

# WESTERN OUTPOST NEWS



**APRIL 2014 ISSUE**

St Mary's Outpost the  
'Train of Knowledge'

## **St Mary's Vietnam Veterans Outpost & St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch Combined Newsletter**



**St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch ANZAC March will be held on  
Sunday 13th April 2014 and Dawn Service 25th April at 05.30am  
See page 5 for more information.**

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**9623 6555**

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## **VVAA ST MARY'S OUTPOST** **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

Well another year has come to pass and I am pleased to say that pretty well all of the usual faces are still with us.

It is always a bit disconcerting writing a report for the past year as I am constantly thanking the same people over and over again. But that just happens to be the nature of the beast; in any organisation 20% or so will do 90% of the work.

### **Train Washers:**

- A hearty thanks to all who assisted with keeping our work place in such fine form again. To Reno a special thanks for not only organising and delegating to his men but in arranging the Fishing Trips with the help of John Barlow for breakfasts and Terry Blackburn for the lotto club.

### **Office Staff:**

- Those who toil away in the office without any fanfare and no recognition, yet who we could not survive without. These people of course are Judy Shepherd for reception and Welfare information upkeep. Di Foeken for the best roustabout in the business and data-input operator. Without Di we would very quickly grind to a halt. John Taylor for stepping up to the mark whenever we need him in whatever means.

### **Education Team:**

- To Vin and Nancy Cosgrove who worked away in the background but in a constant fashion spreading the story of the Vietnam Veterans to the school system and also helping us out with much needed monetary donations from the schools.

### **Welfare & Pensions:**

- The very reason we are all here is to help each other out and any other Veterans or family of Veterans. To this end we have a very hard working group of dedicated people working as Welfare or Pension Officers. The strain on the mental capacity of these people at times is immense. I would like to pay special thanks to the Welfare Coordinator, John Foeken, for looking after the Welfare boys and girls and conducting the

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Funerals. Our Pension Officers also need special attention, some of whom work long hours not only at the 'train' - but at home preparing Veterans Review Board submissions.

### **Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans Support Group:**

- We do not see much of the wives group however, they are an integral part of us and the 'train'. To the Executive - thanks again for all you do for your membership and if there is anything we can help you with this coming year don't hesitate to ask.

### **Sunset Station Singers:**

- This group is bounding along and making themselves available for whatever ceremony we need. To the organisers, Judy Cant and Maureen Clements, thank you. To Rick Stratten the new choir leader, our sincere thanks for stepping up at the last moment to allow the singers to carry on.

### **Lastly My Executive:**

- Gary Fizzell assistant Secretary and Office Manager, Tony Mullavey Vice President and Merchandising Manager, Ted Fish Treasurer, and Sam Vecchio Secretary. Thank you all for your efforts and support in 2013.

Finally, please keep a watch on our web site. There may be a major storm brewing over the horizon. If you check on the latest addition to the 'Presidents Message' it will outline all that is in the wind. If you find the story just a bit scary and worrying then please send a note to all of your email buddies giving them the web site address (just Google VVAA St Marys) and asking them to also read it. There is a edited version in this issue of the newsletter on pages 27-28. I must remind you however, that it is not an 'official document' but is submitted by a reliable source who keeps his 'ear to the ground'.

Some good news, several of our Pension Officers have just completed a War Widows course conducted under TIP and qualifies them to interview and prepare War Widows claims; with the current reshuffling of Legacy it is natural to assume that once it is known we can prepare these claims, we will have prospective customers dropping in to the 'train'.

Greg Cant  
President

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## St Marys RSL Sub-Branch President's Report – April 2014

A warm welcome back to all Sub-Branch members & a special welcome to new Sub-Branch members amongst us. From the AGM held 12<sup>th</sup> February, your Committee for 2014 is largely unchanged but for the addition of Frank Lawton – welcome Frank. Executive positions remain the same – can I presume that is a 'vote of confidence' in last year's achievements? Russ will continue to entice us to some magnificent social events – please show your support as he is doing all this work only for you. The start of the WW1 Centenary commemoration period is now upon us. I'm sure that all readers of the Western Outpost News are gearing up for the early Services, commencing with our own local ANZAC Commemorative Services. It's now a great time to get out the Brasso, polish up the gear, and press the outfit so that all will look resplendent 'on parade' in April. I encourage all to participate in these special events.

