

Care

Victoria Police Legacy Newsletter



Issue 37 - January 2012



Gala Christmas Lunch at the MCG

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Chairman's message

Welcome to the first edition for 2012 of our newsletter, Care. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff, legatees, Friends of Legacy, volunteers, sworn and unsworn members of Victoria Police, and sponsors for the very important contributions you have made to Victoria Police Legacy over the last twelve months.

As we all raced to the end of 2011 and the cheerful chaos of Christmas and New Year it provided a time to catch up with colleagues, old friends and family. It was in that wonderful spirit that legatees, volunteers, Friends of Legacy, serving police and supporters of Victoria Police Legacy attended the MCG on the last Saturday in November for the gala Christmas luncheon. Amongst the guests were many of our legatees that had celebrated their 21st birthdays during the year, and coupled with an extremely moving montage of images from years gone by, it served as a poignant reminder just how many police families have lost a loved one and particularly how many children and young people have been or are part of Victoria Police Legacy.

2012 is shaping up to be another exciting and challenging year from both an organisational and schedule of events perspective. This year will also see further development of the Youth and Young Adult Program, Seniors' Trip to the Yarra Valley, Family Camp and an inaugural Fathers' Day Breakfast, increased legatee home visits and furtherance of research, planning and implementation that will ensure the longevity and relevance of Victoria Police Legacy.

We welcome Kay Miller as our new Executive Manager. Kay has a strong not for profit community sector background with experience in business management, consultancy, project management and as a change agent in the legal, disability, housing and aged care sectors. Her experience is complemented with qualifications as a lawyer and postgraduate qualifications in commerce and applied human rights.

We are proud to announce that recently appointed Chief Commissioner Ken Lay APM has accepted our invitation to be our Patron. The support from Victoria Police is continuous and unwavering and will be complemented by the proceeds from record sales of its corporate Christmas cards.

Victoria Police Legacy is acutely aware that there are people that may be eligible for support and services that we have not been notified of. We assist people in the police family who have lost a husband, wife or partner who is a serving or retired sworn member of Victoria Police. We also provide support and services to serving or retired sworn members who have lost husbands, wives or partners. Support has been extended to a cohort aptly named Friends of Legacy which includes legatees who have moved into a new relationship, parents of serving members of Victoria Police, where that member was not in a relationship at the time of their death. If you know anyone that may fall into the aforementioned criteria, please discuss the matter with them and encourage them to contact us or assist in facilitating that contact.

We wish you all a very happy, healthy and successful 2012 and look forward to your ongoing support.

Roger Schranz
Chairman

The Last Saturday in November

Christmas at the MCG

It's a rare sight to see the MCG empty, but guests were treated to the full spectre of its grandeur on 26th November when the Victoria Police Legacy Christmas party was held.



Over 340 people, including legatees, board members, members of the Victoria Police Executive, volunteers and other police representatives enjoyed a wonderful three course lunch in the Members' Dining Room.

Despite the heavens opening that morning and making underground parking a blessing, the MCG looked stunning and provided the ideal backdrop to Christmas festivities.

Guests were entertained by speeches from Chairman Detective Inspector Roger Schranz, Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe, MC Superintendent Peter O'Neill and the band, Baby Grand, who consisted of Adrian Scott, the beautiful Jennifer Allas, Steve Wade and coincidentally, our own Superintendent Ross Guenther. All accomplished musicians having performed with many great Australian and international artists, they kept the crowd entertained with many favourites and Christmas carols.



Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe delivers a Christmas message to legatees at the annual VPL Christmas gala lunch.





Legatees, police and other special guests enjoy the Victoria Police Legacy Christmas gala lunch at the MCG

A collage of photographs depicting the people and work of VPL over the years provided a timely reminder of the support and ongoing connection to the policing family that VPL offers. The extremely moving presentation



Assistant Commissioner Andrew Crisp enjoyed the annual VPL Christmas gala lunch.

included early photographs of legatee children who now have their own children and some very interesting hairdos and outfits!



Local uniform police provided a welcomed presence at the annual VPL Christmas lunch, mingling with legatees and providing a modern perspective on policing.



