

RSL NSW AUXILIARY NEWS

NOVEMBER, 2023

Another month gone, WHERE THOUGH???

I want to start by congratulating RSL NSW on a very successful Congress but more of that shortly.

Doesn't the Lady Woodward Cup look awesome?



I did send an email out after the winner was announce but, for those of you who still don't know, I am delighted to inform you the winner of the Lady Woodward Cup for 2023 is:

SUSSEX INLET



The results this year were the closest I have seen, runners up were:

2nd Forestville

3rd Old Bar Beach



As I mentioned in the October Newsletter we had 11 entries this year, the most for many years and we would like to see this number increase in 2024. If you haven't already seen that newsletter, it is up on our website RSL NSW, check it out, you will find details on how to enter, how it is decided and some ideas for planning your program for 2024.

Don't forget, if you have any suggestions to make regarding supporting your sub Branch, fundraising etc we would love to hear from you.



Congress is over for another year and for anyone like me who was unable to attend, the 2 days were live streamed on YouTube and you can watch the replay by clicking on the following links:

Day 1 https://www.youtube.com/live/4GuuUrLaU5Y?si=ID6yONGsbgIR-YfA

Day 2 https://www.youtube.com/live/0DWFQIbMRzY?si=sDVIM-CxEPej3Foe

Sadly, this was Ray James' last Congress both as President of RSL NSW and also on the board, but we all know that Ray steps down leaving a huge legacy. He has worked tirelessly for RSL NSW and I know I have said this before but I think it is something that a lot of people really need to get their heads around, if not for Ray and Pauline, we would have no Auxiliaries today. About 5 years ago the plan was to abolish Auxiliaries and make all members Affiliates. Ray & Pauline fought very hard not only to keep the Auxiliaries but to expand them.

We have some amazing members in our Auxiliaries, who have done some wonderful work and dedicated so much of their valuable time for the support of the organisation, sadly many still troubled by the restructure in 2019 but please remember that if not for the restructure we would not have the Auxiliaries we have today.

Just a quick note, in the last month we have gained 1 new Auxiliary and 24 new members which is fantastic.

Congress was very well attended as you will see by the photo's and lots of work was done.

One of the highlights was RSL NSW donating \$3,300,000 to RSL LifeCare Veterans Services. 78 sub Branches and Auxiliaries made this donation possible, everyone has a lot to be proud of.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT - RSL NSW CONGRESS 2023

Good morning distinguished guests, Delegates, ladies, and gentleman.

I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that we meet. I pay my respects to elders past, present, and emerging.

I wish to acknowledge and pay my respects to all veterans who have served this great nation of ours and those who are here today.

We gather here again in Newcastle with Delegates from across New South Wales representing over 300 sub-Branches and over 27,000 members. As a Delegate you play an important role in our organisation; to gather, debate and make decisions on the future of the League. Equally as important, you are the conduit for updating members attached to your sub-Branch about what you have heard and seen while you've been here.

The motto of the RSL is "The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance". The origin of the phrase is a bit uncertain, but history is replete with similar references, from as early as the fourth century BC, in ancient Greece, through to European scholars and political leaders and leaders in post European settlement United States. More pertinent for us though is from the early 1920's when the Victorian Branch of the League suggested that the League should have a motto and the NSW Branch of the League recommended: "The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance".

In November 1923 the 8th National Congress of the RSL agreed on the motto recommended by RSL NSW. Our motto today continues to be that, but also much more. As well as this RSL's national motto, which is so relevant in today's troubled world, at our local level we have also adopted the motto of "One RSL – working together, delivery locally." This motto drives our strategy of respecting and supporting all our sub-Branches across the State as they deliver our Charitable Purpose – supporting all veterans and their families – in their respective communities, but also recognising that by working together we can mobilize our collective resources, so every veteran and community member knows who the RSL is, what we stand for, and what we do.

Since our last Congress the League has been busy at all levels delivering on our charitable purpose. Our volunteers continue to deliver support or connect veterans and their families with critical services and support,

including services delivered by our partner charity RSL LifeCare. It is very pleasing to see the success of this critical relationship with RSL LifeCare. Every member with their Veteran Services Card (hold it up) can connect a veteran in need to a myriad of quality-assured RSL support services. I further commend sub-Branches for the commemorative services you conduct across all our communities, fostering and maintaining our proud ANZAC heritage. Also, conducting sub-Branch meetings, and facilitating social and recreational activities that foster camaraderie, social inclusion and veterans' wellbeing.

