

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



DANDENONG CRANBOURNE
RSL SUB BRANCH INC



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DANDENONG CRANBOURNE RSL SUB BRANCH INC (DCRSL)

CHAIRMAN:	L. McDermott	(President)
COMMITTEE:	S. Couch	(Vice President)
	M. Osborne	(Secretary)
	B. Couch	(Treasurer & Chair, Audit & Risk Committee)
	J. Wells OAM	(EXOfficio)
	J. McNeill	(Committee Member)
	T. Kraskov	(Committee Member)
	J. Galloway	(Committee Member)
	K. Holmes	(Committee Member - <i>Retired</i>)
	P. Farmer	(Committee Member - <i>Retired</i>)
	G. Betros	(General Manager)

“Honouring Service, Strengthening Community”

Our Mission

We are committed to promoting the welfare and interests of current and former ADF personnel and their families. Through our Welfare program, we strive to provide meaningful support to all veterans and their loved ones, ensuring their well-being to the best of our ability. Beyond this, we are dedicated to strengthening our local community by assisting those facing challenges, fostering a spirit of service and care across our community.

Our vision

We are a welcoming and inclusive organisation, committed to honouring the past, serving the present, and embracing the future. Guided by respect for our members, our community, and each other – we evolve to better serve those who have served. As we grow with new spaces and experiences, our core purpose remains unchanged: to support veterans, their families, and the wider community. Behind every moment shared, we uphold the spirit of service – it is our duty and our honour.

Our History

DCRSL was formed in 2009 through the amalgamation of Dandenong RSL (est.1918) and Cranbourne RSL (est. 1929), uniting two strong legacies. Dandenong RSL, a longstanding success in the Victorian RSL network provided financial support and leadership to Cranbourne RSL during a time of need. With roots dating back to 1918 and 1929, our organisation remains committed to a strategic, long-term vision that strengthens operations and sets clear priorities for the future.

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PRESIDENT

Lance McDermott



This is my first report as President of the Dandenong/Cranbourne sub-branch, and I wish to thank everyone who expressed their congratulations when I was elected.

With the unexpected resignation of the entire Board Executive, the last 12 months has been a steep and, at times, a confronting learning experience with the new Executive only having a total of eight years' experience at Board level. At this point I would particularly like to thank Belinda Couch for coming onboard as our Treasurer. Belinda's expertise in business and all things technology has dragged the rest of us, sometimes kicking and screaming, into the 21st century and we are most grateful to her. We have made some mistakes along the journey, but we have learnt from them, and this will help us in our future endeavours.

We were working hard to secure a new venue for Cranbourne but only a week after we notified ANZAC House of our intentions, the site we had in mind was sold from under us. We will continue to search for a venue for our Cranbourne members, although at the beginning it will be a very scaled down version of the previous venue. The site will also be a second base for our welfare activities, in what is fast becoming the biggest catchment area for ex veterans in Victoria. Other uses for the site will be a new base for the Young Veterans programme, which is currently in a rental premises in Station St Cranbourne, a permanent home for the Cranbourne Air League, a new base for our appeals team and a storage/display area for the memorabilia that is currently in storage elsewhere. The Snooker Club will also be accommodated there. Also, once we identify a suitable site, we will no longer be required to pay storage/rental fees and will save over thirty thousand dollars per year.

At last year's AGM, we unveiled plans for significant works to extend our current premises but due to the current financial climate, we have decided to go back to the drawing board for a rethink. Watch this space!

Where would we be without our tireless staff? From reception, the office, welfare, bar and gaming staff, front of house in the bistro, the security staff, the kitchen staff, maintenance and cleaners, we would be lost without them. The people we see every day often have a challenging job task of assisting patrons who may be both demanding and difficult. I sincerely

appreciate their professionalism, patience and expertise in handling these situations with grace and dedication. They, combined with the skills of the people behind the scenes, the ones we don't see every day, make our club the friendly venue that it is.

I would like to thank the members of the previous Board, John Wells OAM, Bill Shepherd, Barry Rogers, John Cooper and Jim Naughton, who stood down last year. The knowledge you have passed down has been invaluable! I am also grateful to Peter Farmer and Karen Holmes who have recently resigned from the Board for personal reasons, we will miss your contributions.

It's my pleasure to welcome Ms Suong Tran to the team as our new General Manager. Suong brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our club having previously been the General Manager of Reservoir RSL Sub Branch and Greyhounds Entertainment. Welcome Suong!

I wish to acknowledge the effort put into the club by our former General Manager, Mr Greg Betros. Greg joined the staff nearly 30 years ago as a two hour a week casual, working in the bar and worked his way up to General Manager 10 years ago, a fine effort. I first met Greg in 2018 when I became a member of the memorabilia group and his guidance then and when I became a board member three years ago, has been much appreciated. However, his guidance and steady leadership since I became President last year is something I'll never forget. Your insights, patience and expertise have made a significant difference, helping to steer us forward while allowing me the space to learn – mistakes and all. Thanks Greg!

