

HELPING VETERANS' CHILDREN TO A BETTER FUTURE



ANNUAL REPORT 2013



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

“TO MY DONOR, THANK YOU. WITHOUT YOU I COULD NOT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED MY COURSE. ONE DAY I HOPE I AM IN A POSITION TO BE ABLE TO GIVE BACK.”
Andrea Wiles



This picture: **Andrea Wiles**, a Long Tan Bursary recipient, is currently in her final year of a Bachelor of Veterinary Science at University of Queensland.

Front cover image: TPI Association (NSW) Scholarship Recipient, **Kate Hallen**, with her painting of PTSD (Post Traumatic Shoaling Disorder). In 2013 she completed her Bachelor of Visual Arts and will go on to study her Honours Degree in 2014.

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ABOUT AVCAT

In 2013 AVCAT helped 120 children of ex-service men and women throughout Australia by providing financial assistance for their tertiary education.

The most deserving candidates are selected on merit and would not be able to start or complete their studies without the assistance of a scholarship.

Our vision is to ensure that the children and grandchildren of the Australian ex-service community have the same opportunities as their peers by providing assistance with tertiary education.

Through the help of our generous donors, AVCAT administers scholarships to the children of those who have served our country in peace and war in the Australian Army, Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force.

Our recipients come from all over Australia and study an enormous variety of courses. Our students attend universities, TAFE colleges and other approved tertiary institutions around Australia.

Over the years we have helped doctors, psychiatrists, engineers, teachers, scientists, meteorologists, ballet dancers, circus performers, creative writers, film makers – the list goes on.

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, is our Patron.

Gifts to AVCAT are tax deductible.

For more information contact us:

AVCAT

PO Box K978

Haymarket NSW 1240

T 02 9213 7999 E avcat@dva.gov.au

www.avcat.org.au

THROUGH HER BODY OF
WORK PTSD: “POST-
TRAUMATIC SHOALING
DISORDER” KATE EXPLORED
SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND
DYNAMICS SPECIFICALLY
LINKED TO SUFFERERS OF
POST-WAR TRAUMA AND
POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS.
Kate Hallen

"WHAT IS TO GIVE LIGHT MUST ENDURE BURNING", DR FRANKL. IN THE PAST I HAVE SUFFERED AND NOW THANKS TO SO MANY INCLUDING AVCAT I AM GOING TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A LIGHT FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. I JUST WANTED TO SHARE THAT WITH YOU, BECAUSE I AM SO VERY GRATEFUL AND HUMBLED BY YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE."

Kate Pearson



Kate Pearson graduated from her honours degree in Psychology at the University of Western Australia and is currently studying for her Masters. Kate received a Long Tan Bursary.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

AVCAT continues to work with government, ex-service organisations and individual donors to provide support for the children of Australian veterans through the administration of bursaries, scholarships and grants. We are proud to share in the accolades so often afforded to students with whom we have worked and who have completed their tertiary studies.

AVCAT has had a long-standing and positive relationship with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) for whom we manage the Long Tan Bursary scheme for fifty children of Vietnam veterans. The relationship with DVA is governed by a Services Agreement which underpins the application, selection and management processes involved in the awarding of these bursaries. A proposal to widen the eligibility of the Long Tan Bursary to include grandchildren of Vietnam veterans remains under consideration.

We are also very appreciative of the ongoing support of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator the Honourable Michael Ronaldson MP. The Minister has taken a keen interest in AVCAT and has met with us to discuss the emerging trends and issues which impact on the awarding of bursaries to descendants of Australian veterans. We are hopeful that he will be able to participate in award presentation ceremonies as his schedule permits.

I would like to record our thanks to our

Patron, Her Excellency the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, CVO for her ongoing support of AVCAT. We reflect on the times that we have been privileged to have Her Excellency host our scholarship awards presentations at Admiralty House, Sydney. These occasions have been a highlight in the lives of the recipients and donors alike. On behalf of AVCAT, I express our sincere appreciation to the Governor General for her patronage over the past five years.

In addition to the fifty bursaries provided by the DVA, the generosity of our ex-service and private donors has continued to make possible an increasing number of bursaries, grants and scholarships each year. In 2012, there were 20 of these "other" scholarships. In 2014 we aim to have some 30 or so scholarships in this category which is a glowing testament to the very generous donors.

