



**Robyn Collins**  
**General Manager**



We have had some staff changes at DefenceCare in recent months and I wanted to let you know that we have brought on board James Dallas, an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, as our new Manager, Claims and Advocacy.

James joins our team in preparation for David Murray’s retirement and to also head up our Claims team.

Although David has not yet set a formal retirement date, many of you are probably aware that David has been handling appeals to the Veterans’ Review Board for RSL WBI (now DefenceCare) for many years, and prior to this he had a 37 year career with DVA.

James brings with him a wealth of knowledge of the military and will spend as much time as possible with David in the next few months gaining knowledge and experience, as he prepares to take over the Advocacy role in the not-to-distant future.

This year, DefenceCare applied to registered clubs under the ClubGRANTS scheme and I would like to thank sub-Branch members who have supported our applications. We have been successful in a number of areas and all money donated by clubs will go to support our services in their local areas.

Thank you also to the many sub-Branches who help DefenceCare in a variety of ways.

Wagga Wagga helped collect money for DefenceCare at the recent NRL City v Country game and we shared the proceeds of the collection between the sub-Branch and DefenceCare. Nowra sub-Branch’s Digger Day 2016 was a huge success and the VCs dinner raised over \$35,000 for DefenceCare and Soldier On. Special

thanks to the powerhouse organiser Rick Meehan, who worked so hard to get what was a wonderful event off the ground.

I would also like to thank Helen Sheargold, a member of the Women’s Auxiliary in Davistown, for taking the huge step of shaving her head with some of her family to raise much needed funds for DefenceCare. This courage is sincerely appreciated.

Finally, I met Keith Wood from Gundagai at a CCWA meeting in Finley recently and he let me know that his sub-Branch had solved a problem with a lack of members visiting hospitals by approaching their Women’s Auxiliary members, who formed a group of women to undertake the training needed to do this task.

- In June:
- DefenceCare received 426 calls for help;
  - Of the calls for assistance, 182 were for help with DVA claims; 26 were calls about appeals to the VRB; 80 were calls for counselling, financial help and other community support; and 138 were for a number of other matters and assistance;
  - A total of 280 new claims were submitted to the DVA; and
  - Community support active clients totalled 221.

### PEOPLE WE HAVE HELPED

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

Cecil loved every minute of his time with the Army. He loved the companionship, the mateship, social activities outside



the services and the fact that everyone looked after each another.

Cecil rose to the rank of Sergeant of his platoon. Serving in the Citizens

Military Forces from 1963, Cecil was a member of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME) responsible for the maintenance and recovery of Army vehicles and equipment.

It was during his time in the Army that Cecil married Judith. “I was pretty wild when I was younger and she tamed me. We had a really wonderful relationship. She was the best thing to happen to me” says Cecil.

Cecil resigned from the Army after 10 years of service as he wanted to spend more time with his family and support his son, who, at times, was very sick with cystic fibrosis. Unfortunately his son passed away in 2000.

On Christmas day 2012, Cecil’s life changed dramatically when his mother passed away, followed by his wife Judith in May 2013 from a tragic vehicle incident. He lost his wife of 47 years in an instant.

“The death of a loved one devastates the immediate family, to arrange the necessary arrangements for funeral services, and the transfer of documentation; and the costs involved are enormous,” says Cecil.

It was at this time that Cecil experienced some significant financial struggles. He had difficulty paying for his wife’s funeral and didn’t know who to turn to.

Cecil had been a member for a number of years of his local sub-Branch and it was the President who connected Cecil with DefenceCare.

“DefenceCare’s help, assistance and generosity were overwhelming. Until this kind of situation arises, I can assure you, you really don’t know what to do or where to turn to for help.”

Cecil has since been able to reimburse DefenceCare for their generous financial assistance. “I paid it back because it wasn’t my money to begin with. I was very fortunate to be helped, paying DefenceCare back was just the right thing to do.

“I have to accept the fact that you cannot change the past or what has happened and

deal with it in my own way; my choice now is to look to the future. It gets very lonely when you are on your own so I try to spend a lot more of my time with my immediate family, in particular my daughter and her four children.”

“My local sub-Branch and DefenceCare have been extremely helpful and I cannot thank them enough. I thank them for their help during this horrendous period. They are the net to catch the fallen and help with the job at hand during difficult times.”

### VITA INSURANCE

Just a reminder to sub-Branches to ensure that any relevant sub-Branch officers meet the current requirements of VITA Insurance to ensure they are covered.

### GRANTS

DefenceCare would like to thank the DVA for a grant to purchase a multi-function printer to allow us to communicate more effectively with veterans, veterans’ groups and community organisations.

### ANZ STAFF GRANT

DefenceCare would like to thank the ANZ Staff Foundation for their grant to support veterans who have transitioned out of the ADF and are experiencing difficulties integrating into civilian life.

### HMAS SUCCESS

DefenceCare would like to thank the crew of HMAS *Success* for adopting us as their chosen charity. Their fundraising efforts and support in assisting us in Naval ship events and within the DefenceCare offices is greatly appreciated.

### NSW ClubGRANTS

DefenceCare would like to thank and acknowledge the following NSW Clubs, for providing additional funding to support veterans and their families: Liverpool Catholic Club, Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, Smithfield RSL Club,

Diggers @ the entrance, Wagga RSL & Commercial Club, Club Rivers, Guildford Leagues Club, Carlingford Bowling, Sports and Recreation Club, Lithgow Workies, Davistown RSL Club & Petersham RSL Club.

### DEFENCECARE AMBASSADOR UPDATE

Joining Damien Thomlinson, Erin Molan, Brad Copelin, Amber Lawrence, Luke O’Shea and Dane Christison as DefenceCare Ambassadors, we welcome Geoff Evans and Mollie Gray to the team. In the next few issues, we will tell you a little more about Geoff and Mollie.

### THE BENEFITS OF WALKING

Studies have proven that as we age we’re less likely to encounter mental decline if we stay active by walking. It sounds too simple, but by walking more we have a better chance of remaining independent and reducing the risk of disability as we age.

1. It’s free. There’s no need to pay an instructor or take a class; you’re already an expert!
2. No expensive equipment is required, just a sturdy pair of walking shoes.
3. It makes you feel good! As you walk, endorphins are released improving your mood and sense of wellbeing.
4. It keeps you mobile, maintains your coordination and reduces your risk of

having a fall.  
5. It’s a work-out! Your metabolism is boosted by walking and you’re burning calories.

6. It’s good for your heart. Walking increases cardiovascular conditioning and improves your strength and muscle tone.

7. It’s a social activity. You can easily walk and talk with a friend or detour via your favourite local cafe.

8. Walking can help you avoid nasty ailments such as back and neck pain, arthritis, varicose veins and others. Walking is a great way to improve your mental and physical wellbeing.

For more information on RDNS HomeCare 1300 665 444.

### YOGA FOR VETERANS AND PARTNERS

The Yoga Foundation is providing a FREE Drop in Yoga classes for veterans and partners in Wodonga, Faulconbridge, Dee Why and North Bondi. Contact Margot on 0400 723 476 for more information.

### DO YOU HAVE A NEXT OF KIN?

Please consider providing their contact details to your sub-Branch. You might like to consider sharing any wishes you have around a tribute in the event of your passing. This will help your family and fellow members at what will be a difficult time for them.

### 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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