



REPORT TO SPONSORS

TIMOR AWAKENING PROGRAM 23

22 APRIL TO 3 MAY 2023



On Top of Mt Ramelau – 3000 meters, and for us, on top of the world

Participant comments

“Being back in Timor gave me and many others the opportunity for closure and grounding. I’ve attended many DVA programs and counselling, but nothing has compared to this experience. This program has saved my life when I was in a very dark place.”

“I have completed several programs with different organisations, and while helpful, none gave me that awakening moment, which I’ve now received, to help me move forward.”

“This has been absolutely life changing for me. I was close to being suicidal, but now I know that I fit and I belong. I’m loved and I can make a difference in the world and I’m so very proud to be part of the history of Timor, and I will sponsor a child going forward”

“At the end of the program, I was able to share a painful experience from the past without fear of judgement or shame. It was fantastic. Thank you so much”



SECTION 1. OVERVIEW

Over the period Jan to Nov 2023, five Programs are to be delivered. TA 23 was our second this year. Each has the objective of “Raising the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families” and involves the widest range of educational inputs, reflective experiences, individual peer mentoring and culminate in the development of a Health and Wellbeing plan.

Many challenges continue to face those working in the veteran space, as we await results of The Royal Commission. Compassion fatigue is evident throughout those frontline carers in this space. We at VCA and other service organizations continue to deliver programs to the extent of our capacity and continue to be fully subscribed with needy applicants.



Participant comments

“The program has exceeded my expectations. I’ve like learnt a lot about myself and improve my mental health. I will be forever grateful.”

“The program addressed needs that I was unaware of even having. I have now been able to release a 12-year burden of grief and self-loathing to forgive myself.”

“The program was much more beyond what I expected. I have started to really address my current issues. The program was much more beyond what I expected. I have felt connected for the first time since leaving Defence. It’s made me feel a valued human and a proud veteran.”

“I felt completely understood, listened to and supported on the program. The group provided a safe place to share listen and grow.”

“By having my wife, join and participate in the program has strengthened us and this allowed us to share more with the better common understanding. I’m super grateful for the opportunity, thank you for including the Kiwis and incorporating their operations in the program.”



A summary of the latest program is as follows:

This program was delivered in Timor, starting with two days in Dili, including ANZAC celebrations and hosting by Australian Defence staff, six days in the Rural districts visiting schools and communities, and a final 3 days in Dili hosted by President Jose Ramos Horta, completing health and wellbeing education and visiting places of inspiration.

Four facilitators, five peer mentors and 18 new participants completed the full program. Three NZ Embassy staff, two current serving Australian Defence Cooperation staff, 5 Sabeh Timorese doctors and nurses, and numerous Timorese veterans participated in parts of the program. A combined group of about 50 joined for the climb of Mt Ramelau.

This program was unique in that it celebrated ANZAC day in Dili and involved seven Kiwi veterans now living in Australia as full participants on the program. The Spirit of ANZAC permeated the whole program, with Kiwis, Aussies and Timorese gaining new insights into our common bonds, "**My best and only truly ANZAC celebration of ANZAC day**", from one Kiwi living in Australia now. The program highlights of visiting our partnered activities at VETS School facilities and students, The Pro Ema School staff and students (Rehab and training centre for Victims of violence), and the accompaniment of the SABEH doctors and nurses, touched all our hearts as we realise our deepest healing comes from ministering to those most in need.

We honour the frontline Team of Program Director Mick Stone and Program manager Mick Lay, paramedic Matt, Padre Gary Stone, Peer Mentors Jodie, Nathan, Darryl, Pete and Jason who gave inspirational example to some previously struggling folks who are now into healing and growth. The prep work of Rowena, Candice and Col was excellent, and we are grateful for the additional management committee members of Katie, Jack, Michael and Lee for your governance inputs. We are mindful many still have follow-up work with participants and admin, let alone prep for TA24 and TA25 requiring attention.

The words of participants validate that we are on target in achieving our mission

"Being back in Timor gave me and many others the opportunity for closure and grounding. Ive attended many DVA programs and counselling, but nothing has compared to this experience. This program has saved my life, when I was in a very dark place."

"I have completed several programs with different organisations, and while helpful, none gave me that awakening moment, which I've now received, to help me move forward positively"

"Every day I would think that nothing could top this, and then the next day was even more amazing"

"The opportunity to share my story, and hear the stories of others, and the mentoring is the most support I have received in a very long time. The care and compassion of the facilitation team was the foundation of my growth here."

"I have gained much to take away with me and the program showed me how to open up and share my feelings - something I have struggled with my entire life. The tight friendships have been invaluable, and it is truly a unique thing you have created"



Participants greatly welcomed new insights into recovery from and prevention of moral injury, compassion fatigue, forgiveness, peer support, mentoring and the chance to deeply engage in “BIG TALK” with others experiencing similar situations. Surely many who work in the veteran space need these insights and mentoring into sustaining themselves amidst extraordinary demands on them now.

TA22: MEDIA GALLERY





“It’s far exceeded my expectations. I didn’t know what my needs were when I came, and now I have the identified them and have a path forward’.

“I felt guilty for a long time, not being able to cope. Now I understand what my condition was, and how I need to address it.”