I would like to reiterate what John said in his report last year in that I am extremely proud to be the President of this fine club, I'm proud of the staff who run the club in such an exemplary manner, the volunteers who enable us to carry out our welfare work and the members who keep the tills turning over.

Leadership is never without its challenges, but I am proud of what we the committee, staff and volunteers have achieved together. We have further strengthened our foundations and remained committed to delivering against our mission and our vision for the club. Looking ahead, I am excited about the path we are forging and the continued success. Thank you to our Members, staff and community for your trust and dedication. The future is bright and I look forward to what we will accomplish together.

VICE PRESIDENT

Stuart Couch



DCRSL remains committed to supporting Veterans, their families and our communities in Dandenong, Cranbourne and surrounding areas. Our commitment to maintaining a strong presence in the region is unwavering, ensuring that those who have served receive the support and recognition they deserve.

This year, we were proud to see outstanding attendance and community engagement at the Cranbourne ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services. The overwhelming support from the community truly reflects deep respect and gratitude for our veteran community. These commemorations are a vital part of our mission, providing a moment for reflection, unity, and remembrance.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our local community, the City of Casey, Victoria Police, SES, CFA and all the local organisations and schools that contributed to making these events so meaningful. Your involvement ensures these traditions remain strong and continue to honour those who have served.

Additionally, we remain committed to new premises in Cranbourne to better serve our members and the wider community. While we were disappointed to have recently missed out on a property, our efforts to find a suitable location continue. Finding the right space is essential to strengthening our engagement and providing greater support to those who need it.

I want to acknowledge our incredible members, volunteers and staff whose dedication drives everything we do. Your support is invaluable, and I look forward to continuing this important work together in the year ahead.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mark Osborne



This year has been one of transition and renewal for DCRSL, with a newly formed committee coming together to guide the organisation forward.

While we have made great progress in aligning our vision and strengthening our foundation, we recognise that there is still much to learn and much to do.

Our focus has and will continue to be on improving governance, enhancing member services, and fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. We have worked hard to ensure a smooth transition while setting clear priorities for the future. As we continue this journey, we remain committed to supporting our veterans, their families and the broader community.

I want to acknowledge the dedication of my fellow committee members, past and present, our staff and volunteers, their hard work and passion have been instrumental in this period of change. Thank you also to our members for your ongoing trust and support – we look forward to building an even stronger DCRSL together.

2024 Committee Meeting Attendance

Name	Directors Meetings		Special Meetings	
	Number of Meetings Attended	Number of Meetings Held/Eligible to Attend	Number of Meetings Attended	Number of Meetings Held/Eligible to Attend
L.McDermott	18	20	2	2
S.Couch	19	20	2	2
M.Osborne	20	20	2	2
B.Couch	19	20	1	2
J.Wells OAM	16	20	1	2
J.McNeill	8	10	-	2
T.Kraskov	7	10	-	2
J.Galloway	10	10	2	2
K.Holmes <i>Retired</i>	7	10	-	2
P.Farmer <i>Retired</i>	9	10	2	2
G.Betros <i>Retired</i>	19	20	2	2

TREASURERS REPORT

Belinda Couch



It is my privilege to present the Treasurer's report for 2024, summarising the financial performance and position of DCRSL.

I am pleased to confirm that the financial statements have been independently audited in accordance with regulatory requirements. The audited financial statements have been reviewed and are being presented to the March 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) for consideration and acceptance. The audit has verified that our financial management practices align with compliance requirements, which means we can move forward with confidence, ensuring continued support for our members.

Despite ongoing economic challenges, DCRSL has maintained a stable financial position. Our revenue sources include Club Bistro and gaming revenue, membership fees, fundraising events, grants and donations which have all contributed to the sustainability of our operations and veteran support initiatives. Prudent financial oversight has ensured that funds were allocated effectively to support our mission while maintaining operational efficiency, I would like to acknowledge Greg Betros and Julie Redmond for their efforts in effectively managing cash flow to ensure our financial stability.

I would also like to highlight that planned changes to gaming regulations could potentially have an impact on our revenue streams. We anticipate that we may experience reductions in gaming activity as a result, which may affect the overall profitability of the club. To mitigate this, we are exploring alternative revenue generating activities, such as but not limited to expanding our dining offering. We will closely monitor the changes and adapt our strategy as needed, so we can continue to provide high-quality services to our members and veterans.

As at end of 2024, our financial reserves and assets provide a strong foundation for continued operations. Moving into the year ahead, we have identified a number of initiatives that will require careful planning, collaboration and ongoing community support. These initiatives have a direct influence on our financial position, which include:

Club Development: We will be looking to explore our options on several key development improvements needed to our facility, this includes **Expanding our dining space** to accommodate more members and guests, providing a comfortable and welcoming environment and expanded capacity. **New Veteran Welfare space**, as many of you know we

have outgrown our current Veteran Welfare area, we need to make improvements that will see a dedicated space to support growing veteran and community support needs. It is our core purpose to provide a peaceful and supportive environment, where veterans can access essential our services. We also need to **improve our staff workspace**, changes are needed to ensure our staff have the space they need to work effectively, which ultimately contributes to the success of our operations and the quality of service we provide our members. It will be essential that we remain mindful of associated development costs in relation to incoming revenue. Balancing both will ensure the long-term success and stability of the club, allowing us to grow and provide value without overextending its crucial to our sustainability.