Whilst we have sadly lost members who have passed away since we last came together, we have, in turn, gained thousands of new members. We recognised that joining our organisation had become incredibly difficult and our own processes were deterring veterans from joining us. We've streamlined an online application process and enabled sub-Branches to access a 'Member Recruitment Toolkit' and guidance on how to connect with their wider veteran community.

Our organisation has seen a drop in the average age of members from an average age of 78 years old down to 71 years old, which means that I am now above the average age. The average age of new members joining the RSL NSW is now 51 and we're seeing younger members taking up Executive roles at sub-Branch and District level and joining our Young Veterans Committee. It's critical we all have succession plans. While younger members may not participate now as they are working and with young families, I encourage you to keep them engaged and one day they will be able to take the reins.

The nominations for the 2023 Board Election reflect a change in the demographics of and interest in leading our organisation with the youngest member ever nominating for a role as Director and the largest number of women submitting nominations for a seat at the Board table.

Earlier this year, you may have heard or read my public apology to any of my fellow Vietnam veterans who may have been turned away by our organisation when it was most needed. They are welcome in our organisation and I sincerely hope that they consider joining us after fifty years. As far as I'm concerned, it's never too late.

My apology was about more than just that. I made the point that our organisation, our services, and support are available to any veteran, regardless of where or how they've served their country, and we are focussed on ensuring that what has happened in the past, will never happen again.

I have been working with the CEO and team at ANZAC House to promote how we're meeting the challenges faced by veterans and their families, including social isolation. Once an initiative of the Strategic Plan, the RSL NSW Sport & Recreation Program is now successfully operating as a part of our everyday service delivery across regional and metropolitan NSW.

I've watched as sub-Branches have rolled out inclusive and accessible recreational and social activities that have literally attracted veterans out of the woodwork to join us. Where sub-Branches are delivering these activities and collaborating with other sub-Branches in their District, we're observing membership growth and a boost in wellbeing. A short time ago, you may have seen images of over 100 veterans and current serving members of the ADF supporting each other to complete the 'City to Surf' in Sydney as part of Team RSL NSW; a great example of how we're engaging with veterans of all ages and facilitating the events they want to be a part of.

Our Sport & Recreation Program Coordinator was approached by the wife of a veteran who, as a family, had all participated in the City 2 Surf event. She thanked RSL NSW for facilitating the event because of the positive impact that the training, participation, and camaraderie had had on her husband. She said it was the happiest she had seen him in a long time. As far as I am concerned, the investment in an event like this is priceless if we're achieving our charitable purpose.

These positive changes have been made possible due to the commitment of our volunteers and our sub-Branches who have donated to our Veteran Support Fund and the sub-Branch Support & Assistance Fund.

As mentioned already, our partnership with RSL LifeCare continues to thrive thanks to the financial support of over \$3 million from our sub-Branches. Thousands of veterans have accessed the services that the Veteran Services team provides and the demand for these free services which can be accessed from anywhere, continues to grow.

Your financial support means that veterans and their families now have access to Veteran Wellbeing Centres in Nowra, Wagga Wagga, Dee Why, and Newcastle.

As we have heard, RSL NSW has supported RSL LifeCare to submit business cases to the Australian Government to establish five new Veterans' and Families' Hubs in the Hunter, Tweed, Queanbeyan, Hawkesbury and SW Sydney, and the Central Coast. I thank all District Council Presidents and local sub-Branches who have all worked with RSL LifeCare to bring together their respective communities to help realise the vision we have for our 'Hub and Spoke' model across the State. We're also collaborating with other Ex-Service Organizations and other veteran service providers to inform the business cases to build the facilities are designed to work in concert with our sub-Branches using the 'hub and spoke' model.

Your financial support is also enabling the League to have a continuous presence at the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare at Concord Hospital. The RSL NSW Liaison Officer, Bronte Pollard, works tirelessly to ensure that clients are connected with the services and support they need while they're receiving treatment and once they return to their local communities, including connection with our sub-Branches.

