

HELPING HAND FROM THE MEN'S SHED

Members of the Strathfield Men's Shed have put their many skills to good use, carrying out a variety of maintenance tasks at the Memorial Walkway.

Before the Anzac commemorative service they were busy repairing and painting the bench seats which are scattered along the pathway, and helped to make sure that everything at the Centrepiece was in sparkling condition.

Pictured are, from left, Ken Lumsden, Bob Turner, Kevin Lucas, Chris Davey and Nick Giglio, who is the secretary of the Strathfield Men's Shed.

Their assistance is much appreciated and is another sign of how the KTMW enjoys widespread community support.

Strathfield Men's Shed aims to empower men of all ages to socialise and do things in a practical way.



STRATHFIELD MEN'S SHED GROUP

Participation is encouraged to develop good self-esteem, respect for each other and to support local community projects. Members may learn and share skills such as woodworking, wood turning, metalwork and other hand crafts, all in a safe manner.

DONATION TO KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

TITLE	FIRST NAME	INITIAL	LAST NAME
COMPANY		POSITION IF APPLICABLE	
ADDRESS		STATE	POSTCODE
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			
NAME ON CARD:		<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> 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.



KOKODATRACK

MAY 2021

MEMORIAL WALKWAY NEWS

WAR WIDOWS JOIN US FOR THE ANZAC COMMEMORATION



JO TURNER, WIDOW OF SGT IAN TURNER, VETERAN OF SEVEN TOURS OF DUTY IN AFGHANISTAN AND TIMOR LESTE, PLANTS HER CROSS OF REMEMBRANCE

The 2021 Anzac Commemorative Service, held on the morning of Saturday 24 April, broke new ground with the participation of Australian War Widows NSW, whose Field of Remembrance ceremony was incorporated in the proceedings.

The War Widows usually hold their service at St Andrew's Cathedral but this year transferred it outdoors for the first time, to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway to allow more people to participate while Covid-19 restrictions are still in place.

The service began with an Anzac Requiem, read by Angelo Tsirekas, Mayor of Canada Bay and a KTMW board member, followed by the official welcome from Jennifer Collins, who chairs both the KTMW and War Widows NSW. "We are honoured to share our

annual service this year with the War Widows and unite our community in a show of respect and love for those who have fallen, and their families," said Ms Collins.

The Right Rev. Dr Michael Stead, Bishop of South Sydney, Rev Emily Carpenter, Anglican Chaplain Concord Hospital and Father Tom Stevens, Police Chaplain and Mortlake parish priest led Bible readings and prayers.

The Anzac Address was delivered by Mrs Renee Wilson, War Widows CEO, who has had a

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I STAND IN THE SHADOW

An edited version of the address by Renee Wilson

The families of defence members wear no medals, no uniform – they stand unrecognisable, and unseen in the shadow - yet the ripple effects of war, service and sacrifice are, at their core, no different. The focus is just reversed.

For us it isn't the pain of other families, the mothers, widows, the children that breaks us. It is the pain of those that wear a uniform that does this. Of those we love.



MRS RENEE WILSON DELIVERS THE ANZAC ADDRESS

Defence and Veteran Families are strong, resilient, fiercely protective and proud. While families are as much a part of the Anzac story and spirit as the Anzacs and contemporary veterans themselves, much less is known or understood of their experiences.

The ripple effects of military service are largely unseen and unspoken.

We count the number of veterans who are impacted by their service but we don't count the number of relationships which break down, the number of families torn apart, the number of women and children subjected to violence in the home or work place, the rate of mental illness that results from traumas relating to service. The list goes on.

While I consider myself very lucky having not experienced the pure darkness that can descend on a family or spouse following war and war injuries I have had my share of challenges.





➔ My husband, Gary, an Army veteran with 20 years' service, was lucky enough to serve this nation in war and return with his life. A war that was almost 12,000km away, but a war that came to my door. With one phone call— I experienced pain and fear like never before. With senior members of the 2nd Commando Regiment at my house and desperately trying to find me, I expected the worst. I expected them to tell me Gary was dead.

Gary had been involved in the same Black Hawk accident that had killed three Australian soldiers and wounded six others. With severe brain injuries he was given just a 4% chance of survival.