New Cranbourne Location: We have been exploring new locations for Cranbourne with the intention of finding the right fit to meet Veteran and Community needs. Ultimately, we anticipate this will be supported by the sale of our Narre Warren property, which has not been utilised as originally intended. This strategic decision will help us align our assets with our long-term goals in Veteran and Community support in the Cranbourne and surrounding region.

Improving and Maintaining Membership: Our membership remains central to the success of our sub branch. As your board delegate for membership, I will be working closely with our new General Manager, Suong Tran on growing our membership base through our events, improved communication and enhancements to our membership sign-up/renewal processes.

Expanding Appeals and Fundraising Efforts: We are fortunate to have a fantastic Appeals and Volunteers team, led by our President Lance McDermott. Funds we've raised are comparable to some of the larger RSLs and have slightly improved from the year prior, thanks to their hard work and dedication. We have already made steps heading into 2025 fundraising activities by improving our communication to engage the community and forward plan the events with the aim to increase visibility in the community and continue to educate our younger people on the significance. Building stronger local partnerships will be key to our ongoing success.

Seeking New Grant Opportunities: There are opportunities for us to be more active in applying for grants to support our projects and initiatives, particularly those that enhance Veteran services and community outreach. This will be an area for improvement, focusing on finding eligible grant opportunities that align to our mission and goals as our funding sources for new programs.

I also extend my gratitude to the committee, members, volunteers, staff and our supporters who have contributed to our financial success. Also acknowledge and thank our Auditors in reviewing our financial statements and ensuring compliance.

GENERAL MANAGER

Greg Betros



To our valued members of this wonderful Club.

As I step down from my role, I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you. It has been my absolute privilege to serve this great Club, to share in its traditions and to be part of a community that embodies the true spirit of camaraderie, service and respect.

I leave with fond memories and a deep appreciation for the friendships I have formed along the way. Whether it was through our commemorations, social gatherings or simply the everyday interactions that define our Club life, I have cherished every day.

Though I may no longer be in this role I look forward to seeing our great Club continue to thrive and grow, knowing it is in the hands of a passionate and committed new General Manager. Thank you for your support, kindness and the privilege of being part of this great Club.

I look forward to 2025 being a year of positive change and growth for our Club and all its wonderful members. I would like to wish all Members, Committee & Staff a healthy and prosperous 2025 as we look forward to another year of change and challenges.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our valued Members and volunteers for a great year; your continued support of our Club is, as always, greatly appreciated.

To President Lance McDermott and all the Committee thank you for your ongoing support and a big thank you to all our staff for helping the Club to achieve a record year in sales.



Lest we forget.

SERVICE MEMBERS

ARMY

Barry Smith
John Goldspink
Ronald Vienna
Thomas Pritchard
Anthonie Eijgendaal
Gregory Miller
John Field
Geoffrey Fickling
Alan Swann
Charlie Aquilina
Norman Morrish
Barry Wood
Savas Aposolides
Rex Johnson
Don Turner
Geoffrey Hardman
Peter Jennings
Neil Bonser
John Brauner

AIRFORCE

Rodney Beevors
Harry Crosby
Neville Clouten
John Dowling
Margaret D'Cruz
Ruby Dixon

NAVY

Joseph Hart
Frederick Menzies

WE WILL
REMEMBER THEM

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Joh Gaylard
Barbara Cook
Rosemarie White
Lyn Amalfi

Dorothy Wade
Alison Thatcher
John Beck
Brian Collins

Beverley Larkham
Dee Lynam
Marion Meppem
Stephen Northcott

WELFARE REPORT

Vladimir Nagorny



It is an honour to present the Veteran Welfare Coordinator's Report. Our mission remains steadfast in ensuring that the veterans in our community receive the support and care they deserve. This report outlines the key initiatives, programs and activities undertaken to support our veterans and community across 2024. In reflection, I am proud of the progress we have made in building a stronger, more connected community. This year, like every year before, was unique. It came with its fair share of challenges, but as always, our team rose to the occasion. **Well done, team!**

Achievements and Shout-outs

We were fortunate to have enough volunteers to visit veterans in aged care facilities, those living independently, and to conduct ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies for those who requested our services. **Welcome Back, ED!** It's great to have you back on the team. Thanks for rejoining us! And a warm **Welcome to Bruno**, our newest volunteer! Bruno has joined us with the goal of becoming a trained compensation advocate.

