

# New link to the past

By Casey Neill

A Noble Park bridge will soon be named in honour of the region's war veterans.

The Heatherton Road overpass at EastLink will become known as the Gippsland Regiment Bridge.

Former Dandenong mayor and retired army major Kevin Walsh led the charge to make the name happen.

"In 1993 I was the guard commander for the Royal Victoria Regiment Guard to Villers-Bretonneux in France," he said.

"I was the mayor of Dandenong. I was trying to find a link somewhere between Dandenong and Villers-Bretonneux."

Mr Walsh found that the 52nd Battalion - known as the Gippsland Regiment - took part in many battles in France including the now famous battle of Villers-Bretonneux on Anzac Day in 1918.

"After the First World War the Battalion was re-raised as a part time/militia battalion in Victoria and named The Gippsland Regiment and had its headquarters in Dandenong," he said.

He said it was amalgamated with the 37th Battalion in 1930 and sent to New Guinea during World War II.

Mr Walsh thought a tribute 100 years on from the battle of Villers-Bretonneux would be fitting.

He'll be in France himself to mark the anniversary.

"I led the lobbying for EastLink. That's why that bridge was on my radar," he said.

"To me, it was a logical place to have it."

He was hoping to unveil the name on 25 April but will instead plan a grander commemoration around Remembrance Day or the 75th anniversary of the 52nd Battalion assault on Fortification Point, New Guinea, in December.



Kevin Walsh on the Princes Highway, looking up to the Heatherton Road overpass. 179545

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

Dandenong Cranbourne RSL Sub-Branch president John Wells supported Mr Walsh's project.

"Large parts of the regiment were based at Dandenong drill hall," he said.

"The naming of the bridge would bookend the Dandenong CBD with the Peace Memorial

Bridge over the Dandenong Creek.

"This would also mark in a permanent way the Centenary of the Armistice.

"We feel as an RSL that really the centenary of the First World War has passed without anything permanent being done."



Dandenong MP Gabrielle Williams and Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti cut the ribbon to open the Allan Street Bridge with residents and others involved in the project. 168457 Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

# Bridge link fixes suburban divide

By Casey Neill

Dandenong residents welcomed a new bridge linking them to the suburb's centre.

Dandenong MP Gabrielle Williams and Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti officially opened the Allan Street Bridge on Tuesday 23 May.

"This is an amazing story of partnerships and what can be achieved when different levels of government come together and listen to the community," Ms Williams said.

"I don't think we can underestimate the impact of this bridge on the liveability of Dandenong.

"This is fundamental to the way people will experience Dandenong."

Maria Bertagno lives nearby and said the bridge would make a very big difference to her life.

"I think it's a wonderful opportunity for residents to walk towards Cheltenham Road rather than having to walk around to Hammond Road," she said.

"I've already used it to go to the station and it's wonderful.

"It's also a peaceful walk, and you've got the

natural habitat instead of the rush of the traffic, and it's beautiful, it's inviting and it encourages one to walk."

The bridge includes a footpath alongside vehicle lanes.

"I always wanted the pedestrian bridge but to have the car access as well is a big bonus," Ms Bertagno said.

"It's not only for us adults, it's also for children.

"It's a complete family environment now.

"The landscape and the natural habitat is combining with the industrialism that Dandenong has always been known for."

Tony Butterworth said the bridge would take him straight into town.

"You were just jammed in here before, you couldn't get out," he said.

He also said the area was formerly the holding paddocks for the Dandenong stockyards.

The Allan Street Bridge is in the Metro Village 3175 housing development.

Construction started last September.

Development Victoria delivered the project in close consultation with the City of Greater Dandenong and Melbourne Water.

The council will now own and maintain the bridge.

THE gap has been bridged between Allan St and nearby suburbs in Dandenong, after the \$2.4 million bridge was officially opened last week.

State Labor Dandenong MP Gabrielle Williams said it gave an easy way to get over the creek to the town centre.

“It’s the final piece of this wonderful project, which has provided new housing, parkland and open space for the community,” she said.

Greater Dandenong mayor Jim Memeti said the bridge will be a key link between central Dandenong and the suburbs to the south.

For more information visit [development.vic.gov.au](http://development.vic.gov.au)

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# Bridge over troubled waters

**PLACES** Victoria is set to build a long-awaited bridge across Dandenong Creek.

The bridge will link central Dandenong and Dandenong South via Metro Village 3175 housing estate.

The proposed Allan Street bridge, to be built as part of a long-standing agreement with Greater Dandenong Council, will connect southwards to the corner of Dalgety Street and Morwell Avenue.

It will provide vehicle and pedestrian access for Metro Village residents to Dandenong South Primary School and Dandenong Bypass.

For Dandenong South residents it will offer a quicker route to the CBD and Cheltenham Road.

The project is proceeding after recent talks between the council and Places Victoria.

Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti said the council had to fight for Places Victoria to honour its agreement to build the bridge, which is not mentioned on the Revitalising Central Dandenong website's list of future projects.

He said the bridge would be an asset for residents on both sides of the creek and an expectation for recently-settled residents in the Metro Village estate.

"It shouldn't become a rat run. It will just be local traffic using the bridge," Cr Memeti said.

"It will mainly help residents in that area by taking traffic off Cheltenham and Hammond roads."

Councillor Peter Brown said the thoroughfare may come as a shock for Metro Village residents.

He called for a precautionary cost-benefit analysis and traffic study prior to construction.

"A number of owners and residents in Metro Village are going to take traffic through their estate from Dandenong South.

