

**Veterans Centre**  
Sydney Northern Beaches



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*Veterans Centre - Sydney Northern Beaches*

# ANNUAL REPORT



## Mission Statement

To improve the lives of our current and former servicemen, women and their families through holistic support and personal empowerment.

## Veterans Centre - Sydney Northern Beaches - Board of Directors



John McInerney OAM  
*Chairman*



Bill Hardman OAM  
*Treasurer*



Grant Easterby  
*Director*



Adrian Talbot  
*Director*



Lindsay Godfrey  
*Director*



Bruce Crossie  
*Secretary*

## Veterans Centre - Sydney Northern Beaches - Staff



Ben Webb  
*Centre Manager*



Kylie Dumas  
*Administration  
Officer*



Lynn Murphy  
*Advocacy  
Coordinator*



Tony Van den Hurk  
*Advocate*

## Veterans Centre - Sydney Northern Beaches - Volunteers

Will Slatyer – *Senior Advocate*

Greg Attwood – *Senior Advocate*

Johnathan Villanueva – *Advocate*

Garry Luscombe – *Senior Advocate*

Allen Telling – *Advocate*

Caroline Moore – *Advocate*

Ken Wunsch – *Senior Advocate*

Beverly Taylor – *Advocate*

Melissa Neish – *Advocate*



# Chairman's Report

## John McInerney OAM

The 2016-17 year was a period of major progress for the Veteran Centre Sydney Northern Beaches with many notable milestones achieved in the period.

The VCSNB established the VCSNB - Necessitous Circumstances Gift Fund with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status that will allow the VCSNB to expand the services and assistance of the VCSNB. The attainment of this status required a complex body of work in the application, constitutional revision, and governance procedures. I would like to recognise the efforts of Chief Financial Officer of Dee Why RSL Club, Sarah Sutherland and our Director, Bill Hardman to bring this important work to a successful conclusion.

Our growing case load and expansion from the traditional compensation work also necessitated major changes to our traditional "Hub & Spoke" model of operation with the employment of staff at the "hub". This will greatly increase the effectiveness of our advocates and align the VCSNB with the Department of Veteran Affairs new advocacy training program, the Advocate Training & Development Program (ATDP).

A great highlight of the year was the conducting of the "Resilience Lunch". The successful fundraiser was an accumulation of effort by the DY RSL Club Staff, VCSNB Staff, and the community.

The efforts of the VCSNB was recognised with the granting of Vice Regal Patronage by His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retired), Governor of New South Wales.

I would like to express my appreciation to our donors and sponsors. I would specifically like to mention the relationship between the VCSNB and the Board of Management of the DY RSL Club. Their foresight and generosity has enabled the VCSNB to tackle problems within the veteran community over and above the traditional compensation.

None of the progress we have made in 2016-17 would have been possible without the contribution of our staff and volunteers. A special mention of Ben Webb the VCSNB Manager who not only oversaw this progress but has been an excellent ambassador in the community and both federal and state governments. His appointment to the ATDP and Sydney North Primary Health Network is of special significance.



It is important that we recognise the efforts of our founding Chairman, CDRE Graeme Sloper AM RAN, [Above] who sadly passed away during the year. His contribution, friendship and dedication to our Veteran Community will be greatly missed.

Lastly, to my fellow Board Members, your oversight and positive can-do attitude has been a fundamental building block on which these achievements have been built.

The year ahead will pose new challenges but this will always be the case as we strive to address the issues that confront our community of current and former servicemen, women and their families.

*John McInerney*



# Centre Manager Report

## Benjamin Webb

Over the course of 2016-17 the Veterans Centre Sydney Northern Beaches has become a central point of contact for anyone with questions or concerns about current or former military personnel and their families. Therefore, we have focused on working collaboratively to implement a holistic regional solution, a combination of reactive services and preventative measures. Our core business of advocacy (compensation and welfare assistance) has significant wrap-around support services. These supporting services are provided by the Australian Defence Force, Department of Veterans Affairs, State and Federal Government Health, Community Organisations and Ex-Service Organisations. This way, we can assist those in need regard less of membership, age, conflict or relationship to the Veteran.

Our team has faced many challenges over the last year and has risen to meet them each time, resulting in assisting more than 160 clients. An outstanding result for a small group of dedicated volunteers. However, increasing client demand and a growing wait list necessitated a fundamental change in our service delivery model.

Firstly, we established a Necessitous Circumstances Gift Fund for the Welfare needs of our Community, enabling fast service provision to those in crisis. This is a crucial element while we establish longer-term care through Government Departments.

We then focused on evolving from a service model of volunteers to a combination of paid and volunteer advocates (of all ages) with adequate support staff. I am happy to report this has been achieved. Due to the generosity of our Major Sponsor, Dee Why RSL Club, we employed a full-time Administration Officer and quickly entered an intensive period of fundraising, launching our annual fundraiser, the Resilience Lunch. The response from the community exceeded all expectations and has enabled us to employ an advocate full-time. Campsie RSL Club and sub-Branch then astounded us with two donations, \$50,000 for welfare assistance and \$100,000 to employ another staff member for service delivery. We cannot thank Campsie RSL enough for their significant contributions to the veterans community.

