



COMMUNITY SERVICES NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



What? September already? While the year slips away, it feels good to touch base again. Not only has progress been made with our building of 12 units in Albany Street, but there has been physical progress made. If you were to walk past, you would see the very capable Nigel Stokes and his earthmoving equipment completing the ground works and establishment of services on the site. If he gets another month of fine weather, we shall be close to having the site fully ready for a builder.

The council have also demonstrated tremendous support for our project, by waiving fees amounting to \$166,000, that would normally be applied to developers for water and sewerage. Since the size of our development will not require changes to the water and sewerage systems, and due to our charitable status, the councillors voted unanimously to waive the fees.

One of our board members known to many of you, Trevor Williams, together with Jane Sury laboured mightily in order to secure a grant for our wellbeing services. This ended up being successful and allows us to budget for this and the following two years.

Thanks to everyone who gave of their time to support our badge week fundraising. Along with the pleasure of meeting people who were willing to contribute and share their stories about their relationship to Legacy, there was the very real pleasure of having the time to catch up with friends while tending to the booth. We all appreciate the challenge of being a deserving charity among a myriad of others. We also appreciate the challenge of raising money in a largely cashless society. Yet there is a very real value in presenting the face of Legacy in public, and that is what we all managed to do on Friday 4th September.

On a personal level, I have recently enjoyed joining with beneficiaries at morning tea at Marian Grove, at our Coffs Harbour lunches, and at the residents' BBQ at Legacy On Victoria. I shall look forward to catching up with many of you in the coming weeks. My best wishes to all.

Jeremy

LEGACY OP SHOP MOVES – OP SHOP GRAND OPENING

Major News for Coffs Harbour: Legacy Op Shop Moves to Prime Harbour Drive Location

In a massive win for the local community, the Coffs Coast Legacy Op Shop is officially packing up its long-standing home on Scarba Street and making a major move to the heart of Coffs Harbour's central shopping strip on Harbour Drive.

The Coffs Coast Legacy Op Shop at 4 Scarba Street has been operating at its current location since **2013** (where it also previously housed the regional Veterans' Centre).

Taking over the prominent retail space in Harbour Drive previously occupied by the Sheridan linen shop, this relocation places one of our town's most beloved institutions right on the main street where it belongs.

Mark your calendars: the community is invited to celebrate this exciting new chapter at the official **Grand Opening on Saturday, 10 October**.

For years, the op shop has been a vital treasure trove for bargain hunters and a crucial fundraising engine supporting local veterans' families and beneficiaries. However, moving out of the side-street setting and into a bustling main-street hub marks an exciting new chapter for both volunteers and shoppers alike.

Unbeatable Visibility and Accessibility

The shift to Harbour Drive brings a huge boost in everyday foot traffic and visibility. Positioned directly in the main retail precinct, the new storefront makes dropping in to browse, donate, or chat easier than ever:

- **High Main-Street Foot Traffic:** Sitting in the former Sheridan outlet guarantees eye-catching window displays and steady passerby attention from shoppers exploring the city center.
- **Better Accessibility:** Located on a primary pedestrian thoroughfare, the new store offers much smoother access for everyday visitors, seniors, and families who frequent the downtown area.
- **A Fresh Shopping Experience:** Spanning a well-known retail space, the site provides a bright, spacious setting to display donated clothing, homewares, and furniture.

More Support for Local Families

The Coffs Coast Legacy Op Shop serves as a vital community hub with two main purposes:

- **Funding Support for Local Families:** Proceeds raised from selling pre-loved goods—such as clothing and furniture—directly support local Legacy beneficiaries, including the families, spouses, and children of veterans on the Coffs Coast.
- **Community Reuse & Affordable Shopping:** It offers an affordable shopping alternative for the local community to find quality pre-loved items, while accepting donated quality goods and offering free local pick-up for larger items.

Every purchase made at the Legacy Op Shop stays right here on the Coffs Coast, directly funding essential services, social connection, and financial support for the families of military veterans.

By stepping into such a high-profile location, the op shop is primed to welcome more customers through its doors, boost daily sales, and ultimately generate even greater support for the local Legacy community. It's a wonderful upgrade for a fantastic cause—be sure to pop into Harbour Drive and check out the new space!

