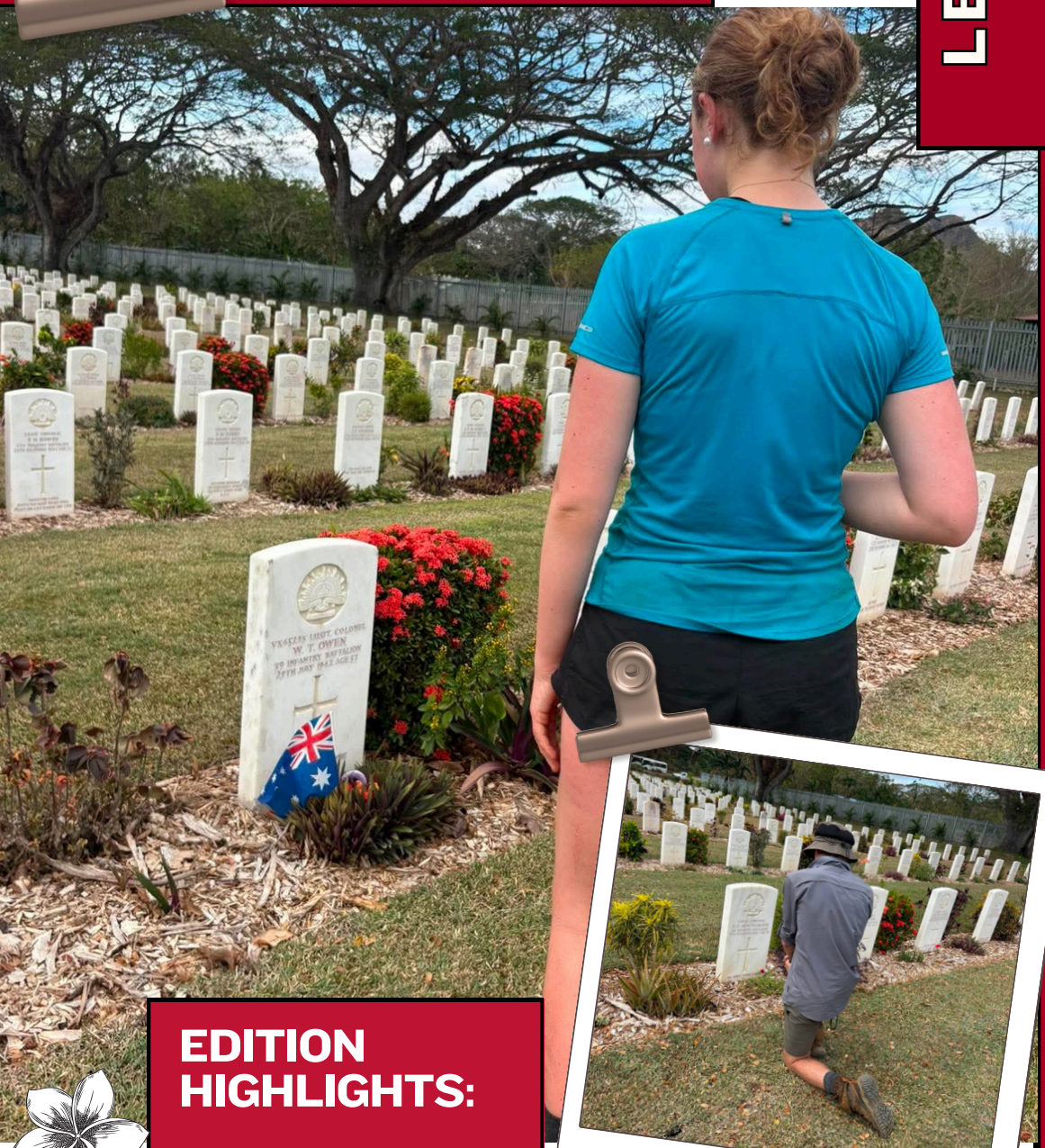
# EDITION 16
# OCT 2026

LEONGATHA RSL

# NEWSLETTER





## EDITION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Remembrance Day
- Staff profile - Andrea Koolen
- Kokoda Trek
- Tree of Hope
- Ladies Day
- New Years Eve
- Live Music
- Halloween
- Xmas parties


