



# Timor Awakening 16 Program Report

Saturday 21st to Sunday 29th August 2021

*Prepared by Veterans Care Association, 8 October 2021*

Holistic Care of Body Mind & Soul for Veterans, Families & Carers  
Reg. Charity No: CH2629 | ABN: 97 213 464 172

*"TA16 was an incredible program that demonstrated care for veterans, inspiration, hope and practical pathways during a very tough period with the challenges of covid, isolation, lockdowns and the collapse of costly war in Afghanistan. The compassion, love, tolerance, inspiration, camaraderie, and courage of the team and all who participated was a revitalising breath of fresh air."*

*TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021*



# Timor Awakening 16 - Program Report

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## Section 1: Timor Awakening 16 – Summary of Activity

### Prepared by Program Director, Michael Stone

Timor Awakening (TA) is an immersive, evidence based, peer to peer wellbeing program for veterans; composing holistic health education, group therapy, mentoring, physical activity, historical commemoration and community development. The program is typically centered around an 11-day immersion in Timor-Leste, creating a disruption from participant's routine to take pause, learn about themselves and seize responsibility for a positive direction forward in life. TA is available to Australian Veterans (and spouse or carer), from any state, with or without operational service. The aim of Timor Awakening is to prevent veteran suicide and improve the wellbeing of veterans and their families. Every TA participant conducts a range of data collection based on internationally accepted metrics for mental health contributing to detailed quantitative and qualitative reporting on each program. This report presents an overview of the TA16 program, quantitative analysis and reflections of participants.

Timor Awakening 16 (TA16) was conducted from 21<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021. This was the fourth time the program has been done domestically, taking place at St Georges Defence Holiday Suites in Runaway Bay, on the Gold Coast. This 9-day holistic health program emulates much of the features of a Timor based program. It providing an opportunity for renewal, ongoing training, and group therapy to contribute to growth, health and reduce the instance of veteran suicide, domestic violence, and detrimental effects of bad health on families. All eight nights were accommodated at the St Georges Hotel, with activities taking place at the hotel and around the greater Gold Coast area. The program was led by veteran Michael Stone and had 11 new participants, five peer support mentors, two facilitation leaders and four support staff, all veterans. The program was largely self-catered and administered with a team led by veteran Col Ahern. The program expanded when a range of visitors joined including from RSL QLD, Open Arms, external holistic health providers and guest presenters.

TA16 provided a multitude of education and healing interactions and experiences at the individual, small group and large group levels, including professional education and guidance, peer2peer support, physical exercise, mindfulness, meditation, exposure therapy and unique interaction with local communities and veterans. The program has been designed to provide a safe, nurturing and inspiring environment where veterans and their spouses have the opportunity to re-evaluate their lives, envisage and plan where they want to go, and provide a range of tools to help them achieve a healthy and purposeful life. The wide range of components, activities and discussion topics covered on the program are listed on p9. Results and reflections of participants on TA16 are profound, reflected in part 2 of this report, p11-28.

*"You are not treated as a patient with a problem, effectively removing at once that patronizing clinical experience. I liked the focus on forward movement not on re-hashing the past, I feel as if a weight has fallen from my shoulders." TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*



## TA16 Program Report, 21 to 29 August 2021



Special elements of the TA16 program included:

- A wide range of holistic health education sessions and syndicates, as per the attached program.
- Morning exercise and health activities.
- Yoga, breathing, meditation, chanting and mindfulness sessions.
- Surfing Lessons.
- Team building and self-development Volleyball.
- Freeman's Organic Farm Tour and education.
- Daily mindfulness and grounding practices.
- Nature Walks.
- Daily themed discussion on Self Mastery/Self-Awareness, Mindset, Body, Relationships, Purpose, and Taking Ownership.
- Goal Setting and Personal Wellbeing plans created.
- Recording of Panel Discussions and recording of Podcast episodes – released weekly [here](#)

**Welcome to St Georges Hotel.** The VCA team and participants all arrived at the hotel in earnest, with an initial meet and greet, opening session and team barbecue. A program overview was delivered by the program director along with ice breaking and introductory activities. Group sessions are always conducted in a circle to obtain full participation and make sure everybody is included, active and respected as equal.



**Holistic Health Sessions.** Holistic Health sessions included prepared sessions, discussions, and activities on the following topics: mental health, exercise, nutrition, mindfulness, goal setting, forgiveness and reconciliation, resources for veterans in australia, communication, growth mindset, PTS, anxiety, addiction, relapse prevention, suicide, relationships, moral injury, body Language. Videos are utilised throughout including a documentaries and TED talks that stimulate discussion and learning and present contemporary best practice and thought on each issue. The Timor Awakening focus of holistic health is that healing is possible, there are many resources to achieve this, that we should live in the present, with a growth mindset and plan for the future. A detailed list of program components, activities and discussion topics can be seen on page 9.

*“The most effective part of the program inspiring intention to change was reflection sessions at the end of each day. This allowed me to process what I was feeling during certain parts of the day and be able to express it in a group environment.”* TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021



**Yoga sessions and mindfulness.** Some of the fundamental tenants of the holistic health program are grounding, mindfulness and relaxation. TA16 participants were fortunate enough to have two sessions facilitated by a highly experienced professional yoga instructor, Hugh Jack. This practice encourages veterans to slow down, become mindful of their thoughts and bring calm to everyday life, as well as improving the mind-body connection. The benefits of this practice carry over to all areas of life.

*“Immersing in all activities, not just talking, but to show we are capable of anything and just taking that first step is all it takes to provide momentum.” TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*



**Organic Farm Tour – Freeman’s Farm.** In the Currumbin valley is situated an organic farm, deeply seeded in military family history. David Freeman, a veteran Army officer himself with an extensive military career, has created an organic farming practice. Here he teaches others the immense benefit of healthy living, sustainable practices and clean organic farming techniques that we can all use at home. David’s 95 y/o father, a fighter pilot in WWII, is still sharing his words of wisdom with visitors. 100% organic lunch and coffee was enjoyed by all.



**Guest Speakers.** The program included a range of guest speakers present to the participants. Mr Rob Buckley on nutrition, health and wellbeing. Dr Nikki Jaimeson on Moral Trauma and veteran suicide. Vietnam veteran John Smith on his experience of transitioning back from war. The VHA Team on wellbeing, mindset and exercise. Open Arms SEQLD on extra support that is out there available, delivered by David Lauw (Peer Coord), and Emma Adams (Community Development).



*“The support was incredible, from the veterans who facilitated the many aspects of the program, from the professional providers of the multitude of activities, in the interactions with the community, and most of all from within the circle of trust established by all who participated in this program.”*

*TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*



**QOV.** A highlight of every program is the presentation of quilts by [Quilts of Valour Australia](#). Quilts of Valour Australia's mission is to present quilts to Australian service members, veterans, families of those who have past in recognition of their sacrifice for Australia whilst deployed on combat operations. This special recognition and love from the Australian Community has a profound positive impact on veterans. VCA acknowledges and thanks the women who carefully made and donated these quilts and for the presentation provided by Bill and Barbara Kenny who drive many hours to present the quilts and certificates.



**Morning Physical Fitness.** Physical fitness and establishing a healthy routine is a fundamental element of the program. Fitness sessions are planned for the early morning on a daily basis, include walks/runs, stretching, breathwork, mindfulness, yoga, mountain hikes and gym. The daily program is active with walking and activities that involve movement, social interaction and stimulation. Establishing a routine of physical fitness at the start of each day establishes the importance and impact of physical fitness for healing, health and well-being. Sometimes this can be something as simple as a walk down the beach or a quick swim before the day's activities commence. We were fortunate enough to have Veterans Health Association from Nerang plan a couple of Exercise Physiology Sessions near the beach, coordinated by Christian and Tommi.



*“Hope. I don’t know if I could have taken an academic without lived experience as seriously as the mentors in this program. To know that my peers have overcome the very struggle I’m facing and emerged a changed person, inspires me. I know I can be more – I have seen the proof.”*

*TA16 Participant, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021*

**Fun Learning Activities.** Another stand out activities of the program was the beach Volleyball. The volleyball got people moving in new ways, lots of laughs and comradery. It was followed by a healthy nutritious breakfast. The entire group came together to play and support each other, there were laughs and face plants into the sand all round.



All participants who were able to, had the opportunity to participate in surfing lessons at Rainbow Bay with Dave Davidson from Coolangatta learn to surf. Many of the group had never experienced this before and had a wonderful time stepping out of their comfort zones and giving it a go. Many of the activities in the program are designed to try new things, not be afraid or embarrassed to make mistakes or not be perfect, stretch your limits and have fun.



Fun and engaging activities like these give veterans an opportunity to get out of the classroom environment, get interactive, enjoy themselves and get involved in some healthy competition. Both activities were much enjoyed by all involved.

*“After covering some intense topics there were some great activities to help unwind. Eg. Surfing, reading, and observing sunrise/sunset.”*

*TA16 Participant, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021*



**Active Listening Interview Scenario.** Mentors and program facilitators demonstrate active listening through all interactions throughout the program. In addition, to explain and practice active listening and positive communication technique Padre Gary Stone and peer mentor Scott McAndrew conducted an out of character scenario-based two-part interview. Part one presented with a veteran reaching out for help having a number of serious personal challenges and was met with the interviewer not listening and having negative communication techniques. Part two of the interview is where the Veteran reaching out was met with an interviewer who had good active listening skills and positive communication techniques. Whilst fictitious scenario, the issues being raised and dealt with were ones that are not uncommon with veterans who attend the programs, or veterans in the wider community. The emphasis of the playlets were to demonstrate the power of being present, listening actively and reassuring the veteran that they will be supported with creating an action plan and connected with the right specialists to deal with the issues being raised.

**Goal Setting and Creating Personal Wellbeing Plans.** The cornerstone of the whole program is what participants do when they return to their day-to-day lives at the conclusion of the program. After a goal setting lesson, participants are given a Personal Wellbeing Plan to fill in, commit to and obtain accountability for. This includes various areas of life, health, relationships, diet and exercise, mindset etc. Participants also commit to who they will reach out to for accountability and support, and which ESOs they will associate with to continue their wellbeing and personal growth.

**Panel Discussions and Podcast Interviews.** Having such a unique, diverse and highly experienced group of veterans on the program at the same time presents another opportunity to share personal lessons, history and ideas that can help with veteran growth and wellbeing. A number of panel discussions and podcast interviews were conducted at the conclusion of the program, to capture important insights which can then be shared with the wider veteran community. The podcast interviews are available [here](#).



*“The highlight for me was John White’s moral compass on the immoralities committed in war zones. Nikki Jameson explaining moral injury betrayal loss of trust, shame”*

*TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021*

Veterans have noted in group sessions and program feedback that these initiatives such as those covered in this program have inspired them to get more involved in their communities and given them an appreciation for the support we have in Australia, in a realisation of the importance of purpose and identity in life. A great opportunity exists for Australian veterans to mobilise in both domestic and regional communities and contribute as volunteers, restoring a sense of purpose and serving the community in practical ways.