At the time I didn't know they were waiting for a phone call from the hospital in Afghanistan which would see them tell me Gary had passed away. At the time, my youth and naivety protected me, the fact he was still alive gave me hope – it gave me reason to believe that there was a chance. I decided then and there that I wouldn't give up on Gary. He was now my priority – nothing else mattered – not even me.

I would take my position. I would answer the call. I would step up. It was my turn to serve.

In the days, weeks, months and years following the accident I was surrounded by people trying their very best to help and support me. I didn't let them, I couldn't. I was scared that letting them in would see me break, lose my composure and, God forbid, cry. It felt much safer to keep pushing forward – to keep hiding my pain.

In the 11 years since this incident I've learned that though I might stand in the shadows I'm not alone. There are many more women, men and children like me who bear their own burdens of war and whose service and sacrifice goes largely unspoken.

In the Shadow, we stand, together, quiet and proud, knowing what we do in service of this nation matters. We need no light - for it is the service of our loved one that lights us up and makes us proud.

This life is hard. I didn't chose this life but he stole my heart. I have suffered, I have gained. I have cried, I've been ashamed. I have laughed, I have grown. I have gained a new family of my own.

In my Soldier's Shadow I stand, ready, willing and able to hold his hand. I am grateful for this life, despite the pain. And, when I reflect on what I've gained, I'm glad I got to know the Soldier with no name.

➔ **WAR WIDOWS JOIN US FOR THE ANZAC COMMEMORATION** *continued*

distinguished career in public service, particularly in the veteran community. Renee's husband Gary was severely injured but survived the fatal crash of a Black Hawk helicopter in Afghanistan and had been guest speaker at the 2019 service.

Several war widows representing major conflicts of war from WWI to Afghanistan then placed small wooden crosses at the front of the stage in remembrance of loved ones who gave their lives in service to our nation. Other war widows walked to the Memorial Centrepiece and laid crosses and wreaths there, remembering how war widows and their families have borne an enormous burden and their lifelong role supporting veterans who have fallen, been wounded, injured or suffering illness.



MEMBERS OF AUSTRALIAN WAR WIDOWS REMEMBER LOVED ONES WITH CROSSES AND WREATHS



WREATHS BEING CARRIED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM TIMOR LESTE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND NEW ZEALAND



THE CHOIR FROM STRATHFIELD NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL



GABRIELLE RAINEY, VICE CAPTAIN ROSEBANK COLLEGE, READS AN ANZAC POEM



JENNIFER COLLINS, CHAIR OF THE KTMW BOARD



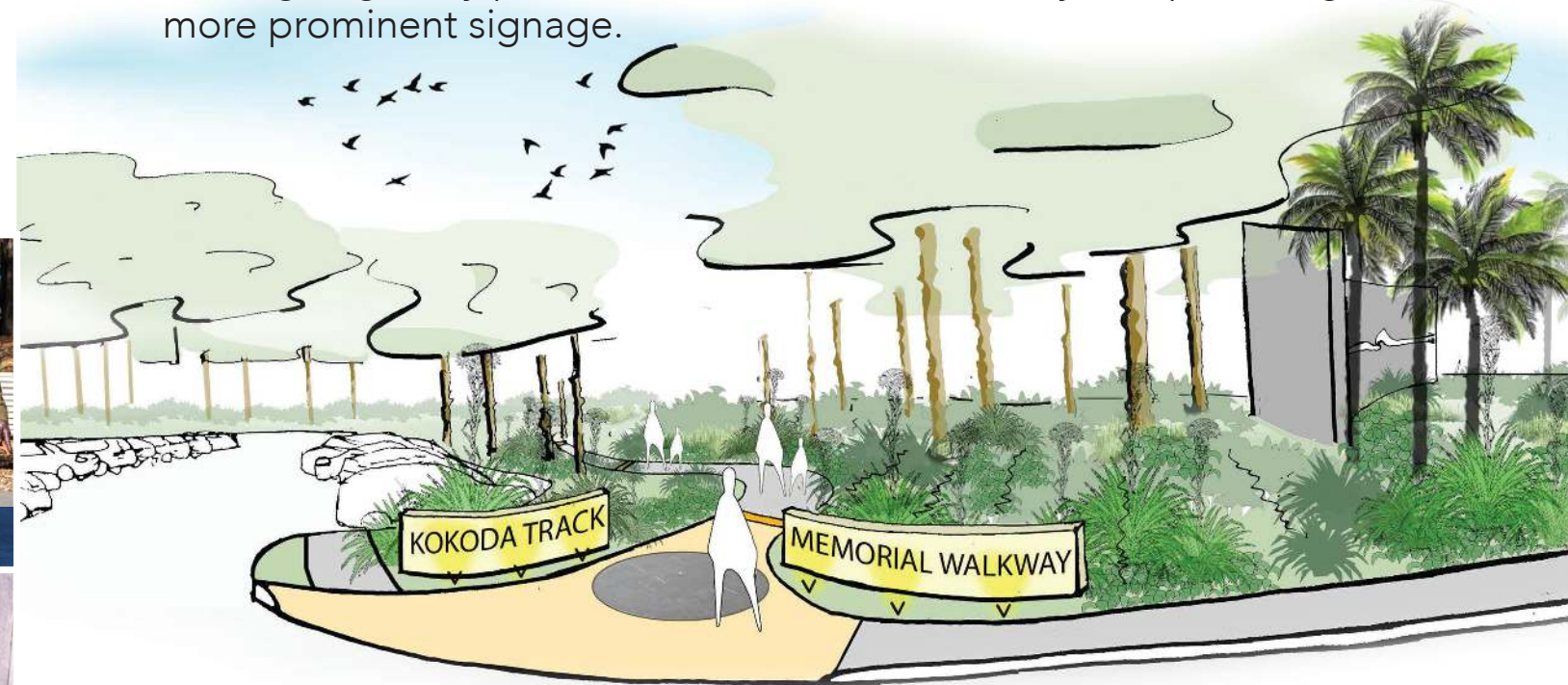
GUESTS INCLUDING RHONDDA VANZELLA (LEFT, IN GREY), WAR WIDOWS PRESIDENT, COLONEL MICHAEL MILLER, KTMW CHAIR JENNIFER COLLINS, AND CANADA BAY MAYOR ANGELO TSIREKAS

Young Australians took an expanded role in the service this year. The choir from Strathfield North Public School led the singing of hymns and National Anthems; Gabrielle Rainey, Vice Captain of Rosebank College, read an Anzac Day poem; and among those laying wreaths were pupils from Abbotsford PS, Mortlake PS and Rosebank College.

Official guests included Colonel Michael Miller, Official Secretary to the Governor of NSW; Leo Oake, Papua New Guinea consul general; Luciano Da Conciencio, Timor Leste consul general; Lt Colonel David Thorsen representing New Zealand; Dr Fiona Martin MP; Jodi McKay MP; and representatives of the Defence Force.

EXPANDED ENTRY POINTS AND SIGNAGE TO INCREASE AWARENESS

The board has endorsed a plan to boost public awareness by redesigning entry points to the Memorial Walkway and providing more prominent signage.



Matthew Taylor, the original design architect for the walkway 25 years ago, presented sketches to the board's April meeting, along with the results of community consultation.

That research showed residents of the area love the memorial, its unique character and its sense of community but too many people don't know exactly where it is as it is enclosed by trees. The entries need to be more prominent, residents said, and the sign beside Concord Road should be lit at night.

Mr Taylor told the board that the northern entry point, off Concord Road, needed a wider path, new illuminated signage, new palm trees to frame the sign and existing vegetation should be cut back to make a more welcoming entrance.

At the Hospital Road end of the walkway there should be new signage visible to pedestrians,

helping to direct them through the hospital car park to the entry point where new palm trees would welcome visitors. Mr Taylor also recommended straightening the path through the car park to the Memorial Rose Garden.

Among further improvements he suggested would be the provision of paving leading to the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels statue outside the Ralph Honner Education Centre. Ecological information could also be provided for visitors.

The plans will need to be finalised and approved by Canada Bay Council and Concord Hospital will need to sign off on landscaping improvements which would take place on parts of the site under its jurisdiction. It is hoped that work will start later this year and be completed in 2022.

THANK YOU

The board is very grateful for donations received recently from the following:

- R and V O'Mara
- Club Five Dock

- And the following RSL sub-Branches:
- Bankstown, Maroubra, Bronte, Bondi Junction, Bass Hill, Forestville, Cumberland, Newtown, Campsie, Redfern, Chester Hill Carramar, Kensington, Rockdale, Combined Services