

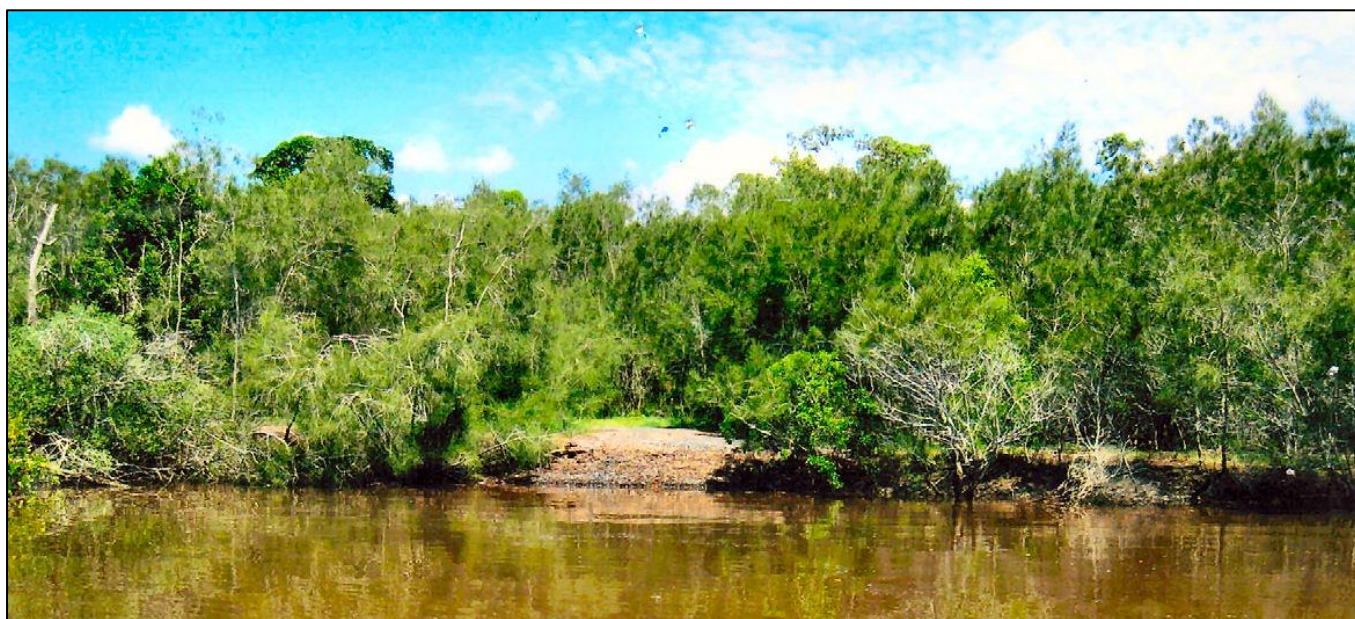
Camp Gregory.

Back in [Vol37](#) we had a story on Camp Gregory and Roger Dwyer, an Army Vet who was in Vietnam from December 1968 to March 1970. Roger and wife Deborah bought the 40 acre Camp Gregory property (which is up near Bundaberg) 22 years ago and in September 2009 finished turning it into an idyllic retreat for Vietnam veterans and their families to use free of charge. But – in so doing, he fell foul of the ever-vigilant Beattie/Bligh Queensland Government.

Roger “dared” put some rock and sand onto the lovely mud on a 5 metre section of the river bank so people could launch their boats without sinking knee deep and becoming bogged. Some of the blokes who take advantage of Roger’s extreme generosity are wheel-chair bound, having lost limbs in Vietnam and silly old Roger thought the change would make getting down to the water easier for them. This was a terrible thing to do as it completely upset some poor little crabs and worms and other beings that up till then had lived quite contentedly in the mud without a care in the world.



Ms Bligh and her team were understandably enraged at the audacity of Mr Dwyer in disturbing those poor little critters and had the Department of Primary Industry, under the lead of the super-efficient Deryk Smith, take Roger to Court where he faced a possible fine of up to \$300,000.



The photos above show the huge section of the river bank permanently destroyed by Roger and it is quite easy to see why Ms Bligh and her DPI people were determined to punish him severely for his sins.

Luckily for Roger, and all the Vietnam Vets who would use the facility, Independent MP for Burnet (at the time) Rob Messenger heard about this stupidity and brought it up in state Parliament.

He later said: “This is a disgrace, I want an independent investigation into why Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries inspectors are harassing and prosecuting yet another of our loyal boys who risked their lives and fought for our precious freedom and liberties. How can this little rock fill that makes life more bearable for men who fought in Vietnam possibly lead to Roger being summonsed to Bundaberg Magistrates Court to face a conviction and a huge and unjust \$300,000 fine?”