**Conclusion.** The feedback from participants of TA16 was positive and appreciative for the opportunity to experience profound growth and healing, as highlighted in participant reflections, p22-28. Through professional mentoring and guidance, together with the extensive peer to peer therapy, Timor Awakening offered an experience uniquely different to other programs available for veterans. The multitude of activities created a bonded group that will remain connected through each other's journey of healing and growth. The overarching theme of hope and purpose was a feature throughout dozens of activities. Even with the realities of a troubled and traumatic past, the Timorese experience is testament to veterans that there is hope, and with purpose and support a positive future is possible.

*“This program has been nothing short of transformational it is not a silver bullet, or magic pill (though if you could bottle it, you would make a fortune); rather it is a set of tools with which you must do the work. In being honest, I cannot say that I am ‘cured’ but I can say with certainty it has made a difference in me.”*

*TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*

By attending the program veterans have elected to participate in their own rescue, taking responsibility for the life they want. The program is intensive and obliges participants to be active in a peer group, whilst facilitating reflection time and individual mentoring. A range of stimulating activities and environments provide fertile ground for healing, growth and development. Our veteran facilitators, who are active participants on each program, demonstrate the value of becoming a healer of others and are examples that post traumatic growth is possible. The end state of Timor Awakening is to have inspired and informed veterans empowered with tools for positive change and linked to the array of veteran resources available in Australia. The program continues to develop with higher efficacy which is passed through participants into the wider veteran community to create an impact on a larger scale.

Timor Awakening has been possible due to financial support of Bolton Clarke and RSL QLD and significant volunteer contributions of experienced veterans. Corporate partners are required for the program to continue and share the program with the wider veteran community for both domestic and international programs. VCAI has a clear strategic aim to utilise the data and successful interventions of Timor Awakening as a model for Department of Veterans Affairs to commit to funding wellness intervention to prevent veteran suicide, broken families and injured veterans. Wellness intervention will result in considerable government budget savings compared to funds spent on ‘sickness’ treatment, pensions and medication. As well as increase health and wellbeing of veterans and their families, save lives, and meaningfully re-engage some of the nation's most energetic and capable members of society. In the soul of the veteran is a need to serve, to be of value, to contribute and to belong.

To see more videos, testimonies, previous TA reports, programs and activities visit [www.timorawakening.com](http://www.timorawakening.com)

For an overview on programs in Timor-Leste, to recommence in 2022, see the videos below.

[RSL QLD 3 Minute Video overview \(2020\)](#)

[Timor Awakening 7 Program Video](#). Provides a snapshot of the Timor program (6 mins)

Veterans Training Centre and English Language School Same, Timor-Leste. [Video 1](#). [Video 2](#). [Video 3](#).

ABC News story on the Riak Retreat project 19 Sep 19: [Video News Story](#) [Radio News Story](#)





### **Timor Awakening 16 program components (content structure)**

Detailed preparation involving individual admin/medical/mental prep, personal and group engagement.  
Orientation - team bonding, individual mentor 1 on 1, briefing.  
Self-Awareness. Improving capacity to relate to yourself and others.  
Grounding (beliefs, techniques, mindfulness).  
Taking ownership and responsibility of personal circumstances.  
Nurturing your mind, body and soul.  
Destigmatizing trauma and mental health.  
Anxiety, depression and stress - understanding the causes, biology, recognising the signs and mitigating symptoms.  
Tools to help relax, ground and manage feelings and physical symptoms of stress and anxiety.  
Communication and positive living in communities.  
Restoring a sense of Identity and Purpose.  
Forgiveness.  
Moral Injury.  
Suicide prevention.  
Goal Setting.  
Forging a new Identity (participants form identity as alumni of program, as Australian veterans, as Australians)  
Strategies to help you go back to activities or places you may have avoided since the trauma.  
Transitioning back to connection with communities, support and positive pathways.

### **Timor Awakening 16 Activities**

Group discussions.  
Self-awareness exercises.  
Physical activation (group walks, stretching, breath work, personal exercise, volunteer work).  
Volunteer work on Freeman's organic farm  
Breathing and breath work.  
Mindfulness and grounding.  
Yoga  
Goal setting.  
Communication skills.  
Body Language – impact of posture, effects on communication.  
Fun and active team activities – Volleyball, Surfing Lessons.

### **Group discussion topics on Timor Awakening 16**

Living with purpose and identity (and helping others).  
Growth mindset / Living above the line.  
Addiction and relapse prevention.  
Taking ownership and responsibility (of our past, present and future).  
Nurturing the body – Nutrition, exercise, sleep.  
Mental health – Anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress (awareness, mitigation).  
Safety plans – Addiction relapse, Triggered Anxiety/Stress/Depression, Suicidal Ideation.  
Suicide – helping others, getting help, safety plans, processing and managing bereavement.  
Moral Injury  
Communication and relationships.  
Relationships.  
Forgiveness / Letting Go.  
Resources for veterans and families at home.



## Section 2: Timor Awakening 16 - Review of Participant Data

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

Data was collected from 11 participants and on TA16 at two time points: Commencement of the program (21st August 2021) and the conclusion of the program (29<sup>th</sup> August 2021). TA16 was the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Mental Well-Being, Post-traumatic Stress, Depression, Stress and Anxiety, Moral Injury. 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. These participants did not show a level of disability or post-traumatic stress at the commencement of the program, nevertheless demonstrating improvement in other health and wellbeing markers. As part of this program, we are monitoring changes in the Moral Injury symptoms of the veterans as a result of the Timor Awakening experience. This is an area that participants have not known about or addressed in earlier treatment programs in which they have been involved. Moral Injury was assessed with a pre and post program assessments which gave us a significant positive difference.

The anecdotal comments at the end of report reflect a fascinating diversity of positive outcomes, the program is seen to show a positive impact on the participants.

**Demographics.** TA16 had 22 participants, including 11 first time participants, five peer support mentors, two facilitation leaders and four support staff, all veterans. Quantitative data was collected from the 11 first time participants. Demographic data collected on the 11 participants revealed the following. 8 participants identified as male and 3 as female. The average age of participants was 53 years (M = 53 years, SD = 10), 11 participants had a history of serving with the military services. Eight (8) participants had served in the Army, one (1) had served in the Navy and Two (2) had served in the RAAF. Of those with military service 27% reported that they had been medically discharged. At the start of the program two (18%) participants reported that they were retired, six (54%) reported that they were employed, three (28%) participants identified as unemployed.

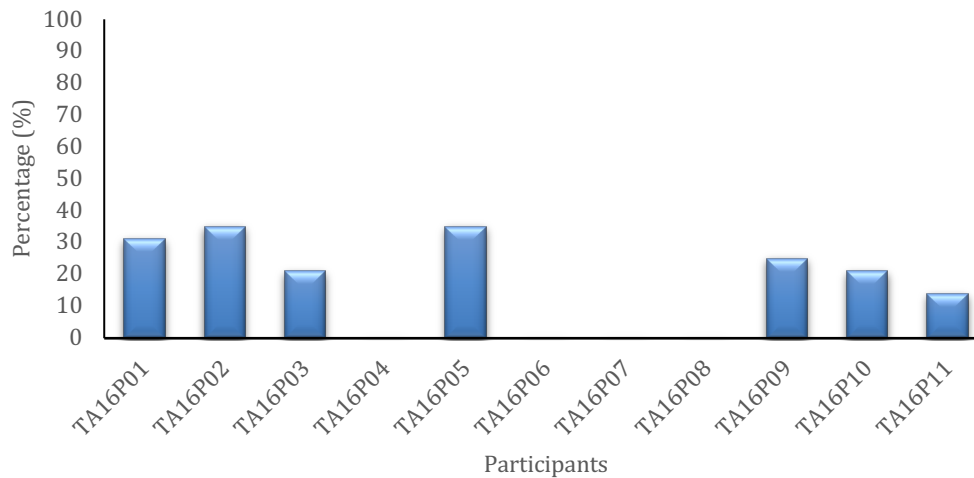
**Family Characteristics.** Nine (82%) participants identified that they were in a long-term relationship (de facto or married), one participant is divorced (9%) and one (9%) reported being single. Eleven (11) participants provided family demographic information which indicated that ten (91%) have children. Of the eleven participants who have children, eight (64%) currently have dependent offspring.

### Health Status

**Physical Health.** TA16 participants were administered the World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0) 12-item version to screen overall functioning and disability due to health conditions. The WHODAS 2.0 provides an overall summary score expressed as percentage of disability experienced in daily life over the past 30 days, with 85% representing full disability due to health condition. All participants completed the questionnaire and disability scores are graphed below.



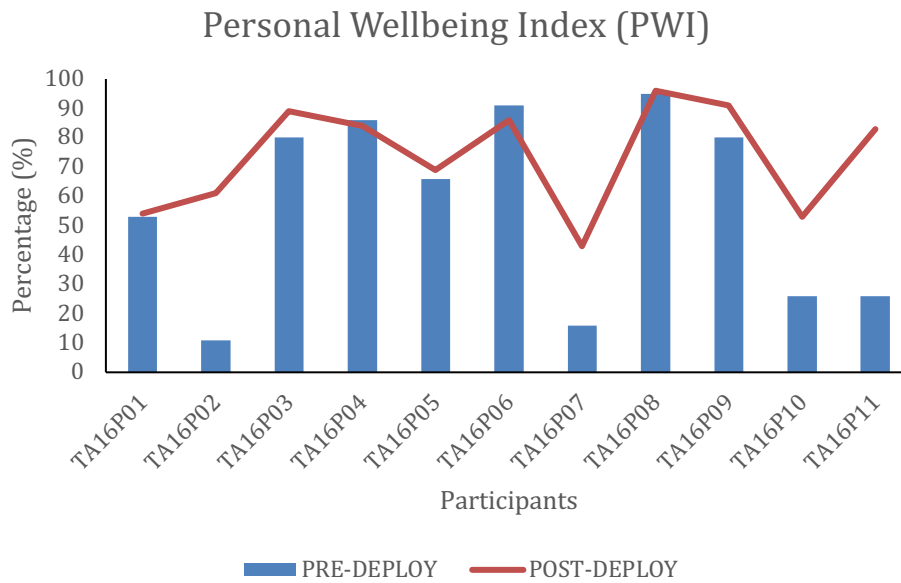
### WHODAS 2.0 Overall Disability Score TA16 (%)



As the graph above demonstrates, there was variability in the overall functioning level of participants who engaged in TA16. The average summary score was 29% disability. Comparison with population data available from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that our participants’ average score ranks below the level of functioning to be considered a disability when compared to the general population. This result suggests that overall, this group of Timor Awakening participant’s daily function was comparably greater than what has been reported for participants on the previous program (TA4 = 30.17; TA5 = 32.15; TA6 = 40.5; TA7=40.5; TA8=8.04; TA9=26, TA10=23; TA12=18; TA14=32.43; TA15=29.44; TA16=29) where the level of disability had been as high as 90-95% when compared with the general population. Further analysis may be required to identify if the higher average disability score is impacted by age range or health conditions reported by the participants in each individual program.