Aside from service delivery, we have also taken additional steps to ensure the governance of the centre remains effective and compliant with all the relevant authorities. This is essential for our clients and the community to have confidence we are doing right by those we are supporting.

To all our sponsors, partner organisations, individuals and community groups who have given their time and money, thank you. Without your generosity and willingness to help we would not have been able to assist so many throughout the year.

Thank you to our Board of Directors, without their support, guidance and dedication to our Community, the Veterans Centre Sydney Northern Beaches would not have such a strong foundation and exciting future.

Lastly, I would like to thank our team of staff and volunteers. This can be a very challenging environment to work in, you have always done your utmost for our clients, giving huge amounts of your personal time. Your selflessness and dedication has made it a pleasure to work with you all.

I look forward to seeing and working with you all in the year to come.

**Benjamin Webb**

# 2017 in Review

## A story from one of our clients

I have served in the Australian Army for over 10 years and deployed multiple times. The physical demands as an Infantryman took its toll, sustaining injuries and eventually the wear and tear got the best of me. I went from being very active to barely functioning, I definitely couldn't contribute to my team mates. I became stuck in the military medical system, in this horrible state of limbo. I mentally worsened and isolated myself. I would be lying if I said I never considered suicide. Eventually I was diagnosed with Chronic Pain disorder,

Depression and Anxiety. Once medically discharged life didn't get any easier, it in fact became more stressful. Trying to finalise DVA claims, waiting for ComSuper to decide what Pension I would receive, moving to a new location and not knowing anyone, trying to figure out my next career. Thankfully I found support. While it still hasn't been easy I know have a support network and understand much more of the DVA system supporting me. I now feel I can get back on my feet and move on with my life.

## Numbers

CLIENTS  
**164**

**89**  
ADF

**71**  
VETS

**4**  
PARTNERS

**189**  
ENQUIRIES

**182**  
COMPENSATION  
CLAIMS SUBMITTED

**1005**  
WELFARE HOURS  
OF SUPPORT

# 2017 in Review

## Resilience Lunch

The Inaugural Resilience Luncheon was held in April 2017 at Dee Why RSL Club, and raised a substantial amount to support the operations of the Veterans Centre Sydney Northern Beaches.

This was a significant event launched to promote awareness, gain support and raise vital funds for the challenges facing our current and former servicemen, women and families in our local community. With an alarming suicide rate among ex-service members, it's imperative to raise awareness of the situation and how people can help.

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor of NSW and his wife Linda were honoured guests at the luncheon. The day also featured 2013 Australian of the Year Ita Buttrose, AO OBE as MC and keynote speaker Major Matina Jewell (Ret'd), as well as Danni Sloper and Tamara Sloper-Harding (widow and daughter respectively of the Veterans Centre co-founder, CDRE Graham Sloper AM RAN).

More than 300 attendees dug deep to raise funds, ranging from government representatives, local business, RSL Clubs, RSL sub-Branches, community organisations and prominent members of the community, including the Hon. Jason Falinski MP, former Mayors Michael Regan and Jean Hay, and former Deputy Mayor Kylie Ferguson.

The Governor of NSW delivered a speech highlighting the need for streamlining services for the veteran's community; the professionalisation of advocacy services for veterans and how community integration can support and assist veterans and their families to transition to civilian life after their defence service. With the transition from military life to civilian life, this can be even more challenging with a chronic physical and/or psychological injury. Military life is unique and servicemen and women remain separate from the general community in many key aspects of life.

Grant Easterby, CEO of Dee Why RSL Club spoke about the Club's involvement and why they became major sponsors of the Centre in 2015. The Board and Club executives wanted to take the Club back to its roots, assisting military veterans, which has resulted in the Club providing more than \$500,000 worth of support since inception.

This event and the amazing result would never have been possible without the generous donations of local business and community, or the dedicated staff of Dee Why RSL Club, who put in a substantial amount of their own time in the months leading up to the event and then a phenomenal effort on the day. The event was a tremendous success for everyone, and we look forward to reporting on the positive impact these funds raised have made in our community at next years event.



# 2018 Key Projects

## Advocacy

Based on the current client demand we predict we will support over 185 clients in 2017-18 Submitting over 200 compensation claims and provide over 1000 hours of welfare support. Compensation assistance and Welfare Support is the core business of the Centre and we will continue to professionally develop our current and future staff and volunteers to enable a continuous high-quality service for our community. The Centre will also be developing more partnerships to ensure a solution can be provided for whoever walks through the door.

## Peer Mentoring Pilot Program

This program is designed to assist early intervention through recognition of warning signs and warm referrals to the appropriate service. The Pilot will consist of 10 people from current and former servicemen, women and their partners, ranging in age. The primary role of these trained Peer Mentors will be to assist their colleagues; to accept or find help, stay with them during their recovery or transition (Military to Civilian) and help to integrate into their community. Peer Mentors will work with the VCSNB Advocates and other industry professionals to ensure a holistic care is adopted.

