

MATES4MATES

Here for those
impacted by service.

Annual Report

2023



 mates4mates.org



Get in touch.

Find out more about Mates4Mates by phoning us, visiting our website or one of our centres.

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Actively changing lives.

| About Mates4Mates.

Established in 2013 by RSL Queensland, Mates4Mates is one of Australia's leading veteran charities actively changing the lives of current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, and their families, impacted by service.

Providing a way forward for those experiencing physical injuries, mental health impacts and social disconnection, Mates4Mates offers mental health and physical rehabilitation services, skills and wellbeing programs, and social connection activities.

Our services can be accessed through centres in North Queensland, South East Queensland, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. Mates4Mates also provides services in outreach locations around Australia and online.

Support looks different for everyone, which is why we are committed to providing face-to-face and online services to veterans and their families to ensure they can access a pathway to recovery and move forward from service-related injuries.

Our Purpose

To make life better for the ADF community affected by injury and trauma.

Our Vision

An Australia where all members of the ADF community are supported physically, psychologically and socially.

Our Values



Integrity

We are always true to our purpose and treat everyone with openness and honesty.



Compassion

We provide a welcoming space for all; you will find empathy, understanding, care and respect.



Innovation

We are problem solvers, innovating and adapting to ensure we provide holistic services that enhance lives.



Collaboration

We foster a collaborative culture and work collectively as a team with Mates, stakeholders and partners to deliver positive outcomes.

Continued growth in 2023.

A joint message from Mates4Mates Board Chair, Stephen Day and Mates4Mates Chief Executive Officer, Emma Whitehead.



Stephen Day.

Mates4Mates
Board Chair.



Emma Whitehead.

Mates4Mates
Chief Executive Officer.

In reviewing our impact in 2023, Mates4Mates remained steadfast in our commitment to deliver services that meet the evolving needs of veterans and their families seeking support and connection.

Throughout the year, Mates4Mates created safe environments where veterans and their families could come together, share experiences, and connect with like-minded individuals who understand their journey.

In 2023 we saw significant growth, with our client contacts increasing by over 40%, totalling over 38,300 occasions of service across social connection activities, mental health and physical rehabilitation services, and Skills for Recovery programs. This translates to over 3,900 individual clients. We also established new sites in Ipswich and Stafford (South East Queensland) and Stuart Park (Northern Territory), in collaboration with RSL Queensland.

Mates4Mates and RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres prioritise the care of veterans and their family members. By co-locating Mates4Mates and RSL Queensland services alongside other ex-service and community organisations, we enhance accessibility and collaboration for the health and wellbeing of the Defence community.

While our overall growth in clients and services expanded in 2023, notable growth occurred in regions outside of Queensland, particularly in the Northern Territory and Tasmania. Additionally, there was an increase in veterans and family members accessing mental health (31.5% increase) and physical rehabilitation (32.4% increase) services, both in our centres and through telehealth.



As a member of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide stakeholder reference group, Mates4Mates is committed to continuous quality improvement, and is proactively implementing improvements aimed at delivering better outcomes for veterans and their families. Our commitment to expanding services and locations is integral to providing more comprehensive support to a growing number of clients.

Internally, our commitment to best practice led to the establishment of a Service and Clinical Governance Committee, reporting to the Board. This commitment ensures evidence-informed and led approaches to provide veterans and their families with the highest quality of care.

A pivotal focus in 2023 was recognising the importance of directly consulting with the veterans and families we serve to inform service delivery. Seeking advice from these cohorts enhanced our understanding of their lived experiences and needs, informing future projects.

Lastly, Mates4Mates celebrated a significant milestone – our 10th anniversary. Since our inception by RSL Queensland in 2013, we have supported over 11,000 individuals through our services. Our devoted and passionate staff demonstrate unwavering dedication to serving the Defence and veteran community. We take pride in our achievements and look forward to the continued positive impact on those in need of our services.