Next year, the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide will be delivered. Since the Royal Commission began in 2019, we have heard and seen evidence and reports that demonstrate that ex-service organisations, including the RSL, have let down veterans, and their families. The League has work to do to rectify this and I encourage every one of you here today to think about how your sub-Branch is meeting the needs of the wider veteran community, not just those of members. I also encourage every sub-Branch, if you haven't already done so, include an update item on the Royal Commission at your meetings. As you know we established an office for the Royal Commission at ANZAC House and all RSL submissions and updates are on the RSL NSW website, easily accessible by members and the wider veteran community.

Both the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Royal Commissioners have called on the ESO sector to establish a peak body and this hasn't happened by chance. The League has lead discussions with ex-service organisations at multiple forums to determine what a peak body would look like and make recommendations to the Royal Commission.

As the largest ex-service organisation in Australia, the RSL should be the peak body, but we all have a part to play in ensuring that we're working together, both internally and with the wider ESO network, to achieve this. When the Royal Commission hands down its final report in 2024 we must be prepared to face the emerging issues that may relate to the RSL and hold ourselves accountable. Whether you're a small regional sub-Branch or a large, well-resourced sub-Branch in metropolitan Sydney, we must ensure that everything we do is contributing to achieving our charitable purpose and not be distracted from our role.

I have been on the Board and previous State Council since 2014 and have been a part of the most significant governance reforms that the RSL in NSW has seen in 100 years.

Your Board has been working closely with the District Presidents' Council to develop and implement new Policies and Standard Operating Procedures, training, and development to ensure that we're meeting our charitable obligations and so that our members are protected as they undertake their role.

As I have travelled around the State, I have met many of you here today and thousands of other members, and their families. Pauline and I have been welcomed and seen firsthand the great work that our members are doing for their local veteran community and they tell me they only wish they could do more to help veterans and their families. Well, our Strategic Plan is centred around how our organisation can do more and I urge you to consider how you can collaborate with your fellow members across the State to ensure that we remain the leading ESO that is doing more to support veterans and their families.

However, we can't do more without our valued network of members who volunteer their time to connect veterans to critical services and support, looking after their wellbeing, and delivering important commemorations to recognise the service and sacrifice of every man and woman who has served to protect our country. Without our members, the League simply wouldn't exist and that would be a great shame.

My role as your President will end today at the rise of this Congress. Our governance and Constitutional reforms mean that my term has expired, and I am grateful for the trust that you have placed in me to lead the League for the last three years. I will continue to be involved in some way as both Pauline and I are volunteers through-and-through, and we believe in this great organisation and the great work it can do.

I wish the Directors of our Board all the best as they come together for the first time. I wish our CEO Jon Black all the best for his retirement, and I welcome our new CEO Giles Hurst to the organisation.

Finally, I congratulate Mick Bainbridge on the appointment to the role of President and I know he will do a great job in representing you all, and the wider veteran community.

Lest We Forget.

A little glimpse at the 2 days



















A major highlight of the Congress schedule for delegates, run for the second year in a row, was the recreational activity held at Bar Beach Bowling Club.

The event gave delegates the opportunity to meet each other, socialise and play friendly games of lawn bowls and trivia.









As I said in the last newsletter we would be paying tribute to Ray this month. Most of you will remember the children's books, Where's Wally?, well for the last few years a lot of us have been asking Where's Ray?.

I can't imagine how many miles he has driven around this state, I wish he had kept a record of it, I am sure it would be the equivalent to going around the world several times.

How many miles?, how many towns?, how many speeches?, how many hand shakes?, too many to guess, but they have all been done for our RSL and our veterans and their families, here's a little look back at Ray's time as President of RSL NSW

This would have to be one of my favourite photos, Ray marching on Anzac Day 2021 with his son Paul on his left and his grandson Harry on his right, a very proud moment.



















































PRESIDENTS CLOSING ADDRESS- RSL NSW CONGRESS 2023

Good afternoon Delegates, ladies and gentleman.

When I joined the League in 1975, I certainly didn't imagine then that I would be standing before you giving my final address as President of RSL NSW.

I joined as a 26-year-old veteran of Vietnam and a current serving member of the Royal Australian Navy. I joined because my father had been a member and because I felt that it was the right thing to do.