We are very aware of the difference that a bursary can make to a student undertaking tertiary studies. A bursary may assist a student to buy textbooks or perhaps allow them to stay in touch with friends and family by paying for internet connection. Those who are living away from home can use their bursary for everyday expenses, allowing them to reduce their hours of casual work required to support themselves thereby putting more time into their studies. AVCAT and our recipients sincerely appreciate the trust that donors place in us to manage these scholarships.



Stephanie Barker graduated in 2010 with a Bachelor of Physiotherapy. She is pictured here with her mother and veteran father, Esther and Peter.

"I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THE ASSISTANCE AVCAT PROVIDED ME THROUGHOUT MY STUDIES. THE SCHOLARSHIP ENABLED ME TO KNUCKLE DOWN AND CONCENTRATE ON MY PHYSIOTHERAPY COURSE WITHOUT STRESSING ABOUT HOW TO PAY FOR BOOKS AND FEES. WITHOUT AVCAT'S SUPPORT, STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT. THANKS TO AVCAT AND MY DONOR FOR EVERYTHING YOU HAVE DONE."
Stephanie Barker

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT cont

I acknowledge with pride the wonderful work done by the AVCAT team comprising our small, highly dedicated and passionate staff, along with very experienced volunteers who give willingly of their time and expertise to assist in the assessing of applications at different stages of the selection process. I take this opportunity to especially thank the outgoing CEO, Commodore Nick Helyer, who has given over five years service to AVCAT. His guidance and knowledge has been fundamental to the valuable work done during his watch.

We welcome on board Mrs Karen Blackwell as the new CEO. Karen is very familiar with our organisation, having worked for AVCAT as a volunteer for some years as an expert in education. She shares the passion and commitment of staff to the cause of promoting tertiary education to those children of veterans constrained by lack of resource and opportunity.

The Board strives to ensure that good governance practice and procedures are maintained and improved where necessary. In this context, considerable work continues with strategic planning, business planning and risk evaluation as we set ourselves for the challenges of the future. DVA has foreshadowed a tender process including re-negotiation of the Services Agreement which is now due for renewal in mid-2015. The Board is keenly focussed on preparing for this process and we look forward to responding to

the tender when it is released later in 2014.

Finally, in offering my sincere thanks for their unstinting support and effort, the commitment of my fellow Directors to AVCAT is well reflected in the time they willingly give to further the aims of our organisation. This year we welcomed Mrs Meg Green to the Board, as Alternate Director for Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council. She joins a group of Directors who have, between them, served as members of the Board for a combined total in excess of 80 years.

It is a great privilege to be associated in such a positive way with the younger and more deserving members of our society. Those involved with AVCAT are always heartened and encouraged to hear the many expressions of gratitude we get from our students, but the real reward is to have been able to play even a small role in their ongoing success.

Russ Shalders
Chairman

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT), a national not-for-profit organisation, has been proudly assisting children of veterans to complete their tertiary studies for 28 years. Our goal remains one of providing financial assistance to those children and grandchildren of veterans in necessitous and deserving circumstances and who show the meritorious potential to do well in their chosen tertiary studies.

To witness the success achieved by students as they progress through tertiary studies is one of the most rewarding aspects of the work done by AVCAT. We are committed to being a respected, independent organisation within the charity sector. We work towards ensuring the best opportunities are afforded to the children and grandchildren of the Australian ex-service community by working with our members, government, ex-service, corporate and community organisations to provide financial assistance through the awarding of scholarships, to students from across the nation.

OUR STRATEGIC VISION

Whilst AVCAT administers scholarships to help students with the costs associated with full-time tertiary education, our overarching goal is to assist these students in the development of lifelong learning skills and attitudes as well as facilitating the pursuit of valuable employment opportunities through their success in tertiary studies.

This year has provided opportunities for our stakeholders to have a major input into the further development of our Business Plan with its short and long term goals being articulated in terms of how we can continue to move forward and remain a relevant source of assistance to our recipients. It is critical that AVCAT remain a contemporary organisation. We need to recognise the implications of the many facets of technology and social media on our applicants, the impact of being a veteran's child or grandchild and the role that education can play in their lives.