**Mental Health.** TA16 participants provided information about their current and previous treatment for mental health conditions. At the commencement of the program, 4 (36%) participants were taking medication for a psychiatric condition and all these participants were under the care of a psychiatrist. Of these 4 participants all were receiving psychological treatment. The psychiatric condition most reported by participants was Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Secondary to this demographic information, 11 participants completed the Personal Wellbeing Index to provide information on their pre-program levels of life satisfaction. The Personal Wellbeing Inventory (PWI) is a 7-item self-report scale designed to assess global satisfaction with life across the key domains of standard living, health, achieving in life, relationships, safety, community-connectedness, and future security. Participants rated how satisfied they are, which results are shown 100 being satisfied and 0 meaning no satisfaction with their life. The PWI assess happiness and satisfaction with life scored and expressed as percentage of life enjoyment over the past 14 days, with 100% representing full life satisfaction. All participants completed the pre-program screening measure, the following analysis is based on the responses of 11 participants. Participants overall life enjoyment scores are graphed below.



The graph above demonstrates Pre and Post Program data, there was some variability in the subjective quality of life dimensions of participants who engaged in TA16. The change indicates the percentage of the within participant change and not a comparison of change between participants. However, to further understand the overall improvement of Personnel Wellbeing Index of the group as a whole statistical analysis was conducted to examine the differences between the group’s Pre and Post-program scores. Analysis was based on the 11 participants who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was a significant increase in the group’s overall scores on the Personal Wellbeing Index from Time 1 ( $M = 57.27, SD = 32.11$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 73.54, SD = 18.21$ ),  $t = -2.534, p = 0.02$ .

### Section 3: TA16 Program Efficacy

**Outcomes.** 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 TA16. These included the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale 21-Item Version (DASS21), the Post-Traumatic Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C), the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) and Moral Injury Military Scale. De-identified Pre- and Post-program results on each assessment area are demonstrated below.

The final assessment of participants perceptions of change as a result of the TA16 program is the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) which is a measure of positive change. The primary aim of the Timor Awakening program is that participants are given opportunities to make positive changes to their mental health and wellbeing despite the negative impacts of service on their functioning, physically, mentally, emotionally and interpersonally.

This is the first time that the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory was administered to participants both immediately prior to program and at the end of the TA experience. In previous assessments the PTGI assessment was only administered at the completion of the program, however it was deemed that this did not give accurate information about the impact of the TA experience and a comparative assessment would provide greater clarity on the outcomes of the program. As such it is the results of this final

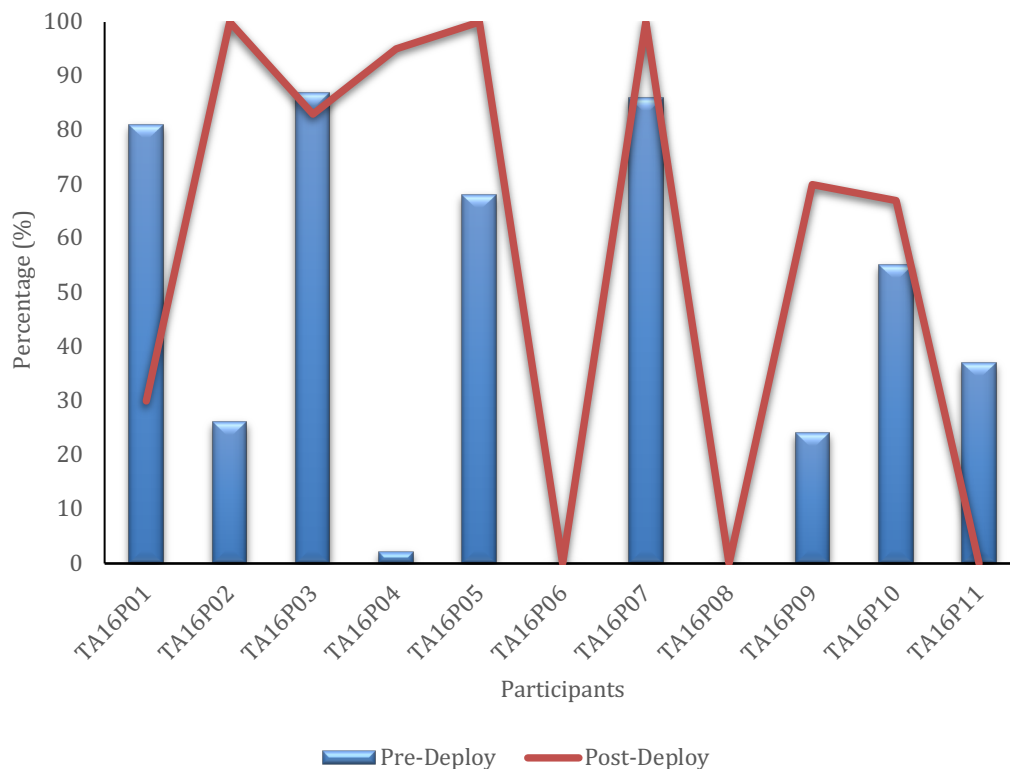


assessment which will be an initial focus of this report prior to reporting in detail any changes in mental health functioning of the participants.

**Post Traumatic Growth.** Posttraumatic growth (PTG) is positive psychological change experienced as a result of adversity and other challenges in order to rise to a higher level of functioning. Post traumatic growth occurs when individuals report a personal benefit from circumstances that represent significant challenges to the adaptive resources of the individual and pose significant challenges to their way of understanding the world and their place in it. Posttraumatic growth is not about returning to the same life as it was previously experienced before a period of traumatic suffering, rather about undergoing significant 'life-changing' psychological shifts in thinking and relating to the world that contribute to a personal process of change.

The Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) enables quick assessment of an individual’s perceived change in personal strength, world view and appreciation of life. Each participant’s de-identified results on the PTGI that was completed Pre-Program and Post-Program of the TA16 experience is demonstrated below. This indicated that out of the 11 participants, 8 (73%) participants experienced some personal growth from the Timor Awakening experience and three participants (27%) did not experience a positive change from the Timor Awakening experience.

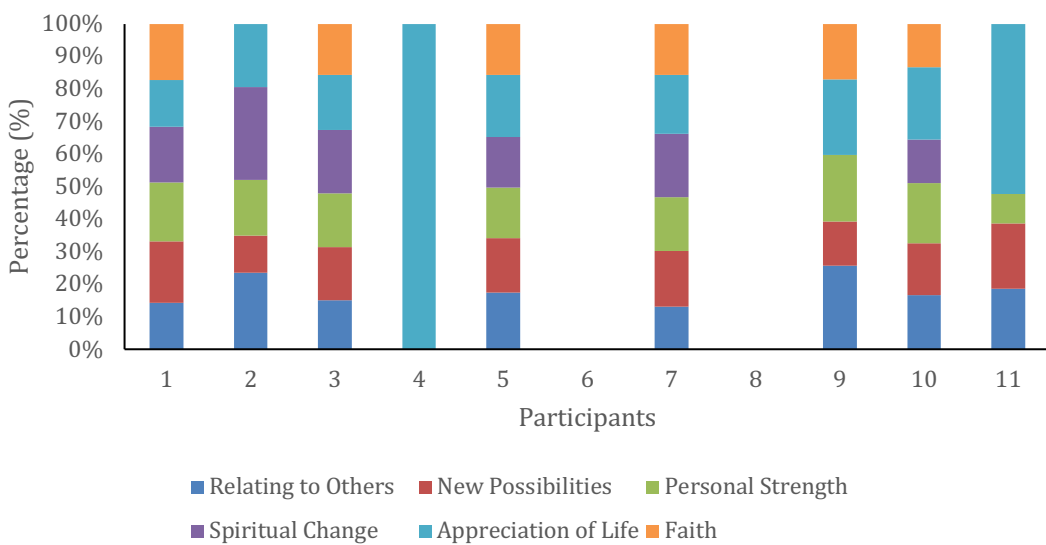
### Post Traumatic Growth Inventory



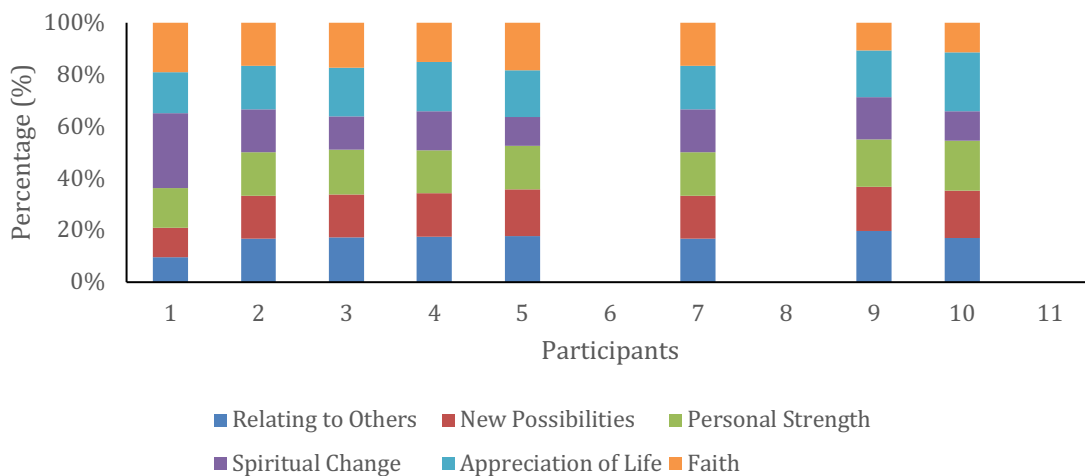


Following is a pre and post deploy graphical representation of the areas of change each participant experienced. The change indicates the percentage of the within participant change and not a comparison of change between participants. However, to further understand the overall improvement of Post Traumatic Growth of the group as a whole statistical analysis was conducted to examine the differences between the group's Pre and Post-program scores. Analysis was based on the 11 participants who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was no significant increase in the group's overall scores on the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory from Time 1 ( $M = 42.36, SD = 34.73$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 58.64, SD = 42.88$ ),  $t = -1.248, p = 0.240$ .