Although I felt welcome, I didn't actively participate as a member for about 20 years. My priorities were raising my young family, serving my country, and establishing a new career in the NSW Police Force.

Eventually, I did get involved and I am proud of the support I've given my fellow veterans, the roles that I have undertaken at a sub-Branch, District Council, Board, and National Board level, and most of all I cherish the life-long friendships that I've made.

I wanted to make this point today because it's not uncommon that I hear that sub-Branches are frustrated that new members aren't getting involved immediately and not putting their hand up for Executive roles.

In most cases, they're not going to get involved overnight. Like me, it's going to take time. I encourage you all to consider what your sub-Branch is offering members and their families and to continue to reach out to them, and indeed all members attached to your sub-Branch, on a regular basis. Whether it's calling them to say G'day, connecting them to services and support, or inviting them to a social or commemorative activity, it's critical that veterans in your community know that the RSL is here to help and that they are welcome.

I have enjoyed my time since 2014 being on State Council, the Board, and serving as Vice President and President of the largest ex-service organisation in NSW, and indeed Australia. There have been significant changes during that time, many challenges, and certainly many achievements that I am proud of, and I hope that I have done the job that I was elected to do and served my fellow members well.

I have been fortunate enough to serve alongside some great people both on the Board and the team at ANZAC House and to meet and work with tens of thousands of members across NSW and our country.

Since 2011, Pauline has been doing her bit too, volunteering as a Councillor on the former Central Council of Women's Auxiliaries, then as President of the CCWA, and more recently as the State Coordinator of the RSL Auxiliaries. Pauline has done a great job overseeing the Auxiliaries and I am extremely proud of the work that she has done and continues to do.

Her hard work and "never give up or take no for an answer" attitude have ensured that the Auxiliaries continue to play an important and vital role in supporting sub-Branches to undertake their charitable purpose.

They say behind every great man is a woman. Well, Pauline never stood behind me, she stands beside me, and for that I am extremely grateful. Thank you to you, Pauline, and my family for the support that you have given me to undertake this role.

To the team at ANZAC House who have supported me, laughed with me, and listened to me, I say thank you. Some of you have worked at ANZAC House longer than I have been on State Council or the Board and you have embraced ongoing changes and reform as the backbone of this great organisation.

During my time in leadership positions, I believe there have been more CEOs than Prime Ministers. I have had some interesting discussions with our outgoing CEO – Jon Black. I almost out-lasted you, Jon! Like most healthy relationships, we haven't always seen eye-to-eye but together we've achieved great things and left behind a lasting legacy.

I thank you for your dedication to our organisation and the immense effort and personal sacrifice you have made to improve outcomes for the League at a state and national level, and indeed for veterans and their families. I wish you well for your retirement and look forward to catching up for a Reschs when we've both got more time on our hands

I welcome our incoming CEO, Giles Hirst, who I am confident will hit the ground running working with our new Board after receiving a very thorough briefing and handover from Jon.

To the Board of Directors, I say thank you. Like all good Boards, we've had some differences of opinion, but we've always been united on delivering the best outcomes for the League in NSW. I wish the new President Mick Bainbridge well and I congratulate you on being elected to this prestigious role. To the newly elected Directors, I say well done and urge you to stay true to our organisation's mission and charitable purpose as you undertake your important role.

Finally, to my fellow members who volunteer countless hours of their personal time to make this organisation great, and who focus on our Charitable Purpose of supporting ALL veterans and their families, I say thank you. Without our members, the League would simply not exist or be able to support veterans and their families for another 100 years.

As we continue to work collaboratively to achieve our charitable purpose, the League in NSW will continue to achieve great things and remain relevant.

I may no longer be President, but I will certainly remain a member of the League, leading by example and proudly supporting my fellow veterans and their families.

Thank you, God bless and Lest We Forget.

One final thing I must show you, at a morning tea at ANZAC House Ray was presented with a mock up Reveille - just fabulous





I can't believe that at the time of writing this, there is just over a week to go until the event of the year, The Poppy Ball.

Though the seats are fully sold out, there are still ways you can be apart of this wonderful fundraising event.