And be sure to pop down to Harbour Drive on **Saturday, 10 October** to show your support, check out the new space, and snag a bargain at the grand opening celebration!

GOODS WANTED

Are you moving home or are downsizing?

Do you need to get rid of unwanted items?

Do you have items left over from your garage sales?

We can assist!

Please donate any quality goods via our Op Shop!

FREE local pick-up available!

Coffs Coast Legacy Op Shop phone number 6651 9669



SHINE A LIGHT ON LEGACY

Coffs Coast Legacy plays a pivotal role across the Mid North Coast by caring for the families of fallen and incapacitated veterans, while operating specialised care facilities such as the Coffs Harbour Legacy Nursing Home.

The Evolving Mission of Legacy

For over a century, Legacy has stood as a cornerstone of Australian compassionate care, bound by the promise made on the battlefields of World War I: to look after the families of those who served. While our founding purpose remains unchanged, the nature of military service and the needs of veteran families have shifted dramatically. Today, Coffs Coast Legacy is evolving to meet these modern challenges, ensuring no veteran's family is left behind.



Honoring Tradition while Adapting to Today

Traditionally associated with supporting elderly war widows, Legacy's scope has expanded significantly to address the complex reality of contemporary defence service. Modern peacekeeping missions, humanitarian deployments, and intense operational service bring distinct challenges to a new generation of veterans and their loved ones.

- **Supporting Younger Veteran Families:** We now actively support younger spouses, partners, and children navigating the sudden impacts of service-related injury, illness, or loss.
- **Focus on Mental Health & Transition:** Beyond financial and physical care, our focus includes comprehensive mental health support, trauma assistance, and guidance for families transitioning from military to civilian life.
- **Youth & Education Development:** We empower the children of fallen and incapacitated veterans through educational grants, mentoring programs, and leadership opportunities like the Legacy Junior Public Speaking Award.

A Local Commitment on the Coffs Coast

Here on the Coffs Coast, this evolving mission translates into tailored, ground-level support. From providing specialised aged care at local facilities to facilitating peer support networks for young military families, Coffs Coast Legacy bridges the gap between historical honor and contemporary need.



By continuing to adapt our services, upskill our Legatees, and foster local business partnerships, we ensure that our pledge of care remains as relevant, responsive, and vital today as it was a century ago.

A Story of Belonging: Veterans and their Families' Journeys

When veterans return home from service, the transition back to civilian life on the Coffs Coast is often not seamless. Behind the scenes, their partners carry the quiet, exhausting weight of keeping their young family grounded while navigating post-deployment challenges, medical appointments, and an uncertain future.

They often feel completely isolated. Everyone sees the uniform and the bravery, but no one sees the strain on the family at home when their service ends.

Where Legacy Steps In

That's where Coffs Coast Legacy comes alongside their families—not as an institutional support system, but as a compassionate neighbour:

- **Practical Relief:** By helping partners navigate educational grants and extracurricular activities for their kids, ensuring childhood stays vibrant and uninterrupted.
- **Community Connection:** Connecting partners with local peer support networks of other contemporary defence partners who truly understand the unique pressures of modern service.
- **A Dedicated Community Support Worker or Legatee:** Pairing with a Community Support Worker or local Legatee—a trusted mentor who checks in regularly, offers advice, and ensures the family never feels like they are facing the future alone.

The Modern Face of Our Promise

Families like this represent the changing demographic of veteran care across our region. Legacy isn't just about preserving history; it's about walking alongside living, breathing young families in Coffs Harbour, Toormina, and Woolgoolga today.

When you partner with or volunteer for Coffs Coast Legacy, you aren't just supporting an organisation—you are directly backing parents, ensuring that the service given to our country is repaid with lifelong care for the people they love most.

Please Join Us

If you would like to become a volunteer or Legatee with Coffs Coast Legacy, please call 1300 534 229.

Coffs Coast Legacy has a range of volunteer and Legatee roles that would suit most people who value the sacrifice veterans and their families have made and who would like to assist us in supporting those veterans and their families.



AVAILABLE POSITION

Volunteer Marketing & Communications Assistant Coordinator for Coffs Coast Legacy **About the Role**

Coffs Coast Legacy is seeking a passionate, creative Volunteer Marketing & Communications Assistant Coordinator to help raise awareness and strengthen community engagement across the region. In this role, you will help tell the stories of our veterans' families, promote local fundraising initiatives, and elevate our digital presence to support widow(er)s, children, and dependants in our community.

