



SITREP



RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)

Supporting veterans in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai area



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Acting President's Message

Hi Everyone,

I hope this Newsletter finds you all safe and well.

As you are aware, George Main stood down as sub-Branch President in August. I would like to take this opportunity to thank George for his enormous contribution to the sub-Branch over the past years, initially as Treasurer and then as President. As a temporary measure, I will continue as Acting President until a new President can be elected.



A special thank you to the Auxiliary for the raffle and fundraising efforts to date. I believe that our Christmas meeting in November will be something special. Thank you to all of our volunteers.

The Hornsby RSL sub-Branch attended the re-opening ceremony of the Sphinx Memorial and HMAS Adelaide Mast on the 27 August 2024. Carolyn Parish and I represented our sub-Branch. The Ku-ring-gai High School Year 7 classes help maintain the memorial and its surrounds throughout the year culminating in a memorial service at the Sphinx Memorial on ANZAC Day.

As is usual for this time of the year, members of the Executive have also represented the sub-Branch at smaller Remembrance Day commemorations conducted at local schools, aged care facilities and social clubs.

The Board of Directors of RSL LifeCare Limited, a partner charity of RSL NSW, appointed current director Sangeeta Venkatesan as Chair of the RSL LifeCare Board in October. Ms Venkatesan has more than 25 years of experience in the financial services sector and brings a wealth of expertise

in corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, digital transformation, investment management, and large-scale corporate restructuring and turnarounds. She had been serving as Interim Chair of RSL LifeCare since September.

Our Coffee & Chat meetings and Ten Pin Bowling sessions continue to be extremely successful. Please contact me to make a booking as numbers are limited. All the best and keep safe.

As this is the final SITREP for 2024, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your dear ones a wonderful Christmas and a happy 2025.

Regards
John

Welcome

Since the last edition of SITREP, the sub-Branch has welcomed Fiona Wang as a new member of the Auxiliary.

Vale

It is with sincere regret that we must acknowledge the passing of Ron Young.

Ron was born on 9 September 1937. He served in the Australian Army as a National Serviceman in the 1950s. Ron passed away on 28 August 2024.



News and Activities

Remembrance Day

The sub-Branch held its regular Remembrance Day commemoration at the Hornsby Cenotaph. The address was given by Mayor of Hornsby Shire, Councillor Warren Waddell, and Barker College provided the Cataflaque Party. Many thanks to those who helped bring this event to fruition.

The following are a few photos taken on the day by Carolyn Parish. Many thanks.





Fund Raising Results

Fundraising in the lead-up to Remembrance Day, the Auxiliary raffles and the Poppy Appeal has added just over \$3,300, after deductions for costs, to the funds raised in 2024. Over the whole year, again after deductions for costs, the sub-Branch has raised over \$10, 600 including the amount raised in the Poppy Appeal.

In the year to date the sub-Branch has donated \$5,000 for RSL Life Care Veteran Services and \$10,025 to the Veterans' Wellbeing Centre Hornsby. In addition, the sub-Branch has provided \$1,888 in direct support to veterans.

New Plaque Installed

The new plaque replacing the generic "Other Conflicts" plaque was installed just before Remembrance Day. As noted in earlier SITREPs, it now recognises all ADF operations over the past 50 years.

The photo shows the new plaque in position albeit partially concealed by wreaths laid on Remembrance Day.



Diaries

2025 diaries are now available. Please speak to Neil Turner if you need one.

Auxiliary News

Members of the Auxiliary and some Sub-Branch members were involved in selling Remembrance Day memorabilia last week. Around \$7,000 of merchandise was sold, sadly less than the previous year. It was also noted when selling items for Anzac Day that people were spending less this year. Thus, we are rethinking our selling strategy for next year.



Thankfully, our new Auxiliary members (Christina and Donald) were able to assist on our roster and James (after completing his HSC exams) counted the lollies in the lolly jar for the fundraiser at our November meeting.



As has been noted earlier, we have a new member, Fiona Wang, who is warmly welcomed and two other younger members waiting backstage – Andy Lee and Jason Winter.

Our monthly raffles have been a success raising around \$350.00 each meeting. We are very grateful for our local business sponsors who donate the raffle prizes.

Finally, we are forever thankful to members and supporters of the Sub Branch for contributing to our raffles and other fundraising activities.