What We've Done This Year

We have proudly fulfilled our mission in providing welfare assistance to veterans who needed it - whether that meant visits, financial support, advice, accommodation. We have worked closely with our veteran network and provided many referrals to organisations like Open Arms and Anzac House. We have also provided practical assistance with engaging DVA, employment agencies, centrelink, medical and social support to help improve quality of life.

We continue to conduct ANZAC Day and Remembrance Days services in aged care facilities, allowing veterans who are unable to attend public commemorations to still honour their service and that of their comrades. These services have been deeply meaningful to the residents, their families and staff, reinforcing the importance of remembrance within our community.



We were also pleased to introduce **new wellbeing exercise programs** for veterans and their families aimed at improving both the physical and mental health of our veterans. These sessions promote mobility, strength and overall wellness, while providing an opportunity for social engagement. We were pleased to partner with [MIND](#) on these activities which have been widely recognised, particularly in reducing isolation, improving mental resilience, and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. We have offered several sessions over the year and are excited to see them continue in 2025.

Veteran Wellbeing Exercise Program



In addition, we launched a **Morning Tea for Veterans and Partners**, creating a welcoming space for veterans and their loved ones to connect in a relaxed and supportive environment. These gatherings have been a great opportunity for veterans to share stories, build friendships and stay engaged with the RSL community. The feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, and we look forward to growing this initiative further in the coming year. A Big Thank You to Julie Galloway for implementing and leading this connection activity.



We held a number of lunches for **Vietnam veterans** throughout the year, which saw an excellent turnout and were well received by those who attended. These lunches included our veterans aged 90+, and veterans in aged care and provided an opportunity for Vietnam Veterans to reconnect, share their experiences, and strengthen the bonds within their community. The positive feedback highlights the importance of these events, and we are committed to continuing them in the future.



A particularly special highlight of the year was celebrating a number of 100th birthday milestones within our veteran and affiliate community. Reaching this incredible milestone is a testament to the resilience and strength of these veterans, and we were honoured to be part of the celebrations. These moments provided a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge their service, share their remarkable stories, and celebrate their contributions to our community. Sadly, some of these centenarians have since passed away, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and loved ones. Their legacy will always remain a cherished part of our community, and we honor their service and sacrifices.

100th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



John Dowling (*Deceased*)



Dot Wade (*Deceased*)



Fred Menzies (*Deceased*)



Jack Schmidt

Sadly, we conducted **10** (27 last year) **funerals** over the year, ensuring veterans and their families received the respect they deserve. Each family of a deceased veteran received a complimentary box containing the engraved details and medals of the veteran, an Australian national flag, and a record of their service history.

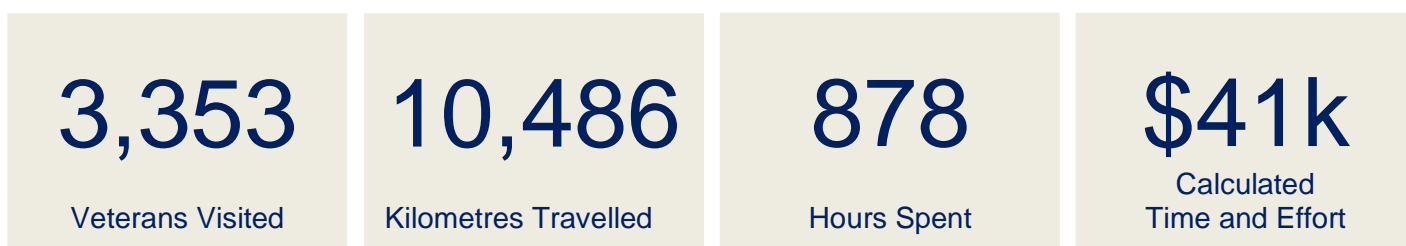
A key and vital area of support has been through our **Veteran Advocacy services**, where we have assisted veterans in navigating the complexities of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) system. Our dedicated team of volunteer advocates have provided guidance and advocacy to help veterans submit claims for White and Gold Cards, as well as apply for DVA pensions and compensation. By ensuring that veterans receive the entitlements and support they have earned, we continue to uphold our commitment to their welfare and wellbeing. These efforts have made a significant difference in the lives of many veterans, ensuring they receive the medical care, financial assistance, and recognition they deserve for service-related injuries.

Our Numbers Speak for Themselves

2024



2023



The Year Ahead

We remain committed to the ongoing welfare of our veterans, and we are proud of the progress we have made in building a stronger, more connected community. While we've done incredible work, there's always more to do. As we move forward, we will continue to adapt our services to meet the evolving needs of our veterans, ensuring that they are empowered, supported and celebrated. We will be looking to engage younger generations, raise awareness of volunteer opportunities, making it easier for people to get involved. We will be looking to continue to develop new programs for veterans. We will continue to visit and support the most vulnerable veterans in our community.

