

# MATES4MATES

ISSUE 04, 2016

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WILSON**

**AN AUSTRALIAN  
FIRST!**  
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**HELLO**, and welcome to this update.

I think I say this every edition, but it's been another busy period for Mates4Mates.

On June 24, 2016 our Brisbane office moved from Albion to Milton. This new location has been well received by our existing Mates and promises to be a better facility in a more accessible location for future growth. If you are in the Brisbane area and have not checked it out yet, please come and visit.

Over the same period, we attended the RSL (Queensland Branch) Annual General Meeting in Townsville. This was a very positive experience and allowed me to reflect on the positive growth in the relationship between a number of RSL Queensland Districts/Sub Branches and Mates4Mates over the past 12 months.

As part of the Townsville visit, the Mates4Mates Board met at the Family Recovery Centre, which, similar to the April Hobart meeting, allowed the Directors to meet the staff and Mates in Townsville and see first-hand the Family Recovery Centre and the great work being achieved by Denis and the team.

As we continue to develop our delivery of support services to the veteran community, a key element is our outreach model. Through Volunteer Liaison Officers (VLOs) we are able to provide a range of services to Mates and families living in areas a little further beyond our centre locations. We are currently establishing VLOs in the following areas: Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Bundaberg, Cairns, Rockhampton/Yeppoon, Launceston, Burnie and the Huon Valley. For more information, please contact us.

I am really excited that Mates4Mates is this year's Gympie Music Muster charity; make sure you check out the interview with Beccy Cole in this edition.

**Simon Sauer AM, CSC**  
Chief Executive Officer, Mates4Mates M4M

# AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST!

## MATES4MATES TASMANIA STAIR PROGRAM

**MATES4MATES** has partnered with psychiatrist Dr Jonathan Lane to launch the Skills Training and Affect Regulation Model (STAIR) program to Mates in Tasmania.

Dr Lane, who has been in the Australian Army in both full-time and Reserve roles, has worked with United States forces in Afghanistan as part of the Mental Health Team. A Churchill Fellowship in 2015 saw Dr Lane visit various US military and Veterans' Affairs treatment facilities to look at a range of inpatient, outpatient and peer-led group programs for both serving and retired military personnel.

The STAIR program, developed by the National Centre for PTSD in the United States, is aimed at building skills in emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning. The pilot program has been made possible through a Partners in Recovery grant and will run over 12 weekly 90-minute sessions, facilitated by Dr Lane and a Mates4Mates psychologist.

Mates4Mates will be working with Dr Lane to broaden the scope of the program after the initial pilot, to support peer-led support services in Tasmania. "We are very excited to be collaborating with Dr Lane on the pilot of the STAIR program and we are looking forward to using this as the basis for further peer-led support programs for our Mates in the future," General Manager Operations Suzanne Desailly said. M4M



# MEET A MATE: TIM WILSON

All of our Mates are the personification of courage and many have inspirational stories to tell, but it's not often you come across one who's also 'Man of the Year'. Tim Wilson, however, is exactly that.

**MEN'S Health** magazine awarded ex-soldier Tim the accolade at this year's *Men's Health* MAN 2016 Awards, which took place back in May in Sydney.

"It was a massive surprise, but I was extremely proud," Tim said. "It was nice to get recognised for trying to do good things for people."

"A guy I did Kokoda with nominated me. The competition was to find an average Aussie who had a good balance between work and lifestyle, who did things for the community and people around them, so the guy who nominated me spoke about my work as Adventure Leader on the Kokoda treks, and also about the one-on-ones I have with veterans in my spare time, talking to people about their problems, similar to the ones I faced when coming back from deployment."

Born in Canberra, Tim joined the army in 2004. Originally posted to the 16th Air Defence Regiment in Adelaide, he served on a deployment to East Timor in 2007. In early 2009, he transferred to the Infantry, was posted to the 6th Battalion and was subsequently deployed to Afghanistan in 2010.

"Two months into my deployment I was hit by an IED and, as a result, lost part of my right hand. I was returned to Australia for medical treatment."

Tim discharged in December 2013 and, like so many others, found the transition to civilian life difficult.

"The hardest point for me was finding direction after discharging. I loved the army and really found it difficult to comprehend doing anything else. Plus, I believed that finding a new career with a similar group of friends



around me would be near impossible."

Tim joined Mates4Mates in 2011 and was one of the original cohorts of Mates participating in the inaugural Kokoda rehabilitative adventure challenge.