Areas of Post Traumatic Growth in Each Participant  
Pre-Program



Area of Traumatic Growth in Each Participant Post-Program

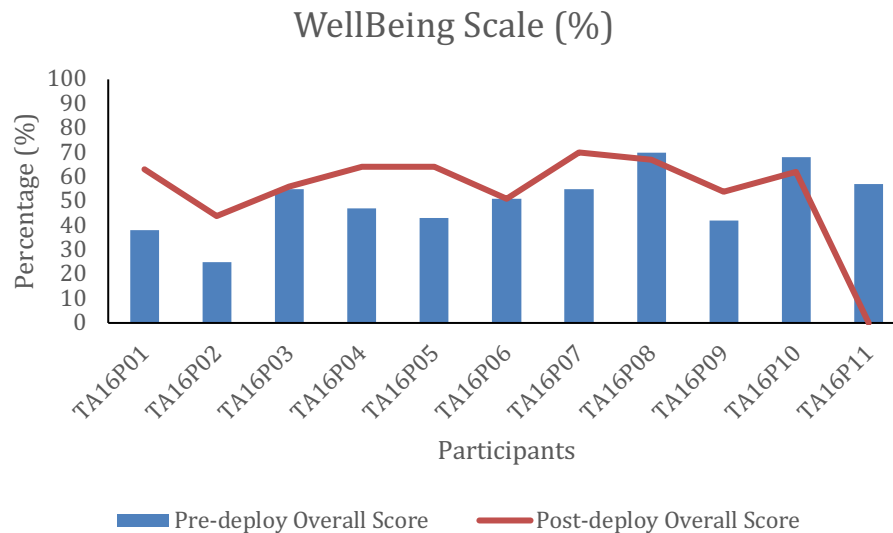


As you can see the comparison between pre and post program for each participant, shows improvement throughout each area for the entire group.



**Mental Wellbeing.** To support the changes reported by participants in their perceived change in personal strength, world view and appreciation of life the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) was completed at Pre and Post-program. The WEMWBS enables quick assessment of an individual’s mental wellbeing across areas including but not limited to relaxation, energy levels, self-esteem, optimism and social connection.

Each participant’s de-identified results on the WEMWBS at Time 1 and Time 2 is shown in the following graph:



*A change in score of 3 points is considered to be meaningful.*

In reviewing the responses on the wellbeing scale a change of 3 points or more in this scale is considered to be meaningful. 73% (8) of the participants involved in TA16 reported an improvement in the total score at the end of the program, 18% (2) of the participants involved in TA16 reported no significant change in the total score at the end of the program and 9% (1) did not complete the post questionnaire as he had to leave the program earlier. Although at this time it cannot be considered a true indication of clinical significance for each respondent, as further statistical analysis of the assessment instrument is required. Therefore, a statistical comparison of the Pre- and Post-program scores for the entire group was conducted to determine if the difference between the mean scores of both Pre- and Post-program scores were of clinical significance.

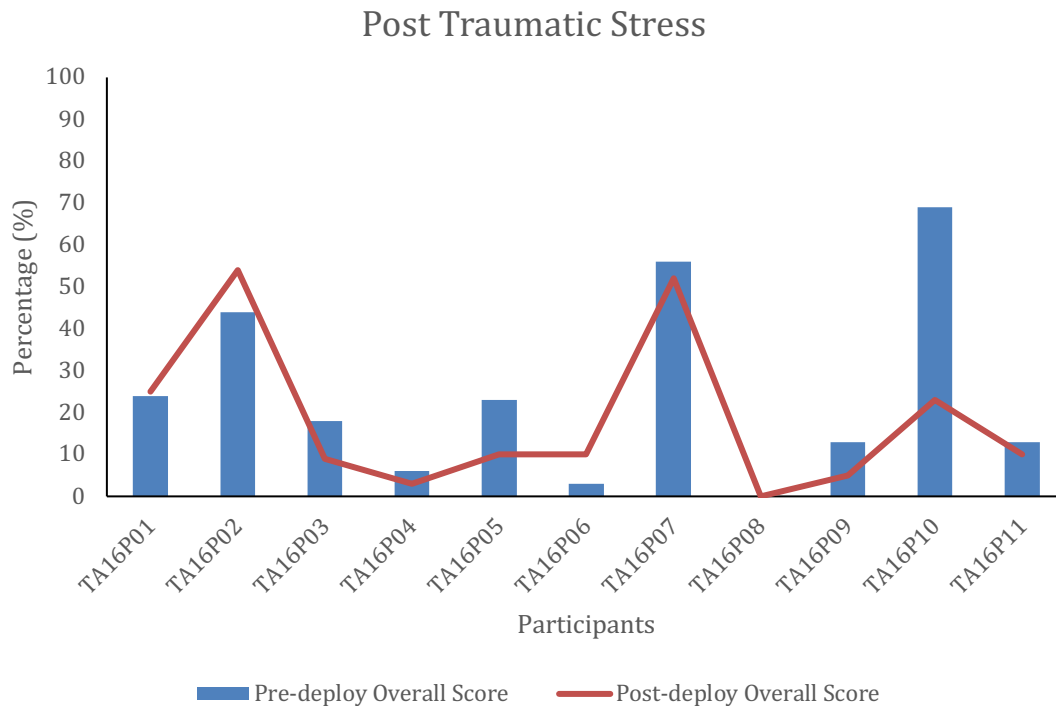
This analysis reviewed the responses of all 11 participants. A one tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was no significant improvement in group’s overall score on the WEBWBS from Time 1 ( $M = 50.09, SD = 13.09$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 54.09, SD = 19.49$ ),  $t = -0.581, p = .573$ .

### Mental Distress Assessment

**Post-Traumatic Stress.** Participants completed the Post-Traumatic Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C) at Pre- and Post-program. The PCL-C is a questionnaire that is designed to assess clinical symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (DSM5). The DSM-5 categorizes PTSD symptoms into several different criteria related to behaviours of re-experiencing, avoidance and hypervigilance and these are assessed in the PCL-C.



Each participant’s de-identified results at Time 1 and Time 2 are demonstrated in the following graph:



*Score >38 likely to be experiencing PTSD*

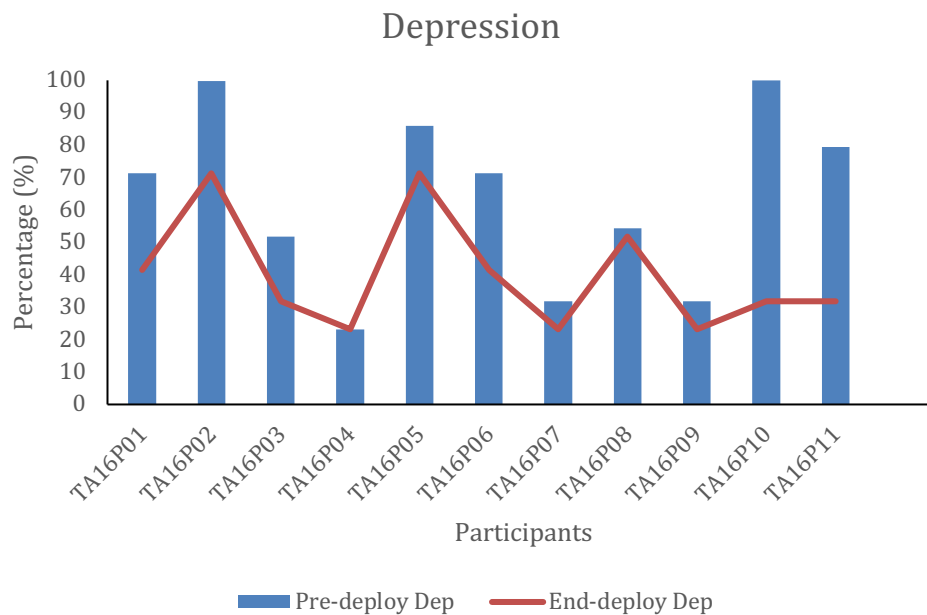
Graphic representation of participants’ scores on the PCL-C shows that 27% of participants were reporting clinically significant symptoms of post-traumatic stress at the start of the program. At the end of the program the number of participants continuing to experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress had decreased to 18%.

To further understand the overall improvement of post-trauma symptoms of the group as a whole statistical analysis was conducted to examine the differences between the group’s Pre- and Post-program scores. Analysis was based on the 11 participants who provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was no significant reduction in the group’s overall scores on the PCL-C from Time 1 ( $M = 24.45, SD = 22.51$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 18.27, SD = 18.75$ ),  $t = 1.384, p = .196$ . In comparison to other Timor Awakenings, TA16 shows a positive decrease in the clinically significant symptoms of Post-traumatic stress from pre- and post-program scores (TA16 Pre deploy = 27%, Post-deploy = 18%; TA15 Pre deploy = 50%, post deploy = 8%; TA14 Pre deploy = 67%, post deploy = 16%; TA12 Pre deploy = 41%, post deploy = 5%; TA10 Pre-deploy = 41%, post-deploy = 18%; TA9 Pre-deploy = 80%, Post-deploy = 55%; TA8 Pre-deploy = 64%, post-deploy = 36%; TA7 Pre-deploy = 53%, post-deploy = 26%; TA6 Pre-deploy = 75%, post-deploy = 26%). indicating that the presentation and impact of participants varies from group to group, however the trend of a reduction in PTSD symptomology continues.





**Depression, Anxiety and Stress.** 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

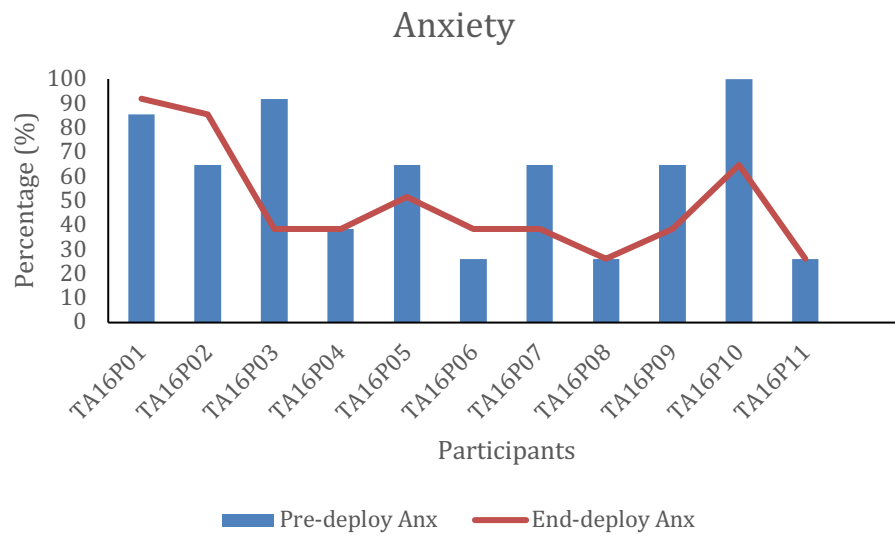
Graphic representation shows that several the participants experienced elevated symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress at pre-program. It is also evident that the majority of participants reported a decrease in some or all of these symptoms at the conclusion of the tour, bringing most within the 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 18% of the 11 participants were experiencing symptoms of depression what are considered to be of clinical concern. Post-program results indicated that 0% of participants remained in this range, one participant experienced higher levels of Depression on the completion of TA16 than they were experiencing prior to departure.

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 11 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 ( $M = 63.68, SD = 27.15$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 40.22, SD = 17.75$ ),  $t = 3.79, p = .003$ . Indicating that on this occasion there was a clinically significant improvement (reduction) in the symptoms of depression within the group.