Thank You

I want to take this moment to thank all our **volunteers**, whether you participated in ceremonies, visited veterans, conducted funerals or supported our Appeals. Your dedication and hard work are the heart of everything we do. I would like to acknowledge and thank the committee for your constant support, understanding, and belief in our mission. I also want to thank Ian and Alastair, our talented pipers! Officially, you're not part of the welfare department, but you're definitely part of our family of volunteers. You've been there for us at funerals and ceremonies, and the residents in aged care absolutely love you. Thank you for always being there. A big thank to our long-standing friends and colleagues at **Berwick RSL** for your continued support. Working together allows us to make a real difference for veterans in need. And, of course, to our friends at the **MISFIDS Shed** for crafting beautiful flag and medal boxes that mean so much to the families of veterans.

THANK YOU all for your continued support

APPEALS REPORT

Lance McDermott
Appeals Officer



Lorraine Laughton and Les Hughes OAM

Our appeals activities remain a vital part of our mission, ensuring that we can continue to provide essential welfare and support services to veterans and their families. The funds raised through appeals directly contribute to programs such as advocacy support, wellbeing initiatives, commemorations, and emergency assistance for veterans in need.

Throughout the year, we conducted our **ANZAC** and **Remembrance Day Appeals**, which were once again well-supported by our community. These appeals serve as a crucial fundraising effort but also play an important role in keeping the legacy of our veterans alive. We extend our deepest gratitude to all volunteers, local businesses and schools who assisted in selling badges, poppies, and other memorabilia. This year we will be looking to improve and expand our Appeals activities through enhancing our community engagement.

One of our biggest challenges we face is the difficulty in recruiting volunteers to support our appeals' efforts. With changing community dynamics and increasing demands on people's time, it has been harder to find volunteers who can dedicate time to manning collection points and assisting with fundraising events. We have been fortunate to have a small but excellent group of Volunteers that make themselves available to help with the many deliveries and pickups across the region throughout the year.

I also wish to mention two special volunteers, Keith and Kevin Hughes. These two brothers have followed in the footsteps of their dad Les and have been an invaluable help to me. They do everything from making up the tubs for the schools and shopping centres and then delivering them, they restock and collect the cash tins from the shopping centres each evening and pick up the tubs from the schools after the appeal period. Thank you!

Despite the challenges, our appeals program remains strong thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, the generosity of our community and the commitment of our supporters. I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this year's efforts – whether through donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness.

	2022	2023	2024
ANZAC APPEAL	\$43,262	\$51,677	\$62,988
POPPY APPEAL	\$26,039	\$36,621	\$35,609

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Robyn Campbell - Membership Ambassador



All renewal and lapsed Service Members as of the 20th of December 2024 were contacted via phone and email. Approximately 290 contacts were made. Where there was no answer, a message regarding the reason for the call was left on the answering service if available. Notations were made in comments on IGT of all contacted members as to the outcome of each contact.

This year I identified 5 unreported deceased members, a significant decline from previous years. Improved record keeping and regular updates to the service members list has contributed to this. As always, I offered condolences and referred families to Vladimir for support. **LEST WE FORGET**

Approximately 39 service members were archived this year. Significantly down on previous years. These are members who we have not been able to contact or who have not contacted us for 2 years, they have moved address, or they no longer wish to renew their membership. There was only 1 member with a flat out “no” this year. He stated he would only renew when Cranbourne was sorted out. As usual, there were also quite a few who were just not contactable. There were no noted transfers out this year.

As in previous years, most older members were pleased to receive a call and were happy to renew their membership. I began each conversation by asking how they were and actively listening to their responses before discussing memberships. Most expressed their appreciation for the personal outreach, reinforcing the value of these calls. The triennial membership was still popular among those under 80 again.

MEMBERSHIP BREAK-UP (APPROX.) AS AT 07/03/2025;

Membership Type	2024	2025
LIFE MEMBERS	7	7
FINANCIAL SERVICE MEMBERS	626	585
LAPSED SERVICE MEMBERS	87	87
FINANCIAL AFFILIATE MEMBERS	1026	930
FINANCIAL SOCIAL MEMBERS	3030	2801
FINANCIAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS	287	260
FINANCIAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS	3	3

(OVER 80 = 216 / UNDER 80 = 369)
(OVER 80 = 25 / UNDER 80 = 63)

BECOME A MEMBER - Anyone can join as a member of the RSL Support your RSL and join a proud tradition of supporting veterans, fostering camaraderie, and honouring service. Plus, there are a range of other rewards and benefits.

Call (03) 9792 1535

MEMORABILIA REPORT

Lance McDermott

Whilst it may not be visibly obvious, the Memorabilia Group has worked steadily over the last 12 months, and we continue to catalogue the many items in our collection.

We have received some generous donations over the last year and I'd particularly like to thank Dr Robert Lazell for the donation of his outstanding brass model of HMAS Stuart 1, which is on display in the cabinet near reception.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Greg and the Staff for their ongoing support and to the team of David Joyce, Mike Newbond, Bill Kendall and Peter Gane, thanks for another good year.



