



## KYOGLÉ COUNCIL

# M E D I A R E L E A S E

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**Date: Friday 6 January 2017**

Kyogle Council has received reinforcements from an unexpected ally in its relentless battle to maintain its aging timber bridge network.

Members of the recently reformed Assault Pioneer Platoon of the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment served along-side Council's battle-hardened bridge crew in a joint campaign to repair a series of load-limited timber bridges throughout the local government area.

The mission, conducted over three weeks, began with the army and council corps attacking bridges on Sheddens Road, Babyl Creek Road and Aspreys Road before they mounted their final incursion on a bridge on Chestnut Road.

The soldiers also helped with the construction of a new concrete bridge on Duck Creek Road.

At the end of the campaign, the army, the council and the community all claimed victory.

The soldiers gained valuable in-the-field experience in timber bridge construction and maintenance; Kyogle Council was provided, at no cost, with extra manpower and resources to repair four bridges; and with the load limits now lifted from the four bridges, the community can enjoy safer and improved access.

The idea for the joint campaign grew from talks between the Council and Army officials earlier this year after the Pioneer Platoon, which is often required to go ahead of the Battalion to clear routes, completed a training exercise in State forest near Woodenbong.

The Assault Pioneers were keen to enhance their timber bridge building skills through hands on experience and Kyogle Council was happy to share its widely acknowledged expertise in constructing and maintaining timber bridges in exchange for extra manpower and resources.

Lieutenant Patrick Box of the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Battalion said it was important that the Assault Pioneers were trained in timber bridge building and repair skills.

"Such skills are vital for maintaining momentum and facilitating resupply and casualty evacuation and the experience gained working with Kyogle Council will hold the Pioneers in good stead for a long time to come," he said.

"The Soldiers thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to spend time away from base and get hands on experience constructing bridges.

"The level of knowledge displayed by the Council staff was impressive."

Council's bridge overseer Tony Olive said everyone involved in the joint exercise gained something from the experience.

"Everyone worked well together," he said.

"It was great from Council's perspective to be able to share our skills with the soldiers who were really keen to learn and happy to work side by side with us.

"And while for the most part we worked on the bridges, the army blokes also helped with some drainage issues and pipe works.

"On the flip side, it was great for us to have the extra manpower to work on our problem timber bridges.

"And some of our fellows got to ride in some of the specialised army vehicles, which was pretty cool."

The joint project was so successful that planning is already underway for a return visit by the army in 2017.

**Quotes from Pioneer Platoon soldiers:**

*"It was really good to learn new skills from the Kyogle Council workers, these guys have been building bridges for years and it was clear to see they knew what they were doing". – PTE Dave Tebbutt.*

*"The opportunity to work with the Council bridge team was invaluable. The knowledge and experience that they were able to share will be extremely useful to Pioneer Platoon as we continue to move forward in our training." – SGT Rob Duffy*

*Various photos of Council staff and soldiers working together attached.*

**END OF RELEASE**

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