You might feel that you cannot undertake the entire role, but you might see areas where you can contribute and would be willing to be part of a team. If this is you, please contact us by phoning Jane on 1300 534 229.

Key Responsibilities

- **Digital & Social Media Content:** Create, schedule, and monitor engaging posts across social media channels to highlight local stories, announcements, and events.
- **Community Campaigns:** Assist in drafting marketing materials, digital assets, and promotional copy for key fundraising campaigns (for example, Legacy Week).
- **Local Media & Outreach:** Draft media releases, newsletters, or local event announcements to increase awareness of Coffs Coast Legacy's services and volunteer opportunities.
- **Brand Consistency:** Ensure all promotional messaging aligns with Legacy Australia's core mission, tone, and brand guidelines.

Qualifications & Skills

- Background or strong interest in marketing, communications, public relations, or digital media.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Proficiency with social media platforms and basic design/scheduling tools (for example, Canva, Meta Business Suite).
- Strong community spirit and empathy for veterans' families.



Benefits & Impact

- **Flexible Engagement:** Flexible volunteering hours.
- **Portfolio Development:** Gain hands-on experience managing marketing channels for a respected national charity.
- **Community Contribution:** Directly impact the lives of local families by increasing awareness and support for essential welfare programs.

If you would like this role or would like to become a volunteer member of our marketing team, please phone Jane on 1300 534 229.

RECIPE CORNER – SPOTLIGHT ON IRISH STEW

Lamb shoulder chops are a budget-friendly cut that works well in stews. Potatoes, carrots and celery round out this meal. Great comfort food for a family or freeze it down into meal sized containers!

Irish Stew

4 lamb shoulder chops
salt and ground black pepper to taste
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon butter
2 tablespoons plain flour
3 cups chicken stock
½ teaspoon dried rosemary
2 carrots, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
water as needed
700 grams baby potatoes



1. Season lamb shoulder chops with salt and black pepper.
2. Heat oil in a large heavy pan over high heat. Working in batches, brown lamb chops on both sides, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer chops to a large stock pot.
3. Cook and stir onion with a pinch of salt in the same pan over medium heat until slightly softened and edges are browning, about 5 minutes. Stir butter into onion until melted; add flour and stir until onions are coated, about 1 minute.
4. Pour stock into onion mixture; bring to a boil, add rosemary, and stir until mixture thickens, 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Stir carrots and celery into pot with lamb shoulder chops and pour chicken stock mixture over the top. Add water as needed to cover meat completely. Bring mixture to a simmer, reduce heat to low, cover the pot with a lid, and cook until meat is almost falling off the bone, about 1½ hours.
6. Transfer meat to a plate. Stir potatoes into stew and return meat to stew, placing on top of vegetables. Simmer, covered, until potatoes are tender and meat is falling off the bone, about 30 minutes. (See point 9 if you prefer mashed potatoes)
7. Transfer meat to a plate using a slotted spoon. Bring stew to a boil and cook, skimming off fat, until stew is reduced and thick, 10 to 12 minutes.
8. Remove meat from bones and discard bones and any pieces of fat. Stir meat back into stew and season with salt and pepper to taste. (I leave the meat on the bones!)
9. Alternatively, mash the potatoes and serve the stew spooned over and on top of the mashed potatoes.

SUB-BRANCH HAPPENINGS – BELLINGER RIVER

Bellinger River RSL Sub-Branch – Sport, Recreation & Camaraderie

Coming together to support each other is a cornerstone of our sub-branch. Whether it's catching up over a coffee, paddling a canoe, hitting the gym, or simply sitting down to chew the fat, these activities give us a great opportunity to connect and unwind together.



Please mark these key dates in your diary (further details for each event will follow soon):

- **10 October**
- **7 November** (*TBC – dependent on Remembrance Day activities*)
- **12 December** – Christmas Social Catch-up

Regular Gym Sessions

Our planned activities are scheduled to complement our regular gym program at **Bellingen Fitness Raleigh**, so everyone can stay involved:

- **Tuesdays:** 09:00 – 10:00.
- **Saturdays:** 09:30 – 10:30

For any questions about these events or getting involved, feel free to contact:

Emma Palmer (President, Bellinger River RSL Sub-Branch)

Phone: 0412 047 535

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Coffs Harbour Sub-Branch Activities

Regular activities at Coffs Harbour Sub-Branch:

Coffee@C.ex – Every Thursday at 10.00am

Walking Group – Usually, 2nd Friday of the Month.