"The community on the south side may benefit from the bridge but I'm not sure if people on the other side of the creek will."

Places Victoria land development and housing general manager Joanne Wandel said tenders were expected to go out in early 2015.

"Places Victoria and the City of Greater Dandenong are working together to finalise the design and construction program."

**-By Cam Lucadou-Wells**

# Coroner's call for safe bridge

By Casey Neill

A Coroner's report has recommended a safety overhaul for a Dandenong footbridge after a cyclist drowned.

Coroner Audrey Jamieson found that Darren Watts, 41, died in the Dandenong Creek near Kyla Avenue on Sunday 17 January last year.

She said that investigators concluded the Wantirna South man entered a bend approaching the bridge on the EastLink Trail travelling too fast, braked hard, collided with a raised concrete block and marker posts, and ended up in the water.

There's already a sign pointing to the upcoming bend and plastic nylon pillars with reflectors on either side of the footbridge.

But First Constable Michaela Orchard suggested speed bumps, signs warning riders to slow down, more pillars on the bridge or fencing could improve safety.

Ms Jamieson recommended that EastLink conduct a risk assessment and examine these and other measures.

EastLink spokesman Doug Spencer-Roy said the organisation was in the process of determining its response.

Mr Watts' family reported him missing when he didn't return home from a bike ride and passers-by spotted his body in the creek the following morning. Emergency services also recovered his bicycle nearby.

Kellie Watts said her husband took up cycling after his father had a heart attack and often rode along the Dandenong Creek Trail.

"Mrs Watts said that after her husband's death, a number of people had noted that the Dandenong Creek Trail was known to be a dangerous, accident prone area," Ms Jamieson said.

Safety came under scrutiny when a three-year-old boy fell into the creek near a playground in Dandenong Park and drowned in September 2014.

(from the Trove List "Early Dandenong", by Ray Carter)

Thur 13 Feb 1919

SB&MJ, p3

## **Interesting Relics.**

### **Found at the Dandenong Bluestone Bridge.**

Last week, whilst the work of dismantling portion of the Bluestone bridge across the Dandenong creek, on the Main road, was in progress, Mr Hall, the clerk of works, found a bottle firmly embedded in part of the concrete foundation, and this contained many relics of the early days, which will doubtless be treasured by the present generation, and those to follow-as they deserve to be.

The relics comprise a copy of the "Age" and "Argus," of 8 pages each, at 3d a copy, dated December, 1866; the Gippsland "Times," December 15, 1866, at 4d a copy ; the "Herald," 4 pages, at 1d a copy; and last but not least, the " Australian," of 4 pages at 4d a copy. These papers were signed by S. Butler, a P.C.R. of Court Dandenong A.O.F., the first friendly society established here. There was also a three-penny piece, a penny, and a copy of the seal of -Court Dandenong A.O. F. In addition, there was a copy of the Dandenong Roads Board annual receipts and expenditure, total £1202 1/7, shewing a credit balance of £287 16/9. This document was signed by members and officers of the Board, as follows : George Hughes (chairman), Alexander Watt Bowman, William Keys, Joseph Chandler, Thomas Rosling, Obadiah Potter, John Keys (clerk and treasurer), John Barter (engineer), and Henry Powis (rate collector). All names that will bring to mind reminiscences of the early days of Dandenong; and the men of affairs at that period.

The "Australian," which was published at Richmond by the late Harvey Roulston, was the newspaper which was identified with matters of local interest at that time. A perusal of the issue referred to is of interest, shewing that the "Australian" covered a large range of country, and, in addition to Richmond news, it contains reports of Hawthorn Borough council; Dandenong Roads Board-there being present: Messrs Geo. Hughes (chairman), Keys, Rosling, Bowman, Potter and Chandler, and a column report of the proceedings at the meeting. Also Berwick District Roads Board meeting, present Messrs F. Barr, J.P. (chairman), J. Brisbane, J.P., J. Buchanan, J.P, J. Wilson, D. Connor, and T. W. Horsfall. Dandenong Police court; impoundings at Dandenong; report of a public meeting at Dandenong; accident at Dandenong; and a drowning fatality at Berwick are events chronicled-also Hawthorn and Kew police court proceedings

A representative of the " Journal" was favored with a glimpse of the relics on Friday morning.. The matter came before the council, officially, at its meeting on Monday.

## Stone Bridge

In 1865 the Dandenong Roads Board accepted a tender from John Nicol of £1466/19/- for the building of a stone bridge over the Dandenong Creek.

The granite for the bridge was mined in a quarry near the corner of Wedge and Power Streets Dandenong. The coping stones came from the Richmond quarries at Burnley. All stones were hauled in bullock wagons – a slow and tedious trip.

The Chairman of the Board, Mr George Hughes laid the foundation stone at the opening of the new bridge on the 19 December 1866, and placed a sealed bottle in the cement under the foundation stone. The bottle contained a number of papers in good condition: Copies of The Argus, The Age, The Herald, The Australasian and The Gippsland Times dated 19 December 1866. A 3d and a penny dated 1863 and a copy of the Dandenong Road Board balance sheet. Showing the receipts for 1866 were £1202/1/7. On the back of the Balance Sheet the names of the Road Board committee were written: George Hughes (Chairman), Mr. Alex Bowman, Mr W Keys, Mr J Chandler, Mr T Rosling and Mr O Potter.

In 1919 Dandenong stone bridge was demolished with 36 plugs of gelignite after severe flood damage.