Legatees, police and other special guests enjoy the Victoria Police Legacy Christmas gala lunch at the MCG



A Birthday Celebration at Scotland Yard



Detective Superintendent John O'Leary, Ben Kimber and Commander David Zinzan former head of the Serious and Organised Crime Branch at Scotland Yard

The international policing network was alive and well recently when legatee Ben Kimber celebrated his 21st birthday in London. As Victoria Police Legacy likes to be on hand to present special birthday cheques at this milestone, Ben's overseas work experience internship with a respected news organisation as part of his journalism studies provided a good opportunity for our Chairman to renew contact with Detective Superintendent John O'Leary, head of the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad.



Superintendent O'Leary, along with other senior police from the Serious and Organised Crime Branch and Ant-Terrorist Squad, met with Ben at Scotland Yard to present him with a card and best wishes from Victoria Police Legacy. He was also presented with some mementos, including a highly sought after tie from the Flying Squad and a Scotland Yard plaque which was later followed up with a tour of the infamous Black Museum which is a special police-only collection of England's most unusual and often gruesome crimes. John and Ben then caught up again for a few beers and an English 'football' match.

Superintendent O'Leary jumped at the opportunity to support Victoria Police Legacy and in his despatch containing photographs and accompanying letter said of Ben, "He is a lovely lad and it was a pleasure to be able to do this."

Resignation of Life Member

After many years serving the cause of Victoria Police Legacy, Detective Superintendent Kevin Sheridan, Vice-Chairman of VPL and a Life Member, formally tendered his resignation from the board of VPL in December.

"Kevin has provided a significant contribution to Victoria Police Legacy since joining in 2004 and as undoubtedly we all do, I have thanked him again for that and for his support of me as the fledgling then President all those years ago and his unwavering commitment to VPL," said VPL Chairman Roger Schranz. Kevin was well supported by his wife Lyn throughout his term on the board including the organisation of the Vietnam trip and more recently in co-hosting the National Police Remembrance Day tour to Canberra. We wish him well with his future endeavours and that additional spare time!

Young Legatee Milestones

Caitlin Armstrong



Caitlan Armstrong receives her birthday cheque from VPL, presented by former board member and retired Inspector Gary Storey.

A recall to duty saw retired board member Gary Storey, a former Victoria Police Inspector, visit Caitlin Armstrong on the Mornington Peninsula and present her with a cheque on behalf of Victoria Police Legacy for her 21st birthday. Caitlin has spent the last twelve months attending Southern Cross University in New South Wales completing a pathway program which

resulted in her being offered a place at Monash University in Frankston. She will undertake a Midwifery degree at the completion of which she hopes to emulate her mother and travel throughout Europe on a Contiki tour.

Jacqui Chandler



Jacqui Chandler receives her birthday cheque on behalf of VPL from Detective Leading Senior Constable Murray Sleep

Detective Leading Senior Constable Murray Sleep of the Wodonga Crime Investigation Unit made the 21st birthday presentation to Jacqui Chandler on behalf of Victoria Police Legacy. Murray was a friend and colleague of Jacqui's father David at Wodonga CIU, and is a long time family friend who has seen Marc and Jacqui grow into young adults. He is an ardent VPL supporter and provides additional support via the local Police golf days at Wodonga.

Jacqui completed a course in business administration in 2011 and hopes to gain employment in this area this year. Since getting her licence she is out and about and also working in retail. Jacqui remembers the VPL trip to Vietnam as being a highlight and she has had a trip to Hong Kong since. She thanked VPL for the support to both her and her family over the years.

Leigh Holmes



Leigh Holmes receives his 21st birthday cheque from VPL, presented by Sergeant Paul Bruders

Another young Legatee to celebrate their 21st birthday on 27th December was Leigh Holmes.

Leigh celebrated his birthday with younger brother Joshua and mum Leeanne Ketcher, while Sergeant Paul Bruders from Project AIM visited the family and presented Leigh with his birthday cheque.

"As he has been a family friend for many, many

years and a friend of Leigh's dad, it seemed such a lovely gesture for Paul to present it to him," said Leeanne.

Leigh explained what the following year holds in store for him: "After finishing Year 12, I did a two year Sound Engineering Course but have now decided to join the Police Force and am currently going through the application process. I have planned a five week trip to America, Canada and Mexico and leave in three weeks so the birthday money will be put to good use."

