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Charity launches gruelling Castle Hill climb as veterans are 'left behind'

Pauline Hanson helps Wounded Heroes launch a gruelling 24-hour Castle Hill fundraising challenge to raise emergency funds for Townsville veterans facing homelessness and financial hardship.

Andrew McKaysmith[Follow](#) Make us your preferred source on Google @amckaysmith  2 min read September 3, 2026 - 3:08PM **Townsville Bulletin** 1 Comment Listen to this article
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Martin Shaw, President Wounded Heroes Australia, Senator Pauline Hanson, Leader of One Nation, Kim Shaw, Philanthropy Manager at Wounded Heroes and Lieutenant General Greg Bilton AO CSC (Retd), at the official launch of Wounded Heroes Australia 24-Hour Challenge for FNQ veterans and Defence families. Picture: Shae Beplate.

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Veteran support charity Wounded Heroes has launched an ambitious 24-hour fundraising challenge where participants will walk up and down Castle Hill.

The event aims to raise emergency funds for defence veterans struggling with homelessness and financial hardship.

Mayor Nick Dametto said the local hub provided a welcoming environment where struggling service members

could slowly build the trust to seek help.

“Some of these veterans will come in just looking for a quiet, safe space. They’ll sit by themselves ... enjoying a cup of coffee ... [before] actually saying, ‘Hey, I need a bed. I need emotional help, I need a hand,’ and this is the place they can get it,” Mr Dametto said.



Senator Pauline Hanson, Leader of One Nation and Townsville Mayor Nick Dametto at the official launch of Wounded Heroes Australia 24-Hour Challenge for FNQ veterans and Defence families. Picture: Shae Beplate.

The Townsville 24-Hour Challenge is a gruelling fundraiser where teams of six take turns walking or running up and down Castle Hill for twenty-four hours.

Participants secure sponsorships to fund critical emergency housing and support for local veterans. On the day, walkers receive food from local business stalls while earning extra charity donations with every chin-up completed at the summit

Wounded Heroes president Martin Shaw said the community hub is dedicated to stepping up where systems fall short.

“So we’re trying to make sure that we’re making a difference to veterans’ lives,” Mr Shaw said.

Veterans First Consulting co-founder Kevin Chapman released findings from the first Veteran Wellness Index report during the launch.

“We found that 51 per cent of veterans under 50 had avoided actually seeking mental health support because they found it was too difficult to navigate the wait times,” Mr Chapman said.

One Nation leader Pauline Hanson praised the grassroots charity during an address to supporters at the venue.

“I really like the name of it, Wounded Heroes,” Senator Hanson said.

“Every man or woman that signs up for our defence is a hero in my eyes.”

Townsville Business

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Senator Hanson declined to join the Castle Hill climb.

“Albanese and Angus Taylor ... (would) dearly love to see me going and missing (in) action,” Senator Hanson said.

The Queensland senator said federal authorities rely heavily on volunteer groups to care for former service personnel.

“They’re allowing (charities) to pick up the pieces because they don’t want to spend the money,” Senator Hanson said.

“They’re forcing organisations like this and the general public to pick up where they’re not prepared to do the job.”

Veterans First Consulting co-founder Kevin Chapman said the Castle Hill climb is essential for keeping frontline crisis support alive in the region.

“Every sponsor, donor, supporter is helping keep those services operating,” Mr Chapman said

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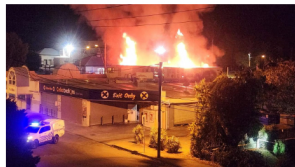
Kate 2 days ago

Unfortunately although I will never vote for the PH Party I must say that never have veterans received a fair go and never been looked after properly. My dad even after his years of war service was only allowed a small time in a private hospital following a stroke to be taken and die in a run down public hospital. To have the support of a private psychiatrist they must upfront \$325/visit with not a great deal returned via Medicare. My heart aches for them and their families. Because of this maybe Australia will get its cumuppance if ever we are attacked.

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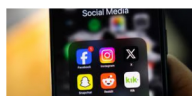
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