SCHOLARSHIPS

AVCAT manages over 200 separate scholarships at any one time. We manage the entire process including marketing, selection of recipients, presentation of awards and monitoring of student progress. One of our main sources of bursaries are those provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). Currently, these bursaries are awarded specifically to the children of Vietnam Veterans.

“OUR OVERARCHING GOAL IS TO ASSIST...STUDENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING SKILLS AND ATTITUDES”.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT cont

We are constantly seeking support within and beyond the ex-service organisations to broaden our audience and increase the number of our scholarship donors. In 2013 there were 50 Long Tan Bursaries awarded to children of Vietnam veterans, from all states and territories. There were also another 22 scholarships awarded to other children and grandchildren of ex-service personnel, an increase of 3 from 2012.

In 2013 the Nurses and Midwives' Association of NSW (NSWNMA) added another scholarship to those available for tertiary students. Their essential criteria is that the student should be studying nursing or something similar as part of their tertiary studies. We thank them for their support and look forward to a long and valuable relationship with the NSWNMA.

As in previous years, our scholarship recipients have been well supported by the generosity of a number of ex-service organisations including the National RSL, Woden Valley RSL Sub-branch, Legacy Australia Council, Brisbane Waters Legacy, The War Widows' Guild, VVAA (SA), VVPPAA and TPI (NSW) as well as our individual donors, some who wish to

remain anonymous. Such continued support is very much appreciated by all.

As part of our growing outreach to the children and grandchildren of Australian veterans we look to increase the number of scholarships we can make available for applicants. Each year AVCAT welcomes more donors to our scholarship program. In 2014, three more scholarships will be on offer to those children of soldiers who have served in the Royal Australian Regiment thanks to the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) Foundation. Another new scholarship will also be available for a successful applicant due to the generosity of Chatswood RSL Club and Sub-branch.

Part of the work done by AVCAT is to develop a long term relationship with each recipient and to monitor their progress as they progress through their studies. The road travelled in tertiary studies is not always easy, however, the high success rate of the graduates with whom AVCAT works reflects the underlying ethos of the provision of these scholarships; one that Benjamin Franklin once espoused: "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

THE HIGH SUCCESS RATE OF THE GRADUATES WITH WHOM AVCAT WORKS REFLECTS THE UNDERLYING ETHOS OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS... "AN INVESTMENT IN KNOWLEDGE PAYS THE BEST INTEREST."



Long Tan Bursary Recipient, **Kate Denner**, graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor of Nursing. Kate plans to begin her Masters of Nursing with Honours degree in Semester 2, 2014

“IT’S BEEN AN EMOTIONAL RIDE
OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS,
HOWEVER TO FINISH WITH A
GRADUATE POSITION IS TRULY A
DREAM COME TRUE. THANKS TO
ALL AT AVCAT FOR YOUR HELP
AND SUPPORT.”

Kate Denner

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT cont

Each year, applications for all scholarships open on 18th August, Vietnam Veterans' Day. In 2013, we received a total of 295 applications for all scholarships offered through AVCAT for the coming 2014 year. This was an overall increase in applications by 4% from the previous year.

THE AVCAT TEAM

AVCAT's small team of dedicated staff and volunteers aims to augment, not replicate, the services provided by various organisations for those seeking assistance with their tertiary education. We strive to provide appropriate support both financial and advisory, whenever feasible.

In 2013 the organisation farewelled its outgoing CEO, Commodore Nick Helyer. Commodore Helyer had served as CEO for five years, during which time the organisation increased its valued contribution to the children and grandchildren of the ex-service community through the addition of available scholarships and the raising of its profile within the ex-service community. As the incoming CEO, I hope to uphold the legacy he has left and continue to lead our team well for the good of the students we aim to assist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As is so often the way, an organisation such as AVCAT is unable to function without the support of so many. The generosity of the ex-service and donor organisations, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and private individuals is very much appreciated and well

epitomised in the words written by the recipients themselves:

“WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT I WOULDN'T BE WHERE I AM NOW. I AM TRULY GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES THIS SCHOLARSHIP HAS GIVEN ME.”