Firstly, our annual **ANZAC March** along Queen Street on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April. (*We had to go 'back' a week because Easter Sunday falls on the 20<sup>th</sup> – the Sunday before ANZAC Day this year.*) What a sight if all members could turn out and pay homage to those who have gone before us in military endeavours! How great will it be to have the families of our members standing along the footpath, cheering all the way! We also encourage all local community and sporting groups to join the march under their own banners. The march commences at 2.30pm (assemble at 2pm at Coachman's Park in Queen Street); it's a brief march behind the ever-supportive St Marys Pipes and Drums Band, and followed by the equally supportive St Marys Brass Band. If you don't feel your 'pegs' will last the distance, then by all means, catch a lift in the B-Vehicle supplied by the 21 Australian Cadet Unit.

Once the March reaches Victoria Park (on the Great Western Highway), our annual **ANZAC Sunday Service** will commence from the freshly restored WW1-era Rotunda. Much work has gone into preparing for this year's events – so why not come along and support your Sub-Branch.

Secondly, our **Dawn Service** on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April looks like it will be at its most popular – let's hope the weather is equally supportive! This year, due the anticipated numbers, we will have two large live-video screens to ensure that all in the car park of the St Marys RSL Club will have a great view on proceedings within this important Commemorative Service. Timed to commence at 5.30am, our suggestion is 'come early' – we hope to have some excellent video clips for you to watch while awaiting the start of the Service.

Soon after the ANZAC Commemorations, may I remind you and encourage you and your family to our final **Boer War Memorial Service** to be conducted at the guns memorial (at the club) on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 11am. From 2015, we anticipate that the new National Memorial in ANZAC Parade Canberra will be complete and become the major centre of attraction and assembly for this important commemorative event.





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Apart from these commemorative events, we have now launched the 2014 program for the **Colin Shepherd OAM Memorial School Scholarships** (for Year 10 students at Cambridge Park High, Colyton Trade High, Emmaus Catholic College, Erskine Park High, St Clair High and Gilgandra High Schools). All topics this year have a WW1 flavour. We are looking forward to see the results later in the year.

Over recent months we have made a **presentation of WW1 relics** to a selection of High Schools. These have been warmly received and are designed to be used as a focal point in ANZAC Commemorative assemblies at those schools for the future.

Every second year our Sub-Branch presents a **small donation to every school** within the 'old St Marys Council' district. This entails presentation to 33 schools via a Morning Tea at a Primary School (where all other Primary School representatives assemble) and a Secondary School (for representatives of all High Schools). The Morning Teas held in March were very well attended and our donations gratefully received to be spent on library assets of a military nature.

The ***Corridor of Honour*** continues to attract positive attention. Have you seen it lately? If not, you will find different slideshows on some screens and changes to the wall-photo display. The computer continues to be loaded with an every-increasing array of interesting information – *take a look sometime*.

**RSL State Congress** will again be conducted at Coffs harbour this year (26-28 May). Chris Winmill and Tony Fryer will represent our Sub-Branch as Delegates. Any outcomes of particular interest will of course be reported back to members.

If you have any ideas or wish to play a part in continuing the work of our Sub-Branch for the benefit of all our members, please come and see me or send a letter to the Committee for consideration. We are always looking to meet the needs of our members.

Remember to look after yourselves and stay healthy.



At the 2013 Awards Presentation for the Colin Shepherd OAM Memorial School Scholarship Program: Vice President John Foeken along with scholarship winners from St Clair High School and their Principal, Chris Presland and guest presenter Robyn Collins (General Manager RSL DefenceCare)

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## **VVAA ST MARYS EDUCATION REPORT FOR 2013**

2013 was another busy year for the Outpost Education Program, the highlights included:

