Nine Months In:
What We're Learning from Military & Veteran Acute Admissions

PRESENTED BY: Dr Julie Simes-Phillips, Consultant Psychiatrist, Deakin Private Hospital, Canberra

About Deakin Private Hospital

A 52-bed, recovery-focused mental health facility providing holistic inpatient and day programs.

About Beeches

12-bed, specialised PTSD & Trauma Ward supporting Defence members through trauma-informed, evidence-based care.

✓ SEEK RECOVERY ✓ RECLAIM SELF-AGENCY ✓ RESTORE CONNECTION

Culturally competent staff



Dr Julie Simes-Phillipps
Psychiatrist and Lead for Beeches

- More than 20 years in the ADF
- Established the hospital's Beeches in Feb 2025
- Focus on biopsychosocial approaches around recovery lifestyle psychiatry that extend beyond discharge

Lana Barrett
Clinical Nurse Consultant



- Clinical Nurse Consultant in Mental Health
- Former serving member of the ARA
- Has held senior roles in hospitals across Australia
- Currently furthering studies in PTSD & Trauma

OUR DIFFERENT APPROACH

Our model of care blends biological precision, psychological depth, and human connection.

Our guiding principles:

- Collaborative Risk – Safety is shared, not imposed.
- Value-Based Pacts – Recovery grounded in trust and mutual respect.
- Dignity of Choice – Empowering informed decision-making.
- Biological Work-Up – Addressing inflammation, pain, and neurochemistry.
- Functional Intent – Restoring purpose through cognitive and behavioural rehabilitation.
- Lifestyle Psychiatry – Movement, sleep, and sunlight as treatment.
- HOPE Principles – Health Outcomes from Pivoting Positive Experiences.
- Phenomenology over Symptomology – Understanding lived experience, not just diagnosis.

REBUILDING IDENTITY

For many Defence personnel, this is their first admission — and often their first step back toward self.

We recognise:

- Family of Origin Foundations – Understanding early attachment patterns.
- Service as Attachment – The uniform as identity; separation as loss.
- Regression & Recovery – Supporting the temporary emotional regression that accompanies detox and re-stabilisation.
- Stigma Sharing – Breaking down shame and rebuilding trust through transparency.
- Family Involvement – Regular family meetings to strengthen systems of support.

We keep it KISSS: Simple, Streamlined, Sustainable.

INTEGRATING NEUROLOGY INTO PSYCHIATRIC CARE

Integrating psychiatry, neurology, and functional medicine to provide a comprehensive picture of each patient's presentation.

- On-site EEG and neurological assessments with Professor Christian (Consultant Neurologist)
- Identify trauma-related brain changes such as hyperarousal and disrupted sleep patterns
- Assess effects of past blast exposure or TBI that may mimic or worsen PTSD symptoms
- Support precision prescribing through EEG-guided medication insights and pharmacogenetic testing
- Integrate neurobiological evidence into psychiatric care for a more personalised, scientifically grounded approach

SCREENS & SCENES

- Pharmacogenetic Screening – Tailoring medication to individual DNA.
- On-site Neurology & EEG.
- Substance Contextualisation – Exploring the role of ETOH, THC, Ketamine & emerging therapies in recovery.
- Pain & Inflammation – Interplay of musculoskeletal injury and trauma related limbic hyperarousal.

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