To book tickets please click this link The Poppy Ball | TryBooking Australia

Also, you can buy raffle tickets, make a donation or grab a wonderful item in the Silent Auction (oh my, there really are some amazing things being auctioned) you can check it all out by clicking on the link for more information and to take part.



All Items - RSL LifeCare Poppy Ball 2023 | GalaBid

AROUND THE AUXILIARIES

BARADINE AUXILIARY

Baradine RSL Sub Branch the RSL Auxiliary and Veterans were joined by representatives of the Baradine Central School and the St Johns Primary School, gathered together with members of the public to commemorate Victory in the Pacific Day and they also took the chance to remember the Vietnam Veterans of the town who had served in that conflict.



We were also very pleased to celebrate the 100th birthday of the last surviving WW2 veteran in our district on the 14th of October. Hilton Pickett served in the Army as a Gunner and was stationed at Port Moresby and spent most of his time Paga Hill as part of the "O Heavy battery. At the end of the war his unit was on the HMAS Manunda which sailed to Borneo to pick up POW's from the camps and then went up to Kure in Japan and they set up the first Australian General Hospital there before sailing back to Australia



Many thanks
Evelyn Hampton
Deputy Coordinator Baradine

Hilton still has very sharp recollections of his 5 years overseas as a young man . After the war he worked the rest of his working life as a farmer in the Baradine, Walgett and Coonabarabran areas and lastly at Guerie. Hilton celebrated at a party attended by his family of 4 children and many of his extended family and friends and wrote and read out his own speech. His war effort was publicly recognised and he was thanked for his sacrifice and contribution to world peace at the time.

LISMORE AUXILIARY

None of us will ever forget the devastation of the 2022 floods, we asked Deputy Coordinator of Lismore Auxiliary Judy Vivers for an update on the aftermath

"On the 28th February, 2022 over 1,000mm of rain fell north of Lismore in the space of 30-36 hours. By 3pm on the 28th the river at Lismore peaked at 14.4 metres, more than 2 metres higher than the 1975 & 1954 floods.

Although I was not affected in my home, my workplace which was 2 stories high was inundated by floodwater and we were unable to attend work.

By Wednesday, we were unable to enter the building and everything was destroyed.

We all had to work from our houses and getting equipment was very hard to find. The wet weather was constant and the mould was horrendous. Lismore struggled to get fuel and food, 3 weeks later we had another flood which broke the levee again. The loss of life, property and buildings was unimaginable but the spirit of the people in the Northern Rivers was exceptional.

18 months on. Lismore and surrounds are still rebuilding. I spent 6 months working from home but am thankfully back at work in our office, but, we have measures in place now as we learned a lot from the floods.

Personally, I am vey lucky. A lot of Lismore residents are not, a lot of people had to leave the area, a lot of businesses will never return and a lot of people still do not have a home to go to. "

Thank you Judy, our hearts go out to everyone affected by these floods.



PORT MACQUARIE





Lyn Elliott Deputy Coordinator

Joan Rose Coordinator

Please find attached two photos from our auxiliary craft stall held on the 19th of October.

Top photo is myself Lyn Elliott and next photo is of Joan Rose coordinator.

We had a lovely day meeting lots of Port Macquarie locals. We sold lots of Christmas decorations, babies' clothes and baby toys.

Regards Lyn Elliott Port Macquarie

FORESTVILLE

Forestville RSL sub-Branch Auxiliary Congratulate: -

The Winners of the 2023 Lady Woodward Cup – Sussex Inlet Auxiliary
And

3rd Place winners – Old Bar Beach Auxiliary.

We are very honoured to be placed between these two amazing Auxiliaries, in 2nd place.

Wishing all the best to NSW Auxiliaries for the 2024 Lady Woodward Cup. We all love a challenge, so here's hoping more Auxiliaries participate.



It was only a couple days after the LWC awards, when members of our Auxiliary met for yet another poppy making workshop. Our 'easy as' felt poppies were a big hit in 2022 and we set out to make more for this year. Plus our dozens of the ever popular knit and crocheted poppies.





Some snippets of some of our events for 2023:

Our recent Spring Fashion Parade was a big success, with thanks to our lovely Auxiliary ladies modelling, while many other members helped organise the morning tea, Raffle and everything that goes into such a day.

