

MEDIA RELEASE
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HARDSHIP & HOPE – TV SPECIAL REVEALS 100 YEARS OF VETERAN SUPPORT

Australians will soon get a rare look at how their donations provide life-saving support and assistance to thousands of everyday Aussies.

To mark its centenary, the RSL has given unprecedented access to a documentary film crew to reveal some of the extraordinary stories of veterans and serving personnel as they transition from Defence to life as a civilian.

RSL National CEO Samantha Jackman said the stories are heart breaking and life affirming.

“All Australians should watch this documentary because they will understand what these veterans have been through and how the RSL, through donations, helps rebuild lives,” Mrs Jackman said.

“It shows how the simple act of buying a Poppy on Remembrance Day or a badge on Anzac Day makes a real difference.”

The documentary crosses the nation – illustrating the array of RSL programs and services which normally go unnoticed, and the dedication of RSL sub-Branch volunteers who are the organisation’s heart and soul.

Former soldier Andy Ticehurst, 46, suffered a serious back injury and PTSD and was discharged from the Australian Army in 1995. He has been supported by RSL DefenceCare in Sydney.

“My counsellor effectively saved my life,” Andy explained. “I had a five and eight year old in my care but couldn’t even look after myself. The tools my counsellor gave me made me a better parent and I’m able to talk about what I have been through.”

“Other veterans are living under bridges, they are living on people’s couches and dealing with demons they shouldn’t have to. That’s got to change.”

Victorians Jim, 70, and Isabel McLeary, 62, are raising their three young grandchildren after a tragic turn of events left them orphaned in Scotland. The RSL stepped in to help Jim – a Navy veteran.

“They gave us a new people mover and a larger washer; without them we would be on poverty row,” Jim said. “I didn’t realise how much the RSL is involved with families of service and ex-servicemen.”

Mrs Jackman said the RSL’s Centenary was an important milestone and it is determined to continue meeting the needs of the modern veteran.

“Fundamentally the experiences of war leave an impact, whether that was the First World War or the Afghanistan war,” she said. “The services are different and our recognition of it is different but the need for that support hasn’t changed.

“At the end of the day, the RSL is here to help veterans and their families get through anything they might need us for. It doesn’t matter what – if you need help, come talk to us.”

Coming Home - Australia’s RSL is narrated by four time Gold Logie winner Lisa McCune and will be broadcast nationally on the Nine Network at 4pm on Saturday 6 February 2016.

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