



# KOKODATRACK

AUGUST 2020

MEMORIAL WALKWAY NEWS

## RAYMOND BRUCE GENTLES

12 APRIL 1925 – 25 JULY 2020

Ray Gentles was more than just a friend to everyone at the KTMW. Ray was one of our legends, a volunteer guide for school groups and a supporter of everything the Walkway stands for.

Born in Orange, NSW, Ray enlisted in April 1944, just days after turning 19. He served with the 55/53 Australian Infantry Battalion at Sanananda, Rabaul and Bougainville, before being discharged in October 1946 with the rank of Lance Corporal.

In 2017, during commemorations for the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda campaign and Sanananda, Ray recalled that "as soldiers we served our battalion with pride, and as General Stan Savage said at Bougainville, the 55th/53rd will do me."

Ray gave valuable service to the Walkway and to his country at large; he will be greatly missed.



RAY GENTLES



## DVA EXTENDS FUNDING

PICTURED, FROM LEFT, CR ANGELO TSIREKAS, ALICE KANG (KTMW SECRETARY), ROBERT RIDGE (PRESIDENT FIVE DOCK RSL), JENNIFER COLLINS, REG CHARD, DR FIONA MARTIN MP

There was good news on 9 July when Dr Fiona Martin MP, Member for Reid, announced that the KTMW had been successful in its application for a DVA grant for the 2019/2020 financial year. This was confirmed by the Secretary of DVA Liz Cosson, who attended the KTMW board and encouraged it to submit a further grant application for the following two years.

After months of uncertainty over the future of government

assistance, this will ensure that commemoration services, school visits and general maintenance can continue to be supported.

KTMW chair Jennifer Collins said the Board will now work with the State and Federal Governments to have the Walkway declared a memorial of national significance. In NSW the only such locations are the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park, the Cenotaph in Martin Place, and the Korean War Memorial in Moore Park.

KTMW stalwart Reg Chard thanked Dr Martin on behalf of all veterans of the New Guinea campaign, pointing out that this is Australia's only living war memorial, where visitors can walk through tropical rainforest and at the same time learn about the WWII campaign.

"It's a great win for our community," added Cr Angelo Tsirekas, Mayor of the City of Canada Bay.



## GOVERNOR-GENERAL ACCEPTS AS PATRON

The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway is proud to announce that His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, has accepted the board's invitation to be our patron. Prior to being sworn in as Governor-General, David Hurley served as the 38th Governor of NSW from October 2014 – May 2019. During that term of office he formed a close association with the Walkway, attending commemoration services regularly.



## RAY JAMES JOINS BOARD

The KTMW has welcomed to the board Mr Ray James OAM, a Vietnam veteran who served more than 20 years in the RAN and another 26 years in the Royal Australian Navy Reserve. He also served with the Transport Investigation Branch and NSW Police Force. Ray has been a member of the RSL since 1975, holding senior positions at sub-Branch and District Council levels and is currently the acting State President. He is also Vice President of the NSW Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

# HISTORY PROJECT BECOMING A REALITY

The exciting project to create a virtual reality program which will give visitors the sense of being on the Kokoda Track and sharing wartime experiences is well under way. Producer Sean Bacon has been recording interviews with veterans of the WWII campaign, and preparing to shoot video sequences on location on the Track itself once international travel restrictions have been lifted.

Funded by a grant from the DVA "Saluting Their Service" program,

the project will allow visitors to immerse themselves in the Kokoda campaign and also provide portable devices for students in particular to learn about individual engagements and sacrifices as they move from station to station along the walkway.

The project is expected to take 18 months to complete, ensuring that young Australians will be able to use the latest technology to learn about a significant time in our military history.





## REMEMBER THIS?



(L TO R) JOHN NEENAN, DON OUGHTRED, RON CASHMAN, EDDIE WRIGHT

A special dawn service was held on the morning of 14 September 2000 to precede the lighting of the Olympic Torch, which was then carried along the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway en route to the Olympic Stadium at Homebush. Norm Pope, aged 96 and a former

army captain who served in the Middle East and New Guinea, released a flock of doves, assisted by Alice Kang. The flame was then carried in relay by veterans Don Oughtred (New Guinea), Ron Cashman (Korean War), Eddie Wright (Malaya) and John Neenan (Vietnam).

## WREATHS LAID ON ANZAC DAY



Restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic made commemorations on ANZAC Day 2020 very different from those of any in the previous century. At the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway it was marked by a simple wreath-laying ceremony, accompanied by a lone piper and bugler. KTMW chair Jennifer Collins recited The Ode and those present sang the National Anthem. Wreaths were laid by Ms Collins, Cr Angelo Tsirekas Mayor of Canada Bay and board member, Federal Member for Reid Dr Fiona Martin MP, NSW State Member for Drummoyne the Hon. John Sidoti MP, and Cr Heather Crichton from Burwood Council.

## NEW OFFICE AND MEETING SPACE



Most supporters of the Walkway will be aware that long-serving KTMW Secretary and board member Alice Kang recently took retirement from her full-time position as Director of Marketing and Community Relations at Concord Hospital. Her departure caught many of her friends and colleagues by surprise because after being on the hospital staff for 46 years, Alice was viewed as an irreplaceable fixture!

This does not mean, however, that Alice's enthusiasm and organisational abilities have been lost to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. She remains in her role here, still planning commemoration activities and school excursions, but with a new email address and phone number:

Alice.kang@kokodawalkway.com.au  
0488 488 297

Extensions are planned for the Ralph Honner Education Centre to create a meeting room and office space, and it will be from here that Alice will oversee activities. The old toilets at the Kokoda Café, which were closed when new facilities opened at the Education Centre, will be converted into storage space to house equipment.



Kokoda  
Café  
NEW TIMES  
10am-3pm  
TUESDAY  
TO  
SUNDAY

OPEN

THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT SO  
WE CAN STAY  
OPEN IN  
THESE TOUGH  
TIMES

## THE KOKODA CAFÉ REOPENED FOR BUSINESS

The Kokoda Café reopened for business once covid-19 restrictions were eased at the end of June, after being closed for much of the year. It wasn't long before dozens of visitors were again walking along the pathway, enjoying the surrounds and learning of the Kokoda campaign, before stopping at the café for refreshments. Observing social distancing requirements of course!

## DONATION TO KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

TITLE	FIRST NAME	INITIAL	LAST NAME
COMPANY		POSITION IF APPLICABLE	
ADDRESS	STATE	POSTCODE	COUNTRY
PHONE	EMAIL		

DONATION AMOUNT

\$ , .

All donations are tax deductible.

### PAYMENT DETAILS

Please attach a cheque made out to "Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway" or complete the credit card details below. The form and cheque should be mailed to: Alice Kang, Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, PO Box 127, Concord NSW 2137 or emailed to [Alice.kang@kokodawalkway.com.au](mailto:Alice.kang@kokodawalkway.com.au)

NAME ON CARD:

Visa

Mastercard

CARD NUMBER:

CARD NUMBER EXPIRY (MM/YY)

CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE:

CVC (CARD VERIFICATION CODE)



Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway is grateful for your donation and undertakes NOT to disclose your contact details to any other organisation.