Jarrold Short

A quiet young man who did not want a fuss made of him, Jarrod was happy to receive his 21st birthday presentation from the Chairman after the Christmas Luncheon in the presence of mum and Field Officer Eileen Keily. Jarrod spoke passionately of his academic studies in a Bachelor Interactive Entertainment majoring in games programming. He thanked Police Legacy for looking after his family and went on to say that he hopes to travel to Italy, the home of his grandfather, after completing his studies.

Children's Christmas Party

The annual VPL Children's Christmas Party was held at the Melbourne Zoo on Saturday 3rd December last year, with 70 parents and children enjoying a festive afternoon in the Bong Su room. The morning activities included a guided tour of the zoo and a buffet lunch, followed by a visit from Santa and free time viewing the animal enclosures.



John Hawkins with Mia and Isabelle at the annual VPL Children's Christmas Party

As with all VPL events, the day ran smoothly thanks to field officer Eileen Kelly and her daughter Katie, as well as chairman Detective Inspector Roger Schranz, Senior Sergeant and photographer Paul McBride, office manager Erica McMahon and Detective Senior Constable Kate O'Neill. Sergeant Mick Downes, a former board member, managed to fit into the red



The annual VPL Children's Christmas Party was a popular event at the Melbourne Zoo last year

suit this year, taking over the role from former Vice President Detective Superintendent Kevin Sheridan.

VPL thanks Police Credit for sponsoring the event and RACV for contributing to the purchase of gifts.



Regional Lunches

Ballarat

Last year's Ballarat luncheon moved to the iconic Oscar's Hotel on Friday 14th October, an intimate and relaxed venue. Superintendent Andy Allen and partner Janine welcomed the small group of widows and guests including local police, Senior Sergeant Peter McCormick and Detective Acting Senior Sergeant Kevin Carson and VPL board member, Commander Ashley Dickinson. On an unseasonably hot day, guests mused over Chairman Roger Schranz and Andrew Allen's banter and differing recollections of when Andy was his sergeant many years ago.

Roger also reflected on a meeting that he and Field Officer Eileen Keily had attended a few weeks earlier at Bereavement Assistance with Ted Worthington and former Chief Commissioner and inaugural VPL Patron, Mick Miller, adding that it was a great opportunity to thank Mr Miller for his visionary support that provided such a sound foundation for the work that we do today.

Box Hill

The new venue for the Box Hill lunch received the tick of approval as legatees and Friends of Legacy (FoL) attended Arlington at Wattle Park in Surrey Hills on Friday, 28th October, 2011, the heritage listed Tudor chalet overlooking gardens and expansive parklands.

Hosted by Chairman Detective Inspector Roger Schranz and Field Officer Eileen Keily, the group were joined by Assistant Commissioner: Intelligence and Cover Support Department Jeff Pope, Inspector Kim West, Detective Inspector Jim Cooke and Officer in Charge of the Nunawading Police Station, Senior Sergeant Mick Jones. Also attending were our photographers, Senior Sergeants Paul McBride and Andrew Hives and, Freelancer Greg Noakes. What was supposed to be a thank you and a chance to relax for the photographers was too much for Greg, who insisted on taking the obligatory VPL luncheon group photograph.

Congratulations to FoL Rex Condon who won the draw for the Parker pen donated by Assistant Commissioner Pope.

The Lasting Gift of a Teddy Bear



Brianna Lyons receives her first teddy bear from VPL. Brianna is now aged 14 and pictured with her new brother Jayden

When Greg Lyons passed away on 16th April in 1998, his daughter Brianna was only 4 months old.

"Although Police Legacy was very much a part of our lives and gave instant support to us since that date we did not attend any functions until Brianna was approximately two," explained her mum Andrea.

A photo was taken of Brianna at her very first Legacy Children's Christmas party with the gift Santa gave to her, a teddy bear. Brianna has kept the teddy bear all this time and still values it.

"Brianna is now 14 and over the years has formed wonderful friendships with her friends from Police Legacy who have also unfortunately experienced a loss, they have an amazing bond and look forward to seeing each other throughout the year with organised activities and celebrations arranged by Legacy. I also have made wonderful friends and can't express my appreciation enough for what Police Legacy do," said Andrea.

"I have been lucky enough to have met another wonderful person Rod, to share my life with and this year we became proud parents once again to a baby boy Jayden. Brianna is loving being a big sister. Although my life has changed direction again and we are moving forward I still treasure what Legacy do for us and particularly for Brianna. It is her way of remembering her dad."