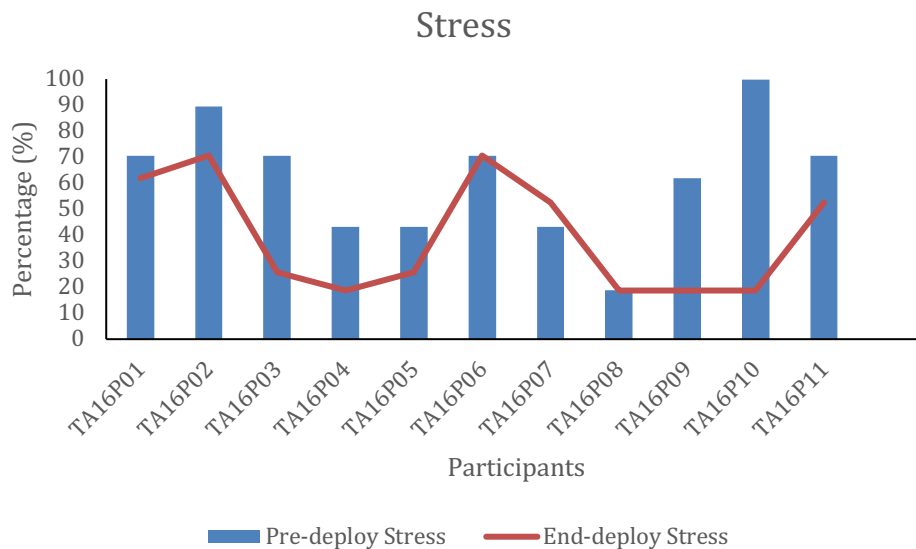


# TA16 Program Report, 21 to 29 August 2021



\* Elevated Range > 78; Clinical Range > 95

On departure 9% of participants were experiencing symptoms of anxiety that are considered to be within the clinical range. Post-program results indicated that 0% of participants 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 11 participants 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 ( $M = 59.4, SD = 26.92$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 48.88, SD = 22.45$ ),  $t = 1.54, p = 0.15$ , indicating that on this occasion there was a clinically significant improvement (reduction) in the symptoms of anxiety within the group.

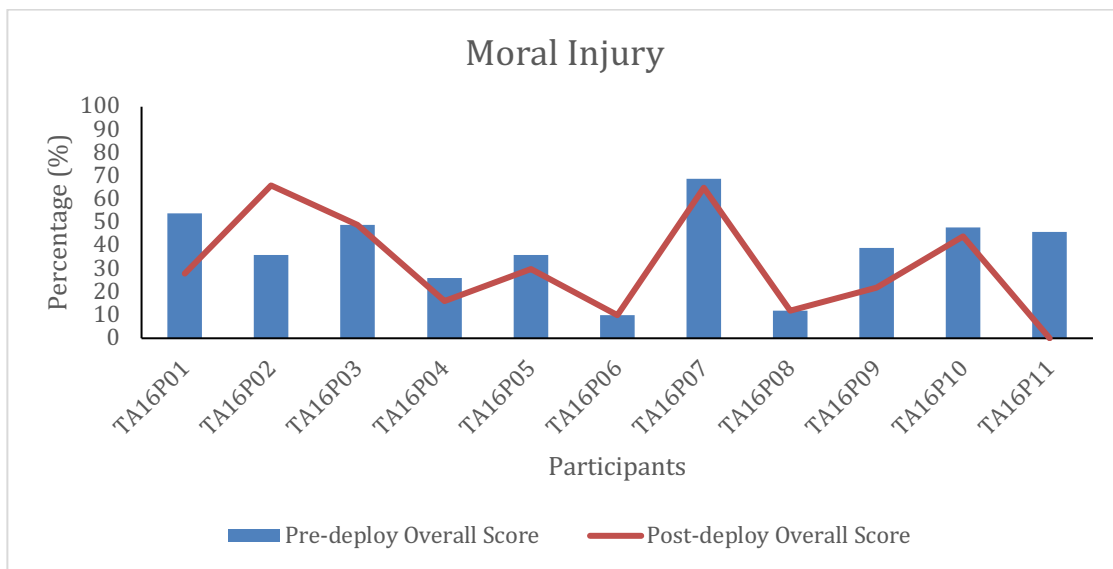


\* Elevated Range > 78; Clinical Range > 95

Graphic representation shows that 9% of the participants were experiencing elevated symptoms of stress at pre-program. Post-program results indicated that 0% of 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 11 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 ( $M = 61.97, SD = 23.31$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 39.51, SD = 22.10$ ),  $t = 2.88, p = .016$ .

**Moral Injury.** 11 Participants who had previously served in the Defence force completed the Moral Injury symptom Scale – Military (MISS-M) version short form. The MISS-M is a 10-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.



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. In reviewing the pre-program and post-program responses of the participants of TA16 is noted that no participants reported a high level (>70) of moral injury pre-deploy, and post-deploy responses. 7 participants (64%) showed reduction in the moral injury, 3 (27%) showed no change and 1 participant showed an increase (9%). These results show that there is a clinical difference between pre and post after being on the Timor Awakening program. To date there is no definitive indicator of a score that demands clinical attention. Further guidance is being sought from the author of the scale, however, further follow up of the wellbeing of the individuals with high scores pre-program is recommended to help maintain low range. To further understand the overall improvement of Moral Injury of the group as a whole statistical analysis was conducted to examine the differences between the group’s Pre and Post-program scores. Analysis was based on 11 participants who are veterans and provided data at both time points. Two tailed *t*-test demonstrated that on average, there was no significant difference in the group’s overall scores on the Moral Injury from Time 1 ( $M = 38.63, SD = 17.63$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 31.09, SD = 22.25$ ),  $t = 1.33, p = .21$



## Section 4: 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 16. All TA16 participants remain connected within a TA16 social media group chat and within their newly found friends and support groups. Many participants have embarked on taking up others veterans' health program, activities, hobbies and habits as learned and referred on the program, such as the Waves of Wellness program, Reboot, RSL QLD Active Lifestyle Cooking for a Cause, Nerang Veteran's shed, Volunteering at Freemans Farm, Veterans golf days to cite a few examples.

Despite the positive changes in Moral Injury and Post Traumatic Growth the greatest improvement for this group was the reduction in the mental health symptoms – PTSD and Stress and a significant improvement in mental well-being. Out of the 11 participants that quantitative data was collected, there were no participants reporting significantly high symptoms of mental health concerns following the return of TA16, all participants have been offered ongoing support and a further follow-up will be undertaken to ensure that ongoing growth is maintained. Regardless of improvement throughout the program a follow-up call to all participants will be undertaken to ensure that the improvements are maintained, and each participant is encouraged to seek further professional help and support for any ongoing areas of concern.

### Reference

Koenig, H. G, (2108) *Religions* 2018, 9 (3), 86-100; doi:10.3390/rel9030086. Downloaded from [www.mdpi.com/journal/religions](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions) 15-4-2019.

“TA16 was an incredible program that demonstrated care for veterans, inspiration, hope and practical pathways during a very tough period with the challenges of covid, isolation, lockdowns, and the collapse of costly war in Afghanistan. The compassion, love, tolerance, inspiration, camaraderie, and courage of the team and all who participated was a revitalising breath of fresh air.”

*TA16 Participant 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*





## Qualitative Evaluation - Timor Awakening 16

*21-29 August 2021*

### **1. How are feeling today in comparison to how you were feeling before coming?**

- More relaxed with a clear focus on where I want to head in the future
- I am feeling rested, relaxed, and satisfied. The program allowed me to unwind and become grounded
- Elated and revitalized
- Feeling good
- I am a lot calmer and more centered, more willing to approach difficult conversations
- I was a little apprehensive before arrival, but I now feel very happy and fulfilled
- More relaxed, balanced and with a clearer mind, feel well revised in health and good living practices, feel more hopeful about the future.
- I am feeling peaceful, I feel on top of the world.
- Relaxed and energized, excited to part of an amazing team, so grateful to feel supported.
- Feeling well and invigorated
- Total opposite from in my head and self-conscious to being confident and having a clean life purpose.
- More motivated to do meaningful activities
- This program has been nothing short of transformational it is not a silver bullet, or magic pill (though if you could bottle it, you would make a fortune); rather it is a set of tools with which you must do the work. In being honest, I cannot say that I am 'cured' but I can say with certainty it has made a difference in me.
- More relaxed, grounded, content, inspired to reset my routine and refocus on some improvements.
- Wow I'm in awe and deeply moved by how deep this retreat went to touch on so many areas that I didn't even realise I was struggling in; I cannot thank Michael enough for his vision to bring healing to veterans
- I do feel a little anxious as some of my scars and hurts were cracked open, but I do understand that to move on some of those hurts from my military days needed to be addressed.
- Very well, I feel I can now speak to different people and have a conversation with them.
- I feel relaxed and content. Feeling accepted values and knowing I belong with a tribe of like-minded people
- I am feeling uplifted, connected, and hopeful. My heart is full of love, and I have a renewed sense of purpose to be the best version of myself. I was anxious and going through relapsing bouts of uncertainty and unhealthy coping mechanisms prior to the program. I have identified these unhealthy coping mechanisms and with the support of my tribe, and self-determination and belief, I intend to replace the negative coping mechanisms with positive ways that improve my wellbeing and my relationships.

### **2. What discussion topic was the most interesting and impactful?**

- Various TED talks & the difference between what you are good at & what is your future
- Big Talk this was a great exercise to really have a meaningful conversation with a person whether you have met them before or not
- Dr Nikki Jameson, forgiveness, and Big Talk
- Nikki Jameson on Moral Injury, very insightful
- Growth mindset which is where I am at in my journey
- Big talk and suicide Prevention, these will assist me in my role at RSL Subbranch as a welfare advocate.
- Doing the book review exercise, what I learnt from reading my own book (12 rules for life) and from listening to other people's learnings.



- Exploring moral injury.
- Goal setting, sharing trauma helped me greatly evaluate where I am at.
- John White and Nikki Jameson on Moral Injury.
- John's Moral Compass, immortalities committed in war zones. Nikki explaining moral injury betrayal loss of trust, shame.
- Moral Injury.
- Forgiveness and moral trauma. I know that is more than one topic, but in my defence, it is near impossible to pick only one from a rich and bountiful selection. I chose these two because of their interrelatedness and as they reached a cave in my heart traditional psychology has yet to explore fully.
- Moral Injury was very insightful and an "AHA" moment.
- Perhaps the sugar film to get me moving on health also a Hero's Journey video on forgiveness was powerful.
- Moral Injury/ Trauma with Nikki as I felt validated and heard finally and not dismissed which has given me hope.
- Rob's session on diet was both powerful and inspiring. Applying it to my life/health is challenging
- Big Talk- as this showed me that I did have a problem, and this made me seek the importance of being able to actively listen and communicate with others.
- The discussions on Moral Trauma and Moral injury, with the lived experience of Vietnam Veteran John White and Dr Nikki Jamieson. Both sessions were profoundly powerful, and I connected with their lived experience and research on many levels.