“TA exceeded my expectations and more - how absolutely blessed I am to have participated in this forgiveness, gratitude and love. Oh my gosh, what an amazing team support for Veterans.”

“The bond of Timor, Australia and New Zealand is something special.. I’m so very proud to be a part of it. Every day provided new knowledge and experiences. What I love the most is that I discovered I now fit perfectly, like a piece in a puzzle.”

“This has been absolutely life changing for me. I was close to being suicidal, but now I know that I fit in.”





TIMOR AWAKENING 23 - REVIEW OF PARTICIPANT DATA

Prepared by Mrs. Candice Carroll, Client Support Officer and Mrs. Christina Hully, Psychologist.

There were 18 new participants on the program. Full data was collected from 17 participants, at two time points: Commencement of the program (22nd April 2023) and the conclusion of the program (3rd May 2023). TA23 was the 20th evaluated program which demonstrates the positive efficacy of the program. A high percentage of the participants showed significant improvements in their health and wellbeing in the areas of Personal Well-Being, Moral Injury, Depression, Stress and Anxiety. We would like to note that we have participants who were on this program and past programs who were not ex-serving but are partners or family members of participants who were veterans. The anecdotal comments at the beginning of the report reflect a fascinating diversity of positive outcomes, the program is seen to show a positive impact on the participants.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic data collected on 18 participants revealed the following. 13 participants identified as male and 5 as female. The average age of participants was 45 years ($M = 45$ years, $SD = 6$), 16 participants had a history of serving with the military services. 11 participants had served in the AS Army, one in the RAAF and five participants served in the New Zealand Army. Of those with military service 42% reported that they had been medically discharged. At the start of the program seven (35%) participants reported that they were retired, ten (57%) reported that they were employed and one (7%) reported to be unemployed.

HEALTH STATUS

MENTAL HEALTH

The participants of TA23 provided information about their current and previous treatment for mental health conditions. At the commencement of the program, 8 participants were taking medication for a psychiatric condition, and 8 participants were under the care of a psychiatrist. 8 participants were receiving psychological treatment.

TA23 PROGRAM EFFICACY

OUTCOMES

17 Participants completed standardized self-report assessments at Pre- and Post-program to aid an understanding of the symptoms of psychological distress and general

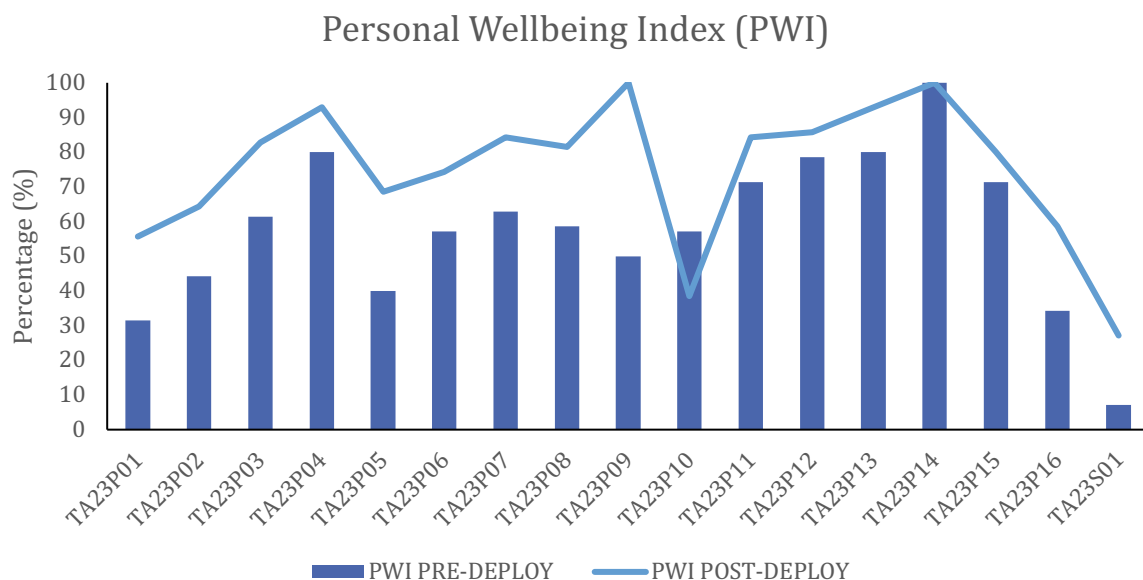


health and wellbeing of the participants undertaking the program to Timor on the TA23. These included the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale 21-Item Version (DASS21), and the Personal Wellbeing Inventory (PWI). De-identified Pre- and Post-program results on each assessment area are demonstrated below.

PERSONAL WELLBEING INVENTORY (PWI)

17 Participants completed the Personal Wellbeing Inventory (PWI) at Pre and Post – program herein referred to as Time 1 and Time 2, respectively. The PWI is a 7-item self-report scale designed to assess global satisfaction with life across the key domains of standard of living, health, achieving in life, relationships, safety, community-connectedness, and future security. Respondents rate how satisfied they are in each domain of life on a Likert scale from 0 (No satisfaction at all) to 10 (Completely satisfied). The scale includes optional items pertaining to satisfaction with spirituality or religion, and satisfaction with life. The scale has demonstrated sound psychometric properties and has been used cross-culturally (International Wellbeing Group, 2013; Lau et al, 2005; Misajon et al, 2016).

