



## CENTRAL COAST NEWS

# Aiming higher, one mountain at a time

**ERROL SMITH**

CENTRAL Coast resident Shane Pophfer doesn't intend resting on his laurels after climbing one of the world's highest peaks.

Fresh from a successful assault on Mt Denali in Alaska, he and close friend Darren Wise have set their sights on conquering Mt Vincent in Antarctica and Mt Everest in the Himalayas.

Although Mt Denali, at 6194m, is significantly lower than Everest's 8848m, it is considered by many a more difficult climb.

Mr Pophfer, who works at the Doyalson Wyee RSL Club, and Mr Wise, from Rhodes in Sydney, are former soldiers with 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. They climbed Mt Denali to raise money for Legacy and found reaching the summit an overwhelming and emotional experience.

"Conditions were appalling and we didn't think we were going to get there, which made the final ascent all the more thrilling," Mr Pophfer said.

Mr Wise described the trip as a

great experience that required stamina and trust in each other.

The successful ascent of Denali ticks off the fifth peak in their seven summits challenge after already reaching the tops of Mt Kilimanjaro (Africa), Mt Kosciuszko (Australia), Mt Aconcagua (South America) and Mt Elbrus (Europe).

Their challenge began in 2008 and they hope to complete their final ascents of Antarctica's Mt Vinson and Everest during the next three years.



Shane Pophfer and Darren Wise on Mt Denali's summit.