ALBERT COATES MEMORIAL TRUST

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MENTOR

Newsletter of the Albert Coates Memorial Trust

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Issue 17 Autumn 2026

Lunch with the Speaker
on **Wednesday 14th May at 12.00 noon**
at the **Selkirk Basketball Stadium**
corner Norman and Dowling Streets, Wendouree.
(Plenty of Free Parking available)

Our speaker will be **Professor Mark Fitzgerald ASM** who will speak on **Advances in Modern Trauma Care**

Professor Mark Fitzgerald is the Director of Trauma Services, at the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, and the Director of the National Trauma Research Institute, Melbourne.

He is Professor, Department of Surgery, School of Translational Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University and Adjunct Professor, School of Information Technology, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment at Deakin University.
He is a National Health Medical Research Council Leadership Fellow and the Co-Chair of the Australia New Zealand Trauma Registry.

Professor Fitzgerald has led the establishment of trauma reception and management programs along with trauma systems development in Australia, China, India, Ireland, Myanmar, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka, with an emphasis on new forms of trauma resuscitation, vascular access, massive transfusion, ultrasonography in trauma, pleural decompression and drainage, resuscitative thoracotomy, neurotrauma management, stroke and trauma systems development including trauma registries.

Professor Fitzgerald's research themes include trauma systems improvement, error reduction and standardization of resuscitation care.
The development of semi-automated, computer–assisted resuscitation is a career goal.
He has delivered 180 major presentations, has over 350 peer-reviewed publications and is a reviewer for multiple medical and surgical journals.
His awards include Ambulance Service Medal, Australia Day Honours; The Foundation 20 Medal, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine; Honorary Life Membership, Neurotrauma Society of India; The Gordon Trinca Medal, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons; Honorary Life Membership, Australian and New Zealand Trauma Society.

Booking details:
Cost for the luncheon is $40 and includes a two-course meal.
To book your place, please deposit $40 per person into the Albert Coates Memorial Trust Bank account with your name/s included in the reference.

BSB: 633 000 Account Number: 144 729 282

To advise of dietary requirements or other enquiries please contact Shiley McIver on 0434 540 171 or email at shirleymacfrog@gmail.com

RSVP - 6th May 2026 to Shirley McIver

Vale - Roger Mitchell FRACS

Roger was a retired surgeon, originally part of the practice of Jim Pryor FRACS, the first Chair of the Albert Coates Memorial Trust.
Roger was an Army Veteran from Vietnam, with widespread surgical experience in the 2nd Field Ambulance.
He was a member of the ACMT Committee for some 10 years, and a valued advisor to our scholarship programmes.
He retired from the Trust after he moved from Ballarat and sadly recently died.

Albert Coates Oration 2025

The Oration was given by Richard de Crespigny, a Qantas pilot in charge of the QF 32 Airbus 380 when one of the Rolls Royce engines exploded soon after the plane left Singapore.
Richard showed dramatic evidence of the explosion and its consequences, and the steps he and his flight crew took to safely land the plane while totally avoiding injuries to the passengers or crew.
He went on to expand the use of techniques in developing resilience in problem circumstances.
Richard was wonderfully approachable, along with his wife Coral, in discussing these issues with the scholarship awardees, at the Coates dinner after the Oration.

A link to the Oration Evening:
https://fedflix.federation.edu.au/media/Sir+Albert+Coates+Oration+Nov+2025%3A+Richard+de+Crespigny+AM/1_gbwost4a

Richard with Sophie Hulbert, Lana Dodd, Jarred Donlan and Nicholas Spark - 2025 scholarship awardees.

Richard and his wife Coral at the Albert Coates Statue, in Sturt Street.

Nurses Memorial Centre Melbourne

The Nurses Memorial Centre (NMC) in St Kilda Road, was established in May 1949, initially by Matron Vivian Bullwinkel and Sister Betty Jeffries. They were leaders among the Nurses interred in POW camps in Sumatra during WW2.
Both worked hard to obtain the funds to establish the Centre, and were strongly supported by Sir Albert Coates, who was president of the NMC from 1956 to 1961.

The NMC celebrated its 75th anniversary at Government house in October 2025.

NMC President Elizabeth Lavender with ACMT Chair, Don Moss

It was initially established to recognize the sacrifice of the 75 nurses killed during WW2.
Of course this includes the three nurses from the Ballarat region (Beth Cuthbertson, Clarice Halligan and Kath Neuss) killed in the Radji beach massacre.
In addition Dot Paschke from Dimboola, and Mona Wilton from Ararat/Willaura were further Western District fatalities, killed in the bombing of the Vyner Brooke ship.