Scores on separate items can be interpreted as independent variable domains, or the seven items can be summed to yield an average score, with higher scores representing higher subjective wellbeing.



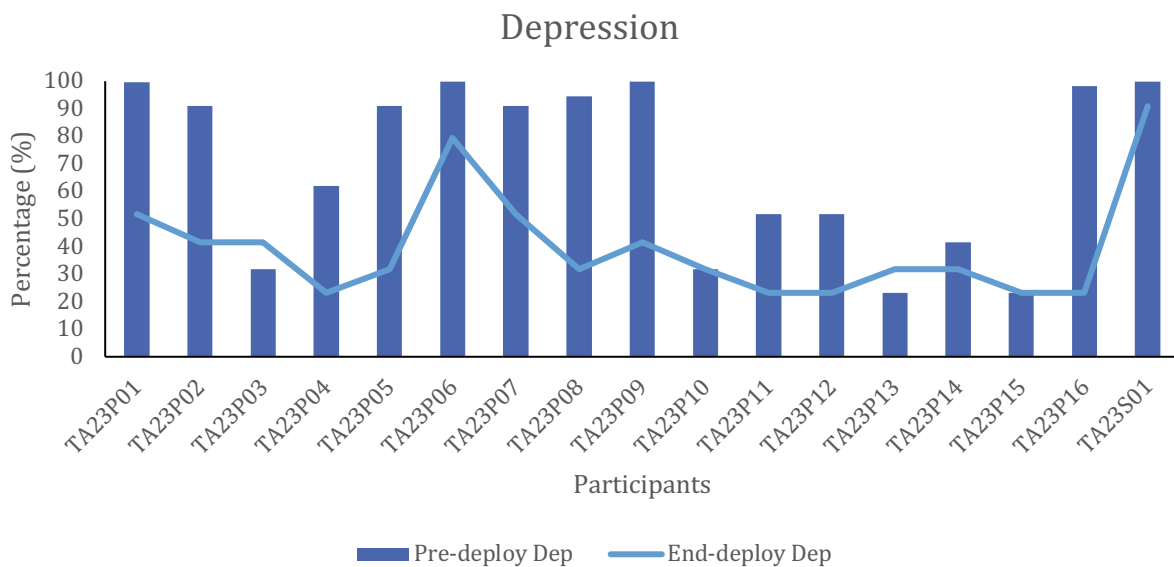
Each participant's de-identified results on subscales at Time 1 and Time 2 are shown in the following graphs. Start of the program the participants were experiencing lower scores on the Wellbeing Inventory. Post-program results indicated that participants experienced higher scores on the Wellbeing Inventory.



Further statistical analysis of the scores on the PWI was conducted to examine if the difference between Pre- and Post-program scores for the group were of clinical significance. Analysis was based on the 16 participants who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was a significant reduction in the group’s overall scores on the PWI from Time 1 ($M = 61.16, SD = 18.7$) to Time 2 ($M = 77.77, SD = 16.9$), $t = -4.56, p = 0.000$. Indicating that on this occasion there was a significant improvement in Personal Wellbeing Inventory within the group.

DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND STRESS

17 Participants completed the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale 21-Item Version (DASS-21) at Pre- and Post-program - herein referred to as Time 1 and Time 2, respectively. The DASS-21 is used to screen for mental health symptoms associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. It is used widely in clinical settings to guide mental health professionals and to evaluate interventions.



* Elevated Range > 78; Clinical Range > 95

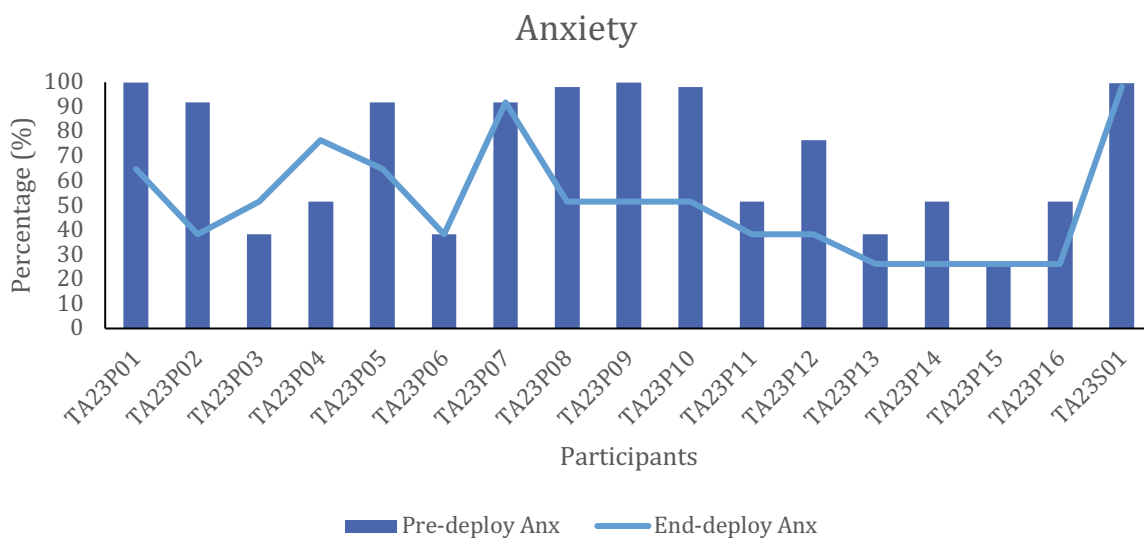
Graphic representation shows that several the participants experienced elevated symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress at pre-program. It is also evident that the majority of participants reported a decrease in some or all of these symptoms at the conclusion of the tour, bringing most within the normal to mild range when compares with the general population.