"From then on, I just kept dropping into the Mates4Mates centre to use the gym, attend social events, do yoga, etc."

What a turnaround: from injured and discharged to Man of the Year.

What message does Tim have for Diggers current and ex-serving who are going through a hard time?

"There are so many people out there who want to help you, but only you can make the first step to help yourself. I entered the Man of the Year competition with nothing to lose, and I won. You have nothing to lose by contacting Mates4Mates, and it could really change your life."

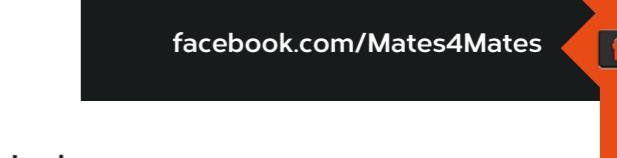
"Thanks to Mates4Mates, I quickly understood that I didn't have to go through the struggle alone." M4M

**1300 4 MATES (1300 462 837)**

[www.mates4mates.org](http://www.mates4mates.org)

[enquiry@mates4mates.org](mailto:enquiry@mates4mates.org)

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# Beccy Cole: Country queen shines a light on Mates4Mates at Music Muster

The 2016 Gympie Music Muster is celebrating “35 years of mates, music and making a difference” this August, and Mates4Mates is honoured to be the official charity partner.

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**THIS** year's poster girl for Australia's largest charity festival is Beccy Cole, and it was actually Beccy's 2006 single *Poster Girl (Wrong Side of the World)* that catapulted the Aussie country queen into the hearts and homes of military families.

*"I was incredibly inspired by the whole experience of going over to the Middle East to entertain the Aussie troops... I was like a proud mother hen."*

During the festive season of December 2005 and January 2006, the songwriter from Adelaide did a series of concerts in Iraq and the Middle East for Australian Defence Force personnel serving in Operation Catalyst. When she returned she received a letter from a fan objecting to her Tour de Force appearances, mistakenly on the basis that it evidenced her support for the war. *Poster Girl* was her response.

“I was incredibly inspired by the whole experience of going over to the Middle East to entertain the Aussie troops, but also getting to know them and understanding what they're all about,” Beccy said. “I was like a proud mother hen over there, so I really did want to come back and sing their praises. I wanted to write a song, but I didn't know what angle. That's when I received the criticism.”



**ABOVE:** Entertaining ADF personnel as part of the 2005 Tour de Force group at Camp Victory in Baghdad.

It was easy for the singer-songwriter to respond. In fact, she says, “It's the fastest song I've ever written.”

It's a sad reality that when civilians don't support a war, it can sometimes equate to a lack of support for the troops fighting in it. Similarly, supporting our troops doesn't necessarily mean agreeing with the decision to involve our country in that war. Cole understands this, singing in *Poster Girl* about Diggers doing a job that must be done.

“You can support the troops without supporting the war. You can recognise that they do an amazing job, that they put their lives on the line and put themselves in danger because we need a Defence Force. Wonderful, wonderful people.”

“That whole time, I was so incredibly inspired, I didn't once consider that I was supporting the war or the politics of the situation. It's not their political choice to



**ABOVE:** Providing a welcome reminder of home for all ranks assigned to Operation Catalyst.

be there, but it's the job they're doing and they're doing it well, extremely well.”

Beccy's response to her former fan may have fallen on deaf ears as far as he's concerned, but it was heard and praised by many others, winning 2007 Song of the Year at the CMAA awards, with the music video reaching No. 1 on Australia's Country Music Channel. Beccy cares deeply about what she's singing, and it's this honesty and integrity that shines through her songs and makes her such a hit with Defence.

“I actually think it's because the songs are quite literal. Country music isn't full of hidden meaning; it's honest and real. The style of writing, the storytelling aspect of it, can be very moving and it appeals to those personal, military stories.”

The military themed single on her latest album is an example of this. *Broken Soldiers* tells the story of the many troops who return from service and experience PTSD. The music video begins with the following message:

“Our service women and men often return with injuries on the inside. They come home to their mothers changed forever. For many of them, the things they've witnessed weigh unbearably on their soul, and their very humanity. Every day they silently fight a new enemy... a war within themselves.”

“A couple of times people have said to me, ‘Thank you for saying it out loud’. People can say things in songs that they're a bit worried to stand up and speak

out loud, but if you put it in a song and make it rhyme, it has that level of honesty that people may not have been able to articulate.”

Exactly a decade since the release of *Poster Girl*, *Broken Soldiers* is just as poignant and as powerful.

