



**Robyn Collins**  
General Manager



By the time you read this, DefenceCare hopes to have raised community awareness of the unseen battles our veteran community faces each and every day through articles and advertisements in magazines, newspapers and on TV.

Post-traumatic stress, depression, chronic pain and illness – all too often unseen to those who walk past our veterans everyday in the supermarket, the park, at the bus stop or train station. Yet it is these things that wage a silent war inside many of our service men and women who have contributed so much to help Australians enjoy the life and freedom we value so highly.

Since the start of 2013, DefenceCare has been assisting an average of 300 clients per month with claims for injury and illness, is progressing and reviewing around 150 appeals to the Veterans' Review Board (and waiting for information for many more) and assisting an average 80 to 90 clients with counselling and community support.

In the last few months, we increased our staff to cope with the demand for our services. At the moment our donations are bunched towards the end of the year (mainly in November and December). While we appreciate donations at any time, we are trying to better match the timing of donations with the needs of our veterans and their families, which are spread throughout the year.

If any sub-Branch is considering donating to RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution (the legal entity behind DefenceCare), please feel free to spread your donation over several months during the year.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR SUB-BRANCH WELFARE AND PENSION OFFICERS

DefenceCare team members have come to know some of the amazing volunteer Welfare and Pension Officers from sub-Branches. We also hear about other sub-Branch volunteers who have supported their local defence community for many years.

We are hoping to be able to acknowledge these members in the near future and will be writing to sub-Branches to ask if they would like to nominate any members who have served in this capacity for a number of years and offered outstanding service.

## REFRESHER TRAINING FOR PENSION OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES

There has been recent discussion about the value of refreshing your training every two or three years if you are a Pension Officer or Advocate.

DefenceCare staff are committed to regular training in TIP and other courses that will help them keep up-to-date and better understand and help their clients. Our team also meets every week to discuss difficult issues and matters of principle, as well as review client feedback and suggestions for how we can better assist our clients.

No matter how many clients you see in this field, we would recommend you consider refreshing your training every few years to keep as up-to-date as possible.

Visit: [www.tipnsw-act.org.au](http://www.tipnsw-act.org.au)



## PEOPLE WE HAVE HELPED

A number of our team members recently had the privilege of meeting a young veteran Jason, his wife Brooke and their children.

Jason had to leave the Australian Defence Force in 2011 due to painful injuries and illnesses that may make it difficult for him to work again on a full-time basis.



Jason's wife Brooke was diagnosed with a brain tumour and he now cares for both his wife and their children. At the time of writing, Brooke was heavily pregnant with their third child.

DefenceCare helped Jason and Brooke by paying for vital dental surgery for one of their children and continues to help when the expenses of family life become too great.

As well as assisting with daily expenses, DefenceCare has provided counselling to help Jason get through tough times.

Jason has since joined his local sub-Branch and is now involved with a community gardening project which has given him a more positive outlook on life.

Last month DefenceCare helped a number of defence families with house cleaning and lawn mowing – services that assisted them during their recovery from painful and debilitating surgery.

DefenceCare also recently helped a seriously wounded Digger and his young family by paying his electricity bill and supported another by paying his accommodation to attend the recent pain management seminar.

## PAIN MANAGEMENT FORUM

On Thursday 21 March around 80 veterans and others in the defence community attended the Walking Wounded: Manage your Pain Seminar.

The seminar, held at the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Surry Hills, featured Professor Rollin Gallagher, Deputy Director of the USA Veterans' Pain Program, and Professor Michael Cousins, Director of the Pain Management Research Institute and PainAustralia.

The seminar was supported by RSL NSW and DefenceCare and featured information on the more recent view of looking at chronic pain as not merely a symptom, but a disease in itself.

Professor Gallagher also shared current research highlighting the vital role early pain management plays in the treatment of serious battle injuries and longer term recovery.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SEMINAR AT STATE CONGRESS

DefenceCare is organising the Health and Well-being Seminar on Monday 27 May 2013 at State Congress.

We hope this will be an informative event interspersed with some fun activities and the chance to win some prizes.

The three-hour session from 9am to 12noon will feature three guest speakers:

- Matthew Johnstone, who is a Mental Health Advocate; Public Speaker on Depression, Anxiety and Mental Health; and renowned Author of the Black Dog Series of Books on Depression.
- Dane Christison, who is a 5/7 Royal Australian Regiment Veteran; sufferer of PTS; Founder and Managing Director of

the In and Out Fitness Organisation and programs for veterans; and participated in the recent Department of Veterans' Affairs series of DVDs on mental illness.

- Ben Burrows, who is a 2nd Commando Regiment Veteran with five overseas deployments from 1998 (Bougainville) to 2007 (Afghanistan); and sufferer of physical injuries and PTS.

The guest speakers will also be part of a panel discussion giving the audience time to ask questions and raise their own issues.

The seminar will feature 10 minute Tai Chi breaks by Paul Parramore, supporter of the Australian Vietnam Veterans Mine Clearing team in Cambodia.

If you can't attend this seminar, we hope to see you at our stall that will be manned by a number of our staff including an Entitlements Adviser.

## FACEBOOK TRAINING AT STATE CONGRESS

Our Marketing and Sponsorship Manager, Xiong Luong, who recently trained veterans in the use of Facebook for VVCS, will be available to give one-on-one training at State Congress for those wishing to join Facebook and use this social media site to keep in contact with their friends, family and organisations.

Sessions will generally be an hour in duration and can be booked in prior to Congress by calling 8088 0388 or emailing [kaustin@rslnsw.org.au](mailto:kaustin@rslnsw.org.au). Delegates and their partners are all welcome to take advantage of Xiong's expertise in this area.

All Facebook training will take place near DefenceCare's display stand.

## DEFENCECARE'S NEW WEBSITE

If you are online, please check out our new website at [www.defencecare.org.au](http://www.defencecare.org.au).

It features an online donation facility, stories about the clients we have helped and information on our full range of services. The site also lists a number of organisations that can help in times of need.

You can also directly contact us through the website (or like us on Facebook and send us a private message).



## SMOKE ALARMS REMINDER

If you have not changed your smoke batteries yet, now is a perfect time to do so. Fire and Rescue NSW recommends that it is a good idea to change smoke alarm batteries when you change your clocks at the end of Daylight Saving each year.

## CONTACT US

**DefenceCare. Always there.**

A charity supporting the Australian Defence Force. DefenceCare was formerly known as the Defence Service Assistance Centre and is part of RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution (RSL WBI).

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**

**Phone:** (02) 8088 0388 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm)

**Fax:** (02) 9261 4558

**Email:** [defencecare@rslnsw.org.au](mailto:defencecare@rslnsw.org.au)

**Website:** [www.defencecare.org.au](http://www.defencecare.org.au)

**Facebook:** DefenceCare

**Twitter:** DefenceCare