As we forge ahead, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all the supporters, partners, and staff who have played instrumental roles in supporting those impacted by service. The accomplishments of 2023 reinforce our confidence that the future of Mates4Mates will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients.

Stephen & Emma



Our services in 2023.

| **Mental Health & Wellbeing.**

Providing evidence-based individual and group therapy, our mental health services are proven to make a real difference to our clients. Our highly skilled team of psychologists, counsellors and social workers are here to help with challenges such as PTSD and trauma, grief, depression and anxiety, transition adjustment, addiction, and parenting and family issues.

Mates4Mates psychologists, counsellors and social workers are available to see clients both in centre and online via telehealth through video call or telephone.

| **Physical Rehabilitation & Wellbeing.**

Targeting all aspects of health and wellbeing, our team of exercise physiologists are here to support veterans and family members through a range of services. Offered both in one-on-one appointments and in group class settings, effective treatments include physical rehabilitation, hydrotherapy, health education, and more.

Mates4Mates exercise physiologists are available to see clients both in centre and online via telehealth through video call or telephone.



Joining Mates4Mates has brought me this renewed sense of camaraderie that I missed from my time in service, and I am thankful for that. ”

John*, veteran, North QLD.



Social Connection.

Knowing the power of social connection and community, we create regular opportunities for mateship and peer-support in each of our locations through social, recreational, and family activities. Social connection is also offered in outreach areas as well as online.

By participating in a wonderful range of social connection activities, veterans and family members had the opportunity to take part in exciting new experiences that helped them to break social barriers, face their fears, and learn new skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Skills for Recovery.

Our Skills for Recovery programs are offered in person and online and are designed to provide veterans and their families with opportunities to develop new skills and learn techniques to help them manage their health and wellbeing now, and into the future.

In 2023, we offered programs focused on sleep health, managing persistent and chronic pain, mindfulness, and One-Day or Four-Day Wellness workshops that focused on self-managing PTSD, relationships and communication, and the transition into civilian life.



“

**From that very first meeting,
I knew Mates4Mates was the
group I needed in my life.”**

Mike*, veteran, TAS.

“

**I have found connecting with
Mates4Mates has helped me and other
veterans find normality, routine, and
social connections in a non-judgemental
and sober environment.”**

Paul*, veteran, SEQ.

OUR IMPACT IN 2023.

Helping veterans and their families find a way forward.

In 2023, Mates4Mates supported over **3,900** veterans and family members across Australia. This was a 31.1% increase from the previous year.

With over **38,300** occasions of services provided, a 40.6% increase from 2022, this included:



6,800+ occasions of **physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services.**



4,400+ occasions of **mental health and wellbeing services.**



3,100+ occasions of **Mates4Mates Skills for Recovery programs.**



23,900+ occasions of **social connection.**

Client Feedback

In 2023, feedback collected by our clients indicated that **95.8%** were 'very happy' or 'happy' with the services they received at Mates4Mates.

Mates4Mates also conducted a range of surveys in 2023 to ensure our services and programs are meeting the needs of Mates, family members and the wider Defence community. Over **670 responses** were received across six surveys.

95.8%

Recognising significant milestones.

10 years of Mates4Mates.

Established by RSL Queensland in 2013, Mates4Mates was set up as an initiative to support injured current and former Defence Force personnel and their families, particularly after the withdrawal of Australian troops from Afghanistan in the same year.

Over these past 10 years, Mates4Mates has expanded our services, shifting our focus to a holistic approach to ensure that an individual's physical, mental and social health is supported. With the introduction of mental health and physical rehabilitation services to complement the power of social connection and community, Mates4Mates has spent the last decade building a safe and welcoming environment for veterans and family members across our locations in Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

In 2023, Mates4Mates celebrated its 10th anniversary and the over 11,000 veterans and their families who have directly benefit from our services during this time. Celebrations were shared with staff in each region alongside the veterans and families they've helped to support.