“Over the years I've been asked to sing *Poster Girl* at many different functions, including the memorials of soldiers who've died. It was at the memorial of Captain Paul McKay (who took his own life after returning from service), when his mother got up and spoke in a big cathedral in Adelaide, that I realised what I wanted to write about. She spoke with such love for her son and such passion for his work and what he did... She was so happy when she got him back, but as soon as she hugged him she knew he was a different person, ‘dead inside’.”

“That line got me, and that line's in the song. A mother wants to say, ‘You're all right, you're here’, but unseen injuries can be the most deadly. I just want to shine a light on certain situations through song and make people think a little differently. So, while the song is inspired by Captain Paul McKay, it's a generic story told from the mother's point of view, and that was because of his mum and the way she spoke that day.”

It's her own motherhood and these deep personal connections that inform Beccy's writing and have earned her the trust of Defence Force members and

*“The first thing I ever ask a returned serviceman or woman is, ‘How are you?’ It really is the first thing you should be asking.”*



**ABOVE:** Performing for the troops of the Multinational Force and Observers during the Forces Entertainment Tour concert.

their families. But it's not just the mothers that have her attention.

"I'll sit down for a beer with the guys and girls after a show, and the first thing I ever ask a returned serviceman or woman is, 'How are you?' It really is the first thing you should be asking. As tough as Australians are, we're very sensitive too. We have beautiful hearts and they come from the mums who've nurtured them.

Yes, they're tough and yes, they're very capable, but their hearts have to contend with horrific situations in war zones far from home – how can you be prepared for that?"

The award-winning singer is also lucky enough to hear first-hand some beautiful stories of hope and growth.

"I just received a third letter from the Digger I mentioned in my *Poster Girl* song. It wasn't until he actually heard the song that he said to his family, 'I think that's me'. He wrote to me and said, 'I think I'm the Digger in your song' and I replied, 'Yes, you are!' He lets me know what he's up to and, in fact, the little girl that's a brand new baby girl in the song is now 10. When she was six she took the song to kindy and it was her show and tell. He's now written to me again, saying, 'I've just read your book and I'm in it!' He was the first incredibly inspiring soldier that I met when I was in Baghdad, so it's a lovely connection, getting these letters and watching his family grow."

So, what does Gympie Music Muster's poster girl have to say about the partnership with Mates4Mates?

*"I just want to shine a light on certain situations through song and make people think a little differently."*



**ABOVE:** Singing for ADF personnel during one of the first concerts for troops assigned to Operation Catalyst in the Middle East.

"I've been going to the Gympie Muster since 1993; it's my favourite outdoor festival. Everybody that's there and has a wristband is making a contribution to that charity. The Muster's been a charity event since the '80s, and I think that helps that level of mateship. As a performer, it's one of the most amazing feelings to be up there in front of a crowd that makes you perform the best you ever have. That's why I think the partnership with Mates4Mates is perfect, and especially in my year as Ambassador. I punched the air when Mates4Mates came on board!" **M4M**

## REHABILITATION MORE THAN JUST HEALING WOUNDS

For many Australian Defence Force members, the transition from military service to civilian life can be challenging, so supporting the move into civilian employment is an important part of the rehabilitation journey.

**THIS** is the reasoning behind the Employment and Education Support provided by Mates4Mates through partnerships with specialist providers like Ironside Recruitment, Churchill Education, MRAEL Group and In & Out Fitness.

Mates4Mates General Manager Operations Suzanne Desailly says that offering a range of Employment and Education Support Services is vital to providing holistic support to current and ex-service personnel who have been wounded, injured or are ill.

"The transition can be difficult enough, but managing mental health issues or physical injuries on top of navigating the civilian training, education or job search process can prove particularly challenging.

"There is a great deal of research that points to employment being a restorative psychological process. Positive and meaningful employment experiences have been linked to improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and high levels of personal empowerment – all of which have a positive effect on mental health and wellbeing."

Ironside Recruitment is an employment agency that transitioning Defence Force members can trust. Despite their core focus being the creation and securing of employment opportunities, Ironside Recruitment also provides CV development and career coaching services, right through to interview guidance and contract negotiation for Mates looking to transition into the civilian workforce. Director Glen Ferrarotto says Ironside is there to provide all necessary support to ex-serving Defence Force personnel seeking civilian employment.

