

# W Memorial to honour Vietnamese soldiers

DANDENONG RSL is working on three war memorials — and no one is prouder than club secretary John Wells.

“We are treasurer-banker for the Endeavour Hills Peace Memorial, which is going on the south side of Heatherton Road near the shopping centre as a traditional peace memorial.

“The peace memorial at the Dandenong Creek is a significant development in our social fabric. It’s one of our state’s most significant memorials and now nearing completion.”

All of the war memorials have been highlighted in *The Journal*, but Mr Wells is particularly proud of the newest of them, a sacred place where Vietnamese ex-servicemen who came to Australia after their war can pay their respects.

Clay model statues by sculptor Lis Johnson will rise to life-size bronzes, with the focal point being a Vietnamese soldier standing

beside an Australian digger. Mr Wells said the completed ‘bronzes’ would stand on a stone plinth beneath the Vietnam-era Iroquois helicopter dedicated last year at the Dandenong RSL in Clow Street.

He said for four years the Vietnamese ex-servicemen who came to Australia after the war had sought a suitable site for their memorial, approaching Melbourne’s municipalities without success.

“For the past year, having received their site, they have been busy fund-raising,” Mr Wells said.

He described the bronze memorial as “a coming together of communities, ex-service and civilian, Vietnamese-Australian, and Australians young and old, conservative and radical”.

“It is even a rare linking of Melbourne’s eastern and western suburbs and is a story of old wounds healing.”

**Marg Stork**