



SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENT'S WANDERERS EDUCATION PROGRAM



"The Wanderers Education Program is the first-ever charity established to provide educational opportunities to serving SASR soldiers who commit to sacrificing their lives to protect our way of life"

Mark Donaldson VC



INTRODUCTION to Wanderers Education Program

The Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) is a special missions unit within the Australian Defence Force (ADF) tasked to provide Special Operations capabilities in support of national interests, and frequently functions in environments beyond the range and capability of conventional forces and other government agencies. Since 1957 the SASR – guided by the motto “Who Dares Wins” – has served Australia both domestically and offshore, with heightened demands placed on the unit following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. This tragic day marked the beginning of thousands of SASR combat and discreet mission sets in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor Leste, and other undisclosed global locations. Seven men serving with the SASR have paid the ultimate sacrifice since 2001, either in direct combat with, or in preparing for operations against, terrorists seeking to harm Australian interests. Many dozens more have been seriously injured over the same period with a total of 48 SASR soldiers killed in combat or training since 1960. Adding to these physical stressors, SASR personnel regularly spend months and sometimes years deployed around the world, and continue to do so to this day. This takes a significant toll on both SAS personnel, their partners, and families as they selflessly commit their lives to protecting our way of life.

While their military training is world – class, these skills are often not directly transferable to the outside world. After so many years spent honing their unique skills, knowledge, and capabilities transitioning into civilian life upon termination poses significant challenges. In late 2015 the SASR established it’ s first – ever “in – service” philanthropic initiative to support serving and transitioning SAS soldiers, called the Wanderers Education Program (WEP), which in May 2016 was formally embedded in the SASR’ s official charity, the SAS Resources Fund, as a sub – fund within Trust No3. The WEP was initially endowed with \$250,000 from three founding benefactors – VGI Partners, the Angela Wright Bennett Foundation, and the Joye family – to support merit – based applications by SASR personnel to pursue further study at leading Australian educational institutions. Over \$1.5 million in generous donations from a small number of vetted Australians has since been raised in total.



VISION

The vision of the WEP is that by 2025 all SASR personnel will be afforded the opportunity to automatically commence tertiary study beyond a negotiable minimum period of service.

THE GOALS OF THE WANDERERS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ARE TO:

- Give select and vetted private sector partners the opportunity to contribute to SASR personnel welfare by way of assisting with merit-based education scholarships;
- Build trusted networks with small communities of experienced non-military leaders and mentors;
- Enable SASR personnel to successfully assimilate back into, and actively contribute to, the community through their professional and personal lives once they complete their service;
- Build familial resilience in SAS personnel, their spouses and children by giving them confidence and certainty for their future transition out of the military;
- Ensure that the SASR remains a destination employer of choice for Special Operations personnel globally, and is continuously engaged in augmenting its own capabilities through benchmarking and sharing with select external educational and private sector networks in the name of protecting Australia’s national security interests;
- Build psychological resilience and intellectual curiosity within SASR personnel; and
- Enhance SASR operational capability of SASR by providing personnel with an opportunity to enhance their human capital via world-class educational experiences, including non-military programs that help them build on and develop a diverse array of leadership, management, strategy, negotiation, decision-making and vocation-specific skill-sets.

GROWING UNIVERSITY NETWORK

In early 2016, SASR and the University of Western Australia Business School (UWABS) signed a memorandum of-understating (MOU) to formalise the first pilot for the WEP, a relationship that has progressed from strength to strength and continues to afford SASR with local (WA) access to unique professional development and education opportunities. Built on the success of this collaboration, in late 2017 SASR and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) signed an MOU to formalise a new relationship under the WEP framework. Further, recent engagements between SASR and the Harvard Business School, the University of Cambridge and the University of Melbourne have opened up additional opportunities to evolve the WEP. Such relationships have significantly contributed to building trust and awareness in advance of more recent collaborations between the broader ADF and academic institutions.