- Delivering 65 student sessions to a combined total of around 5800 senior secondary students from both Government and Non-Government Schools.
- Delivering 20 guest Speakers to support school and College Commemorative Services involving more than 13,000 primary and secondary students.
- Attracting sufficient school/student donations in appreciation of the Education Program to cover all costs associated with the delivery of the program and to support other Outpost initiatives.
- Delivering Outreach Programs to Gilgandra and Monaro High Schools for the 9th consecutive year.
- Accompanying a student group to the Australian War memorial (AWM) to visit the Long Tan Cross and holding a short Commemorative Service in the Hall of Remembrance with them.
- Attending the AWM 3 day conference on Vietnam - **‘International Perspectives on a Long WAR’**.
- Attending the Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration Service at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Canberra, which concluded with John Schumann’s moving presentation of **‘I Was Only 19’**
- Seeing the Outpost Vietnam-Era Memorabilia Display Cabinet come to fruition after two years on the agenda. The display is a ‘work in progress’ and will include items from the 3 services when completed. Additional items to complement those already displayed are most welcome keeping in mind the space available.
- 2015 will finally see the implementation of the National History Syllabus across Australian Secondary Schools, however, it is worth noting the current government has already indicated some further changes are possible.

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The future of the Outpost Education Program will depend on the number of schools retaining their Vietnam War focus, and the availability of Outpost members with the appropriate skills to visit schools.

Thank you to all members who have supported the Outpost Education Program across 9 years of operation.

The outcomes achieved by this group mentioned earlier are a clear indication of the worth of the program.

Vin Cosgrove  
Outpost Education Program Coordinator.



**The new  
Display  
Cabinet at the  
Train - Any  
suitable  
donations of  
equipment  
would be  
appreciated as  
this is a 'work  
in progress'**



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## **AN ABOMINABLE TRAGEDY – SANDAKAN 1942-45**

*The 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945 signalled the end of WW2 when the Japanese surrendered. At that time, in the North Borneo jungle, 15 POWs (mainly Australian and some British) were all that remained from the 1053 POWs who were marched through inhospitable jungle. From Sandakan on the east coast they were ‘marched’ 230kms towards Ranau in the central highlands, in three groups (455 in January 1945, 536 in June, the remainder in July, less than a month before war’s end). I say ‘towards Ranau’, because many, likely most, died or were killed along the way.*

*Death would have been a release from the inhumane, brutal, savage manner in which they were treated by their Japanese captors. Six somehow managed to escape and survive.*

*But those who remained at Sandakan fared no better – of almost 300 POWs remaining, most died of exposure as the Japanese torched all of their huts; 75 were sent on a third march – not one got more than 54kms; of the remaining, the healthiest 23 were marched to the airfield on 13<sup>th</sup> July and brutally shot dead. The rate of deaths increased over the next three weeks, POWs ‘co-operating’ by dying of ‘natural’ causes, until on VP Day (15<sup>th</sup> August) ONE remained – private John Skinner from Tenterfield. At 7.15am, he was dragged from his crude shelter, forced to a hillside where 199 POWs had earlier been murdered and buried (like sardines in a can – head to tail), and decapitated with one swipe of the guard’s sword.*

*Five hours later, Japan surrendered unconditionally.*

*Literally thousands of POWs had been annihilated over three tumultuous years of Japanese incarceration. This MUST rank up there with Gallipoli, Western Front, Tobruk and Kokoda (etc), in the annals of Australia’s military history. If it does not, then we fail those many who were mercilessly murdered ... and we fail their families.*

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Nora and I spent an eye-opening and emotional week in Sabah (formerly North Borneo), Malaysia in August 2013. A goal I’ve had for some time now, was to attend a Sandakan Day Memorial Service (15<sup>th</sup> August), so we took the opportunity this year to take in the beauty of Brunei and Sabah while experiencing the aura of this tragic North Borneo history. A walk along a brief section of the actual Death March track provided an ideal time for serious reflection, finishing at Quailey’s Hill, where there is a well-maintained memorial to Pte Allan Quailey, murdered by his Japanese guards because he could not continue the last 18kms of the 230km Death March. On to Ranau and a most emotional visit to the Kundasang War Memorial – a place of beauty, not to be missed; then the moving Last Camp Memorial which needs no further explanation.

Sandakan Day Memorial Service on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August was a continuation, in fact the climax, of this emotional journey. The early-morning service, conducted by the Sandakan Municipal Council (in conjunction with DVA) at the Sandakan POW Campsite, was a unique experience (comparable to the 1987 Dawn Service experience in Canberra at the opening of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial). The local community were outstanding in their homage for our boys; they helped them then ... they remember them still. From the welcome party of 100+ guides, scouts, cadets, etc., the political representatives from Malaysia, Australia and Britain, the special and moving reflections by three descendants of lost POW’s, to the special rendition of the Last Post and Rouse, it was a wonderful opportunity to ponder the harshest treatment and the endurance of these Australian and British POWs.