hello@leongatha-rsl.com.au

www.leongatha-rsl.com.au


FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS TO KEEP UP TO DATE WITH ALL OF OUR NEWS AND EVENTS

# KOKODA TREK

Local Year 11 students Rose Bowler and Bede Challis, our inaugural recipients of the Leongatha RSL Kokoda Trek Scholarship, undertook a challenging 132-kilometre trek from Kokoda to Owers' Corner during the June/July school holidays of this year. On return from their trek, Bede and Rose presented the Leongatha RSL with a large photo book that captured their experience as a thankyou for allowing them this once in a lifetime opportunity. They have also enjoyed sharing stories of their experience with many audiences over the past few weeks, including at our monthly veterans luncheon and at our Thursday night members night.

Rose, from Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College, and Bede, from Leongatha Secondary College, confessed to having doubts along the journey. Bede's uncertainty began as soon as he was selected for the trip, while Rose humorously considered the cost of a helicopter during the tough early days. Despite the physical and emotional challenges they faced, both students expressed their satisfaction with persevering through the experience.

Their journey offered rich rewards, exposing them to a vastly different way of life. They witnessed the joy of locals who, despite possessing few material goods or educational opportunities, had a deep passion for rugby league. They also learned about the hardships faced by soldiers on the Kokoda Trail, forming bonds with other students from various regional areas of Victoria. Each participant was assigned a soldier who lost their life during service and was buried at Bomana War Cemetery, which they visited to pay their respects.

- Rose's Soldier - William (Bill) Owen, originally from Leongatha and Moonee Ponds, was promoted to lieutenant colonel and served as commander of the 39th Battalion. He was killed at age 37 and was the first Australian to receive a posthumous American Distinguished Service Cross.
- Bede's Soldier - Ernest Aeschlimann, a farmer from Korumburra, enlisted at age 27 and served as a corporal in the 39th Battalion. He was killed in action in December 1942 in the Gona/Haddy's Village area at the age of 29.

While acknowledging the support they received from porters, cooks, and others during the trek, Bede and Rose recognised that their experiences, unlike those of the soldiers, did not involve direct combat. Their ability to confront the physical and emotional challenges—ranging from steep terrain to high altitudes—has equipped them to face future obstacles with confidence.
Bede reflected on the personal growth he experienced, stating, "It's definitely benefited me as a person," feeling more empathetic as a result. Rose shared, "Having done something that's so hard, it's like, okay I can do hard things," when discussing the newfound confidence she gained from this journey.
In contrast to his initial doubts, Bede expressed a desire to pursue more opportunities, noting his similarity in age to many soldiers who perished on the Kokoda Trail, which inspires him to seize the moment.

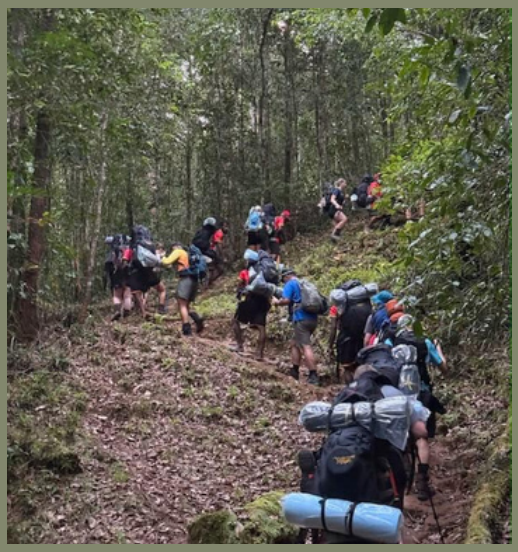
Bede and Rose had varying approaches to preparing for the journey; Rose focused on hilly terrain and used a stair climber machine, while Bede was limited in his preparation due to appendix surgery in April before their trip in June and July. Rose noted, "I've never seen a hill in Australia like the Kokoda Trail," suggesting that next year's chosen pair, regardless of their preparations, will face unexpected challenges once they arrive.