"You can't put your hand on your heart and say you care via email or a phone call, so as soon as we're able to we get on a plane and visit our Mates. Our

employers and industry partners trust us to have a personal relationship with each person we work with. Trust is the critical link for Ironside Recruitment, our Mates and those who seek to employ them, so we work hard to develop and maintain it."

If there's any training needed prior to transitioning to a new career, Mates4Mates' partners can help. Churchill Education offers leadership and management courses and recognition of prior learning support. MRAEL provides direct access to apprenticeships and traineeships, and In & Out Fitness recently awarded a number of scholarships to Mates seeking certification in fitness.

Having the right partnerships in place with specialist providers is key to providing Employment and Education Support Services to Mates. Glen and his team at Ironside, for example, as ex-serving ADF members themselves, understand the challenges Mates face.

"One of the greatest myths in leaving the force is that you'll never have a close mate again, you'll never be able to trust anyone. It's entirely incorrect; securing employment is one way to establish a new network of trusted mates," Glen says.

To find out more about the employment process in our interview with Glen Ferrarotto visit [mates4mates.news](http://mates4mates.news). To speak to a member of staff about transitioning into the civilian workforce, email [enquiry@mates4mates.org](mailto:enquiry@mates4mates.org) or call 1300 4 MATES (62837). **M4M**

*"Positive and meaningful employment experiences have been linked to improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and high levels of personal empowerment."*

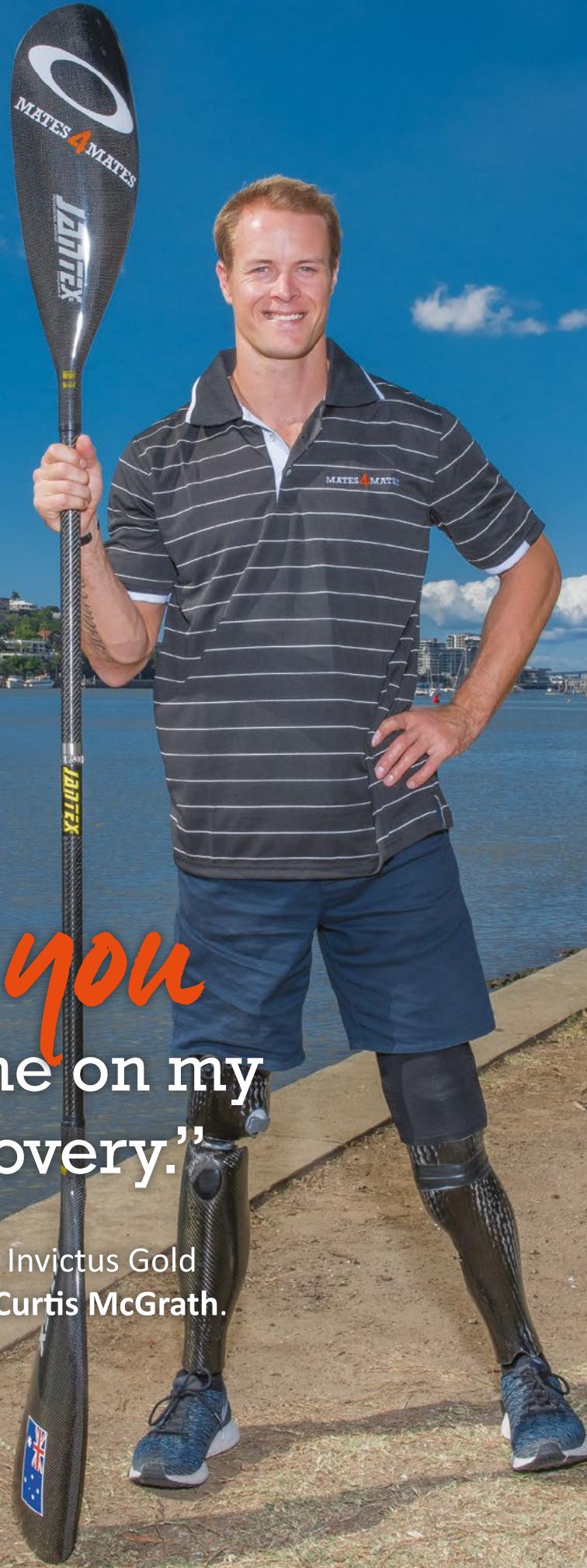


MATES4MATES

Thanks for helping  
our wounded Mates!

**"Thank you  
for helping me on my  
road to recovery."**

Current serving Sapper, Invictus Gold  
Medallist & Paralympian **Curtis McGrath.**



[mates4mates.org](http://mates4mates.org)