New home for Siege of Tobruk war medals

By Violet Li

A collection of Siege of Tobruk war medals will have pride-of-place at Dandenong-Cranbourne RSL.

The RSL sub-branch's committee members had a commemoration ceremony with the donor Jim Wetherall at Dandenong on Tuesday 25 February.

The medals were awarded to Mr Wetherall's late father James Wetherall, who fought in the Siege of Tobruk during the Second World War.

"We've now got the medals and we're going to put them into a frame with a photo and put them onto our wall to thank him for giving us the medals," Dandenong-Cranbourne RSL secretary Marcus Osborne said.

Mr Osborne said the ceremony went very well.

"It was more of a commemoration of about 14,000 Australians that were involved in the Siege at Tobruk," he said.

"James was in the middle of it for the eight months that they were surrounded by the Germans.

"His son Jim has graciously given us the medals to display."

Mr Osborne said he felt compelled to share a story told by Jim during the lunch.

"He was only young when his father passed away. But he said his father told them that a German soldier, who was the enemy, would sit in his trench and sing country and western songs in English to the Australian soldiers," Mr Osborne recalled.



Peter Gane, David Joyce, Lance McDermott (president of Dandenong-Cranbourne RSL), Jim Wetherall (donor of the medals), Mark Osborne (secretary), Vlad Nargorny (veteran from Ukraine) were at the ceremony. (Rob Carew: 461548)

"And then he would say, that's all today, Aussies. And they would all clap and cheer him, and then the night would come.

"He did that for quite some time. But one

day, he didn't play his song. And they never heard from him again.

"If there's something out of that story, it shows that they were human too, the generals."

Star News Article: [Dandenong-Cranbourne RSL honours Siege of Tobruk veteran](#)

COMMEMORATION SERVICES - 2024

These events are a cornerstone of our commitment to honouring the sacrifices of our servicemen and women, ensuring their legacy is remembered and respected by current and future generations.

All our services over the year in Dandenong and Cranbourne were well attended, with strong community participation. Their presence reinforced the deep respect and gratitude our community holds for those who have served and continue to serve.

ANZAC Day Commemorations

Our ANZAC Day services were once again a moving tribute, bringing together people of all ages to reflect on bravery and sacrifices of our Australian and New Zealand forces. The Dawn service saw an exceptional turnout, with hundreds gathering in the quiet of the morning to pay their respects. The main service later in the day was equally well received, featuring:

- A march by Veterans, serving personnel and community groups, including strong participation from local schools and cadets.
- A commemorative address by our President Lance McDermott in Dandenong and Vice President Stuart Couch in Cranbourne, highlighting the enduring spirit of ANZAC and the importance of remembering past and present service members.
- The laying of wreaths by veterans, community representatives and schools
- The playing of the Last Post and a minute's silence, followed by the Rouse and National Anthem was observed at both events.

Remembrance Day Commemorations

Our Remembrance Day services on November 11th was another important moment of reflection, as we paused at the 11th hour to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This year included ceremonies at both the Dandenong and Cranbourne cenotaphs, again well attended by veterans, families, schools and members of the public.

Additionally, our efforts to ensure aged care residents could participate in commemorations were deeply appreciated. Special services were held within aged care facilities who were unable to attend public events, allowing them to still reflect and honour our servicemen and women. A Big Thank you to Vladamir Nagorny and our volunteers for making this happen.

***Our Commemoration services remain at the heart
of our mission to honour, remember and educate***

DANDENONG



CRANBOURNE



AGED CARE FACILITIES



Anzac Day at Scottvale Aged care



Anzac Day at Willow Wood Aged Care facility (Cranbourne)



Anzac Day at Mercy Place (Dandenong)



Remembrance Day at Mercy Place (Lynbrook)

DANDENONG RSL Woman's Auxiliary

Fiona Kendall, Secretary

During 2024 the Women's Auxiliary meet twice a month, our group still remains at just 10 members

Our main focus for 2024 was fund raising for Veteran support. We held 4 major raffles, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas form which with the support of members and staff at the Dandenong RSL we raised \$8927.65.

As well as the above we also held a raffle on Anzac Day and raffles at our meetings, raising a further \$1186.00.

In March of 2024 we were able to donate \$8000.00 to the Dandenong RSL welfare department to help support our Veterans, we are on track to surpass this figure in March this year.

I wish to congratulate all the Woman's Auxiliary members for their amazing efforts in supporting our Veterans.

I would also again like to thank the Staff at Dandenong RSL for their support throughout the year. Particularly the reception staff who sold tickets for our raffles on days we were not present.

To all the club members a special thank you for without your support there would be no funds raised.

We are still looking forward to new ladies joining our group, we meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month.

We are also looking to continue holding our raffles in 2025. Our aim to help support our Veterans remains.

DANDENONG RSL Whirlybirds Day Club

Leslie Whitiskie, Co-ordinator

We are still averaging around between 30 to 40 people most weeks for our day club, we have lost a few because of health reasons but have new ones that have taken their place.