The information evening for next years trek was well attended by interested students and the application process is currently underway, with the successful applicants being decided in the coming weeks.












THEIR NAME LIVETH
FOR EVERMORE














KOKODA TRAIL





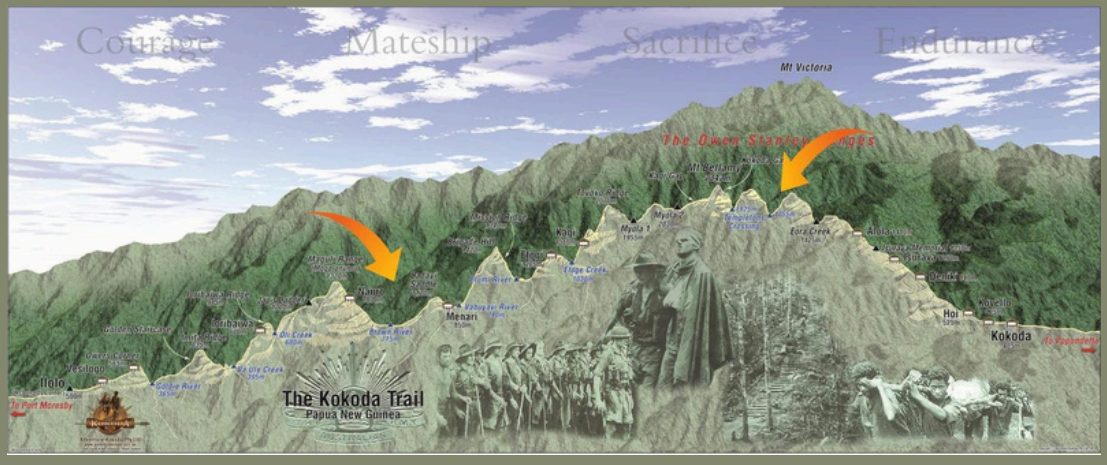













Well done
Bede and Rose!
We are extremely
proud of you both.

SPOOKTACULAR

# HALLOWEEN

## FRIDAY OCT 30TH

DRESS UP IN YOUR FINEST HALLOWEEN ATTIRE

# Join Us!

## SPOOKTACULAR PRIZES TO BE AWARDED!

- Spookiest costume competition
- Colouring competition for a range of ages
- Meat raffles, joker poker and members draws as per regular Friday nights.
- Kids 12 & under eat free with a paying adult - t's and c's apply

*We're going all out for Halloween this year on Friday October 30th! Staff will be dressed up in their spookiest outfits and prizes will be awarded to our colouring competition winners and best dressed on the night! Winners announced at approximately 8pm! Be sure to book a table to avoid disappointment!*

## MELBOURNE CUP DAY - NOV 3




## WE'RE OPEN

**Regular hours in our entire venue. Lets us feed you and provide you with cold or hot drinks!**

**Racing will be on the big screen! Book a table - 56622747 www.leongatha-rsl.com.au**

# TRIVIA

*We have 2 more monthly trivia nights for the year - Wednesday November 11th and Wednesday December 9th, 2026. Monthly trivia will resume on February 10th, 2027.*

*Our final Bingo for the year will be on December 22nd, and we will resume after a short break early in 2027 - date to be confirmed.*

BINGO!

# LADIES Day

is fast approaching!
Have you bought your tickets?








Purchase tickets by scanning the qr code or heading to www.trybooking.com/DQEUJ

*Remembrance Day*

# Call for Volunteers

**Remembrance Day is approaching, and we're reaching out for support to sell merchandise in our community.**

**If you can dedicate just 2 hours of your time, please call 56622747 or visit the RSL to choose an available time slots.**

**All proceeds from the sale of merchandise directly benefits our Welfare Program supporting local Veterans and their families.**

**October 28th - November 10th**
**2 hour timeslots**

**Leongatha IGA and Leongatha Newsagency**

It's not to late to volunteer to sell merchandise leading up to Remembrance Day. If you can help please get in touch.