"Brianna has grown in to a lovely young woman and will undoubtedly be in that great group of young adults we hope to nurture," said VPL Chairman and Detective Inspector Roger Schranz.

Naming of Bridge

VPL Board member Superintendent Peter O'Neill was recently approached by a senior constable from Corio, Andy Brittain, to name a local bridge after deceased police officer Sergeant Russell James Thompson (14833) of the Corio Police Station.

VicRoads was in regular contact with the family after the request was put forward, and accordingly on 25th November, the bridge on the Midland Highway was named after Sergeant Thompson. Loreen Thompson, Russell's widow, is a legatee of VPL.

Western Australia Police Widows Guild

President Nonie Browner and a group of Police widows from Western Australia visited Victoria taking in all from Melbourne, Lorne, Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. At the end of their holiday they caught up with some VPL widows at a dinner hosted by board member Peter O'Neill and Field Officer Eileen Keily. This organisation has been going strong for the last 40 years and preceded the Police Legacy in Western Australia. The links and opportunities to engage with other Police Legacies and like-minded organisations provide great opportunities for Victoria Police Legacy.

Wall to Wall Cheque Presentation to VPL

On Tuesday, 8th November, 2011 Senior Sergeant Phil Pearson, President of the Police Association of Victoria and VPL Board Member received a cheque from the proceeds of the 2011 Wall to Wall Ride. The presentation was made at the Police Federation of Australia 2011 Federal Council Meeting at the Marriott Hotel Brisbane. VPL thanks all police members, friends and supporters who participated, that core group who organised the event and the PFA and staff for its ongoing support and facilitation of the event.

"It is admirable when people can combine a passion/s, such as motorcycle riding and police welfare with promoting causes such as safe and responsible motor cycle riding and Police Legacies," said VPL Chairman and Detective Inspector Roger Schranz.



Senior Sergeant Phil Pearson receives the proceeds of the Wall to Wall Ride whilst at the Police Federation of Australia

Achievements

VPL is always keen to hear from young legatees who achieve within their chosen field, and recently received a photo of Melina Ayres at the National Primary School Soccer championships at Canberra in August. The team finished equal third, while individually Melina enjoyed a good tournament.

Melina has also just made the State Cricket team again and is heading to Cobram Barooga in January 2012 for the championships.



Melina Ayres at the National Primary School Soccer championships at Canberra

Surfing

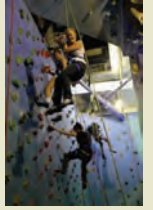
Recently VPL was able to facilitate a special youth activity in conjunction with Melbourne Legacy. VPL Legatee Elyce Boulter was the lucky recipient of this offer and enjoyed an overnight surfing camp at the Anglesea Surf Club, with Go Ride a Wave hosting the lessons. Youth activities coordinator Vladimir Keca described Elyce as "a little star and what a surfer. (It was a pleasure to have her involved and we are looking forward to more of your kids being involved in the future."



Young legatee Elyce Boulter surfing the waves at Torquay

Rock Climbing Event

On Thursday the 6th of October the first meeting of the "Young Legatees" of Victoria Police Legacy was held. A small but adventurous group of 11, lead by Detective Senior Constable Kate O'Neill, met at the Victoria Police Centre, piled into the police bus and made their way over to Cliffhanger Climbing Gym in Altona North where there were a variety of climbing walls to suit all levels.



"Once there we got kitted out with our own climbing gear and shoes, and then we were met by Senior Constable Damien Peppler from the Special Operations Group who came along to share his climbing knowledge and to help get us up the very, very high walls!" said Kate O'Neill.

"After a climbing lesson from the very helpful staff we were left to conquer any wall we wished. Or ladder in Chelsea Miller's case! Everyone was very impressed by the efforts of both Shanleigh Meldrum and Elyce Boulter who managed to make it up one of the toughest walls. Luke Bailey and Austin Miller did the boys proud and channelled their inner Spiderman, with a few minor cramps and a lot of sweat they scaled the walls with ease."

"It was great to see some of our older 'Young Legatees' such as Chloe and Jackie Forsyth and Hannah Jovanovic get involved and I know they will join me in encouraging anyone that wants to get involved to come along to the next activity. It is a great group and it is only the start of some fantastic activities and events we have planned for the future," said Kate O'Neill.



