



Robyn Collins
General Manager



2017 will be an important year for RSL DefenceCare. While our focus will remain on providing the best support possible for our current and ex-serving men and women and their families, we will be making a few changes to our administration to streamline operations.

Late last year we adopted RSL NSW's new Client Management System and from the end of 2017, this will provide us with more comprehensive data on our clients, helping us to expand our information to donors and better manage our workflow.

By the time you read this, we hope Anzac House will have new internet capability, improving our communications systems. Our struggles both with telephone and internet throughout 2016 are well documented and for those affected, we apologise and thank you for your patience.

RSL DefenceCare is currently part of RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution (RSL WBI) and is a separate legal entity from both RSL NSW and RSL LifeCare.

RSL WBI was set up in the late 1960s and from the early 1970s offered claims and advocacy advice as well as what was then called welfare, including financial assistance and more recently counselling. Today RSL WBI trades as RSL DefenceCare, with the new name a part of the modernisation of the organisation.

RSL LifeCare, in contrast, is an aged care provider and while we are both charities, RSL LifeCare and RSL DefenceCare are separate organisations

providing very different services.

RSL DefenceCare was started in August 2012, to recharge the RSL WBI services and offer best practice professional advocacy and welfare support to veterans, their families and RSL NSW sub-Branches. Our organisation is much smaller than RSL LifeCare and whilst in 2016 we opened in Western Australia at the request of RSL WA, we remain a small organisation supporting veterans and their families in times of injury, illness and crisis.

I understand that there has been some confusion around the difference between RSL DefenceCare and RSL LifeCare in particular, and I am happy to visit sub-Branches or Women's Auxiliaries if members would like more clarity around this.

This issue we introduce one of our team members, Hayley Catford, who is an RSL DefenceCare claims advisor working in the Hunter Region. We hope to follow this with information on other team members in later issues.

Wishing you all the best for 2017.

MEET AN RSL DEFENCECARE STAFF MEMBER

Hayley Catford
– Claims Advisor
for the Hunter
Region



Hayley Catford joined RSL DefenceCare almost 18 months ago. Her role includes providing claims advice to Defence members at Williamstown and Singleton bases. Hayley comes from a Defence family and has many friends within the ADF. She is qualified to TIP Level two and has also completed TIP Welfare Level one. Hayley has also undertaken the following

additional courses; Accidental counsellor, Mental Health First Aid, Managing Difficult Situations, ASIST (Suicide Aware) and Mental Health Resilience.

"I wanted to do something a little more meaningful in my life and something that had a lot more purpose. Having family and friends in the Defence Force really encouraged me to look further into the role when it was advertised. I enjoy being part of the team, but also having the ability to service my local Hunter Region is really unique."

Prior to joining RSL DefenceCare, Hayley worked in a commercial setting. The change to the charity sector has allowed her grow as a person both professionally and personally.

"My role as a claims advisor and working with serving and ex-serving members has heightened my connection to the ex-service community and the greater Hunter Region community in general. I am able to be a part of a team that provides professional and compassionate service to veterans and their families.

"I remember a particular client who was in a really tough place both physically and mentally when I started helping him. It took a number of appointments before we were in a position to lodge his claims. After they had been accepted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the client came to thank me, not for the successful outcome of his claims, but for being someone he could talk to and turn to at that point in time.

"This client told me he was grateful that I was able to listen, to understand. He advised me that I helped give him perspective in a particularly dark time in his life and that things would work out for him and he would be ok."

"That day really stood out for me as a time when I knew definitively that I had

made a difference in this veteran's life."

Hayley has also been visiting Muswellbrook RSL sub-Branch on a monthly basis to assist members with their DVA claims.

"I most often work with current serving members at the Williamtown and Singleton ADF bases. But when I work with sub-Branch members, I have the opportunity to work with ex-serving members, something I have especially enjoyed."

Hayley has also been honoured to attend the 2016 commemorative ceremonies for both Anzac Day and Remembrance Day in her local area as a representative of RSL DefenceCare. During both of these occasions Hayley was able to spend time with a number of sub-Branches in the Hunter Region.

"This year on Anzac Day for the first time I was able to represent my late grandfather at the Shortland RSL sub-Branch Dawn Service. It was during this service I wore his medals in his honour for the first time.

"My grandfather was a WWII veteran who served as a Signaller with 1 Corps of Signals and I was proud and honoured to have been able to be part of my local community in his memory."

A TAIL OF TWO DIGGERS

Written by John Gillam and Yvonne Fletcher, and illustrated by artist Paul Durell, this children's book, *A Tail of Two Diggers* is inspired by stories of



'Digger', a bulldog who became mascot of the 1st Division, AIF. Digger served with his mates at Gallipoli and the Western Front. He was gassed at Pozières, serving on until being wounded again at Ypres. Befriended by Sgt James Martin of Hindmarsh S.A., the two became inseparable, sharing their experiences of war. Both were repatriated to England prior to their return to Australia in June 1918.

A Tail of Two Diggers is included in the Premier's Reading Challenge 2017 and sensitively approaches the issue of PTSD through the heroic dog, Digger, and his handler Sgt James Martin. Animals often resonate with children as they are familiar and usually a friendly way to approach difficult topics which the authors have successfully achieved in this book.

Copies of *A Tail of Two Diggers* can be purchased at \$19.95 from RSL Shop either by calling 029 264 8188, purchasing it in person at Anzac House, 245 Castlereagh St, Sydney or online rslshop.org.au/a-tail-of-two-diggers.html

Substantial profits from book sales will go to RSL DefenceCare to fund Assistance Dogs through the Operation K9 program.

DEMENTIA – NATIONAL HELPLINE AND WEBSITE

The website www.fightingdementia.org.au contains help sheets and useful information about dementia and memory loss. There is also a National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500 for people with dementia, their carers, families and friends.

CHOOSING A GP

For information on choosing a general practitioner (GP), what they can do for you and Medicare and billing, the patient section of www.racgp.org.au provides simple, easy to read information.

ATDP TRAINING (REPLACING TIP) TRAINING

Most of those working in the claims, advocacy and welfare area, are aware of the progressive changeover from TIP training to ATDP. If you want more information, the best source is the DVA website www.dva.gov.au and enter ATDP in the search field in the top right hand corner of the home page. ATDP sends out regular newsletters and you can subscribe to these by sending an email to ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au. You can also use this email address to ask questions about the program.

CONTACT US

RSL DefenceCare is a charity helping current and ex-serving members of the ADF and their families in times of injury, illness and crisis. RSL 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

RSL DefenceCare can assist you and your family, please contact us.

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Website: www.defencecare.org.au

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Twitter: DefenceCare

Instagram: DefenceCare