## Service Dogs Research Project

Under the Department of Veterans Affairs – Supporting Younger Veterans Grant, the VCSNB successfully applied to conduct a research project in collaboration with Macquarie University. The aim of this project is to identify the standard and scope of services currently in Australia and produce recommendations. These recommendations will be presented to the Department of Veterans Affairs to instigate change in this industry in Australia and establish a starting point for Government support to Service Dog providers.

## Invictus Games Training Program

A grass roots training program to prepare potential Invictus Games athletes for the 2018 Sydney Invictus Games Selection Tryouts. The aim of this program is to use sport as another vehicle for recovery and to prove to each participant what they are still capable of achieving. While this program will prepare athletes for the Invictus Games selections, it will aim to go beyond, connecting athletes into local and state sports events after the Invictus Games.



## His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd)



*"We are so excited to have His Excellency join our existing Ambassadors, Bronwyn Bishop, LTCOL Matt Stevens and CAPT Michael Maley. They are all extraordinary leaders and passionate to help our Defence and Veteran Communities."*

*Ben Webb – VCSNB Centre Manager*

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), is the 38th Governor of New South Wales. He commenced his five-year tenure in October 2014.

Prior to his appointment as Governor, His Excellency served for 42 years in the Australian Army, concluding his service as the Chief of the Defence Force. His Excellency was appointed a Companion within the Order of Australia in 2010 for eminent service to the Australian Defence Force, and had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his leadership during Operation SOLACE in Somalia in 1993.

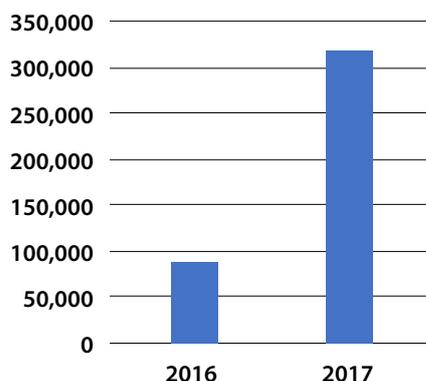
His Excellency is married to Linda and has three adult children: Caitlin, Marcus and Amelia. He has a wide range of interests in the arts and in sport.

As Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency intends to support the people and community organisations of New South Wales, through:

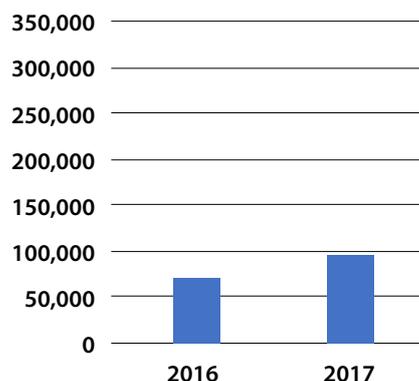
- Assisting programs and organisations that promote inclusiveness, diversity and active citizenship
- Recognising innovation, achievement and excellence
- Promoting industry and regional development
- Providing support in times of adversity
- Advocating for marginalised members of our community.

# Financials

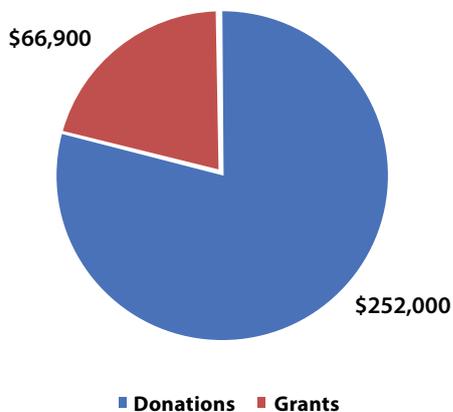
### Income



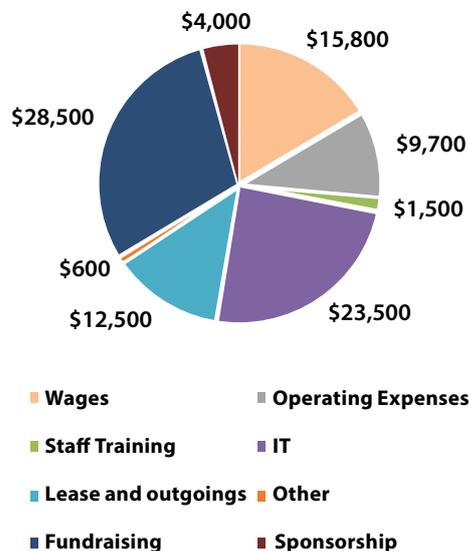
### Expenditure



### Income



### Expenses



#### Notes:

1. Increased Income due to fundraising through the Resilience Lunch and the donations from Campsie RSL Club and sub-Branch. The majority of costs will be spent on wages to deliver services.
2. Information technology expenditure high due to purchasing of Case Management Software.
3. **These figures do not include the majority of wage costs due to direct funding by major partner, Dee Why RSL Club.**

Major Partner



**Dee Why  
RSL Club**

Sponsor

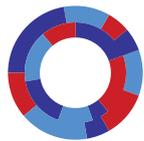
CLUB | COMMUNITY | COMMITMENT



PUTTING OUR COMMUNITY FIRST

Community Partners





## **Veterans Centre**

Sydney Northern Beaches

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