Wills and Bequests

Many Australians die without leaving a will, even though we are all aware that an accident or illness can occur at any time to anyone. Making a will is also something everyone, including young adults should do. A will allows you to:-

- Name the Executor/s you would like to carry out your wishes as you intend them;
- Make arrangements for the guardianship of minors, naming people whom you know will bring your children up with the values you hold;
- Give your estate (divided as you choose) to family, friends and organisations;

- State your wishes as to whether you prefer to be buried or cremated and any other instructions; and
- Nominate a person to officiate at your funeral.

VPL recommends that you always seek professional legal advice when preparing or amending your will. Any costs up to the amount of \$150 incurred by legatees, including young adult legatees, will be reimbursed by VPL.

For those considering a bequest, it provides an opportunity to recognise organisations like Legacy that have either provided assistance or signify a special support based on life experiences. Again, it is best to contact your solicitor or trustee company in order to appropriately tailor the wording of your bequest

Education Grant

There have been minor changes to Legacy's Tertiary Educations Scheme, in order to maximise the opportunity to reduce the burden of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP or otherwise know as HECS fees) for young legatees.

VPL will now pay the grant on completion of a year of study or part thereof at a pro-rata amount, directly to the Australian Taxation Office or under a reimbursement arrangement to parents who have paid the fees upfront.

As part of the previous policy, only subjects that have been passed will be considered in the education scheme. Should this policy change create any hardship, legatees are asked to contact VPL.

Friends of Legacy

In 2000, Coburg Sergeant Robert White died of a brain tumour, leaving behind his childhood sweetheart Cherise White and their three children Ben, Jess and Tom who were aged eight, five and two respectively.

The White family became part of the Legacy family and Cherise, at the age of 33, was one of our younger mum legatees facing all the challenges of raising a family on her own. As a sole parent, Cherise recalls that the hardest part was being the only disciplinarian and constantly enforcing rules. 'You can't always be strong and sometimes you feel guilty knowing that it might have been different if your partner was there to help you,' she said.

Legacy trips and events such as the children's camp provided opportunity for some well earned respite and connection to other families in similar circumstances. "I think that it is a credit to Legacy as Tom (now eight) has had positive experiences with other events thus feeling quite comfortable in attending the trips. With the Legacy trip he has company, I have company and there are plenty of activities to keep one busy.

"I do enjoy the opportunity to reconnect with the legatees and over a few days have good and interesting conversations. The good thing about being in Legacy is its uniqueness to our situation and the understanding," she said.

After several years, Cherise found herself questioning what she wanted from the rest of her life, and while she was readily surrounded by family and friends, the feeling of personal tenderness was missing. She was fortunate enough to meet Norm and re-partner, prompting a letter to Legacy acknowledging that she was interested in becoming a Friend of Legacy (FoL).

FoL was formed in recent years to facilitate the continued connection with Legacy with former legatees and other people such as the parents of police officers who have died whilst that police officer was not in a relationship. FoL aims to encourage friendships, support and links to Victoria Police of people who have suffered the loss of a loved one in the police family.

"I have been in Legacy for nearly 11 years now and have had amazing support which I have truly needed at times which has lifted my spirits and always appreciated. Most support disappears within the first one to two years post the death. Even friends carry on as if nothing has really happened. Friends see you getting on, and on face value getting back to your old self with laughs and smiles so they think your pain has gone," explained Cherise.

"For me I would say you never get over it, you just learn to live with it. I am now in a new relationship and although this has brought happiness to my life, my new partner is not the father of my children and life will never be as I knew it."

"You move on and make the most of your life. I don't sit around miserable but what has happened is never far from my mind. In a new relationship you keep lots of thoughts about your past life to yourself. Legacy is a place to vent your true emotions and know you have understanding. Being able to talk to legatees and their journey and some who have moved on as well is supportive and positive. It normalises your worries and concerns."

Cherise explained that her experiences at Legacy were cherished over 11 years of changing circumstances. "Legacy has supported me in my saddest grieving times when I really needed a lift in spirits and during these occasions been able to talk to others in similar circumstances."

Supporters

This month VPL would like to thank Victoria Police and the annual Christmas Card fundraising effort, Police Federation Australia, the Police Credit Co-op and RACV for their support of our organisation.



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