Motorcycle Riders Group – Usually, 3rd Friday of the Month

Lawn Bowls Group – Usually, Last Friday of the Month

Email: coffs-harbourSB@rslnsw.org.au



SHINE A LIGHT ON LEGATEE AND BOARD MEMBER TREVOR WILLIAMS

There are some truly amazing people volunteering for Legacy either as Legacy volunteers or as Legatees. At Coffs Coast Legacy we have a proud Legacy family and Trevor Williams is just one of those very giving people. Sixty seconds is often not long enough to get to know someone Here is a little about Trevor:

Trevor Williams – Biography 753

Trevor Williams built a life defined by service, leadership, and a deep connection to the land. He began his working years as a jackaroo and large-animal trainer, developing the practical skills and work ethic that would shape every chapter that followed.



After transitioning from rural life to military service, Trevor spent more than two decades in the **Royal Australian Air Force**, specialising in **Communications and Data Processing** before retiring from the **RAAF**.

He later returned to his agricultural roots, owning and managing several cattle properties. His operations focused on **Murray Grey stud beef cattle** and **working kelpies**, and he became an active contributor to the broader livestock community. Trevor organised and ran field days on beef cattle breeding, showing, and ringcraft, and served as a **Royal Show Beef Cattle Judge**, as well as a **Steer and Carcass Judge**.

Trevor's career then expanded into education and governance. He joined **TAFE Queensland** as a **Finance and Administrative Officer**, later taking on roles as an **Administrative Auditor and Board Member**.

Following major medical challenges, Trevor retired to the coast but continued his lifelong commitment to service. He joined the **RSL**, becoming a **Wellbeing and Pensions Advocate** for veterans. He completed all major **DVA** training, including **SRCA/DRCA, VEA, and MRCA**, enabling him to support veterans across multiple legislative frameworks.

Trevor helped establish the **Veterans Centre Mid North Coast**, strengthening regional support networks, and went on to become a **Legatee** and **Director** for **Coffs Coast Legacy**. He chaired **Community Services** for most of his tenure, continuing his enduring dedication to assisting veterans and their families.

Across every stage of his life—from the paddock to the parade ground, from classrooms to community halls—Trevor has remained committed to leadership, advocacy, and service to others.

60 SECONDS WITH LEGATEE AND BOARD MEMBER TREVOR WILLIAMS

What inspired you to become a Legacy volunteer or Legatee?

After nearly a decade as a Veterans Advocate, Welfare and Pensions Officer with RSL and Veterans Centre Coffs Coast, I began assisting with Coffs Coast Legacy, then became a Director. I found that I enjoyed my time with Legacy and have remained till today.

How long have you been with Coffs Coast Legacy?

Well over a decade now and I especially value my time as Chair of Community Services.

Were you or a family member in the either the Navy, Army or Air Force?

Great Uncle served and died in WW1 and buried at Villiers Bretonneux. Another Uncle served in the RAAF in Lancaster crew. I served for over 20years in the RAAF, as did my younger brother. My grandson is a Lieutenant in the Army.

What is your role within Legacy?

Director on the Board, Chair of Community Services and Legatee.

If you had to describe Legacy in just three words, what would they be?

Veterans – Family – Caring.

What is the single best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Always look after your family. (Even right down to our two darling great grandchildren who are 3 and 16 months).

What is an accomplishment in your life—outside of Legacy—that you are proud of?

Beef Cattle Breeder (Murray Greys) and Judge at Royal Show.

If you could travel anywhere in the world tomorrow, where would you go and why?

Malaysia as we were posted there as a family in 1972 to 1974.

What is one act of kindness you did for someone else that you'll never forget?

Taking the time to listen to a Veteran and actually saving their life.

What is one lesson about resilience you've learned?

Little things matter, courtesy, being polite and caring. Keyword EMPATHY.