Each participant’s de-identified results on subscales at Time 1 and Time 2 are shown in the following graphs. Start of the program 5 participants were experiencing symptoms of



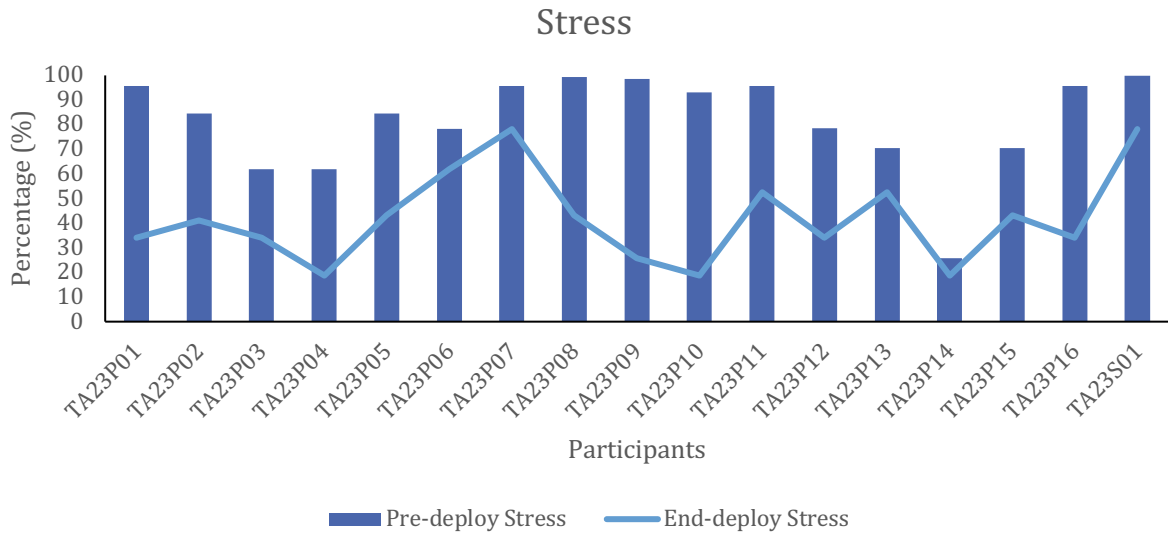
depression what are considered to be of clinical concern. Post-program results indicated that none of the participants remained in this range.

Further statistical analysis of the scores on the Depression subscale of the DASS-21 was conducted to examine if the difference between Pre- and Post-program scores for the group were of clinical significance. Analysis was based on the 17 participants who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was a significant reduction in the group's overall scores on the Depression subscale of the DASS-21 from Time 1 ($M = 69.51$, $SD = 30.71$) to Time 2 ($M = 39.61$, $SD = 19.64$), $t = 4.61$, $p = .000$. Indicating that on this occasion there was a clinically significant improvement (reduction) in the symptoms of depression within the group.



On the start of the program 5 participants were experiencing symptoms of anxiety that are considered to be within the clinical range. Post-program results indicated that 1 remained in this range.

Further statistical analysis of the scores on the Anxiety subscale of the DASS-21 was conducted to examine if the difference between Pre- and Post-program scores were of clinical significance. Analysis was based on the 16 participants and 1 staff member who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was not a statistically significant reduction in participants' overall scores on the Anxiety subscale of the DASS21 from Time 1 ($M = 70.31$, $SD = 27.40$) to Time 2 ($M = 50.61$, $SD = 22.39$), $t = 3.47$ $p = .003$, indicating that on this occasion there was a clinically significant improvement (reduction) in the symptoms of anxiety within the group.



Graphic representation shows that 7 of the participants experienced elevated symptoms of stress at pre-program. Post-program results indicated that none of the participants remained in this range.

