

Year in Review

2020-21



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Bravery Trust 2021-2023 Strategic Plan

Our Community

- Develop direct pathways into Bravery Trust's services
- Engage with, and develop, a broad network of community services
- Provide a professional and trusted service nationally
- Evaluate and understand the impact of our work

Our People

- Enable our staff to lead and innovate
- Maintain up-to-date information about the environments in which we operate
- Invest in the capacity and capability of our services and people

Our Future

- Identify and interpret trends impacting those we assist
- Contribute to thought leadership through evidence-based reporting
- Diversify our revenues through engagement, relationships and awareness campaigns
- Grow our financial counselling service

EMPOWER
PEOPLE AND
IMPROVE LIVES

FINANCIAL
WELFARE

FINANCIAL
EMPOWERMENT

FINANCIAL
LITERACY

Message from Chairman

This year, Bravery Trust has worked with the Australian veteran community, and those who support it, to ensure we keep moving forward. In such a turbulent time, I am so pleased to have the opportunity as Chair of Bravery Trust to assist in the leadership of the organisation and to ensure we maintain a strong and informed voice for those we support.

As this is my first opportunity to provide comment as part of our annual stakeholder's report, there are three key messages I would like to deliver.

Governance and compliance

You can be confident in the ongoing work of Bravery Trust. Through the Board, our executive team and our services delivery we have built a strong framework to ensure compliance, strong governance and adherence to your expectations. We see our role as too important to jeopardise through misalignment with the rules we work under.

Innovation and adaption to best support veterans

We are not now, nor will Bravery Trust ever be, all things to all veterans. Rather, we see our work as being specialists in understanding and reacting to the needs of veterans in financial distress, and as intermediaries to link with other support services they require. As such, we continue to invest in our people, our relationships, and the technology we use to streamline the delivery of our services.

People matter

While this may seem like an overly self-evident comment, it is at the heart of all we are, and all we do: from our data collection to tell the stories of the trajectories of those individuals we support; to the commitment and compassion from those who answer our phones, engage deeply and find solutions for those in need – and all those people in Bravery Trust who make it possible.

Finally, I would like to welcome our new Board members Steven Patrick, Simon Matthews and Jason Nicholas, all of whom bring diverse and considerable expertise to our already highly capable Board. But most importantly, I would like to thank my predecessor Peter Fitzpatrick and our former director Jane McAloon, both who have invested so much time and energy to ensure at-risk veterans and their families get the financial support they need.

– Garth Callender, MBA, GAICD



Message from CEO



The Bravery Trust team has, for another year, been unperturbed by a challenging external environment. Our strong values and commitment to the veteran community has fostered close collaboration with the Defence, veteran, and community sectors.

Our People

We value the importance of investing in our people – ensuring that we have a wide range of skills and diverse professional backgrounds, so we are best placed to provide veterans with a compassionate, dedicated and knowledgeable service.

We celebrated the recognition of Tracy Attewell, our Beneficiary Services Manager, with a Service Medal presented by the Governor General for her dedication to the veteran community over the last three decades.

I thank the board for providing me with a unique opportunity to be part of the Australian Defence College, Australian Command and Staff Course (Reserve) this year – to learn from and to share my knowledge with Defence.



Our Community

Covid-19 continued to have an impact on those we assist, and we saw an increase in calls to Bravery Trust and a decline in mental health, with **91%** of those we assist being impacted by a mental illness (up from **85%** the year before).

However, we have already started to see the positives from the Veteran Specific Financial Counselling Service – bringing hope to families and skills to empower them to take back control of their finances.

Through the support and the willingness of the veteran and community services sector collectively, we continued to reduce barriers to access help, with strong referral pathways through the RSL network, Defence, DVA, Open Arms and other ESOs and community service organisations. We could not do what we do without their support.

“Financial counselling really helped me get on top of my finances; waived some bad debts; and showed me how to budget – which has been really helpful, and I haven’t needed any help since. It also helped me with my relationship with my daughter and partner.”

– Bravery Trust financial counselling client

Our Future

We are excited about our future, including being committed to expanding the Veteran Specific Financial Counselling Service. This has involved amendments to our Trust Deed to allow for a wider scope which, in future, will allow for Financial Counselling Services to vulnerable veterans, irrespective of whether they have been injured.

We have also seen the value of having impact reporting in place and look forward to expanding our knowledge of the impact of our work and the effect of the wider environment. We are using data to help inform our decisions and despite being in the early stages of this process, we are committed to continue this journey.

I thank directors (both past and present), members of the finance committee, staff, and our stakeholders for another interesting year – one where I believe we have all grown closer despite working from home.

– **Belinda Wilson LLB, GAICD**

Our Impact

Bravery Trust helps to change lives by ensuring that veterans and their families do not suffer as a consequence of their service and are provided with immediate financial support and assistance in a time of need.

Since we started in 2012, we have helped:



5,585

Veterans & their families



\$6.5M

of urgent financial support

This year we have helped:



661

Veterans & their families



\$1.0M

of urgent financial support



9,290

calls



19,014

emails

Financial Assistance

Covid-19 restrictions impacted housing affordability, particularly in regional areas, which saw housing become our largest area of need.