What is a hidden talent or hobby of yours that most people don't know about?

Collecting hand carved Australian lures.

If you could describe your life's philosophy in a single sentence, what would it be?

Everyone has something to contribute in life, it is worthwhile finding how you can assist others?

What was your very first job, and what did you learn from it?

Jackeroo, and gentled in my own filly when I was nine years old. I learnt that time and patience with large animals can train them to do extraordinary things.

What is one hope or wish you have for the future of Legacy?

That we progress Coffs Coast Legacy, caring for Families of Veterans and the finalisation of our Bob Denner Legacy Apartments at 94 Albany St.

What would you say to someone who is thinking about becoming a volunteer or Legatee?

It is rewarding to be able to assist those families gain a happy and valued life, through caring for others.



WOMEN VETERANS – RESEARCH PROJECT 2025

Australian-First Women Veterans Research Project to Help Address Support Needs

Project Overview

The NSW Minns Labor Government, in partnership with RSL NSW and Monash University, has launched an Australian-first initiative titled the *Shaping Support Services for Women Veterans* project. Actioned as part of the NSW Veterans Strategy 2025–2030, the research examines how state wellbeing services can be modernised to meet the specific health, physical, and mental requirements of former servicewomen.



Key Objectives & Focus Areas

- **Survey & Interviews:** The project gathers data through a voluntary, anonymous online survey and optional follow-up interviews to understand former servicewomen's experiences accessing support.
- **Core Topics Explored:** Challenges surrounding gender-specific health needs, balancing family and caregiving duties, and managing service-related physical injuries and mental health conditions.
- **Service Evolution:** Insights will be used to adapt veteran services, which have historically been designed around male requirements, into more gender-tailored models.

Demographics & Population Context

- **NSW Female Veterans:** According to 2021 ABS Census data, 11.7% (14,923) of NSW's 127,600 ADF veterans are women.
- **Active Service Snapshot:** At the time of the 2021 census, women comprised 20% of active personnel in NSW, with 3,876 serving full-time in the ADF and 1,183 in the Reserves.

Stakeholder Perspectives

- **Minister for Veterans (David Harris):** Emphasised the necessity of evolving historically male-centric wellbeing programs to serve the growing number of female veterans.
- **Minister for Women (Jodie Harrison):** Stated the research ensures women's contributions across Army, Navy, and Air Force roles are recognised and supported by government services.
- **RSL NSW CEO (Giles Hurst):** Highlighted that first-hand veteran experiences will directly shape high-quality support services for approximately 20,000 current and former servicewomen residing in NSW.
- **Defence Force Welfare Association President (Del Gaudry CSC):** Noted that female veterans face distinct issues—including sexual trauma, reproductive health concerns, and complex mental health conditions—that require targeted data to effectively resolve.

COFFS COAST VETERANS SET TO GET CREATIVE WITH FUNDING BOOST

Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan joined Coffs Coast Legacy representatives to celebrate the organisation securing **\$18,669.50** through the **Veteran Wellbeing Grants Program 2025/26**.

The funding will support a new **art therapy program** for veterans, partners and families at the Coffs Harbour Botanic Gardens. Delivered by registered art therapists, the initiative will provide regular creative sessions designed to promote wellbeing, social connection and inclusion in a relaxed natural setting.

Mr Conaghan praised Coffs Coast Legacy's longstanding commitment to supporting veterans and their families.

"Legacy has spent more than a century helping families through loss and injury, and it is encouraging to see the organisation continue adapting to meet the needs of today's veteran community," he said.

Coffs Coast Legacy Director Rhod Cook said the program was developed in response to feedback from a 2024 survey, which highlighted a need for more non-clinical wellbeing activities. Following the success of a Veterans Wellbeing Week art therapy event last year, participants reported reduced stress, stronger social connections and strong support for ongoing sessions.

Community Services Manager Jane Sury said the program will feature guided creative activities and group discussions to encourage connection and stress reduction. Children's activities will run alongside the sessions, ensuring parents can participate and making the program accessible and inclusive for the wider veteran community.