As we look to the future of what support veterans require from ex-service organisations, Mates4Mates remains dedicated to actively changing the lives of current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, and their families, impacted by service.



Our pathway to reconciliation.

In 2023, we launched our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

As one of the first organisations in our sector to establish and begin to implement a RAP, Mates4Mates did so to ensure that our services, operations and workplace is reflective and representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

Through our Reflect RAP, Mates4Mates is committed to:

- Ensuring all staff undergo cultural competence training
- Implementing an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings and events
- Celebrating National Reconciliation Week
- Displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in all centres
- Developing and embedding inclusive policies within Mates4Mates.

As part of our Reflect RAP, we established a RAP Working Group, which includes a Reflect RAP Lead, members of our staff from across the country, and endorsement and support from our executive leadership team.

While we acknowledge that reconciliation is an ongoing journey, we look forward to working directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Reconciliation Australia, our staff and clients, and the wider Defence community to implement the actions outlined in our Reflect RAP.

To access the Mates4Mates Reflect RAP, please visit mates4mates.org.



“Mates4Mates has given me the ability to take control of my health and has had a positive impact on my relationship with my family and my kids and improved my social life.”

Daniel*, veteran, SEQ.

Identifying the social needs of the community.

Social connection is a key priority for Mates4Mates in supporting veterans and their families transition from the Defence Force and recover from the impacts of service. To guide the development of Mates4Mates social connection stream of programs, a Needs Assessment of Australian female veterans and veterans' families was commissioned in 2023 with a focus on social needs.

Written by consultant clinical psychologist, Dr Carolyn Deans, the 'Australian Veterans' Families: Social Needs Assessment' and 'Australian Women Veterans: Social Needs Assessment' reports provide an evidence-informed understanding of these client cohorts.

This project provided Mates4Mates with a unique understanding of the needs of Australian veterans' families and female veterans in the social sphere. While the reports and subsequent surveys are not classified as research, their data will allow Mates4Mates to identify any gaps in the wellbeing-needs of women veterans and veterans' families and improve future services accordingly.

To access these reports, please visit mates4mates.org.



“Mates4Mates has given me a bit of my life back. The access to social connection has given me a reason to get out of bed some mornings and has completely changed how isolated I was.”

Celia*, veteran, NQ.

Around the regions in 2023.

With centres in Brisbane, Ipswich, Townsville, Cairns, Hobart, Darwin, and Sunshine Coast in 2024, Mates4Mates aims to be accessible to all veterans and families around the country, providing a safe environment for mateship, recovery and peer-support.



South East Queensland highlights.

Mates4Mates South East Queensland grew to new heights in 2023, with new locations, new veterans, and new staff joining us across the region.

Mates4Mates Brisbane said goodbye to the Milton centre and moved into our new location at the RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Stafford. The change brought along community growth and the team saw more veterans taking part in activities to help improve their health and wellbeing.

This included fresh faces joining the team to take part in Bridge to Brisbane 2023, as well as a huge turnout at the Mates4Mates Christmas Carnival, with over 100 veterans and family members in attendance.

In Ipswich, the Mates4Mates team moved into their very own centre with a dedicated space to provide both social connection activities and clinical services. As a result, the Ipswich team welcomed two new liaison officers and an exercise physiologist to the centre. Located in an easily accessible part of town, the new space also brought a boost in veterans accessing our services with intake of new clients reaching the hundreds for 2023.



North Queensland highlights.

Throughout North Queensland, Mates4Mates continued to support the Defence and veteran community through our centres in Townsville and Cairns, while also providing support in outreach locations.

The Mates4Mates community in Cairns continued to grow in 2023, with more activities and more engagement than ever before. Our popular Aqua Fit classes continued to rise in attendance, with a four-week Pilates trial proving to be successful and turning into a regular activity in high demand.