The Nurses Memorial Centre has established a strong program of scholarships for nurses, with similar funding origins to the Coates Trust.
Like Vivian Bullwinkel and Betty Jeffries, Albert Coates was similarly a POW for three years, and strongly aware of the value of supporting future trainees in the health industry.

His daughter, Sister Win Gherardin, was both a subsequent President of the NMC, and a long-term committee member of the Albert Coates Memorial Trust.
The similarities and connections between the NMC and ACMT remain strong.

The Leckie Peri-Neonatal Scholarship

Jessica Beveridge is the 2026 Scholarship awardee.
Jess is a graduate nurse, YP3, studying a Graduate Diploma of Health (Neonatal Health) at Federation University, Mt Helen. Whilst Jess was initially interested in completion of her midwifery training, she is now keen to continue her training in neonatal paediatrics.

Mt Pleasant Primary School Scholarships

Most years the pupils in year six at Mt Pleasant PS complete a unit of work on Sir Albert Coates and produce projects which illustrate their understanding of his life and his war service during the First and Second World Wars.

A variety of creative work is presented each year - PowerPoint presentations, computer games, dioramas, board games, booklets and posters.

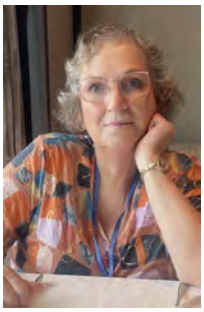
The students present their completed projects to their classmates and to a small panel from the ACMT committee who are keen to view their work and to chat with the children about the knowledge they have gained through undertaking this activity.

Scholarships and book prizes for 2025 were awarded to Gabe Gilford-Drouin (1st), Lilly and Matilda Watson (2nd) and Zaidan Kennedy and Archie Palmer (3rd) and were presented at the School's Awards' evening in mid-December.

Regional Emergency Nursing Scholarships

This year scholarships were awarded to four applicants from the Loddon-Mallee District.

Libby Gore, from Bendigo Health is undertaking a Master of Advanced Clinical Nursing (Emergency Nursing), at Monash University - Bendigo Campus
Scholarship Value: $4,200
The course will assist Libby in caring for critical care and emergency patients in a rural environment.



Joanne Kane from Rochester & Elmore District Health Service is working towards becoming a Rural Isolated Practice Registered Nurse (RIPRN) through Cunningham Centre, Queensland. Joanne's proposed course will assist with her work in the community. Rochester and its hospital have been impacted by floods and its health services were recommenced in late 2025.
Scholarship Value: $3,495

Sandra Sierra Flores from Mallee Track Health is undertaking a Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) through the Berwick Campus of Federation University. The Nurse Practitioner course will assist Sandra with her work in her rural community.
Scholarship Value: $4,200

Maddy Wright from Swan Hill District Health is working towards a Graduate Certificate of Critical Care Nursing at Deakin University.

Maddy has a passion for nursing and ongoing education in a rural setting. Scholarship value - $3,200.

Victoria University - Paramedicine

Nikki Knight is a Bachelor of Paramedicine student who was awarded the Victoria University Coates scholarship for 2025-26. Nikki has navigated considerable stress including family and housing insecurity prior to entering University.
Nikki has trained in surf lifesaving and volunteered as a first-line medic in high-risk metropolitan settings.
She has already responded to multiple critical incidents, including a successful cardiac arrest resuscitation during trainee placement.

Ex-POW Memorial Service

Many of the ACMT committee members were among the 800 guests who attended the ex-POW Memorial annual service held in February, where the former Governor General, General The Honourable David Hurley was the key speaker.
ACMT President and Secretary, Don Moss and Roger Trudgeon donated books on behalf of the ACMT.

New Committee Member

Lachlan Dodds FRACS

Lachie has recently joined the ACMT Committee, and will be a valuable contributor with his background of training and assessing advanced surgical trainees, and medical students, over many years.

ALBERT COATES MEMORIAL TRUST

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Donations to the ACMT are tax deductible.

The Albert Coates Memorial Trust sponsors a range of scholarships for medical, nursing and para-medicine training.
This includes scholarships at:
Federation University (Nursing and Biomedicine);
Melbourne University (post-graduate Anatomy and Rural Clinical School);
Deakin University (Medicine);
Notre Dame University (Medicine);
Australian Catholic University (Nursing/Paramedicine) and Victoria University (Paramedicine).

Scholarships are offered to regional registered nurses in post-graduate courses, and to Peri-neonatal nurses at Grampians Health (Ballarat Health Service).

Scholarships are also awarded at Mt Pleasant Primary School.

Albert Coates Memorial Trust
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