Housing assistance helped **353 veterans and their families**



110 veterans and their families received transport assistance



101 veterans and their families received food & utility assistance

Financial Counselling

In April 2020 we piloted a veteran specific Financial Counselling Service, the first of its kind. We found 97% of those who participated in the program did not return for further welfare within the first 12 months.



Helped **175 veterans** with financial counselling and budgeting



Saved **\$180K** for veterans in waived and reduced bills



Saving range per person: **\$1,015 - \$32K**

Education

Education is the key to empowering people and improving lives. We provided 64K in education support including school fees and computers.



\$64K to support veterans and their families with education



\$38K supporting veterans with school fees



\$18K for essential equipments ie laptops

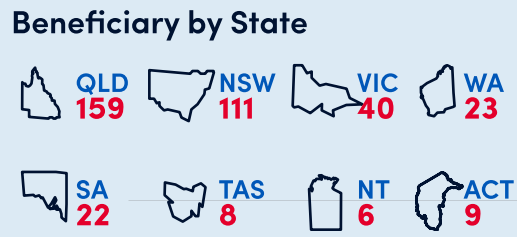
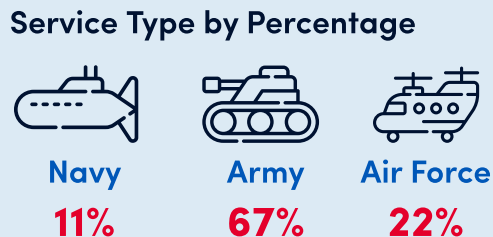
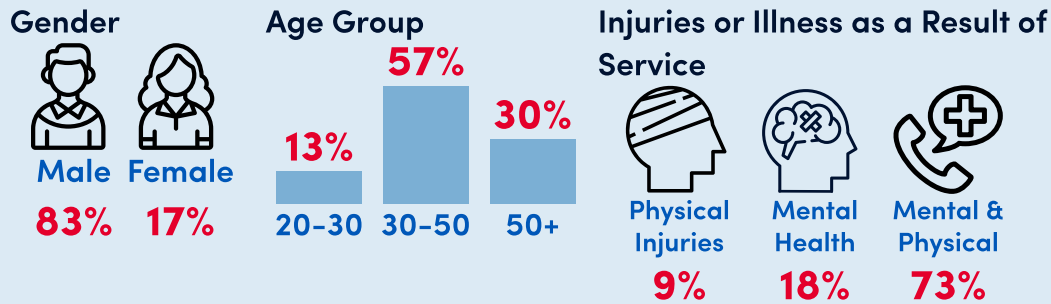
Our Community

Each year Bravery Trust supports between 650 and 700 serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force with approximately \$1M in crisis funding nationally.

As the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions began to show, phone calls to Bravery Trust escalated in April and May 2020 – and calls more than doubled from May 2020 to May 2021.

The number of new cases, that's people contacting us for the first time, increased by around 50% in the first half of 2021.

The most common issues were rent and bond, as Covid-19 impacted on housing affordability particularly in regional areas and people struggled to find affordable accommodation. 40% of our financial aid payments in the 2020-21 financial year were directed toward rental bond and relocation costs.



Empower Veterans and Improve Lives


In 2020, the Trust, in collaboration with the **ADF Financial Services Consumer Centre**, embarked on a national first for veterans and their families, where welfare and veteran specific financial counselling were provided together as part of a single integrated service. The plan is to provide a pathway out of financial crisis to financial wellness – filling a gap in veteran support services.

The trial commenced in March 2020 and a 12 month report has been received, which showed **97% of veterans moved on to financial independence and did not return for further welfare** after participating in Bravery Trust's Financial Counselling Service (FCS).


Prior to the commencement of the FCS, a large portion of veterans returned to Bravery Trust for ongoing welfare, often presenting with the same financial issues each year.

While the pilot is funded for 18 months and we await the final report, it is clear that there are significant benefits to be gained from this service.

We developed a Theory of Change for the FCS as we wanted to measure the impact that the service has on veterans and their families. The trial measured links between financial matters and veteran wellbeing.

 **242** veterans received financial counselling ("FC") support

 **36%** of all BT beneficiaries have been supported with FC services since July 2020

 **\$1.1 million*** Saved for veterans to date
*where savings have been quantifiable

 **\$1,015-\$32K** Saving range per person

"Can't thank the staff enough for their assistance. It really helped me and my family get back on track. It also relieved so much stress from us and for that we are forever grateful."

- Bravery Trust financial counselling client

Our Engagement

coles In the five days leading up to Anzac Day in April 2021, Coles raised \$223,000 for Bravery Trust to support former and current service men and women with medical fees, food vouchers, energy bills and education costs. Coles supermarkets donated 50 cents from the sale of every pack of Coles Bakery Cookies, and collected customer donations in-store. Since 2014 Coles has donated a total of \$5.78 million to Bravery Trust to support those who serve.