The Cairns team were especially proud of the local veterans for their willingness to step out of their comfort zone and engage with civilian opportunities following a tour of the Cairns Museum. With the support of the Mates4Mates staff, a number of veterans have now chosen to begin volunteering with the museum which in turn benefits their physical, mental and social health.

Our Townsville team continued to provide opportunities for mateship and education through a wide range of social connection activities. This included a beekeeping workshop which allowed veterans and family members to pick up a new hobby while connecting with one another.



Mates4Mates has changed my life immensely. It has provided me with purpose and the opportunity to connect with other people.

Chris*, veteran, NT.



Tasmania highlights.

In Tasmania, the team made new connections within the community and welcomed over 150 new veterans and family members to Mates4Mates.

The Tasmanian team brought back some crowd favourite activities in 2023, returning to Dove Lake, the Nut, and Tahune for some fun days at these iconic spots. Veterans and families also headed to the Central Highlands area to participate in a Four-Day Wellness Program to help improve their quality of life.

Bringing forward new ideas for community involvement, staff also collaborated with Reclink to trial a new swim stroke correction class that received positive feedback from all participants.

Northern Territory highlights.

May 2023 saw veteran support services in the Top End receive a significant boost with the official opening of the Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Stuart Park. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Matt Keogh was in attendance to officially open the centre.

An opening event was also held for veterans and family members to get to know the new space which was highly successful with 135 veterans coming along to see the centre.

Throughout the year, veteran engagement remained high, with a wide range of opportunities provided for the community to come together and find mateship and support. This included the Easter BBQ which saw over 100 veterans and their families join the Mates4Mates team for social connection.





More veterans supported in 2023.

| Grants.

In 2023, Mates4Mates received grants from a wide range of organisations to support projects and programs. This funding was instrumental to the delivery of our services, helping us purchase equipment, facilitate more activities and ultimately support more veterans and their families.

The following grants were received in 2023:

- Brisbane Lord Mayor's Christmas Trust
- DVA Veterans' Health Week grant – North Queensland
- DVA Veterans' Health Week grant – Northern Territory
- DVA Veterans' Health Week grant – Southeast Queensland
- DVA Veterans' Health Week grant – Tasmania
- DVA Veterans' Health Week grant – Online
- Queensland Veterans' Council ANZAC Trust Fund – Christmas Grant Round
- Department of Veterans' Affairs – Veteran and Wellbeing Grant
- Google Ads grant



Partnerships.

Mates4Mates partnerships came to life in 2023, with many organisations supporting our initiative to connect with Defence communities across Australia.

For Remembrance Day 2023, Mates4Mates partnered with Amazon and wear blue for the 'Allied Forces: run to remember' event in Darwin to remember and honour the services of current and ex-serving Defence Force members. The event started with a 'Circle of Remembrance' before the gathered group started a 5km run, finishing the day off with breakfast, coffee, and a recovery zone including ice baths once everyone had finished.

As a result, Mates4Mates had incredible engagement from the Defence community in the Northern Territory, with many current-serving personnel taking part, including a large number of US Marines who were based in Darwin.

In 2023, Mates4Mates also partnered with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) to collaborate on several initiatives to benefit the veteran community.

ACU was the first Australian university to establish a dedicated Veteran Entry Program (VEP) that enables current and former members of the ADF to be granted a selection rank for entry to university based on their military training achievements. Alongside their Student Veteran Support Program and Leadership Centre in Townsville, ACU offers dedicated support services and academic resources to help veterans ease into university life.

Partnerships like these allows Mates4Mates to meet the ever-increasing need for more services within the veteran community.



Fundraiser Spotlight.

It was another big year for Mates4Mates fundraising in 2023, with the return of annual events as well as new community initiatives to support veteran services.

Mates4Mates returned to Bridge to Brisbane as a proud tier one charity partner, and the support flowed in from veterans, supporters, and corporate sponsors.

Veteran James Fox and his partner Erin participated in Bridge to Brisbane with their young son, raising money for Mates4Mates.