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

- I don't think you can isolate into one thing, the program as a whole led to my experience of peacefulness and clarity.
- Reflection and the end of each day, this allowed me to process what I was feeling during certain parts of the day and be able to express it in a group environment.
- That Sugar Film, Dr Jameson, Moral Trauma/Injury.
- Listening to everyone's stories about what they have done to help themselves, 1% improvement is all it takes to begin change.
- The time to absorb/process the information being taught.
- Information on Moral Injury and how I can recognize it in Veterans and help them in some way.
- The health and nutrition information provided by Rob Buckley. This provided useful and accessible tips for relief of back pain (big for me) and how to restore balance in life/health.
- Hearing about – RIAK Retreat and Life in Action.
- Reflection and the end of each day. This allowed me to process what I was feeling during certain parts of the day and be able to express it in a group environment.
- I enjoyed so many parts it is hard to pick one after each session the group sharing was so beneficial.
- Just working towards all facets of the health and wellbeing.
- The whole program worked for me, all of it was beneficial it has given me a map to follow.
- The process of integrating, film clips, speakers, guest sessions and discussions.
- Hope. I don't know if it could have taken an academic without lived experience as seriously as the mentors in this program. To know that my peers have overcome the very struggle I'm facing and emerged a changed person, inspires me. I know I can be more – I have seen the proof.
- Rob's nutrition talk. Whilst I am not going to try his 'smoothie' I do appreciate the information and learning of the benefits of the different products (i.e., Gelatin, turmeric etc.)
- That I am not alone, there are many networks available for support that are not given to us, it was great to understand what Open Arms offers etc.



- Immersing in all activities, not just talking, but to show we are capable of anything and just taking that first step is all it takes to provide momentum.
- Hard to define. Many of the topics are familiar but also new. I think the sum of the parts is more powerful.
- It's the entire program as it gives you the inspiration to open to others and understand the tools that are available to you and know that you have someone to call if you need it.
- The most effective part of the program is being amongst a group of veterans, with an equal respect for each other, with valued and extensive experience, whom I consider to all be my peer mentors and accountability partners. I am inspired to be a better person to set an example for other veterans and deal with the challenges of the past, present and be resilient to get through the challenges ahead.

#### 4. How was your support on the program?

- Excellent from Peer mentors (Mick Lay) to the Stone family and participants.
- Support was great, the peer mentors were approachable, motivated, and willing to give up their time if required.
- I was supported but happy how others helped, particularly Tony and Rowena.
- Good.
- Great as there was always somebody checking in on welfare.
- Excellent support from all staff and mentors.
- As much support as could ever be expected, great location and facility, great balance between sessions and learning and rest time.
- Well, supported by the team.
- Support was great, the peer mentors we're approachable, motivated, and willing to give up their time if required.
- Faultless I so appreciated the support right from the initial contact Rowena, the chance to have a mentor Darryl was fantastic putting my mind at ease and feeling comfortable in the group.
- Excellent very caring and honest.
- More support than I have ever experienced.
- Scott was very professional, inclusive, and good manner at facilitation.
- Unshakeable, insightful and without judgement or agenda, a 10/10 don't change anything. I found that Rowena's regular contact helped me get here, without it, I would have lost sight amidst the chaos of daily life.
- This is my tribe, so I always feel supported by the crew – the other mentors, staff, and leadership crew. Us mentors I feel did well liaising and balancing off each other.
- Constantly genuine from both mentors and even among fellow veterans.
- Felt very safe and supportive to share.
- The support was incredible, from the veterans who facilitated the many aspects of the program, from the professional providers of the multitude of activities, in the interactions with the community, and most of all from within the circle of trust established by all who participated in this program.
- Outstanding the staff and peer mentors had no problems assisting you when needed.
- It would be hard to improve on the level of support.

#### 5. How does this program differ from other programs or treatment you have experienced?

- I have only attended a faith-based program with the men Alive team, this was holistic but covered areas such as food intake and as such a holistic approach.
- After covering some intense topics there were some great activities to help unwind. Eg. Surfing, reading, and observing sunrise/sunset.
- Less rushed.
- It is a very inclusive, welcoming and gives practical advice towards health and wellbeing.
- It is all taught in a more relaxed environment it is not so clinical as other courses.



- Way more relevant to me than other experiences of learning.
- More experienced and deliberately subtle. More heart focused and inspired self-initiation and realization.
- I had fun, laughter, Joy, program relaxed.
- I found this program continually full of such solid and profound information and commend all that were involved for their outstanding effort.
- Awesome learning pace, not bombarded with PowerPoint, an excellent balance of mental and physical with peer support that has been through the journey.
- There is nothing like this anywhere else that I have experienced.
- You are not treated as a patient with a problem, effectively removing at once that patronizing clinical experience. I liked the focus on forward movement not on re-hashing the past, I feel as if a weight has fallen from my shoulders.
- This one had a lot more quiet/ reflective/ relaxation time than other programs.
- This program is profound- so deliberate in the whole person- mind, body, soul. Its relevant without too much jargon of heavy on the spiritual its practical and hits on the spots that need healing.
- Being so holistic on all aspects which truly passed on tools that could be implemented daily to facilitate change. I live my life this way and run similar programs but it's so nice to have this available for other veterans to get into their heart space, where the answers are instead of being in the head which keeps you safe and limits your life.
- This program not only covers mind/relationships/body/ team building it gives you tools to use when you require them.
- There is a cross section of active participative leaders who facilitate this program with extensive lived experience, credibility, compassion and have developed a well-engineered holistic curriculum that challenges you to be a better version of yourself, to enjoy life, to smile, to be vulnerable, to listen, to love, to forgive, to try new things, to be accountable, to connect, to reinvent yourself, to feel worthy.
- As someone who is not suffering/experiencing PTSD or related, it is exceptional.

### **6. What could be done to improve the Timor Awakening Program?**

- Possibly a short relevant video clip for the Aus. based version so I had a better understanding of what the program was about.
- Hard to fault. Would have to really think about this question.
- Felt time was allocated well.
- The time to process worked well.
- I would say that it is very close to the preferred model.
- Perhaps less takeaway and entry out to align with nutrition and health practices taught.
- Its working very well.
- The program has continually evolved and has reached a very good place it is better balanced with a bit more breaks.
- I hope that many more veterans and service personnel could experience this program. It would save many lives and help many people walk on a better trajectory before the need for acute care, medication, family breakdown, violence, and suicide.
- More of them, so grateful to be included in Timor Awakening 16.
- The only thing would be to meet the East Timorese people, although I know it can't be helped due to Covid.
- On the structure, organization, content, and delivery I have little to offer by way of improvement. I did, however, find myself getting agitated and distracted by one of the participants. They seemed to use every opportunity to self-promoter, or steer, the conversation away from its original path. I'm sure this wasn't their intention but instead of contributing to the experience of the group I detracted from it.





- Covid to go away so that we can go to Timor-Leste and immerse in the culture, but it was an amazing retreat at Coolangatta that I really need to recharge those batteries.
- Include experienced that entrance dreams and immerse others in things they don't think they deserve or are possible for them.
- Developing the leadership to move beyond "the founders" is a great challenge imparting the vision and heart to others is necessary.

### 7. What is your greatest challenge? In what area do you feel stuck?

- Possibly about how best to "pay it forward" but getting some idea how this could work.
- Excepting that I am not perfect and its ok to stumble. I feel stuck in learning and education
- Learning to embrace change and be comfortable with it.
- Dealing with my emotions.
- Relationships with close family and patience.
- Feeling burnt out and in need of slowing down to rejuvenate mind/body/soul. Having the time, money, and ability to travel for a break.
- Still not losing sight to get under 80kg.
- Excepting that I am not perfect and its ok to stumble. I feel stuck in learning and education.
- Was too much internet – reducing more emails etc.
- Finding the right support.
- My medication keeps me constantly trying to balance out, I feel in danger sometimes.
- Researching and pursuing Moral Injury.
- Forgiveness and Moral Injury. I found the first day very triggering for me. To see other veterans, forgive the Indonesians and militias initially made me furious. I seriously considered alcohol and other distractions, to dull the flare and numb the wound. Later, when the video Xanana Gusmao put together was played, I started to look at forgiveness in a new light, but I still struggle with this concept.
- I have considerable challenges with sleep, a hypervigilant mind, alcohol abuse, connection to society and committing to relationships. I'm working on these things now, sometimes it's like walking through soft sand, but I have hope that I am heading in the right direction.
- Lack of time or the perception of lack of time, prioritizing time effectively to fit in the important stuff i.e., fitness and reading etc.
- Yoga. I understand its relevance, but I did struggle with the chanting side of things, but I do believe it needs to stay on the program.
- Forgiving defence for the decision of punishment on lack on punishment against my perpetrator who hurt me immensely over a long period, to protect the boys club! I am worthy and I am deserving of being protected.
- As a serving member I am aware that I am not part of the ex-service community, preparing for such a transition is key.
- Relationships/communications I don't believe that I am stuck now, I feel a lot more confident in going forward now.

### 8. What is your key intention or life change that you will take away from this program?

- About how best to serve my faith, my family, work, and others.
- A positive outlook on life. Look at what is important and apply it to your day/goals.
- To embrace flexibility and change.
- Practice big talk to help gain more confidence with connecting with others
- Improve relationships with family and others using skills learnt on the program
- To utilise the health principles taught and keep reading personal development books to feed my mind.
- I just want to remain positive and not judgmental or critical of people or programs
- A positive outlook on life. Look at what is important and apply it to your day/goals



- To continue to serve with VCAI and support magnificent leaders Michael and Gary Stone. They make the impossible happen with Australian veterans and Timor people.
- When making goals start small and reach out for support as I need it.
- Mindfulness and Active listening
- Live my purpose. Make everything I do each day to be something to improve.
- I can often find life overwhelming. The concept of looking for 1% improvement in each area of my life feels both realistic and instinctually the right approach. The lifestyle audit helped identify areas of under or over-investment, planning to rectify the imbalance.
- Re-priorities time and focus on health through fitness and nutrition.
- Commit to healthier lifestyle choices food and exercise, breathing and gratitude
- Continue my path of raising the energy vibration in others and showing what is possible by being the change I need to see in the world and as a result creating opportunities to create impact in humanitarian efforts.
- I will challenge myself daily to connect with society, to work to bring a smile to other people's faces, to help others, in the hope to experience joy, purpose, and stay out of the darkness.
- To give back to invest in the veteran's community in due time.
- To be a better husband/father/grandfather.

### 9. What is your advice for DVA and the ESO community to reduce Veteran suicide, domestic violence and helping veterans onto the earliest possible path of wellbeing?