Rob Messenger called on Premier Anna Bligh to step in and stop what he described as “an idiotic and dangerous persecution of a decent man who is just trying to do the right thing by other Vietnam vets”. He said “I am dealing with a number of people in the Burnett who are facing those fines at the moment. There is a lady, a widow, whose husband tragically killed himself during a similar court case late last year in Bundaberg, again over a fine of \$300,000 under this fish protection legislation.”



Ms Bligh responded to Rob saying that “in terms of offences, the legislation has been drafted in comparison to other similar legislation for boards dealing with matters of a similar nature ... not every offence is comparable, but I think the drafters do a pretty good job of ensuring some level of consistency.”

Roger also found support from the local Butchulla tribe. Elder Marie Wilkinson, 77, wrote to the court on his behalf. She said: “I wish to advise that this proposed prosecution of Roger Dwyer is one of the worst cases of injustice I have been associated with in the last 30 years since I have publicly been involved with ‘looking after country’ in this region, namely Butchulla and Gurang Gurang, which I am a Traditional Owner by Elder.” She wrote. “I have personally visited this Vietnam vets’ retreat/campsite and the only access from boat to site is up this small narrow bank. It is a gross exaggeration that any detrimental work was conducted by Mr Dwyer, and in actual fact, the opposite occurred by stopping erosion to the alluvial bank. I sat in at the 1 November 2010 meeting with Mr and Mrs Dwyer and DPI investigative officer Deryk Smith to assist with mediation and resolve this issue prior to summons and believe this matter has been handled very poorly.”



Roger eventually faced the Court in Bundaberg, was convicted and fined \$1,500 – an absolute disgrace. Since then, the state Labor government has been dumped, the LNP were given the reins and Roger has been told the new Government will quash the conviction and his \$1,500 would be returned. It now remains to be seen whether or not that was a core promise.

Rob Messenger has a very good explanatory video on his web site, you can see it [HERE](#).

Roger has licked his wounds, got on with it and the camp is now open and welcoming vets who are on the road and who want a nice shady spot to pull in, put the feet up and chat with people who have shared the same experiences - and the disgraceful destruction of river bank remains destroyed.



The front gate and all weather road into the retreat, you are most welcome.



Top, part of the camping area and below, some blokes setting up for a leisurely stay.



The dining area being constructed adjacent to the camping area, this is now finished and can be used as and when required.

If you're a vet and you're on the road, you are more than welcome to use the facilities at Camp Gregory. To get there you travel north on the Bruce Highway from Brisbane and just before you get to Childers (310 kms north of Brisbane) take the (right) turn to Woodgate. The property is about a 30 mins drive down the Woodgate Rd and only 10 mins from Woodgate. It's address is 168 Darville Rd, Woodgate.

There are sites suitable for caravans, tents, motor homes, or just swags – the max stay is 2 weeks and there is a long-drop toilet.

A few people have got in touch with us since our earlier story and wanted to know if they could contribute some funds to help Roger with his fine and expenses, we put that to Roger who was reluctant at first but, under advice, has given us the following bank information. If you wish to help, the **BSB:** is 084 802, **Account No:** 1456-58022, **Title:** Camp Gregory Future Fund.

If you wish to contact Roger, his phone number is 07 4129 4030 – remember, you are more than welcome.

I'm jealous of my parents – I'll never have a kid as cool as theirs.

Funding

Unfortunately, Governments, whether Federal, State or Municipal, are very slow and/or reluctant in making funds available for facilities to make life easier for returned service men and women. These men and women, in a lot of cases suffering severe physical and mental injuries, were just 'dumped' and forgotten when they returned from Vietnam. Most of them were called off the street when their marble came up, stuck in uniform and sent overseas for 12 months, then on return they were discharged after their 2 year stint had expired and expected to get on with it.

A lot couldn't – and still can't!

But if you're an illegal boaty there is a bucket load of Government money available for you. Greens leader Sarah Hanson-Young was recently driven to tears as she outlined the poor boaties' plight. Makes you sick!!