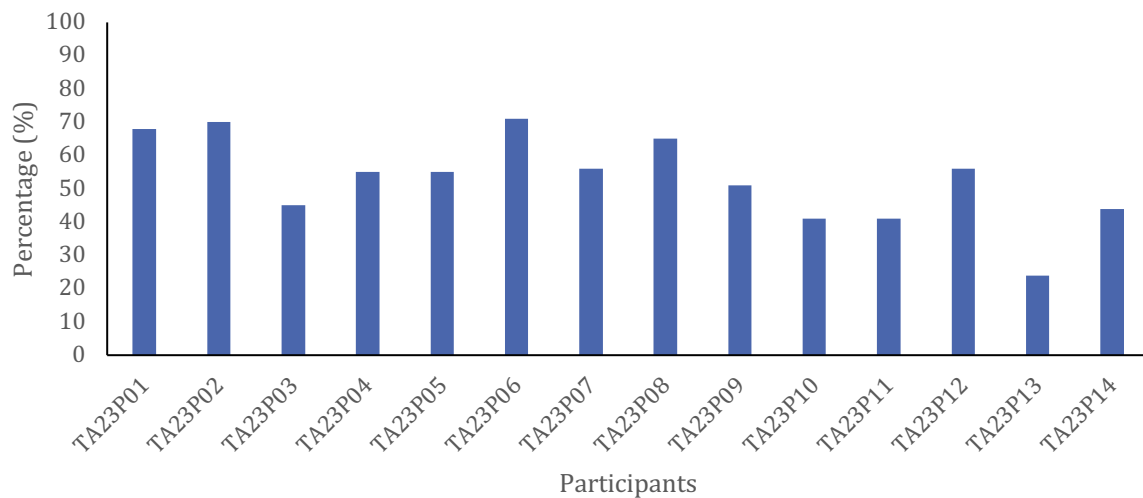
Further statistical analysis of the scores on the Stress subscale of the DASS21 was conducted to examine if the difference between Pre- and Post-program scores were of clinical significance. Analysis was based on the 16 participants who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was a significant reduction in participants’ overall scores on the Stress subscale of the DASS21 from Time 1 ($M = 81.81, SD = 19.44$) to Time 2 ($M = 41.87, SD = 18.36$), $t = 7.98, p = 5.66$, indicating that on this occasion there was not a clinically significant improvement (reduction) in the symptoms of stress within the group, but note there is some reduction.

MORAL INJURY

14 Participants completed the Moral Injury symptom Scale – Military (MISS-M) version short form. The MISS-M is a 17-item measure of moral injury (MI) designed to use in Veterans and Active serving military participants, consists of 10 theoretically grounded subscales that assess the psychological and spiritual/religious symptoms of Moral Injury: guilt, shame, betrayal, moral concerns, loss of meaning/purpose, difficulty forgiving, loss of trust, self-condemnation, spiritual/religious struggles, and loss of religious faith/hope.



Moral Injury



Considering the impact on Moral Injury on veterans is a developing area in the military psychology. According to Koenig (2017) there is opportunity for a negative psychological and spiritual impact on military personnel who in the course of work undertakes tasks that are a contravention of personal beliefs and values. As can be seen from the data all military members experienced between 8% and 89% degrees of Moral Injury. The current MISS-M does not cover all of the scope to evaluate pre and post responses as most of the questions are not comparative, whilst we attempt to remediate Moral Injury on the programs it is not possible to show this graphically at this stage. From our data above our participants have an average of 53% moral injury.

TA23: POST PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

POST PROGRAM PARTICIPANT CONTACT

At the time of preparing this report, all participants have had a follow up phone call, 2 weeks post Timor Awakening 23. Overall, we are shown the positive changes in DASS-21 and the PWI. Post TA 23 there was one participant who remained in the high level of anxiety. Although their post-program scoring in the DASS-21 are high, we are unable to pinpoint the exact reasoning for this. The participant was followed up with regards to this scoring who informed the coordinators that they had big awakening on the program. All participants have been offered ongoing support and a further follow-up will be undertaken to ensure that ongoing growth is maintained.



Timor Awakening Participant Evaluations

Reflections on the Program:

1) To what extent did you feel understood, listened to, and supported throughout your time in Timor-Leste?

- When I talk share and confident about everything I see in here. Everyone felt as family, trust and support each other. Embrace each other to move forward with a positive mindset.
- Very much so by both peer mentors and participants. Everyone was respectful and allowed each other to speak and then often followed up with nods, hugs, verbal affirmations etc. The bull was a great tool to control speaking when no one interrupted.
- I felt completely understood slash listen to and supported throughout the TA program push up the group provided a safe place to share, listen and grow from the experience.
- To full extent.
- Everyone was great (mentors and participants). As I don't have the same experiences, I still felt comfortable to share and felt supported the whole trip.
- The program was beyond what I expected I've never done a veteran program, and this has made me not want to isolate anymore.
- I felt completely understood, I was supported whilst on the program especially during your most vulnerable times.
- I was able to share my thoughts an enable feelings that I have not even told my psychologist or psychiatrist. The peer mentors in the group were overwhelming in support.
- To the full extent, birth by the mentors and the participants.
- Of the time. Every mental always made time to talk and listen and I felt supported through every minute of the program.
- Sharing my story, hearing the story of others in the facilitation a mentor was the most I have welcomed and received support in a very long time.
- The entire time I was with a team or awakening team, initially I brought with me a lot of anxiety and apprehension being a wait listed person along with long habits of things as an example. But one that I realised I wasn't going to be yelled at or reprimanded I soon felt more relaxed and let my guard down day by day.
- Quite well, interesting to catch up and talk with people with some of the same thoughts/emotions as myself which usually seems very rare.
- At all times TAP mentals in particular have been quite competent at ensuring all are seen and heard including myself.
- More than I ever have.
- 100% very trusted group, who were there for each other for stop support in so many ways from good logistics to emotional support.



2) Did the program meet your expectations and address your needs throughout your time in Timor-Leste? Please elaborate.