DIARY DATES

OCTOBER	3	SATURDAY	WOOGOOOLGA SOCIAL GROUP	TBA	11:30AM
	9	FRIDAY	COFFS HARBOUR SOCIAL GROUP	CEX COFFS HARBOUR	11:30AM
	TBA		VETERANS HEALTH WEEK ACTIVITY	TBA	10:00AM
	29	THURSDAY	MARIAN GROVE SOCIAL GROUP	THE GROVE CAFÉ	11:30AM
NOVEMBER	7	SATURDAY	WOOGOOOLGA SOCIAL GROUP	TBA	11:30AM
	11	WEDNESDAY	REMEMBRANCE DAY WREATHS	ALL CENOTAPHS IN REGION	
	13	FRIDAY	COFFS HARBOUR SOCIAL GROUP	CEX COFFS HARBOUR	11:30AM
	26	THURSDAY	MARIAN GROVE SOCIAL GROUP	THE GROVE CAFÉ	10:00AM
	27	FRIDAY	COFFS HARBOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY	COFFS GOLF CLUB	11:30AM
DECEMBER	4	FRIDAY	FOL CHRISTMAS PARTY	TBA	12:00PM
	5	SATURDAY	WOOLGOOLGA CHRISTMAS PARTY	TBA	11:30AM
	12	SATURDAY	4G FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY	TBA	12:30PM
	18	FRIDAY	DORRIGO BELLINGEN CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON	HERITAGE HOTEL	11:30AM

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LIFE

Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard, there is nothing you can do about it.

Life's journey is not to arrive at the pearly gates safely in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid sideways, totally used up and worn out, shouting, "Wow! What a ride!"

PET SPOT

This Pet Spot has been provided by Ricky, the wonderful Concierge at Lagacy on Victoria.

Good day! My name is Winchester. My dads call me Winnie-boy and I'm 16 months old. I'm a toy mix mini poodle, if you are wondering why I am cute!

Today I am celebrating one year of living with my pawparents.

*They love me and I'm being taken care of really well!
Love you, dads!*

My current favourite things to do are brushing my teeth at night, because my dad will give me my favourite treat; and going to the dog park to play with my friends!



BIRTHDAYS



AUGUST

2nd Diane – 80
11th Meghan – 11
14th Oliver – 18
18th Mason – 7
19th Dylan – 5
27th Lachlan – 30

SEPTEMBER

6th Cooper – 18
14th Frejya – 8
14th Emma – 14
23rd Janice – 80
24th Gibson – 15
28th Leonie – 90
29th Kerrie – 80

OCTOBER

2nd Myah – 8
3rd Lily – 14
3rd Anabelle – 16
4th Eden – 13
17^t Lyn – 80
23rd Norma – 100
23rd Alex – 40
23rd Joan – 102
26th Eric – 4



UPDATE FOR OUR WAR WIDOWS AND FAMILIES

An Important Update for Our War Widows and Families

In the August 2026 edition of *Vetaffairs*, two key articles shared some significant changes in how Australia's war widows and veteran families are represented at a national level. We wanted to pass these details along, so you know exactly what's happening and what it means for you.

Changes to Australian War Widows Incorporated

After 78 wonderful years of dedicated service, the national peak body—Australian War Widows Incorporated (AWW Inc.)—officially closed its doors on 16 June 2026. Following the closure of the South Australian branch late last year, the national umbrella group no longer met the legal registration requirements to keep running as a national body, and a clear path forward couldn't be found.

Most importantly, please rest assured that **your local state branches in the ACT, NSW, Queensland, and WA are still open and running independently**. They will keep providing the exact same local care, friendship, and support you've always relied on, holding close to that familiar motto:

"We all belong to each other. We all need each other."



FOR A LAUGH

Why do seagulls fly over the sea? If they flew over the bay, they would be bagels.

What do you call a line of men waiting for a haircut? A barberqueue

What do you call a magician who has lost his magic? Ian.

Did you hear about the rowboat than sank? It was an oar-deal.

THELMA'S STORY OF MOVING INTO LEGACY ON VICTORIA

The Saga of Thelma Moving into a Dreaded Nursing Home

I had no choice but to move into a nursing home after three trips to Coffs Harbour Hospital. Each time I was sent back home because the hospital was full and there simply were no beds available.

One doctor became quite upset and started saying, "No! No! No! You can't send her back to her unit. There are dangerous stairs outside her unit!" As if the ambulance officers and I didn't already know that. We had gone up and down those stairs three times, with them carrying me on a stretcher. The look on their faces was priceless. The doctor kept saying, "She might fall."

