

**MEDIA RELEASE****Embargoed until 25 January 2017****A “Platoon” a Week Seeks Lifesaving Help*****State Opposition Leader Tim Nicholls Honours ‘Mates’ at Unique Recovery Centre in Townsville***

State Opposition Leader Tim Nicholls will today (25/01/17) visit a unique rehabilitation program in North Queensland that is now providing weekly help for up to 50 current and ex-service personnel suffering psychological trauma.

The latest data from the Mates4Mates Townsville Family Recovery Centre shows that the demand for its services throughout north and central Queensland is on the rise, with up to 15 new members being inducted by its team of psychologists every week.

“The first few months after Christmas can be an especially challenging time for our members,” said Mates4Mates North Queensland Manager Denis Devantier.

“When most people are heading back to a secure job after a holiday with a spring in their step and some New Year’s resolutions under their belts, many of our Mates are facing the exact opposite.

“Unstable or absent employment, financial pressure and shattered confidence as they seek purpose in their civilian lives,” he said.

In the past year, Mates4Mates has received more than 9,000 separate contacts from injured current or ex-serving men and women and their families living in north and central Queensland, seeking help for physical or psychological trauma.

In order to meet this demand effectively, Mates4Mates has developed a unique blend of psychological therapies and adventure rehabilitation challenges, including water-based activities like sailing and kayaking, wheelchair basketball and rugby and Equine Therapy where participants interact with horses.

“These men and women are heroes, they have answered our country’s call and we must recognise their dedication and sacrifice by supporting them as best we can,” Queensland Opposition Leader Tim Nicholls said.

“Mates4Mates picks up where government leaves off, it’s an organisation that cares, listens and helps when it’s needed most and it’s an honour to spend some time with some Mates and listen to their stories.

“It gives me a real idea of what these men and women have sacrificed, what they are confronting now and what’s needed in terms of support in the future,” he said.

Mates4Mates is an independent charity recognised as providing the most progressive, integrated support programs in the country, with life-changing results such as suicide prevention.

It is the only organisation with dedicated Family Recovery Centres, also helping wives, husbands, children and loved ones all to rebuild lives.

Additional Liaison Officers have recently been appointed in Cairns and Rockhampton to meet the demand for its services, with membership nationally doubling year on year since Mates4Mates was founded in 2013.

## **INTERVIEW AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES**

**When: 11:30am-12:30pm, Wednesday 25 January 2017**

**What:** Qld Opposition Leader Tim Nicholls visits Mates4Mates Family Recovery Centre in Townsville

**Where:** 40 Anne Street (cnr Anne and Wotton), Aitkenvale

### **Details:**

- **Qld Opposition Leader Tim Nicholls** will be available for interview and will participate in a wheelchair basketball training session with Mates4Mates members
- **Mates4Mates North Queensland Manager Denis Devantier** will explain the unique services Mates4Mates provides
- **'Mates' attending the Townsville Family Recovery Centre**, playing basketball and working out in the gym

**- End -**

Facebook: /Mates4Mates

Twitter: @mates4mates

Instagram: @mates4mates

---

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Paul Stone, Evoke Communications

**M:** 0414 326 848 **E:** [paul@evokecommunications.com.au](mailto:paul@evokecommunications.com.au)