- Yes, I am extremely happy to be part of this program. I understand more about my husband and myself and I understand how important it is for everyone to get out from the darkness. As I believe in God, nothing is impossible when we want to be happy and make everyone happy too.
- Yes, I wanted to be able to crack my armor and start my healing journey. There isn't one specific thing that I can attribute but by the end of the program I was able to share a painful experience without fear of judgement or shame.
- Yes, the program exceeded my expectations I have completed several courses, (over related organisations) and whilst they were helpful none gave me that "awakening" moment which will help me move forward positively.
- Well above my expectations.
- This trip exceeded my expectations, I probably didn't expect to get much for my own mental health as I was here for my husband. But through the program I have learned a lot about myself and my own mental health I will be forever grateful.
- Exceeded, I felt safe and started to really address my current issues.
- The program went above and beyond of expectations. Being back in Timor Leste gave myself and many others the opportunity for closure and grounding.
- Yes, more so than I ever expected. It addresses needs I had and was unaware of even having, I was able to release a 12-year burden of grief and self-loathing to forgive myself.
- Yes, it did for stop it helped me identify areas I needed to improve on to help me move forward it gave me a new perspective on life.
- The program exceeded my expectations and addressed mine and everyone else's needs in terms of support through difficult and emotional times and experiences.
- I had no idea what to expect and felt the program may cause me anxiety will stop this was truly an awakening and each step a brand-new day.
- Honestly TA exceeded my expectations and more how absolutely blessed I am to be accepted onto a program like this. The admin and planning in country and from Australia is so meticulous and well planned. From the history, wisdom, timings, vehicles, meal prep, drivers, and locations. Wow it could have been a logistic nightmare, but it wasn't well done TA!
- Yes, I didn't have many expectations and it was open to experience the program I found it very positive. My needs with food, shelter, water, compassion we're all met.
- Yes, it is a jam-packed trip with lots of deep meaningful and impactful interaction over a relatively short period. Note: my needs are somewhat less than others being of volunteer support staff participant.
- It far exceeded my expectations; I didn't know what my needs were when I arrived and now, I have a path forward.
- Exceeded expectations it suddenly gets participants to challenge themselves and confront the demons will stop the activities and program were a wonderful compliment to the introspective discussions/reflections.



3) What was the most effective part of the program, in terms of education or inspiring your intention to change, and why?

- Education is the key for future changing is to get knowledge, skill. Humble - stay humble make everyone an equal and bring joy for those who see with their heart. Forgive yourself your past and move on with positive vibes.
- Hearing everyone else's stories especially the mentors as they had come through the other side for stop also keeping all the reflections focused on positive experiences and gratitude.
- Seeing how the Timorese people despite their suffering and situation have been able to forgive, move forward and be happy and live in the present has been the most effective part of the program for me.
- Round table (circle time) talks.
- sitting outside my own bubble and realising I'd like to reevaluate my life and find more purpose, figuring out my own mental health journey and taking these tools for a better life and have a fuller cup.
- The history I was very uneducated as too why we deployed to Timor. The support I don't feel so alone now.
- Most effective part of the program was hearing the Timorese stories and that appreciation of our service that we made a difference.
- Sense of purpose through seeing the faith in action, at the schools and how i can contribute. Learning to forgive, via relating the sites we visited in relating that to our own tours when in defence.
- Opening up with peers and mentors as we grew to know each other better.
- Circle time was fantastic to listen to other experiences with different topics and share my own thoughts in a very non-judgmental environment.
- The sharing of stories our own group stories, the veterans, and the stories of Timor Leste day. These stories made me want to listen to not just the stories here but also the stories of people back home. So powerful it is in sharing stories.
- Forgiveness, gratitude, love, education of the history in depth Oh my what an amazing team of knowledge and support for veterans. The Anzac camaraderie is something in itself but the bond of Timor/Australia and World War Two is something so very proud to be a part of and to have served with.
- Combination of talks with individual team members combined with seeing beautiful countryside 's, they happy Timorese people, and great local projects, organisations leave a great feeling and provides good example to pursue positive changes.
- Seeing the change, comments, and narratives from participants: clear mentors and supported participants. Listening everyone's stories Anyone was able to speak and be heard.
- Full immersion in the country, having fellow veterans made it so easy to relate and open up.
- Open and honest sharing by colleagues who have been through the same difficult times. Plus, the exemplary manner of the Timorese people who forgive and demonstrate resilience every moment of every day.



4) If you were to tell someone about your experience of the Timor component of the program, what would you say? Are there any highlights?

