



Robyn Collins
General Manager



As we enter 2015, I would firstly like to express our sincere gratitude to the RSL NSW CCWA Women's Auxiliaries who came together in 2014 to raise \$37,032.77 for DefenceCare through the sale of tickets to the Lest We Forget Quilt. The quilt was made by the members and this donation will help a significant number of veterans and their families in crisis. Thank you.

At the time I write this, we are still struggling to meet the ever increasing need for our services. As more people speak up about their difficulties since leaving the service, more people come forward. We welcome each and every one who turns to us for help.

This brings with it an increasing need for donations. We still have a long way to go for donations to match the demand for our services and if you are able to donate to a charity in 2015, please consider DefenceCare.

In 2015, DefenceCare will be launching a number of fundraising initiatives to raise money to meet critical areas of need. Our New Start Fund for homeless veterans will be one of the first to be launched.

New Start will fund things such as food, toiletries, clothing, basic furniture and a rental bond when young homeless veterans reach out for help. Those funded will be eligible to have key financial costs paid to give them the chance to rejoin the community, gain treatment for their injuries and illnesses and improve their health, wellbeing and family relationships. In coming issues of *Reveille*, we will feature some of our new initiatives that will provide practical,

immediate and compassionate support to members of the Defence community in their time of greatest need.

In November:

- DefenceCare received 323 calls for help bringing the total for the calendar year to 3976;
- Of the calls for assistance, 149 were for help with DVA Entitlements and claims; 19 were calls about appeals to the VRB; 53 were calls for counselling, financial help and other community support; and 102 were for a number of other matters and assistance;
- A total of 115 new claims were submitted to the DVA and 22 claims were finalised; and
- Community support active clients totalled 287.

PEOPLE WE HAVE HELPED

...an ex-serving career soldier and his family

Shane was in the Army for 20 years, motivated to join by childhood dreams. As an 18 year old he had always wanted to be a soldier and did not see anything else in his future. Shane wanted to experience the challenge and defend the Australian way of life.

Shane and his wife met before he joined the army. When he joined, she stood by him and followed him around Australia, with their family. After more than six postings during his career from Kapooka to 1/19 Royal NSW regiment, including a deployment into East Timor, the family moved to his final posting in Wagga Wagga.

When Shane came back from deployment things changed - he was not the same man who left Australia. Shane left the Army due to a family crisis but missed the male companionship and like



mindedness, of his army colleagues.

Once he returned to civilian life, Shane tried to work for a supplier to the Australian Defence Force but found the change increasingly difficult and now works for himself. He has found the last ten years challenging and has struggled with his health and finances.

DefenceCare has been able to assist Shane and his family with financial support and counselling during difficult times. We have assisted by paying utility bills and car expenses when times were tough. We also handled his claim with DVA.

"DefenceCare helped out immediately. What I like about their counsellor is that there is nothing too bad or shocking I can discuss with him. I also appreciate that the first thing that DefenceCare do when they speak with my wife is that they ask how she is doing".

...a Vietnam veteran and his mate

65 year old Vietnam veteran George has cardiac disease and advanced Multiple Sclerosis. For most of his later life he has been confined to an electric wheelchair and for over a decade, was cared for in nursing homes in Dubbo in central NSW.

In 2012 one of George's mates from his unit visited him and found that his care in the nursing homes was good, but his personal circumstances outside were not. The fees for his care were being deducted from his pension, but George did not have any access to any of his remaining funds. Arrangements were made for cash donations to be sent to him for bus trips, outings and personal items.

After attending the reunion of his unit



in 2013, George made the decision that he wanted to move to a nursing home in Albury, to be close to his mate Bill. Initial efforts were thwarted due to his family's legal arrangements.

With assistance from DefenceCare, Bill drove George to Parkes to make new arrangements for his finances and care. At George's request, he was also placed on the priority list at the Lutheran Nursing Home in Albury.

In 2014, George was transferred to the care of the Lutheran Nursing Home near his mate Bill and Bill's family. He now has his own furnished room with an ensuite. He also has an electric wheelchair and remote controlled reclining chair which add to his quality of life.

George is very grateful to those who assisted him during this difficult time. He wanted to thank Geraldine of Dubbo, the committee of the Albury sub-Branch, Peter and the Lutheran Nursing Home. "But the biggest thanks has to go to DefenceCare, for the time and effort to help George. I can assure any veteran or family member who requires any form of assistance, that they will not be let down by the team at DefenceCare," Bill said.

PENRITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING EXPO

On Sunday 8 March DefenceCare will be running a combined seminar and expo for current and ex-serving men and women

and their families. The event will feature guest speakers and stalls and cover topics such as transitioning out of Defence (including employment issues and opportunities), mental health and medical issues (such as pain management) and carers/partners/families.

The event will run from 10am to 2pm at Penrith RSL. More information will be available at www.defencecare.org.au, www.facebook.com/Defencecare and through local sub-Branches.

HEARING SERVICES FOR VETERANS

If you are entitled to DVA-funded treatment for hearing, you are able to receive, free of charge, hearing rehabilitation services appropriate to your needs through the Office of Hearing Services (OHS).

Hearing loss is sometimes referred to as the invisible disability. Rarely can it be cured and no type of hearing aid can restore your hearing. The good news is that hearing loss can be managed to achieve realistic communication improvement.

The treatment starts with you and your hearing services provider together devising an individual program based upon your needs. The program consists of assessment, information sharing and strategies to make the most of your communication abilities and better manage your hearing loss.

If your provider thinks that, as part of your hearing rehabilitation program,

you will require hearing aids they will firstly talk about the free range of quality high technology devices appropriate for your rehabilitation needs. They will also explain about the range of top-up hearing aids that are available. These hearing aids offer additional features which are not clinically necessary for your rehabilitation program. As well, they are also generally not free.

DVA does not cover the cost of top-up hearing aids, as veterans and war widows have access to the large range of well featured, quality, free-to-client hearing aids that will meet their rehabilitation needs. DVA and the OHS expect that if you require hearing aids as part of your rehabilitation program there will almost always be an appropriate free option for you.

If there are exceptional circumstances, your practitioner should consult the entire panel of free-to-client hearing devices. Should they still believe there are no appropriate free-to-client hearing devices available to you on the free-to-client list; your provider can submit evidence to the Office of Hearing Services for consideration of a non-standard device.

For more information go to the DVA website and refer to factsheet HSV22 Hearing Services for Veterans. You can also discuss your case with the Veterans' Affairs Audiologist by calling 1800 637 816.

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.

ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 8088 0388 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm). Fax: 9261 4558

Email: defencecare@rslnsw.org.au

Website: www.defencecare.org.au

Facebook: DefenceCare

Twitter: DefenceCare