We also greatly appreciate the tireless efforts of our team of volunteers which plays a critical role in the scholarship selection process. They bring years of experience, expertise and passion to the whole application process. Our hard-working, dedicated staff value the rapport they establish each year with the many students that pass our way. It is a privilege to be part of such a positive team that, supported by the committed Directors of the AVCAT Board, continues to contribute to the opportunities afforded to the children of Veterans to succeed in their chosen tertiary studies.

Our raison d'être is well summarised by a speech made by US President Barack Obama. In his national address to students across the nation, he said:

"... Every single one of you has something that you're good at. Every single one of you has something to offer. And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is. That's the opportunity an education can provide."

Karen Blackwell
Chief Executive Officer



Caitlin McGregor received a VVFA scholarship and has been studying at the University of Newcastle. She recently completed her Bachelor of Communication Honours and is currently in her first year of a four year PHD in Communications at Newcastle.

**“THE CHANCE TO DO
MY PHD IS A DREAM
COME TRUE AND THIS
WOULD NOT BE
POSSIBLE WITHOUT
THE VVFA AND
AVCAT. THANK YOU!”
Caitlin McGregor**

DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors have pleasure in submitting the Financial Report of the company for the year ended 31 December 2013 and the Directors' Report therein.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The Company's activities in the financial year were those prescribed in its Constitution, namely the provision of financial assistance for the costs of tertiary studies to the selected necessitous and deserving children of the Australian Veteran community.

The Company does this through the administration of scholarships and bursaries, funded by the Australian Government, organizations and private donors and through bursaries provided by the Company from direct donations.

REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

This is the eleventh year of the operations of the Company since it was restructured in 2003. We continue to refine the selection and application processes based on our internal audit and monitoring operations. Business planning continues to focus on increasing the number of applicants each year as well as the number of scholarships available to applicants. Both of these areas of focus have seen successful outcomes in 2013.

The Board of the Company maintains a regular review of the identified risks to the organization on a quarterly basis and monitors the progress of mitigation strategies when implemented.

OPERATING RESULTS

Surplus from ordinary activities in the financial period was \$19,004 with total company equity of \$220,794.

A detailed review of operations is contained in the Financial Report which is available on request.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Company measures performance on two levels:

1. Monitoring the success rates of the recipients of scholarships in their respective studies of tertiary education. Success is defined as a recipient receiving an average passing grade for the duration of the scholarship (many recipients continue their studies after scholarship completion). The cohort of recipients who commenced their studies in 2011 in the main finished their scholarship period during calendar year 2013 and achieved an average success rate of 69%.

**“BEING A SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENT HAS ENRICHED MY
LEARNING AND GIVEN ME
OPPORTUNITIES THAT WOULD
HAVE OTHERWISE BEEN
WITHHELD FROM ME.”**

DIRECTORS' REPORT continued

Andrew King, RSL National Scholarship recipient for 2013 is presented his award by Air Commodore Noel Dewart.



2. Measuring the ratios of expenditure to operate the Company to the assistance funds distributed to the needy children of veterans to support them through their courses of tertiary education. The ratio for administrative expenses is 15% (2012:14%); were operating expenses to be included, the ratio would be 55% (2012:51%).

EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE

No matters have arisen since the balance date which will significantly affect the operations of the Company, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Company in subsequent financial years.

MEMBERS

The members of the Company are the five principal national ex-service organizations which sponsored it. These are the Australian Veterans' and Defence Services Council, Legacy Australia Council, The Returned and Services League of Australia, the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia Incorporated. The other member is the Chair who is appointed by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs (Commonwealth).

The Repatriation Commission has the right to appoint a person to be a member but has chosen not to do so.

DIRECTORS' REPORT continued

DIVIDENDS OR DISTRIBUTIONS MADE TO MEMBERS

No dividends have been paid, declared or recommended either during the reporting period or since that ended. Nor have any distributions been made to the members. Indeed, the Constitution of the Company provides that no part of the profits or other income or the property of the Company may be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise, to the members.