My son and daughter started ringing around nursing homes, and fortunately Legacy called them back. I wasn't feeling fortunate at all. In fact, I dug my heels in. Then my son explained that it would only be for two weeks of respite care.

When I arrived, I had to admit that the staff were standing at the front door waiting for me, smiling and saying, "Hello."

It was very hard to snarl at people who were being so kind. I walked through the door, though I was still keeping an eye out for an escape route!

As soon as I came inside, I was amazed. I remember thinking, "Hang on a minute. This is nothing like the dreadful nursing home I've carried around in my imagination for all these years."

After lying on my bed for a couple of hours, I made the decision to stay. I realised how silly I'd been. I no longer really had a home of my own, I didn't have many friends, and I was isolated in my unit. I wasn't even allowed to go down the stairs.

I am so glad that I made the decision to stay. The warm and friendly atmosphere here is wonderful. What more could I ask for?

I have a new home, new friends, plenty of entertainment, hot meals three times a day, lots of craft activities, and enthusiastic staff who are always happy to teach us something new.

There's a physiotherapist to help us with our aches and pains, a hairdresser, and I can even have my nails done.

I wish you could see my room. It is filled with family photographs, lovely plants, and all the little things that make me feel as though my family is right here with me.

What I've come to realise is that it isn't so much me accepting them; it's them accepting me.

As many of you would know, making the decision to move into a nursing home can be heartbreaking and upsetting. It is a big change, and one that takes time to accept. But now I have lots of new friends among the other residents. The nurses and staff always seem cheerful. They never appear to have a frown on their faces. They are endlessly patient and are always ready to help whenever we need them.

There is a large games room where we can enjoy painting, exercise classes, card games, cooking activities, and all sorts of other fun things.

Have you ever seen six elderly ladies trying to play UNO when they've never heard of it before? The poor fellow who was trying to teach us the rules didn't stand a chance! I felt terribly sorry for him. There were quite a few moments when he sat there with his head in his hands. In the end, the six old ladies simply made up their own rules. We had a marvelous time, even if the game bore little resemblance to UNO!

Outside my door is a beautiful courtyard garden, and I've already planted six or eight plants there. When I look out and see the flowers, it feels very much like having my own garden again. I've always loved gardening.

My room is filled with family photographs and some lovely black iron furniture that suits it beautifully. Everything fits together so nicely. The nurses and staff enjoy coming in for a look. I don't think they've seen another room quite like mine.

Legacy has given me something very precious: the freedom to be myself. It has allowed me to feel happy again and to stop feeling sorry for myself. Instead of thinking "poor me," I now think, "how lucky am I?" I have my home back, wonderful company, and so much more interest and enjoyment in my life.

My son, daughter-in-law, daughter, and all of their families are delighted to have their happy Mum and Nan back again, enjoying life and smiling.

So, thank you. A big hug to all my carers and every member of staff for giving me the chance to be me. ❤️



TO CONTACT LEGACY

COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF

Jane Sury – Community Service Manager – 0423 830 079

Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday

8:00am to 4:30pm

Veterans Wellbeing Centre on Friday 10:00am to 3:00pm

Keah Harrigan – Community Support Worker – 0423 830 061

Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday

8:00am to 4:30pm

Veterans Wellbeing Centre on Thursday 10:00am to 3:00pm

Tyrone Binns – Community Support Worker – 0492 862 089

Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday

8:00am to 4:30pm

Veterans Wellbeing Centre on Tuesday 10:00am to 3:00pm

NEED TO CHAT

Our Community Services staff and Legatees are available for a chat but sometimes you need to reach out to someone outside working hours. Here are a few options that may be helpful in times of need.

Open Arms	1800 011 046	Veterans and Families Counselling Service 24 hours
Lifeline	13 11 14	Suicide and Crises Counselling 24 hours
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636	Qualified Mental Health Counsellors 24 hours
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800	24-hour counselling for 5 to 25 year olds
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467	Suicide related counselling 24 hours
1800 RESPECT	1800 737 732	24/7 sexual assault, domestic or family violence & abuse
Safe Zone	1800 142 072	Anonymous counselling line 24 hours for current and ex-Service community & their families