In July we celebrated Dots 100th birthday with everyone enjoying a great celebration. Sadly,

Dot passed away not long after. We lost another long-term member, Rex who is sadly missed as well.

We had our usual Big Morning Tea which raises money for cancer where we raised \$1486.35 an excellent effort from all our Day Club members.

With our ageing member base and mobility becoming problematic we are having fewer bus trips but have increased the number of entertainers we now invite to entertain the Club which we all enjoy.

We had our 19th birthday in July so had a nice lunch and a cake to celebrate. We still play our usual card and board game exercises and Quiz's plus the price is right plus floor scrabble. We had our Christmas lunch on the 12th of December.

I want to thank Greg and all the staff for everything they do for us, without their help we would not be able to have the Day Club. Very sorry you are leaving us Greg we will all miss you but all the best in retirement.

FREEDOM DAY CLUB



Our Vietnamese Freedom Day Club (VFDC) was founded in 2008 and has been operating for nearly 16 years. Under support of Dandenong & Cranbourne RSL and Department Veteran Department.

DCRSL is the home for our Vietnamese Veterans, their partners, relatives and families to meet every week with friendly and enjoy a range of different activities each weekly Monday: it could be a chat, a karaoke song, a Domino game, Bingo game or Line Dancing.

Our club is supported, and our weekly lunch is subsidised by the DCRSL Board.

Last year on 20 May 2024 we organised the 16th anniversary function day at Dandenong RSL with 96 members and 12 guests attended.

Apart from 44 meetings in 2024 (held on Mondays), we also arranged 2 Outdoor trips on Thursdays to Cape Schank / Angel Cave on Thursday, 29 Feb 2024 and Agnes Falls on Thursday, 7 November 2024. All Bus seats were filled by members. These outings were enjoyable, memorable but also knowledgeable. Thank you to Mr. Van Thuan Tran for organizing these outings every year.



Every year, our Club attends the ANZAC DAY commemorations on 25 April 2024 and the Memorial of Remembrance Day on 11 November at the Pillars of Freedom Dandenong.



In October our committee organized a Veterans Health Week (VHW) 2024 event at the Grand Reserve, held on 19th October 2024. Thank you to all our volunteers and members who contributed their time and helping hand to the success of organising the VHW, we were pleased that over 120 people attended.



Each month we celebrate member Birthday on the 2nd week of the month (or 3rd week if falls on Public Holiday) for members born in the same month. Through this event, we could see more members attending, more laugh, more kisses and noisy celebrations.

In 2024, we visited 4 members both at home and in hospital. Sadly, we said goodbye to one member who died during the year - Mr. Mel Nguyen Funeral Date: Friday 19 December 2024

Thank you to all the volunteers, we couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you to all members who attend each week. Our average attendance is 53 per week.



From our Committee

The VFDC are grateful for the ongoing support from Dandenong Cranbourne RSL Committee, Club Management and all RSL staff.

We understand that a variety of entertainment programs is crucial to attract members' attendance. Without them, we could not have a Day Club to run. Therefore, we constantly review ways to entertain members while also considering various ideas contributed by our members. We look forward to the next 12 months, we believe VFDC still has a steady and bright future ahead. We are hopeful of getting the grant from DVA to assist us with the cost of our bus trips. This would help to reduce costs for our members.

We wish everyone good health, happiness and success in the coming year

DANDENONG RSL KNIT CLUB

Karen Anderson Coordinator

The cupboard is well stocked with knee rugs ready to go when the cooler months of Autumn start and then we head into the cold of Winter.



Although the Knit Club members have nearly all gone over the last two years for various reasons, they are unable to continue to knit due to arthritis or have moved away, gone into care homes due to age or health issues.

Sadly, we lost our number one supporter/member Dot Wade, contributor of bed socks, twiddle muffs, rugs, beanies and the occasional knitted dressing gown. Dotty is missed for her colourful knitted creations and her dedication to the club.

Special mention to Lillian Gilbert for continuing to knit her beautiful knee rugs and blankets keeping us with a supply to gift to Veterans, their families and members in need or some

local nursing homes to provide a bit of comfort and warmth to those in need.

Thanking all the ladies for their contribution to help give some comfort to our veterans and others in need.



DANDENONG RSL Recreational Bowls Club

Julie Galloway, Hon. Secretary

Another year and the 64th Year of the Bowling Section of the Dandenong RSL and although our membership is dwindling year on year, we have continued to have a community and social focus within our sporting section.

The Dandenong RSL Recreation Bowling Club continues and is affiliated with Bowls Victoria however, due to small member numbers we remain unable to field any Pennant Teams.



Dandenong RSL continues to enter teams in both the winter & summer Pennant Competition in the RSL Indoor Bowls Competition (Southern Region) and remains very competitive. We are looking forward to the upcoming season.

In 2025 the RSL Edinburgh Shield is being held in April, and a Dandenong RSL team has entered and will be playing in Echuca. Thank you to the Club for their ongoing support of the team for this event.