Bravest overlooked

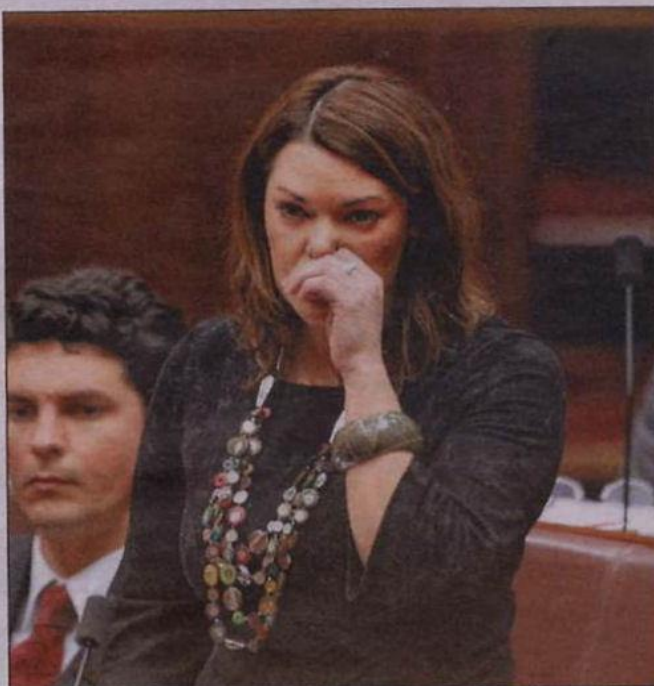
Opinion
DEBRA GIBSON,
Pinnacles

AS THE asylum seeker/illegal boat people saga unfolds on our screens and in the print media, I have wondered why this situation seems to have caused such a difference of opinion with our politicians and dogooders and the average person in the street.

There may be several possible explanations, but I believe the most paramount reason is this: Australians in past wars and adversity have never run from an enemy or not pulled their weight. Our proud and noble fighting prowess has been apparent over many conflicts, if our soldiers had run from the Japanese in World War II, if they had sought protection and asylum in America or England or anywhere else, we may have a very different life to what we have today.

If our brave soldiers, even now, did not put themselves in harm's way, then the terrorists would win. So the claim by these people that they may be killed is so cowardly and weak that it immediately conjures up an insignificant reason.

Our soldiers are getting killed doing what these illegal immigrants should be doing themselves and that is fighting and protecting themselves, their land, way of life and their families. These men have often



TISSUE ISSUE: Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young wipes away a tear while describing the plight of asylum seekers.

left women and children to run for cover in our country, then plead asylum. What kind of people are these, that will do that and then demand our help, money, housing, medical care and welfare?

But the most insulting of all, is to keep allowing our soldiers to die at the hands of an enemy that will shoot them in the back, when those soldiers have

extended the hand of friendship, help and protection in their own country.

To the average person in the street, this is not acceptable. Our soldiers died making sure their families and friends back home would be safe from an invader. They did not put their tail between their legs and run for the nearest hole. They stood and died to give us the country

we have today, and they are still doing it better than any soldiers in the world.

I saw Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young cry on television about the illegal boat people. I wonder has she cried for the fallen soldiers just the same? Has she cried for the men in World War II who have given her the right to have the freedom she expects so easily? Did she cry and demand action for our Vietnam veterans and other veterans who have to battle government red tape just to get the pension and assistance that these people demand as soon as they hit our shores?

I watched the ABC's 7.30 on asylum seekers. These people portrayed in the report were not threatened like our soldiers, they have made it to a country illegally and are illegally trying to get to our country to live a life of luxury, to quote one of the men interviewed.

The United Nations expects us to pick up the pieces of failed and weak policies. The world has the means to get rid of corrupt governments, dictators and mass murderers in these far-off lands. However, lives are lost every second of every day while they dine and discuss problems that are so far away, they become just a topic over wine.

Thank you to the soldiers who have kept our land safe and given us the right to everyday freedom.

Last upgraded armoured carrier handed over.

AAP
25 October 2012

ONE of defence's longest equipment projects has concluded with Army handed the keys to the last of 431 upgraded M-113 armoured personnel carriers. In a ceremony at Bandiana, Victoria, BAE Systems land division head Kim Scott gave the keys for the vehicle to Major General Grant Cavenagh.



Under the decade-long project worth \$600 million, 431 of the Vietnam-era troop carriers were upgraded to improve their firepower, protection and mobility.

M-113s were first used by the US military in 1962 and more than 80,000 have been built since, making it one of the world's most widely used armoured vehicles. Australia acquired its M-113s in the 1960s and many were used in Vietnam. By the 1990s, Australia's M-113s were in need of modernisation and the process began in 1992.



But what started out as a modest upgrade eventually morphed into a protracted and troubled makeover as the vehicles were lengthened and fitted with new engine, suspension and transmission systems, turrets and guns, improved armour and even a cooled drinking water system. (One wonders why not a new vehicle??)

The contract began in 2002 and the first upgraded vehicles was handed over to the army in 2007. "It has been an enormously challenging project, but one that has resulted in the final vehicle being completed well ahead of the contracted December 2012 deadline," Mr Scott said in a statement. More info [HERE](#).