In this short time the program has expanded to support over 20 SASR members who have enrolled in various tertiary and vocational studies, including in business, teaching, sports science, and high performance. The program anticipates growth of five scholars per annum over the medium term underpinned by rigorous application processes, for which SASR’ s Commanding Officer is directly responsible and accountable for.

INTEGRATION OF WANDERERS EDUCATION PROGRAM INTO SAS RESOURCES FUND

The SAS Resources Fund (SASRF) is a perpetual trust fund established following the Black Hawk accident on 12 June 1996, in which 15 SASR personnel were killed in training. This highly respected charity was originally created to provide relief to current and former members of the SASR who become deceased or permanently disabled in or as a result of operational service or in training.

The SASRF received a \$10 million Deed of Gift from the Federal Government in March 2009 that has enabled it to have a strong financial base upon which to look after its beneficiaries. Today the SASRF has scores of beneficiaries including numerous children and disabled soldiers. The children are looked after until they reach the age of 25 years while former SASR soldiers receive support for the term of their natural life.

In May 2016 a sub – fund of the SASRFs third trust, (a DGR1 status organisation) called Trust No 3, was established for the express purpose of financially supporting the WEP and acts as the custodian for donations received from benefactors. The program is operationally administered through the SASR’ s Human Performance Cell.

The SASRF provides the WEP with governance oversight, full auditability by Ernst and Young, and tax refundable status for benefactors.

Michael Jeffery AC, CVO, MC, the former Commanding Officer of the SASR and Governor General of Australia, is the Patron of the SASRF, with Mr Mark Donaldson VC and Mr Ben Roberts – Smith VC MG serving as Ambassadors.

The Chairman is Mr Greg Solomon and the Deputy Chairman is Dr Grant Walsh CSM. The SASRF’ s Trustees include:

- Treasurer Mr Rob Druitt B Com MBA
- Commanding Officer, Special Air Service Regiment
- Mr Andrew Forrest AO
- Mr Nicholas Brasington, B Com, ACA – Associate
- Ms Michelle Hawksley, LLB (Hons) B Econ
- Mr James McMahon DSC DSM
- Dr Mark Nidorf MD MBBS FRACP FACC FCSANZ
- Mr Kerry Stokes AC
- Ms Caron Sugars
- Hon Peter Blaxell
- Mr Alan Cransberg
- Mr Peter Fitzpatrick AM GAICD AO AM



FUNDING CONDITIONS

All SASR recipients of funding from the WEP are required to formally agree to its conditions, which include the following terms, amongst other things:

“By virtue of the fact that you have accepted a funded position in the WEP, you are undertaking an enduring commitment to the SASR, whether as an Operator, support staff, or as future Alumni. This privilege is underwritten by moral obligations against which you will be measured by your peers. These obligations are designed to safeguard the articles of the program as stated above, and to ensure the program remains successful into the future. These moral obligations include, but are not limited to;

- 1. All students commit to making enduring, valuable, and worthwhile contributions to the program, the people, and the inherent relationships so to benefit future SASR students; that is, students will aim to leave the program better than they found it.*
- 2. Whilst students cannot legally be held to a return of service, you are expected to return reasonable service to SASR commensurate with the investment this program bestows. That is, students are expected not to profitably ‘study and run’. This may take the form of a commitment to the SASR Reserve as support staff in training and selection for the years following your discharge, where it is reasonable to do so.*
- 3. You have an obligation to the benefactors who support the program to see out your studies and training, and to optimise their investment in the program.*
- 4. Whilst a beneficiary in the program you are expected to support and mentor new students enrolled in and applying for the program.*
- 5. Students are obliged to continue to contribute to the program beyond their education. This may take the form of in-kind support, mentoring, or fundraising.*
- 6. Whilst in the program you continue to be a representative of SASR and your behaviour, attitude, and the ethical standards you uphold are to reflect the SASR ethos. Any contravention of this will risk your position in the program.*
- 7. In due course soldiers will leave the unit and program; however, until this point active poaching or headhunting of soldiers in the program by business is discouraged, and as such all students are to ensure this is clear in all external interactions and relationships.”*