- Making and advertising these types of programs as a continuum. I.e., on entry to, as part of and at the exit of military life.
- More promotion, radio, TV, talks on bases to current soldiers discharging.
- Take note of veteran Peer to Peer run health and wellbeing programs like Timor Awakening with view to fund and take nation-wide.
- More courses similar to this program.
- Early intervention i.e., start a meaningful process before veterans leave the ADF. Train a workforce of Peer mentors to assist advise veterans.
- Understand that each case is different, no one size fits all. There are a range of ESO's and clinical interventions that can help the key is to refer them on to the right people and organisations.
- Promoting wellbeing.
- More promotion. Radio, Tv, talks on bases to current soldiers discharging.
- Fund more of the peer support peer programs.
- Having programs like Timor Awakening is an amazing start, with conversation connection and understanding.
- I advise that there needs to be more time invested in the ADF leadership training curriculum on character development, moral courage, and holistic health. Deliberate compulsory transition should be part of the contracted departure from ADF to Reserves or discharge. DVA should incorporate more funded activities that promote meaningful social connection and utilise veteran role models like in Timor Awakening with contemporary approaches to wellness. From personal experience, single male veterans with PTS, Depression, Morale trauma, without meaningful social connection, are all **very high risk** of self-harm or harm to others. I hope that our political leaders can see the importance of values to the military and veteran community. They do not get to pick and choose Anzac Values and should be honorable in our dealings with our veterans, their families and with other countries who suffer from the war or poverty that their foreign policy and national interest initiates.
- Engage within the military before transition.
- Attend this program.
- Integrate your services.
- I would like to see moral injury investigated further and incorporated into a holistic treatment plan. Having representatives from other organisations participating and experiencing the growth and change would potentially increase the effectiveness of their approach.



- Connections surrounding vets with like-minded people. Then educate from back to basics also, a simple source/site to show resources available.
- Listen to Nikki Jameson and make a way for real healing not a quick fix but deep healing takes time to genuine care.
- Better transition and support on leaving defence.
- Peer to peer mentoring.
- To support programs like Veteran's Care.

### 10. Who do you have to hold you to account for the changes you wish to make or have made?

- Myself.
- Wife, Parents.
- Myself.
- My partner and my Peers.
- My partner and possibly Gary.
- My Girlfriend, close friends, and other people on a similar journey in life.
- My wife.
- Wife and friends.
- Men alive buddy as I meet every Thursday morning for coffee with others.
- My close friend and my mentor have both offered to be there for accountability.
- Myself.
- Scotty, Cindy, Mick, Sean.
- Me.
- Family, friends, doctors, and mentors.
- Myself.
- My family and myself.
- Vicki accountability partner.
- Now I mostly rely on my closest family, and I am slowly rebuilding friendships to become close enough to open with vulnerability (only military ones at this point). I am working very hard and finding it difficult to open to civilian social networks. I am hopeful and confident that this will be very healthy for me if I can achieve some breakthroughs.
- My relationship with Gary.
- Tony Irwin.

### 11. How do you intend to engage ongoing support for your personal growth?

- I will keep in contact and hope to support the TA community.
- Continue to look for opportunities, courses, conferences, to attend and participate or teach/mentor.
- Keep looking to be with positive mindset people who allow me to grow and change.
- Find a new psychiatrist.
- Help veterans care in and where possible and continue to help veterans in my RSL role.
- Remain physical in the veteran community and stay abreast of what opportunities exist
- Continue personal development.
- Continue to look for opportunities, courses, conferences to attend and participate or teach/mentor.
- VCAI and men alive, try to follow the great life, advice and use the tools that they provide
- Make attainable steps through lists to check off with my accountability team keep in touch with this group to follow their journey and my own.
- Through nominated peer mentor.
- Increase my involvement in the veteran community.
- Talk to very immediate supporters.



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- Seeking out mentors in each area of my life that can continually find the 1% improvement I need, network more and become more sociable.
- I will reach out if needed.
- Read, research, seek was to connect with other programs like reboot etc.
- Constant and never ending, listening to podcasts, working on self, accountability, surround self with other go getters, be the leader and change need to see in world.
- By participating on other programs that Veterans Care run.
- I have taken the advice to establish a professional network of psychology support, pain/injury management through EP/Physio/Exercise, engaging in veteran activities and pushing into community activities. I aspire to read more, continue to find inspiration through leading growth talkers online such as TED talks.
- Through the network of friends and accountability structure there are preventing in my life.

### 12. Any additional comments or feedback.

- Thank you so much for the work you do and the effort you have made to support this community, well done.
- VCA keep running a great program Domestic or International.
- Keep up the great work
- Awesome program to diverse and different to other available programs really felt part of the tribe.
- You have been a very practical yet conceptual program.
- I was very surprised by this course. I don't know what I was expecting but I could not have anticipated the depth, breadth and gravity of the lessons learned I hope to come back one day as a mentor and pay this experience forward. Thank You
- I am immensely grateful to be accepted to attend this course and for Rowena who could tell that I needed to attend when I felt underserving to attend, I am thankful to Michael and Gary for their grace and leadership I will be back.
- TA16 was an incredible program that demonstrated care for veterans, inspiration, hope and practical pathways during a very tough period with the challenges of covid, isolation, lockdowns, and the collapse of costly war in Afghanistan. The compassion, love, tolerance, inspiration, camaraderie, and courage of the team and all who participated was a revitalising breath of fresh air.
- Thank you for this incredible time to help heal. Many other veterans have not been as forgiving to immerse in personal and spiritual growth like I have. This is what heals so thank you for seeing the importance and helping veterans feel values again.





# TIMOR AWAKENING 16

## GOLD COAST

Saturday 21 to Sunday 29 August 2021



## OFFICIAL PROGRAM

Timor Awakening is an immersive peer to peer wellbeing program for veterans; composing holistic health education, group therapy, mentoring, counselling, physical activity, historical commemoration and community development. The TA program is centered around group immersion creating a disruption from participant's routine to take pause, learn about themselves and seize responsibility for a positive direction forward in life. Veterans provide each other with inspiration, practical tools, strategies and routines in overcoming trauma and re-establishing purposeful lives.

While COVID 19 has restricted capacity to deliver programs in Timor-Leste, VCA is delivering a series of holistic health programs in Australia. TA16 includes the range of topics covered in Timor-Leste. The detailed explanation and range of topics, discussions and activities are described at the rear of this program.

**Prepared by Michael Stone – Program Director**  
**Correct as at 20 Aug 2021 – Final Program**





# TIMOR AWAKENING 16 (TA16)



Sat 21 Aug to Sun 29 Aug 2021



## Day 1 – Saturday 21 August 2021

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
1	8am – 11 am	Travel to St Georges Defence Resort, 192 Marine Parade, Rainbow Bay, QLD	Parking underneath building after check-in
2	9am – 12 noon	Check-in St Georges Apartments	St Georges Defence Suites 192 Marine Parade, Coolangatta
3	12 am – 2 pm	Self-familiarisation with neighbourhood – local own lunch arrangements	
4	1:30–4:00 pm	Pre-Program Interviews with Peer Mentors	
5	4.00 pm	Afternoon Tea	
6	4:30 pm	Opening session. TA Video. 1-minute masterpieces, introductions, admin & overview brief of TA Meet and greet, helping dinner prep	Ground floor kitchen/BBQ area
7	6:30 pm	Dinner: Fahitas and salad (team effort)	Mexican Night OIC: Holly

### Notes.

- Peer Mentors to provide venue orientation, hand out TA shirts and conduct Interviews.

### Contact Details of VCA Coord team

Rowena (VCA Liaison/POC):	0424343416	rowena@veteranscare.com.au
Gary Stone:	0403270515	gary@veteranscare.com.au
Michael Lay:	0435475709	michael.j.lay@hotmail.com
Scott McAndrew:	0402451018	scottmcandrew@icloud.com
Katie Kilpatrick:	0408885654	kilpatrick.k@me.com
Darryl Ryan:	0499295844	darryl.ryan77@outlook.com
Tony Irwin:	0427297314	anthony.irwin2@bigpond.com
Candice Carrol:	0400850317	candice@veteranscare.com.au

## Day 2 – Sunday 22 August 2021

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme: Grounding			
1	6:30 am	Morning walk along oceanfront Local walk to Point Danger – stretching and opening up	Candice TEC – Mick L
2	7:30 am	Breakfast	
3	8:30 am	Morning Session, Loc: Circle Team building activity, Grounding Journal	<i>Intro Video: JP Individual MA/MS</i>
4	9:00 am	Nutrition Introduction, discussion, Loc: TV Room	<i>Intro Video: Gut Michael S / Rob B</i>
5	10:00 am	Morno's	
6	10:30 am	Welcome and introductions / Expectations - TV Room	Michael Stone <i>Video – BB Vulnerability</i>
7	12:30 am	Lunch – Rear BBQ area at St Georges (BunningsSS/Kebabs)	1:30 pm - QOV
8	2:00 pm	Holistic Health Overview, Loc: Circle (30 mins)	Gary Stone
9	2.40 pm	Health and Wellbeing Plan Introduction, Loc: Circle (20 mins)	Michael Stone
10	3:00 pm	Afternoon Tea	
11	3:30 PM	That Sugar Film	
12	5.00pm	Toilet break and green tea	
13	5:30 PM	Circle Time: grounding and share, Loc: Circle	
14	7:00 PM	Dinner – Rainbow Bay SLSC	Colin to book & pay

### Expected Visitors for TA16

Nutritionist:	Mr Rob Buckley, Date: Sun 22 Aug 21, 0437 770 587, Host: Gary Stone.
Open Arms:	Pip Wheiland / Jayme Temple, 0437 669 145, Tue 24 Aug, Host: Gary Stone.
RSL:	Welfare Officer, Ms Pauline Ryan, Tue 24 Aug, Host: Scott McAndrew. Partnerships Coordinator, Wed 25 Aug, Emma Campbell, Host: Gary Stone
Suicidologist:	Dr Nikki Jamieson, nikkijamieson@hotmail.com, Date: Fri 27 Aug, Host: Gary Stone.
Open Arms:	David Lauw (Peer Coord), Emma Adams (Community Development). Host: Gary Stone.