Celebrating the 69th Birthday for the Forestville Auxiliary.

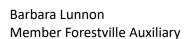
Pauline James OAM, with Don Kennedy OAM, cut the Birthday cake. We were privileged to also have President NSW RSL, Ray James OAM with us. As State Coordinator RSL NSW Auxiliaries, Pauline took centre stage, while Ray got to relax, for a change, and enjoy the occasion.





What to do when, at the last minute, a booked guest speaker for one of our meetings is unable to be there?

We have learned to look within the Auxiliary to members who happen to have a history of general interest to everyone. This was the occasion when our member, Marj Howard, spoke of her Qantas flying days which included a wonderful PowerPoint of the many changes of uniforms over decades and personal memorabilia. We learned a lot of what goes on behind the scenes on board flights with many interesting, intriguing, and delightful stories.







CASTLE HILL AUXILIARY

Recently members gathered to create this wonderful poppy net which will be used in the fishbowl at Castle Hill RSL Club in the lead up to Remembrance Day. They also packed the poppies they have made for Remembrance Day. They are about to begin to sell Poppies and badges in the foyer of the Club.







DOYLSON WYEE AUXILIARY



Gail Rowe busy at Bunnings Charmhaven





To all our Auxiliary Members who are not feeling the best at the moment, we are thinking of you and sending our love and best wishes

PENRITH AUXILIARY

Auxiliary hard working ladies selling Remembrance Day badges etc. at Penrith RSL







Just a quick note before I finish, on behalf of Pauline and myself, I would like to thank everyone for their lovely comments on the fact that we are not retiring, some of you may not know but we have been talked in to staying a while longer. We really appreciate your support and we look forward to continuing working with you all.

Also, I want to say thank you for the comments regarding this newsletter. It's very amateurish, I tend to write as I speak, I mostly say I, as I write it, but obviously when I use the pronoun we, I am talking about Pauline & me. I have never learnt to type so I should run a competition each month for spot the mistake, but it's not a professional publication, it's just us keeping you in the loop and as I keep saying, I need content so please keep it coming.

Cheers

Sue

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

VERA MOY LANE - BARADINE AUXILIARY

Vera Moy Lane passed away 5th September, 2023 aged 92- just a few days short of her 93rd birthday, at her home the Residential Aged Care Home in Baradine. Moy had been a member of the Baradine RSL Auxiliary since 1994 but her association went back to when she married to John Lane in the 1940's post WW2.

Johnny Lane served in the Navy on the HMAS Shropshire as an Able Seaman and at the time he joined the ship it was involved in escorting convoys up the coast of New Guinea , the Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines1) , Borneo and the Pacific. At the time of the signing of the Peace Treaty between Japan and America the Shropshire was tied up next to the USS Missouri on September 2nd 1945. For many years , up to 2008, they attended the Shropshire reunions Moy attended every ANZAC service in Baradine taking pride of place in the Jeep leading the parade through town She was an active member up to just before her death- she made sure she had attended the Victory in The Pacific Commemoration service held in Baradine on August 15th.



She is sadly missed by all members

Evelyn Hampton





Auxiliaries with Facebook Pages:

Ingleburn

ANZAC House RSL NSW Auxiliary – St George

Bundeena

Leeton

Port Macquarie

Woonona Bulli

Doyalson Wyee

Toukley

For those of you who use Facebook, do you know that we have both a Facebook Page and a Facebook Group, why not pop over and join us?

Facebook Page, https://www.facebook.com/groups/163434587113422

Facebook Group www.facebook.com/groups/3455036824555520

Battlefields of WWI , Gareth McCray OAM has regular posts, poems from Bill Charlton, so much more.

We are aware some Auxiliaries have their own Facebook Pages/ Groups, if you do, please let me know so that I can add the details to the next Newsletter and other members will be able to follow you.

Heicke Keefe has set up a Facebook group for all of us crafters, **Helping our Veterans Craft Group**, pop over and join, some great ideas to help raise funds. https://www.facebook.com/groups/3455036824555520

CONTACT DETAILS

auxiliaries@rslnsw.org.au

Pauline James: 0411 877 396 Susan Allen: 0409 608 901



ANZAC House is now located in

Suite 11.02, Level 11, 175 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000