DIRECTORS OF THE COMPANY

The Chairman is a Director. Each of the sponsoring organizations appoints a Director and each such Director may appoint an Alternate with the agreement of his or her appointing organization. The Repatriation Commission has the right to appoint a Director but has chosen not to do so.

The Directors in office during the period of this report are:

- **Commander WB Loftus** RFD RAN (retd) LLB - Legal advisor, board member since 2007
 - **Mr W Roberts JP** - member Education Committee, board member since 2005
- The Alternate Directors are:
- **Lieutenant Colonel IM Henderson** (retd) - Chairman Audit Committee, board member since 2005.
 - **Mrs Meg Green** - appointed August 2013.
 - **Mr PAF Kainerder** BA Cert Teach - member Education Committee, board member since 2006.
 - **Mr DJ Norton** MA FCA - Chairman Finance Committee, member Audit Committee, board member since 2011.
 - **Mr NM Robertson JP** - Member Education Committee, board member since 1989.
- All the Directors of the Company have experience in matters associated with the welfare of veterans and their families in necessitous and deserving circumstances.
- **Vice Admiral RE Shalders** AO CSC RAN (retd) - appointed Chairman on 12 August 2010
 - **Lieutenant Colonel PG Badcock** (retd) AFAIM AFIPM - member Audit Committee, board member since 2005.
 - **Mr GS Blake** - appointed to the board on 29 May 2012.
 - **Mr KH Foster** OAM JP - member Finance Committee, board member since 2005



Long Tan Bursary and Other Scholarship recipients in NSW receive their certificates at the 2013 award ceremony.



Long Tan Bursary and Other Scholarship recipients in QLD receive their certificates at the 2013 award ceremony.

DIRECTORS' REPORT continued

DIRECTORS BENEFITS

No Director has received or become entitled to receive a benefit by reason of a contract made by the Company or a related corporation with the Director or with a firm of which the Director is a member or with a Company in which the Director has a substantial financial interest.

The Directors are not paid any remuneration for their services.

There is a provision in the Constitution of the Company which expressly prohibits the payment of fees, allowances or honoraria to members of the Board out of the funds of the Company, except for the reimbursement of actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred in attending to the affairs of the Company.

INDEMNITIES AND INSURANCE

There has been no call on or notice given for indemnities for any Director, Officer or Auditor of the Company during the reporting period.

During the financial period the Company has paid premiums to insure officers against liabilities for costs and expenses incurred by them in defending any legal proceeding arising out of their conduct while acting in the capacity of officer of the Company, other than involving a wilful breach of duty in relation to the Company. The policy covers the Directors and the Secretary of the Company.

There is also a volunteers' insurance policy held by the Company, which provides coverage for personal accident and injury

arising from their duties for the Company for its Directors and volunteers.

COMPANY SECRETARY

Commodore NF Helyer MBE RANR was appointed Company Secretary on 8 April 2008. He retired from his position on 31 October 2013. Ms KJ Blackwell, the incoming CEO, was officially appointed as Company Secretary at the AVCAT Board Meeting on 26 November 2013.

COMPANY PARTICULARS

The Company, incorporated and domiciled in Australia, is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee. The address of the registered office and principal place of business is:

Ground Floor, Tower B
Centennial Plaza
280 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

AUDITOR

The auditor appointed by the Company is Mr AM Frawley of DM Walsh and Co, Wahroonga NSW 2076.

The lead auditor's independence declaration is set out on page 9 of our Financial Report and forms part of the Directors' Report for the financial period.

Our Financial Report for year ended 31 December 2013 is available on our website www.avcat.org.au.

RE Shalders
Chairman



South Australian presentation for 2013 Other Scholarships award ceremony.



Long Tan Bursary recipients in Western Australia receive their certificates at the 2013 award ceremony.

OUR SPONSORS

Finally we would like to thank our generous sponsors. Without them we would be unable to provide the funds for these scholarships.

We would also like to acknowledge our anonymous donors. Thank you!

National schemes



Regional schemes



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust

PO Box K978 Haymarket NSW 1240

Ground Level 280 Elizabeth Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

T 02 9213 7999 F 02 9213 7307 E avcat@dva.gov.au

ACN 008 609 032

ABN 50 008 609 032



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www.avcat.org.au