RSL NSW State Congress and Annual General Meeting

The RSL NSW Congress and Annual General Meeting was held at the Newcastle Exhibition Centre from 27-29 Oct 24. Phil White was the Hornsby sub-Branch delegate. Video of each day can be found on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/@rsl_nsw

Day One

The opening afternoon included the standard ceremonial activities, including an address by the Governor of NSW, the presentation of awards and reports from the Board Chair, the President and the Chair of the District Presidents' Council.

Day Two

Presentations on Day 2 included RSL LifeCare Veterans Services, DVA and RSL Australia. Day Two also comprised a series of member-participation forums on the topics of membership, structure, trustees and vision for RSL NSW. Each forum was led by a panel comprising a Board member, a District Council President and an executive team member from RSL NSW. Preliminary comments were followed by a general Q and A session.

One issue to arise during the membership forum was the concept of a supporting member rather than two separate membership categories of Affiliate and Auxiliary. There were some reasonable arguments for the combination and the meeting generally supported the concept although the specific name for this membership category was not agreed. I got the sense that the name will probably be 'Auxiliary'

The final forum dealt with the vision for RSL NSW. The forum was preceded by a presentation showing that:

- Unless action is taken now, one in five sub-Branches are likely to close by 2030, with the impact felt greatest in regional NSW, where 43 sub-Branches are predicted to close based on the current trajectory.
- Sub-Branch Office Bearers are over-burdened by onerous charitable administrative and trustee duties and new volunteers are reluctant and unwilling to take on these roles.
- Last year, more than half of our sub-Branches operated at a loss, and 35 receive ongoing financial assistance from RSL NSW to ensure their doors stay open.
- In 2022, sub-Branches reported that they spent \$7.5m on administration and staff, \$1.8m on direct veteran welfare, and \$5.5 million on donations. This expenditure is not aligned with RSL NSW's charitable purpose, nor member expectations.

Regrettably, comments from the floor during the discussion were diverse and many were of little value. At the end of the forums, the RSL NSW Board Chair observed that she was disappointed in

the level of the discussion and that many people were unable to lift their vision. It was an accurate observation.

Day Three

There were 31 motions on the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting held on Day 3 and the results are detailed in the following table:

Housekeeping	Four motions considered – all were carried
General motions requiring over 50% to be carried	17 motions were considered – 14 of these motions were carried
Constitutional Motions requiring over 66.7% to succeed	10 motions were tabled, one was withdrawn and the remaining nine all failed to pass

The detailed results for each motion will be published on the RSL NSW Website around 6 December 2024

The results of the Constitutional motions were particularly disappointing. This continues the trend of the last few AGMs and demonstrates an almost 'dinosaur like' resistance to change within many of the sub-Branches. Something has got to change if RSL NSW is to survive.

Upcoming Dates

The calendar of activities for 2025 is being finalised and will be distributed to members in December.

In the interim, please note that with December and January being stand down months, the next sub-Branch General Meeting will be on Sunday 23 February 2025. Notwithstanding the stand down period, our Sports and Recreation activities will continue in December with the next 10 pin bowling event planned for 11 December 2024 There will be no Coffee Club on 8 January and the normal schedule will resume in February with 10 pin bowling on 12 February 2025.

The Committee will hold its final meeting for 2024 on 10 December.

Heritage

Memorabilia Collection. – Table Tops

Many will recall the Army, Navy and Air Force News. These publications are still published regularly and electronic versions can be found at <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/defence-newspapers>

Over the years, there have been many newspapers and publications which have provided troops with news. Our Memorabilia Collection includes several examples of one such publication called Table Tops. Wikipedia tells us that it was a free daily newspaper produced for Australian Army personnel. Originally published in the Atherton Tableland Training Area in Queensland, Australia, regional editions were printed abroad for serving personnel in places such as Morotai in the Maluku Islands, Balikpapan, Brunei in Borneo. Our examples were produced in Balikpapan and Tarakan.

It was published by staff who were part of the First Australian Army Printing and Press Unit. The newspaper was printed seven days a week: weekday and Saturday editions were four pages long while Sunday editions were eight pages. It contained news on the progress of the war, as well as home news such as current events in Australia and sport results.



Throughout the war, the editor of Table Tops was Major C. H. Cheong. The regional editions were produced in camps, with mobile generators and truck-mounted printing equipment. News was collected by listening to short-wave radio broadcasts from India, Hawaii, the BBC and Australia. More details can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_Tops

Editor's Note

Please take care and thanks for reading.

To echo John's message, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your 'near and dear' ones.

Phil