- You are a super amazing person, brave and hero. Because you have done amazing work in my country to bring peace.
- The history of Timor-Leste is far more complex and deeper than I was ever aware. It was great to hear also seeing the changes since my deployment in 2002 and 2003 and the work that NGO's and X service people are doing.
- I will tell them that the experience will touch you deeply even if you don't have unresolved issues there are so many lessons you can learn from the program. The highlight for me being forgiveness (of others and self).
- Highly recommended with every component of the course.
- Every day I'd think nothing could top this, then the next it was even more amazing. Meeting the kids, seeing the schools visiting the smaller villages the humbleness of the people.
- Time, sharing stories the welcoming feeling that the TA staff provided.
- The life changing effect is hearing our service made people feel safe to live a normal life without fear and to be free.
- Do it, you won't regret it. The friendships formed and absorbing the love of veteran's commitment by Timorese people.
- Too many to list, it's a magical place full of inspiring people and stories.
- I would say if you have deployed to Timor-Leste or any other place this is a must do as you get to see the country through a different lens for stop the highlight is seeing an immersing ourselves in the local communities for stop Anzac Day dawn service was also very special to me.
- The caring compassion of the facilitation team was the foundation of my growth here and there was never a moment here where I felt alone.
- There are so many highlights on this trip every day was new knowledge and experiences. No day was over the same as the day before, but what I loved the most was that I absolutely fit I fit perfectly like a piece to a puzzle with the family (Timorese/Australia and Kiwis). My copies of a flying with complete love for everyone that is healing.
- Smiling people, incredible roads (positive and negative), great support from NZ embassy and military, veterans, AHHA, pro EMA there are so many highlights.
- TA builds a team from a bunch of largely strangers and takes them on a journey. That journey is to the land of Timor and its wonderful people. People who have suffered much over the years yet remain resilient, happy, and hopeful.
- Having lunch with and meeting Ramos Horta at the presidential palace. Hiking up Mount Ramelau, Visiting my former military base at the HPOD (former Heliport/Hospital).
- It is a lightly facilitated experiential program, where the country and people do the teaching. It is a fantastic context within which to reconnect with similarly experienced service members.



5) In your opinion what could be done to improve the Timor Awakening Program?

- Spiritual awakening. Circle time among the forest or water/river, these two elements bring more peace within you.
- Nothing comes to mind although there are times, I was worried we weren't doing anything, on reflection the whole experience has been powerful and has given me confidence to start moving forward in a positive way.
- Nothing really, it's an awesome experience thank you.
- Nothing it's all a brilliant program.
- There is still so much to do I see I only wish this was longer.
- To have a couples only trip Anna solo person trip. I feel the group would blend better.
- This life changing program needs to be acknowledged by Veterans Affairs and politicians to receive publicity and funding to save more veterans lives.
- Perhaps separate trips were partners as opposed to having partners and those travelling on their own as a way to help unify the group.
- Continue to involve more Kiwis to hopefully help NZ learn to implement similar programs.
- Not a lot if anything. I felt it was perfectly tailored to meet an address everyone's needs whilst maintaining a local presence in the program (Bella) would be great for future TA as it adds another dimension.
- The program was set perfectly and from shad feedback touched a soulful stop I hope that more funding can be provided so that others can experience and heal alike.
- Honestly there are no complaints from me but one thing maybe the Balibo 5 video and the presidents assassination attempt and story to be shown at the start of the course and that's only because forgiveness is something I am learning to do however these videos did stir up some resentment from me on the 1st of May 2023 when we watched them, I did need quiet time afterwards to process them.
- To tell people to take some cold weather gear for mount and a small backpack.
- Minor logistic, communication and scheduling changes. it is in most important and impactful if the team is built early and strong as early as possible. This includes bringing in embassy, SABEH, ProEMA, DCP and other support elements because if they feel connected with each one then it is better for everyone.
- Funding – DVA and defence transitions to take it seriously.
- It is great as it is, perhaps the inclusion of an experienced military psychologist to provide some guidance and to be there for long talks.



6) What is one concrete thing that you will implement in your daily life for your mental wellbeing from what you have gained from the Program?

- I will say I love myself every day and puts a smile on everyone's face that I meet. "God bless me and you".
- Get up in the morning before kids and practice gratitude and breathing not checking phone in the morning until after school drop offs.
- The tools to take with me that I learned on the course.
- Getting back into my own routines I plan to adopt my own form of mindfulness and realising my own pressures are just the natural state of mind that I need to continue to be over the line even if I find them hard.
- Journal writing
- Always remain humble and to acknowledge my symptoms with the tools I've gained during this program.
- Journal writing, sponsoring, intrenching connection with my eldest son.
- To be easier on myself and to appreciate myself in my life more.
- Focusing on positive rather than dwelling on negatives.
- Mindfulness to stop living by the minutes and start living in the minute. I'm excited to find creative ways to give thanks to others.
- Compassion fatigue, that has always been me. That video felt like it was coming straight out of my mind for how i felt for a long time. I just never knew what it was called. I now know that it is not selfish to put myself first I felt guilty for a long time trying to do this, so now I am so very grateful for their awareness.
- Will try to do journaling.
- Never wasting a moment to be mindful, helpful, useful, constructive, and kind to myself and others.
- Re association with moral injury, passion fatigue they are the biggest thing that I learned here.
- Lower my God more be more open to feeling riding emotions instead of squishing them down.



7) How do you intend to engage in ongoing support for your personal growth?

