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Diamantina Shire Council

MEDIA RELEASE

Victoria Cross recipient to lead the 2013 ANZAC Day March in Birdsville

Victoria Cross recipient, Mr Keith Payne VC OAM, will lead this year's ANZAC Day March in Birdsville, in the Diamantina Shire, on Thursday April 25, 2013.

Warrant Officer Keith Payne received his Victoria Cross in 1969 for his bravery during the Vietnam War. Covering the withdrawal of his surrounded company and under heavy fire, the wounded Payne spent hours scouring the battleground for isolated and wounded soldiers, eventually rescuing forty wounded men. He is the last living Australian recipient of the original Imperial Victoria Cross.

Diamantina Shire Council Chief Executive Officer, Mr Scott Mason, said the Shire was honoured to host Mr Payne, who, along with his wife, will travel from Ingham on the State's east coast to participate in this year's service.

"Today's Australians owes a debt of gratitude to the men and women past and present that have been part of our Defence Force to protect our nation, the commonwealth or who have participated in allied conflicts and wars. The Diamantina Shire and its residents are humbled and grateful that Keith and his wife Flo have travelled from one side of the state to the other to support the communities of Birdsville and Bedourie to honour ANZAC Day."

Diamantina Shire Council Mayor, Cr Geoff Morton, has encouraged all Shire residents – young and old – to participate in the Dawn Service and March on Thursday.

"ANZAC Day is about coming together to remember those who are no longer with us and to honour those who have served or are still serving on our behalf," he said.

ANZAC Day Services in Birdsville will commence with a Dawn Service at 6.30am at ANZAC Park followed by the official ANZAC Day March and Service at 10.30am and a Community morning tea hosted by the Betoota Social Club at the Birdsville Community Hall at 11.30am.

Services in the Shire's other main centre, Bedourie, will begin with a Dawn Service at 6.30am, followed by a March from Bedourie State School to the Cenotaph in ANZAC Park at 10am. A Community lunch and fun day organised by the Bedourie P&C will then be held at the Bedourie Community Centre from noon.

While in the Diamantina Shire, Mr. Payne will also officiate at the official naming of ANZAC Park in Bedourie and the unveiling of a new Cenotaph and statue in on Wednesday, April 24 at 12.30pm.

April 23, 2013

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