# REMEMBRANCE Day 2026

Remembrance Day is one of the most important days on our commemorative calendar. It's a day when we acknowledge those who died or suffered while serving in wars, conflicts and peace operations. Remembrance Day is held on the 11th of November each year and marks the anniversary of the Armistice of 1918 that ended fighting in World War I. The war didn't officially end until 28 June 1919 with the Treaty of Versailles.

Remembrance Day is a time to honour all personnel who died or have suffered in the service of Australia.

Please join us at the Leongatha Cenotaph on Remembrance Day, November 11, 2026.

PLEASE JOIN US TO COMMEMORATE

# REMEMBRANCE Day

## 11 NOVEMBER 2026

Order or Service

- 10:45am - Congregate at the Cenotaph in Leongatha
- 10:50am - Welcome and commemorative address
- 10:55am - Wreath Laying
- 10:59am - The Last Post
- 11:00am - A minutes silence
- 11:01am - The Rouse

Please join us for light refreshments at the Leongatha RSL at the conclusion of our service.

*Lest We Forget*

# FAB FRIDAY

COMMUNITY RAFFLES

## Want your club to HOST?

Email Kate - kate.gourlay@leongatha-rsl.com.au

NEXT UP













# Follow us

on our socials - its the best way to keep informed!

www.facebook.com/leongatha.rsl

www.instagram.com/leongatha.rsl






# $70,000

## We've poured a whopping $70,000 back into our community through our spectacularly fabulous FAB Fridays!




Thanks to your support, we've been able to invest over $70,000 back into our local community groups and sports clubs through our FAB Friday initiative over the past 2 years. With more than 40 different groups or clubs hosting a FAB Friday night at least once, this initiative has created a significant positive impact on our local community.

If you ask any group or club that has hosted a FAB Friday, they will tell you how easy it was to earn funds. Our team takes care of all the hard work, allowing community groups to simply reach out to their networks to bring in as many supporters as possible on their designated night for the best chance to raise money.

Groups get to enjoy a fun night out with family and friends, win exciting prizes, and raise funds for their cause! Places are filling for next year so get in touch quickly to secure your date!




**Next goal $100K**

kate.gourlay@leongatha-rsl.com.au




# Save the Date

*and book early to avoid missing out!*



Have you been thinking about hosting a X'mas gathering for your workplace, community group or family?

We have a range of options to suit your budget and menu.

Dates are starting to fill quickly so please get in touch with our event co-ordinator Michelle, to secure your place now.

Email - events@leongatha-rsl.com.au

LEONGATHA RSL

# LIVE & ACOUSTIC

SAT 7TH & 21ST NOVEMBER 7PM



WITH LOCAL DUO

# YAS & CHAD

LIVE IN OUR MAIN BAR

BOOK A TABLE 56622747

FREE ENTRY




Come and enjoy some free acoustic music from local talent! Listen while you enjoy dinner in our bistro, or book a bar table to be right near the action.





## STAFF X'MAS

Our staff will be enjoying a well earnt X'mas party on Sunday November 29th.
Our venue will be open regular hours from 11am-10pm however ONLY LUNCH will be offered in our bistro NO DINNER SERVICE.
We apologize for any inconvenience but we are sure you will understand!

HO HO HO



Leongatha RSL & Leongatha Salvation Army

# Tree of Hope

The Leongatha RSL is honoured to collaborate again with the Leongatha Salvation Army to host our annual **Tree of Hope.**

Donations can be placed under our tree until **November 29th**, after which the collected gifts and food will be distributed within our local community.

