

Cleary returns home for book



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NOVEL: Simon Cleary has released his new book *The War Artist*.

TOOWOOMBRA-raised author Simon Cleary has returned home in more ways than one for his new book *The War Artist*.

The novel tells the story of Brigadier James Phelan, who when he returns from Afghanistan, is left traumatised by the tragic death of a young soldier under his command.

“The book is about him dealing with the consequences of what he experienced,” Mr Cleary said.

Issues like PTSD are close to Mr Cleary’s heart, as his grandfather E W Cleary served in World War One before moving to Toowoomba. In the novel, Phelan moves to Preston, near Toowoomba, after returning from Afghanistan.

“So many of my formative experiences were here and around Toowoomba is country I feel I know well and love,” he said. “I feel like I have a real connection to it and the seasons of Toowoomba. I

wanted to give the characters a similar experience of living the Toowoomba seasons.”

Phelan also at one point attends a creative writing course at USQ.

“One of themes of the book is the way in which art may operate as a form of therapy,” Mr Cleary said.

Mr Cleary will speak at a sold-out event tomorrow night hosted by the Book Tree, and will return again for a second talk on May 10 at the CUA Building from 5.30pm. For tickets visit Ticketbo.