



WHAT ANZAC DAY MEANS TO ME



The bedrock of our values

BETTINA WARBURTON

VETERAN Nick Pratt doubts there is a more important date to his fellow veterans than Anzac Day.

“A more symbolic day for a soldier or a former soldier doesn’t exist,” Mr Pratt said.

“It’s not only the history of it, but Anzac Day is what our customs and tradition are built on.

“The Anzacs paved the way for everything we know about soldiering. That is what our foundation, for new and old soldiers, is built on.”

Mr Pratt, who voluntarily transferred from the army to the active reserves to accept a role as a liaison officer at veteran and soldier support organisation Mates4Mates, said his family, which included three children aged between five and 10, would attend the dawn service on Wednesday.

“We’ll wake the kids up early and attend the dawn service as we do every year,” he said.

“It’s our family’s ritual and one that we’ll continue to do.

“Even our youngest child can appreciate what Anzac Day means.”

Mr Pratt said he had attended dawn services as a child, as his father served in the army.

“What I remember notic-

ing as a kid, was the mateship,” he said.

“At the ceremonies, I remember thinking there were a lot of people who all seemed to know each other and all seemed to have a common bond. That was very noticeable.

“As I got older I, of course, developed a deeper understanding of that sense of mateship. The older you get the more you can understand that bond and how it is tied to Anzac Day.”

Mr Pratt said Anzac Day “means everything” to him.

“Working with current and ex serving veterans, and being a veteran myself, on Anzac Day you realise you never really leave it behind,” he said. “You are always connected to your service.

“Even if you haven’t seen people in years, on Anzac Day it is a special time to reflect and be thankful.”

Mr Pratt said it was humbling to see community support for veterans.

“In recent times, more veterans are speaking out about, not only their successes, but their troubles, and that is very positive,” he said.

“When a soldier is physically or mentally injured they can lose confidence in them-

selves and that’s when it’s up to their mates to show them they have worth and support them when they can’t support themselves.

“That’s why my role at Mates 4 Mates is so fulfilling.”

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SERVICE: Liaison Officer at Mates4mates Nicholas Pratt

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