We are indebted to Coles for their ongoing generosity and look forward to continuing this valued partnership for many years to come.

Thank You

Thank you to our amazing staff, volunteers, our generous donors, supporters and partners, all of whom make an incredible difference to our veteran community. Our donors and corporate partners are truly part of our team and with their support we can continue to help veterans and their families take steps towards financial stability.

Corporate Partners



Our inaugural Bravery Trek was held in October 2020 to coincide with Veterans' Health Week.

Many thanks to our Foundation Partner Leidos, which not only sponsored the event but generated enormous support from staff and colleagues to raise vital funds for veterans in need and grow our profile so we can reach out to more veterans.

Bravery Trek raised \$100,000.

It also initiated many conversations about what it means to serve; what it is like to be a young veteran; and how we can all help each other through challenging times. It connected us in a time of social distancing and it raised much-needed funds for veterans and their families who need financial support.

The Trek was a virtual challenge of **96km** to replicate the distance of the iconic Kokoda Trail.

It is envisaged that the Trek will honour military achievements and milestones from all three services into the future.



NSW Office Opening

The official opening of our new office in Camden, NSW, on February 25, 2021, was a celebration of our people and our commitment to provide individualised support to those who served.


The Camden office is home to our national veteran support services team. We recognise every veteran is different and work hard to provide the right support at the right time. We are fortunate to have a highly skilled and dedicated team who understand the issues impacting veterans and the range of support services available.

We were privileged to welcome our Patron-in-Chief, the Governor-General of Australia, The Hon David Hurley, and his wife Linda Hurley to our opening event.

Their Excellencies also presented the Governor-General's service medallion to our Beneficiary Services Manager, Tracy Attewell, who has devoted more than 30 years caring for the veteran community.

Tracy has been passionate about building a professional and collaborative team to make sure veterans receive the best support we can provide.



 Image: Tracy receiving the Governor-General's service medallion for her compassion and commitment to the veteran community.

THANKS TRACY!

Our Future

Our new strategy recognises the importance of future planning. Whilst we can't predict the future, we can help shape and create a future that benefits the entire veteran community.

We are committed to:

Identifying and interpreting trends of what we are seeing

Each month we spend time reporting and reviewing the circumstances of those we have helped and how it may be linked to the current environment, to help us understand the impact we are having and future changes we can make, including how we can work towards a more preventative model of support, in place of crisis support.

Contribute to thought leadership through evidence-based reporting

This year we developed a Theory of Change for the Veteran Specific Financial Counselling trial, along with measurements of how we would assess the trial. This has helped assess the impact of the service, even in its early stages.

It will help us make future decisions about the direction of the service, including its effectiveness to provide veterans and their families with the tools they require to move towards financial wellness.

Growing our financial counselling service

During this last financial year our Veteran Specific Financial Counselling Service has grown significantly within current referrals and those new to Bravery Trust. 12 months into the trial, and one third of our beneficiaries had received financial counselling alongside welfare support. Our team of financial counsellors has grown to three, with a further four staff undertaking their diploma to become financial counsellors.



Our Directors



Garth Callender

Chairman

Joined in February 2020



Cherly Cartwright

Joined in August 2019



Vicky Carlson

Joined in May 2017



Brett Dowsing

Joined in March 2020



Simon Matthews

Joined in June 2020



Steven Patrick

Joined in July 2020



Jason Nicholas

Joined in February 2021

Directors who retired in 2020-2021

Thank you Peter and Jane for your dedication over many years to the veteran community and especially Bravery Trust.



Peter Fitzpatrick

Former Chairman

Join in March 2016

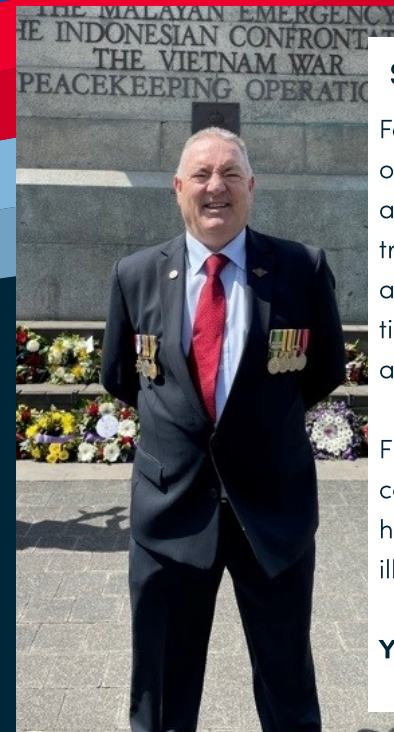
Retired in September 2020



Jane McAloon

Join in March 2015

Retired in June 2021



Support a veteran

For some veterans, their battle isn't over when they take off their uniform at the end of the day, or when they transition to civilian life. Ill-health and injuries received during their time in service can leave both visible and invisible scars.

Financial circumstances can be complex, especially for those who have limited earning capacity due to illness or injury.

Your donation can change lives.

Bravery Trust is a not-for-profit charity organisation endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

BRavery
TRUST

Veteran & Family
Financial Support