Thank you to our members who continue to volunteer and to Greg and the team for their ongoing support.

Dandenong RSL Social Golf Section

Steve Osborne, President

I would like to thank President Lance McDermott, General Manager Greg Betros, Committee & staff of the Dandenong/Cranbourne RSL for continued their support throughout 2024.

Our numbers in 2024 were again better than the previous year which is a great sign for the Social Golf Club. With 2025 numbers set to increase again!



Our annual trip to Barham again was a great success and we included a weekend away to Howlong Golf Club which was also very successful. Our club Champion for 2024 was Steve Osborne and the B Grade Champion was Robert Cesare. Our aim this year is to bring back the C Grade Championship. With the possibility of even maybe looking at a D Grade for the first time in the Dandenong RSL Social Golf Clubs history.

I would like to thank our hard-working Treasurer Rhonda Osborne, Captain Simon Gurr, Vice President Robert Cesare for all their tireless efforts during 2024. Our 2025 Committee elected on 2 February 2025 is as follows: President Steve Osborne, Vice President Robert Cesare, Treasurer Rhonda Osborne, Ass Treasurer David Nolan. Secretary John Buis, Ass Secretary Ross Beiske, Captain Simon Gurr, Vice-Captain Richard Hojnacki, Liaison Officer Bob Rayner.

If anyone is interested in joining the Dandenong RSL Social Golf Club for more information, please contact reception at the RSL on (03) 9792 1535 or via our 'Contact Us' form on the DCRSL website.

DCRSL Snooker & Billiards Club

Jim Naughton, President / Secretary



During the Year the Club was successfully relocated from Dandenong RSL to Strathaird Drive, Narre Warren. The Club is extremely thankful and comfortable in the new location.

Pennant and Competition

The DCRSL is well represented in both the VBSA (Victorian Billiards & Snooker Association) and Ex Servicemen's Over 55's Billiards & Snooker Association. This Year the Club Fielded Five Teams with 3 in the Night Competition VBSA and 2 in the Over 55's Competition, our B Grade VBSA team again won the Grand Final, I understand they have now won 4 Seasons in a Row. Our Over 55's Teams had a very competitive Season with Dandenong RSL (2) finishing in the Finals.

Morwell RSL Championship 2024

This Year the Club is extremely appreciative for the Support and Sponsorship for three Teams with Dandenong RSL (1) Winning the Snooker Championship and Dandenong RSL(2) Finishing Second.
Jim Naughton



MEMBERS SOCIAL CLUB

Tony Samperi



I would like to thank Lance, Greg and the wonderful staff in making 2024 a successful year for the Punters Club. We again Thank you for the opportunity of running Thursday night raffles where profits are mainly used for our punters Club break up. (In past subsidised by punters).

This year we had a expected 120 people, that ended up being 130 attending on the day. A great day was had with the punters club using the raised funds to heavily subsidise the day. A special thank you to Marcus, Travis and all the amazing staff who all worked so hard in making the breakup day the best one yet.

Special thanks to my two Thursday raffle sellers Jeanette and Damo. December raffle takings \$2340 was all paid back to patrons in prizes as a Thank you for the year's support. Overall, for the year we returned well over 50% of takings back to the patrons.

2024 the Punters club put back in excess of \$16,000 into the RSL in Vouchers, meals and drinks for break up.

It's great to see so many Punters club members supporting the club. Thurs/ Friday night raffles, Sambos Sat Shenanigans and Anzac Day where we had a several helpers with BBQ cooking and two-up. It's great to see the Punters Club Members giving a little bit back.

We look forward to a bigger and better year in 2025!



FINAL MESSAGE

From DCRSL Committee

As we reflect on the past year, we are incredibly proud of the achievements and contributions of our members, volunteers, and sub-club activities. Through dedication, hard work, and a shared commitment to supporting our veterans and community, we have continued to strengthen the role of our RSL in providing welfare, camaraderie and remembrance.

To our **members**, thank you for your unwavering support and involvement. Your presence at commemorative services, social gatherings and fundraising events ensures that the legacy of service and sacrifice remains strong. Your dedication keeps our RSL at the heart of the community.

To our **volunteers**, we simply could not do this without you, whether assisting with appeals, supporting welfare programs, organising events or giving your time to help others, your contributions are invaluable. We recognise that in today's busy world, finding time to volunteer is not always easy and we are deeply grateful for all that you do.



To **our sub-clubs**, your activities bring people together, promote well-being and create lasting friendships. Whether through sport, social gatherings, or our groups, your efforts enrich the lives of our members and strengthen our RSL family. Thank you!



As the DCRSL committee look ahead, we remain committed to growing our membership, expanding our services and continuing our mission to support veterans and their families. We encourage everyone to stay engaged, bring forward new ideas and help us build an even stronger, more inclusive RSL.

The DCRSL committee, **thank you for supporting us throughout the year.** We look forward to your continued support and seeing you at the club over the year ahead!