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# TIMOR AWAKENING 16 (TA16)



Sat 21 Aug to Sun 29 Aug 2021



## Day 3 – Monday 23 August 2021

## Day 4 – Tuesday 24 August 2021

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme: Relationships			
1	6:30 am	Morning Health Activity	Lead: VHA
2	7:00 – 8:30 am	Wash and Breakfast	
3	8:30 am	Morning session – Loc: TV Room	Meditation Compassion Video – Hindrances to self-mastery
4	8.45 am	Big Talk – Communication / active listening	Lead: Mick Albrecht Intro Video: Big Talk
5	10 am	Morno's	
6	10:30 am	Body Language – Loc: TV Room (Physical & discuss)	Lead: Mick Albrecht Video: Body Language
7	11:00 am	Relationships - Syndicate	Lead: Mick Lay Syndicate - Team Leaders
8	12:30 pm	Lunch - Takeaway #1 – Eat across the road	View of the ocean
9	1:30 pm	Team Building Activity Book Review Project	
10	3:30 pm	Walk back to St Georges	
11	4:00 pm	Afternoon Tea break	
12	4.30 pm	Circle time – Loc: TV Room then move to circle	Intro Video: 12 Rules for life
13	5:15 pm	Personal time to enjoy sunset / surf / swim	
14	6:30 pm	Dinner – Takeaway #2 at St Georges	

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme: Body			
1.	6:30 am	Meet in conference room	Michael
2	6:45 am	Depart St Georges	192 Marine Parade, Coolangatta QLD 4225
3	7:30 – 9:00 am	Beginners Yoga <a href="http://www.yogaofself.com.au">www.yogaofself.com.au</a>	Move to Om Café, 1206 Currumbin Creek Rd OIC Yoga: Scotty Mac (prep registrations)
4	9:00 am	Breakfast: Om Café (Optional: swim across road at C Pool)	1206 Currumbin Creek Road, Currumbin Valley <a href="https://omcafe.com.au/cafe-menu/">https://omcafe.com.au/cafe-menu/</a>
5	10:00 am	Travel to Freemans Organic Farm	Toomewin Rd Currumbin
6	10:30 - 12:30 pm	Farm tour and nutrition workshop	OIC FF: Gary Stone Lead: David Freeman Loc: Freemans Lookout
7	12.30 pm	Lunch at Freeman homestead	Sumptuous Fine Foods to deliver 12.15pm Leesa Trigga - 0488 206 893
8	1.30 pm	Return to Rainbow Bay	
9	2.45 pm	Team activity - Circle	
10	3.00 pm	Morale Injury Discussion with John White	Gary Stone / John White, DSC Q & A from participants
11	4.00 – 4:20 pm	Afternoon tea, coffee	
12	4:20 pm	Suicide Prevention Introduction and syndicate discussion	Gary Stone Syndicate: Team Leaders
11	5.10 pm	Circle Time – Reflections of the day	
12	6.30 pm	Dinner – Team dinners	Team discretion.

### Admin Notes.

VHA contacts: Christian and Tommi, Host and TA Coord – Darryl Ryan.

### Admin Notes.

Currumbin Valley coaches - [1300 794 373](tel:1300794373), Driver: Dennis French - 0409 361 949

Hugh Jack, Yoga of Self: 0433 413 988

David Freeman: 0428 777 763 / Leesa Trigga - 0488 206 893, <https://www.sumptuousfinefood.com/>

Visitors: Open Arms – Pip Wheeland / Jayme Temple, 0437 669 145, Tue 24 Aug, Host: Gary Stone.

RSL Welfare Officer – Pauline



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# TIMOR AWAKENING 16 (TA16)



Sat 21 Aug to Sun 29 Aug 2021



## Day 5 – Wednesday 25 August 2021

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme: Mindset			
1	6:30 – 7:20 am	Intro to Boxing and Calisthenics	Lead: VHA
2	7:30 am	Breakfast	
3	8:00 – 10:30am	Surfing Lesson – Rainbow Bay <a href="https://www.coolangattaleartosurf.com/">https://www.coolangattaleartosurf.com/</a> POC: David - coolylearn2surf@hotmail.com	Lead: Mick Lay Note: Confirmed
	10:30 am	Shower, Change and Morning tea	
4	11 am	Mindset / Making changes Team Syndicate: Mindset – applying that to life	Video: Growth Mindset Lead: Michael Stone (5am) Team Leaders (States)
5	11:40 am	Team 5-minute presentation to group on mindset	
6	12.00 am	Break / BBQ Prep	
7	12.30 pm	Lunch – Bbq @ StG (Lamb Cutlets, Salads)	Lead: Colin Ahern
8	2.00 pm	Video – A Hero’s Journey	Intro Video: Forgiveness Lead: Michael Stone
9	3:30 pm	Afternoon herbal tea and celery sticks	
10	4.00 pm	Forgiveness discussion Forgiveness activities – write and burn	Lead: Gary Stone Syndicate - Team Leaders
10	4:50 pm	Break	
11	5 pm	Circle Time: Reflection Loc: outside with magnesium foot baths	Meditation – Mind and Body Col & Team Emu to prep
12	6.30 pm	Dinner – Rest night / Coolangatta Hotel (Trivia Night)	

### Admin Notes.

RSL QLD Emma Campbell to visit from 11am to 2pm.

## Day 6 – Thursday 26 August 2021

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme: Taking ownership			
1	6:30 am	Beach Volleyball – Rainbow Bay	Lead: Darryl Ryan
2	7:30 - 8:00 am	Breakfast	Change to yoga clothes
3	8:30 am	Morning session – TV Room: accountability, habits	Mick Stone Video – Goggins (10m)
4	8:50 am	Lifestyle Audit (from Smart Book)	Lead – Katie Klipatrick Syndicate - Team Leaders
5	9:20 am	Addiction and relapse prevention	Lead – Scotty M Syndicate - Team Leaders
6	10:00 am	Morno’s / Prep for bus	
7	10:15 am	Depart St Georges for Currumbin Pools (Yoga)	
8	11:00 – 12.30 am	Yoga – Yoga of Self	Restorative Yoga
9	12:30 – 1:45 pm	Lunch – OM Café	Depart for Currumbin
10	1:45 pm	Drive to Rainbow Bay	
11	14:30 pm	Reading time – book project preparation	
12	4:00 pm	Circle Time – Loc: TV Room then move to circle	Intro video – JP Take action
13	5:15 pm	Beach sunset	
14	6:30 pm	Dinner – Takeaway #3 @ St Georges	

### Admin Notes.

Currumbin Valley coaches - [1300 794 373](tel:1300794373), Driver: Dennis French - 0409 361 949







# TIMOR AWAKENING 16 (TA16)



Sat 21 Aug to Sun 29 Aug 2021



## Day 6 – Friday 27 August 2021

## Day 7 – Saturday 28 August 2021

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme: Purpose			
1	6:30 am	Group EP Session, Loc: meet out front	Lead: VHA
2	7:30 am	Breakfast	
3	8:30 am	Morning Session – Loc: Circle	Lead: Mick S <i>Atomic Habits</i>
4	8:50 am	Finding your purpose – Loc: TV Room	Lead: Mick Lay <i>Syndicate - Team Leaders</i>
	9.20 am	Break	
5	9.30 am	Goal setting Syndicate Activity – Loc: TV Room	Lead: Mick Lay <i>Syndicate - Team Leaders</i>
6	10:00 am	Morno's	
7	10:30 am	Sleep Management – Loc: TV Room	Lead: Katie Kilpatrick <i>Syndicate: Team Leaders</i>
8	11:20 am	Break	
9	11.30 – 12.15 am	Mentoring – being a mentor and using mentors	Lead: Scotty Mac <i>Syndicate - Team Leaders</i>
10	12:30 – 1:30 pm	Lunch (Rainbow Bay Surf Club)	Colin to book
11	14:00 pm	Morale Injury – Guest Dr Nikki Jameison	Gary to introduce
12	15:00 pm	Break	
13	15:30 pm	Health and Well-being plan	Lead: Darryl Ryan <i>Syndicate - Team Leaders</i>
14	16:00 pm	Afternoon tea	
15	16:30 pm	Individuals explain their chosen book – Outdoor Circle	Lead: Tony Irwin
16	17:20 pm	Break – grab magnesium baths	
17	17:30 pm	Circle time, Loc: outside with magnesium foot baths	
18	6:30 pm	Dinner – Free night	CAKYO

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme – Decompression, Evaluation and Transition			
1	6:30 am	Self PT – Surf / Swim / Walk	
2	8:00 am	Wash and Breakfast	
3	8:30 am	Morning session – Loc: Circle	Meditation Path to Transformation
4	9:00 am	Evaluation paperwork	Lead: Candice
5	9:30 am	Interviews with Peer Mentors – session 1	Podcast Interviews
6	10:30 - 11 am	Morno's	
7	11-12.00 am	Interviews with Peer Mentors – session 2	Podcast Interviews
8	12:30 am	Lunch	BBQ
9	1.30 pm	Interviews with Peer Mentors – session 3	Podcast Interviews
10	3:00 pm	Transitions	Gary leads group discussion
11	3:40 pm	Afternoon tea	
12	4:00 pm	Activity: Letter to self	Lead: Candice
13	4:30 pm	Circle Time, Loc: Circle	My Timor Awakening
14	5pm	Beach sunset	
16	6:30 pm	Dinner – Takeaway #4 @ St Georges	Restaurant alternate plan

### Notes.

Open Arms Visitors David Lauw (Peer Coord), Emma Adams (Community Development)



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# TIMOR AWAKENING 16 (TA16)



Sat 21 Aug to Sun 29 Aug 2021



## Day 8 – Sunday 29 August 2021

## Veterans Education Training Scheme Timor-Leste

Ser.	Time	Activity	Remarks
Theme – New beginnings			
1	6:30 am	Self PT – Surf / Swim / Walk / Morning Prayer	Lead: Gary
2	7:30 am	Breakfast	
3	8:30 am	Check out	Check out and pack cars.
4	9:00 am	Morning session: Loc TV Room then to circle	VETS/Riak Retreat TA Participant Resources
5	9:45 am	Farewell	
6	10:30 am	TA16 Support Team debrief	Conference Room

In recognition and respect to the support and sacrifice that the poorest of Timorese communities provided in WW2 and in the TL struggle for Independence, veterans of Australia and Timor-Leste are providing pathways out of poverty, pathways of peace, pathways of dignity through education. As part of the Timor Awakening program, Australian and Timorese veterans have been collaborating in the development of an education centre south of Same, Timor-Leste. Whilst many development projects and international support halted due to the Covid19 crisis, the veteran’s education centre in Same made remarkable progress, and starts classes in January 2020. The facility is to provide vocational education, training and life skills for rural youth to enable poverty alleviation, develop rural markets and support labour mobility.



**Full Time students sing the school anthem every morning.  
The anthem reminds us to focus on aims for personal development.  
After the school anthem they will go to the class.  
Every Monday they sing the national anthem.**

The aim of the Veteran centres is to empower rural poor citizens with skills that will benefit rural economic development, international trade cooperation and opportunity for rural Timorese to qualify for the seasonal labour and pacific labour schemes. The development of these centres will create jobs and invigorate learning and cooperation outside of Dili, in particular for historical tourism, agriculture and climate change. Australian Government financial support to this project will be a practical Covid19 recovery stimulus with enduring impact. Australian veterans are proud to be contributing to Timor-Leste through this school project in building peace and prosperity for our friends, allies and our region.

[See the latest report on the school from March 2020](#)

### Donation bank transfer details:

**Account Name:** VCA AUSSIE VETERANS RETREAT **BSB:** 034 061 **Account Number:** 433059

Please contact Mick with questions - [michael@veteranscare.com.au](mailto:michael@veteranscare.com.au)

## END OF PROGRAM – Obrigado



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