**www.leongatha-rsl.com.au | www.salvationarmy.org.au**




After such a hugely successful initiative last year we're hoping to brighten even more local families lives again this Christmas.
Please bring non-perishable food items, that are still in date, and/or unwrapped gift items to the Leongatha RSL by November 29th for distribution amongst local families before Christmas. Your donations will be greatly appreciated by less fortunate local families and we couldn't be more thankful.



## A quick word from The Boss

As I am sure you are all aware, our General Manager, Greg Nugent has moved on from the venue and we wish him all the best with his future endeavours. Greg really changed the face of the RSL, all for the better, and we look forward to continuing the growth of the venue into the future.
The new General Manager will be starting in mid January, and in the interim I have stepped into the role of Acting Manager until he starts.
I would like to thank all of our staff for assisting me stepping into this role, I really do have a fantastic team around me, and they have all really stepped up to ensure the transition has been very smooth. I honestly do think, the long serving staff (and there are a couple over 30 years) are a real asset to our business and their loyalty is extremely valuable.
We have really increased our patronage in the bistro over the past few months, and coming into the busier part of the year, I would strongly encourage you to make bookings if you are dining with us. This also goes for any businesses who are looking at holding your end of year Christmas functions here, please get in touch with our Event Manager, Michelle for any enquiries.
Over the coming months, our ramp (which has been delayed by regulations) for the Michael Place entrance will be constructed, so entry to the venue while works are completed will be via Smith Street. We apologise for any inconvenience, but this ramp really is a necessity and is well overdue.
With the fabulous festive season almost upon us, I look forward to seeing many of you in the venue over the coming months.
Kind regards,
Ricky McNaughton
Acting General Manager





JOIN US FOR A

# NEW YEAR'S EVE *Celebration*

## AARON CAITLIN MUSIC

An acoustic cover performer who showcases a wide range of genres, including classic 60s rock, contemporary rock and pop, along with a touch of country mixed in for good measure.

**SONGS**
Copperhead Road, Have you ever seen the rain, Bad Moon Rising, Sweet Home Alabama, What I like about you, Lightning Crashes, Summer of 69 and more!

**MAKE A NIGHT OF IT**
Enjoy a delicious dinner in our bistro beforehand - open from 5:30 PM.
Call 56622747 to reserve a table for dinner.

COST = **FREE!** TIME = **8PM**

## DECEMBER 31, 2026 | THE LEONGATHA RSL

**IMPORTANT EVENT INFORMATION**
Since this is a free event, there's no tickets to purchase!
However, to help us prepare effectively, please inform us if you plan to attend and whether you will be dining beforehand.
Call us on 56622747 or chat with our friendly team.

# STAFF profile



## Andrea Koolen

Office Manager

Say hello to Andrea, the numbers wizard who keeps the lights on at the venue! Juggling a full-time gig at the RSL for 11 years, she also wrangles a bustling property, two grown-up kiddos, and a zoo of furry friends.

Her menu must-have?
Potato Croquettes! 🥔

Sipping pleasure?
Coke No Sugar and the occasional cheeky prosecco. 🍷

Job's cherry on top?
Hanging out with my awesome colleagues. 😏

Andrea's secret talent?
She is the undisputed champ of chugging a beer in record time. 🍺

Spare time escapades?
Tending to the farm and hitting the road in the caravan to explore the Aussie outback. 🚐

The team's verdict:
Friendly, knowledgable, the best customer service voice, helpful, motherly, supportive & organised.




To go into the draw to win a Brand New Car simply renew your membership between Nov 1st and Dec 20th. If you have paid for a 3 year membership you will automatically be entered. Have a friend who's been wanting to join? This is the time to do it! If you are due for renewal you will get a renewal notice by post or email (keep an eye on your junk folder) letting you know you are due.

♪ Beep.. Beep.. ♫ 

## VALE

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing* of the following members:

Service - Malcolm Grant

Affiliate - Brae Timmins
Affiliate - Graham Challis

Social - Fay Turner
Social - Margaret Boag
Social - Cynthia Ellul

*passed since June, 2026 and the printing of this newsletter.