"For James and I, Mates4Mates has had a great impact on our lives. It's such a welcoming place and it's good to know that Mates4Mates will always be there for people like us," Ms Fox said.

A team of representatives from Rohde & Schwarz, including veterans who work at the organisation, also took part in the event, raising an impressive \$2,100 on behalf of Mates4Mates.

In total, over \$15,000 was raised for veterans and their families who have been impacted by service as Mates4Mates supporters walked, ran and wheeled to the finish line.

The residents at Inverpine Retirement were kept busy throughout the year collecting recyclable items to in turn raise over \$3,000 in profits which they kindly donated to Mates4Mates to help support their fellow veterans.

Other fundraisers in 2023 included the Burleigh Bears Rugby League Football Club, who auctioned off special edition jerseys at their annual ANZAC Day match to raise an incredible \$1,328. As well as the Virgina Golf Club, who raised \$3,500 for Mates4Mates at their Queensland Apparel Charity Golf Day.

Fundraisers like these, big or small, all play a critical role in Mates4Mates supporting those who have been impacted by service.



2023 Financial summary.

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Revenue	12,068,857	11,809,834
Less: Cost of Sales	(76,413)	(88,394)
Expenses		
Service Delivery	(3,518,470)	(3,238,099)
Overheads and Management Costs	(2,326,616)	(2,055,348)
Psychological Services	(2,786,377)	(2,439,482)
Property Outgoings	(1,448,194)	(1,210,328)
Marketing and Fundraising	(283,710)	(298,799)
Finance Costs	(103,229)	(32,014)
Total Expenses	(10,466,596)	(9,274,070)
Surplus		
Surplus/(deficit) before Income Tax Expense	1,525,848	2,447,369
Income Tax Expense	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) after Income Tax Expense for the year	1,525,848	2,447,370
Other Comprehensive Income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total Comprehensive Surplus/(deficit) for the year	1,525,848	2,447,370

Revenue from Ordinary Activities

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Sales Revenue		
Merchandise	20,622	11,856
Total Sales Revenue	20,622	11,856
Other Revenue		
Donations — RSL Queensland	10,200,000	7,200,003
Donations — Other	367,990	271,190
Grants	1,017,865	3,848,343
Other Revenue	462,380	478,442
Total Other Revenue	12,048,235	11,797,979
Total	12,068,857	11,809,834

Statement of Financial Position

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,254,756	1,998,529
Trade and Other Receivables	92,526	295,772
Other Current Assets	97,264	84,398
Total Current Assets	2,444,546	2,378,699
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	4,000,000	3,518,695
Right-of-Use Assets	808,407	171,940
Total Non-Current Assets	4,808,407	3,690,635
Total Assets	7,252,953	6,069,334
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	912,860	1,891,453
Non-Current Liabilities	681,373	45,009
Total Liabilities	1,594,233	1,936,462
Net Assets	5,658,720	4,132,872
Equity		
Retained Surpluses	5,658,720	4,132,872
Total Equity	5,658,720	4,132,872

Statement of Cash Flows

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Donations Received	10,567,990	7,471,193
Payments to Suppliers and Employees	(10,199,991)	(8,296,191)
Grants Received	341,165	3,918,146
Other Receipts	686,249	267,627
Interest Paid	(103,229)	(32,014)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	1,292,184	3,328,762
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities	(565,245)	(3,505,253)
Cash flows from/(used in) financing activities		
Payment of lease liabilities	(470,711)	(485,898)
Net cash from/(used in) financing activities	(470,711)	(485,899)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	256,228	(662,390)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	1,998,529	2,660,919
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	2,254,757	1,998,529

MATES4MATES

Here for those
impacted by service.

With mates behind
you, there's power
to move forward.

For information and support



1300 4 MATES



mates4mates.org

If you're looking for information
and support offered in your area,
call us on 1300 4 62837, or visit
your local centre.

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