- Stay positive, stay humble, stay loved and always forgive know how to say thank you and say sorry most of all be close to God.
- Continue with psych support, stay in touch with participants and peer mentors.
- Motivation skills I learned on the course.
- Making myself priority, making my own health a priority meditating daily and seeing if journaling will help without putting pressure to file on myself, tools I learnt from the trip.
- Do a domestic program, volunteer myself to TA and to return to Timor again.
- For ongoing support, I know that I can reach out to the mentors at any time and pay it forward to assist other veterans with the knowledge and tools gained whilst on this program.
- Sponsoring students in Timor Leste, journaling, pursuing a way to assist the people of Timo three using my skills in environmental health in East Timor.
- Continue to learn from other people and their lives and their stories.
- Why asking for help when I need it rather than sitting in the shadows waiting for help to find me.
- Actively share my stories is what I intend to do and to open my heart, ears Anne home to others in need. Be more active in my parish even if just to listen keep communications with my mentor and other participants.
- To reach out to these nearest/dearest and closest to me along with Jason Taane if needed to. But again, I am also mindful that Jason is my mentor and at times may fall into the category of compassion fatigue Himself. Another one is routine physical check-ups and fitness this program has been a jump start for me.
- Our remain engaged with voluntary activities that involve community, veterans, and Timorese people into my eventual separation from defence and retirement.
- Small steps, listening, engage, find something for me.
- By having my wife join and participate in the program it has strengthened our bond and allows us to share more with a better common understanding. She now has a much greater understanding of the military life and deployments and Timor Leste.



8) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about in terms of your journey on the Timor experience?

- I know most people come with their own history in life people hurt that's sad they keep their anger and so on. But what I have seen in this program is people start to realise that life is not about materialistic things or have a lot of money. Life is about love with your heart give with your heart see with your heart feel with your heart. Everyone starts to understand and see what has been lost from them. Including myself sometimes I do everything I couldn't afford just to make my family happy and six have success, but i forget myself that I need to be happy and look after myself. It brings me joy I see everyone wants to be make life changing in positive waste. Teach the kids how to love, respect and value to live in simple life. I want to thank Timor awakening for giving me a chance to share my history, my life and my parents' history and how my husband's life changing after involved in this program. I recommend to TA to get more friends with the programs and bring a good impact for veterans.
- It was fantastic thank you so much.
- The whole course was wonderful experience.
- As a spouse I find this whole trip so insightful, I've always had respect for veterans but hearing the stories/experiences has given me respect. I want to learn more, see more, and bring the kids back. I have a connection with this place that will never disappear.
- It has been life changing, i felt connected for the first time since leaving defence. Michael Stone is an amazing leader and I felt blessed to be a part of the program. It has made me feel like a valued human and veteran. I feel sad about leaving I fully opened up to my mentor as mentally I felt not ready to share fully with the circle.
- I have attended many DVA funded programs and counselling, but nothing compares to returning to the country which has had a huge effect on so many veterans including veteran families. This program saved my life when I was in a very dark place and I'm confident and proud to say this program is a game changer and deserves the recognition from our government to be incorporated during transition out of service including all first responders. This program actually really cares about our lives and shines through with the program holistic approach.
- Keep the 50% Aussie and Kiwi connection of participants it was exceptional. A life changing experience of sites, surround friendships and healing. I cannot think TA enough for this opportunity thank you.
- I believe it will be a turning point in my life and having the opportunity to have my wife here has helped our already stronger relationship grow ever more.
- My journey has been healing overwhelming (in a good sense) emotional and powerful. I have gained many valuable tools to take away with me and the program has taught me how to open up and speak about the way I feel which is something I have struggled with my entire life. The tide friendships that have been formed are invaluable and I intend on maintaining these into the future. I can't think Mick, Gary, and the mentors enough for their support advice and listening it is truly a unique thing you have created, and I hope many more veterans benefit from it in the years to come.



- Life changing absolutely life changing I'm I manifested in December 2022 that 2023 was going to be my year and then I was going to pull myself out of the black hole I have been in over the past few years. October 2022 is close to being quite suicidal as sad as that is I can admit that, but I know that I fit, I belong, I am loved. I have made a difference especially here in Timor I am very proud to be a part of history while serving here in 2000. I am also still very proud to observe, listen to MB with the Anzac veterans and TA mentors slash staff slash directors for the program. The word gone into this program is phenomenal my heart spirit is open again. For so long it has been closed off I now wish for my son Ramea Rapata to come on this, as he was only about 18 months two years when both his dad myself and his stepdad left to serve over here. TA is a program I know that my eldest who served in 211 battalion will truly understand what his parents did and the impact on the country. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.
- It was great, well done.
- As in previous TA's: well run, organised, planned, and executed I hope to share DCP support into 2024 and after maybe departure to ensure that are integrated with current ADF members. This would give me enormous comfort as I would like to see ADF members attend TA events in Australia and Timor Leste before they engage with joint health command and or DVA.
- I didn't realise how much I needed this I have re associated negative memories with positive ones.

"I am super grateful for the opportunity thank you for including NZ's and incorporating their AO into the program. It was hugely beneficial to the NZ's and Aussies. Thank you for the mountain of work that goes into organising the trip I acknowledge and appreciate how much work that must have been. I am happy to assist the VCA organisations in any capacity as needed."

Referrals to other agencies

All participants were briefed on RSL and Open Arms services and brochures were made available. Participants shared their experiences of the range of agencies available, shown various websites and provided a USB with the full range of VCA resources.

Images

A massive range of images, stories and podcasts are on our Facebook page and websites.

<https://www.facebook.com/timorawakening>

<https://veteranscare.com.au/>

<https://timorawakening.com>

Other matters of significance.

Budgeting remains problematic for us due to increasing prices of everything and the need to employ 3 part time staff to assist in the coordination of volunteers, preparation and running of our programs.

END REPORT





**WE THANK ALL OUR SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS
IN IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF
VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**



Lago.



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