL Club Limited, Bankstown Trotting Recreational Club, Belmore RSL Club, Bexley RSL and Community Club, Burwood RSL Club, Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club, Chatswood RSL, City of Blacktown RSL Club, Club Five Dock, Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, Earlwood-Bardwell Park

RSL Club, Ettalong Diggers, Forestville RSL Club, Kingsgrove RSL Club Ltd, Halekulani Bowling Club Limited, Paddington Woollahra RSL Club, Penrith RSL Club, Queanbeyan Leagues Club, South Sydney Juniors and The Greens The Entrance.

POSITIVE AGEING

Our thanks to RDNS for the following information.

Positive Ageing is about experiencing more happiness and satisfaction with life as we age.

Happy people live longer, have stronger immune systems and improved coping skills. Research tells us that money doesn't make us happy – friendships and relationships do, so connecting with others is important.

Ways to connect include staying in touch with neighbours and finding things to do with family members. You can connect with others in person, on the phone or online through social networks.

RSL NSW and Women's Auxiliary members know more than most about staying connected with friends and volunteering – their sub-Branches, Women's Auxiliaries and Coffee Clubs help members stay in touch and support others in need. If you are an RSL member but haven't connected with others in your area in a while, think about attending a meeting or a coffee group to reconnect with fellow members.

Other activities to consider include community classes and volunteering with local charities or community groups – keep connected to stay healthy and happy and enjoy life.

(RDNS HomeCare provides home nursing, care and support services to help Australians live their best lives through better health and independence.)

(Continued on page 26)

RECIPROCAL TOUR REPORT

As this is the last report for 2015 a lot will be happening between now and when we return in 2016.

Our October meeting will confirm the hosting clubs along with planning an itinerary of outings. We are looking forward to showing our visitors the same great hospitality they showed to our group.

There are many events to look forward to before the end of the year.

The Eisteddfod at Hurstville on Saturday

7 November also the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Youth Club concert on Sunday 15 November. Both events are always very entertaining.

Kerry and I were invited to attend the Rooty Hill RSL Youth Club 50th Anniversary Dinner. It was a great night. Food and entertainment were tops. Best of all was catching up with those who have worked tirelessly over the years for their youth club and also the support they have always given to the Reciprocal Visits.

I would like to thank all that have supported us over the years, the youth club members, the billeting families and the behind the scenes helpers without whom these tours would no be possible.

We wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy festive season and look forward to what 2016 brings.

More next issue.

Esther Kitching OAM JP
Youth Councillor

DEFENCECARE

THANKS TO DDB

DDB is supporting DefenceCare this Remembrance Day by donating an advertising campaign including TV commercials. This will help attract donations from a wider audience to allow us to continue to meet the increasing demand from those in need.

Hopefully you will see some of these advertisements in coming months. Our sincere thanks to DDB for their generous support for DefenceCare.

CONTACT US

DefenceCare. Always there.

DefenceCare is a charity helping current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in times of injury, illness and crisis. DefenceCare is part of RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution and is a Tier 1 RSL NSW recognised charity.

ABN: 61 603 206 488.

DGR: 752 766 491. CFN: 12317.

If you would like to discuss how DefenceCare can assist you and your family, please contact us.

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8.30am to 4.30pm). Fax: 9261 4558

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Website: www.defencecare.org.au

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