



Safety net needed for vets

Service has ongoing toll

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ON April 25, four Brisbane veterans will attend Dawn Services to honour the Anzac legacy and their mates.

Kevin Hughes, Scott Nuku, Rob Vonk and Mick Turnock are connected by their shared pasts as veterans of Australia's conflicts.

Ferny Hills' Rob Vonk, who served in the Australian Army for 34 years and was deployed to Iraq, said everyone should try to make time for the Dawn Service.

"Anzac Day, to me, is about remembering the very first day the Anzac tradition started. It's not about a celebration of where I've been or where we've been, because

other people will remember us, as we remember the first guys on the beach on Anzac Day," he said.

"The poignant things are remembering the guys you served with that aren't here."

Each of the men struggle with the after-effects of their service, such as injuries, post traumatic stress disorder and losing the "tribe" of mates they had in the defence force. Mates4Mates is helping them rebuild their lives and tribe.

Mr Vonk recalled seeing another servicemen speaking harshly to his child and recognised it for what it was immediately.

"I've got PTSD coming out of my ears. That's what I've done to my daughter," he said.

He urged the man to seek help and a few months later

was thanked for his advice.

"Wouldn't it be great to have a great Mates4Mates

presence on base?" he said.

"There should be no reason that they (the young ones) should slip through the cracks, there should be more safety nets to catch them," Mr Turnock said.



Kevin Hughes, Scott Nuku, Rob Vonk and Mick Turnock at Mates4Mates.

PICTURE: AAP/SARAH MARSHALL