I would recommend this Sabah experience to anyone with an interest in Australia’s military history; it rates with the most heroic of battles – a doomed battle of personal

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survival for thousands of our boys. Anyone interested could do no better than to visit the website of Lynette Silver (<http://lynettesilver.com/>), easily our most accomplished historian on this facet of our history. She and husband Neil will help you find your way to this massive experience. The Silvers have devoted their lives to uncover the true story of Sandakan, to pay homage to the fallen and to provide on-going and critical assistance to the descendants of those local tribes-people who put their own lives on the line (and many lost) to help the POWs.

We should not reflect on the Sandakan tragedy as simply a savage event which took many Australian and British lives. Thousands of local civilians were likewise slaughtered by the Japanese during their reign on absolute terror. Many had been sympathisers (or just families of sympathisers) for the plight of the Allied POWs. All forms of barbaric torture and murder were committed against them. The brutal nature of the occupation totally defies imagination.

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*And what of the 15 POWs still somehow alive at war's end? Twelve days AFTER 15<sup>th</sup> August, the five remaining officers were told they were going to Ranau Japanese headquarters to discuss surrender; the remaining 10 'other ranks' were told they were to walk to a village 5kms away to collect vegetables. Both parties departed in opposite directions; a short distance from the camp, the five officers were shot dead without warning in a hail of rifle fire; the OR's were moved along a small track and murdered, each with a single shot to the head. Final death total: 2,428 POWs (1,787 Australian and 641 British) and many thousands of the civilian population.*

This Poem is borrowed from the Sandakan Day memorial service; written by Sandakan survivor, Pte Keith (Bill) Young, referring to the boiler that was at the heart of the Campsite, and still remains at the site today:

**STILL – IT STANDS AT SANDAKAN**

*The boilers's dry, the fire's out*

*The years have laid the ghosts about*

*With only now and then a sigh*

*A whisper from the past of - Why? ... why?*

Tony Fryer  
August 2013

**Tony & Nora Fryer  
At the  
Sandakan Memorial**



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## **SERVICE PENSION**

We receive many queries regarding eligibility of the Service Pension at the Outpost and surprised at the number of veterans who are unaware that it actually exists.

### **What is a Service Pension?**

A Service Pension provides a regular income for people with limited means. A Service Pension can be paid to veterans on the grounds of age or invalidity, and to eligible partners, widows and widowers. It is subject to income and assets tests.

The age service pension paid to veterans who have qualifying service and the partner service pension paid to eligible partners, widows and widowers, are paid earlier than the age pension paid by Centrelink. This is in recognition of the intangible effects of war that may result in premature ageing of the veteran and/or loss of earning power. Invalidity service pension may be granted at any age up to the age pension age. The Service Pension is paid fortnightly, based on daily entitlements. The rate of Service Pension is adjusted twice-yearly, in March and September, in line with movements in the cost of living and/or average wages.

### **Who is Eligible?**

- Australian Veterans'
- Commonwealth Veterans
- Allied Veterans
- Australian Mariners
- Allied Mariners
- Members, Former Members, Declared Members covered under the MRCA Act 2004.

### **Eligibility for Veterans:**

You are eligible for the Service Pension if you are a veteran who:

- Has Qualifying Service - generally, that is, has served in operations against the enemy while in danger from hostile forces of the enemy, and
- Meets the *residency requirements* - that is, is a resident of Australia and is present in Australia at the time of lodging the claim for service pension (Additionally, Commonwealth Veterans and allied Veterans and Mariners must have been an Australian resident for at least 10 years, although there can be some exemptions).

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And you are either:

- Of Service Pension age; or
- Permanently incapacitated for work.

A Service Pension may not be payable because of your income and assets, even if you are eligible.

### **Eligibility For Current Partners:**

Partner Service Pension may be paid to partners who are:

- Legally married to and living with a veteran; or
  - Living in a de facto relationship with a veteran;
- And in both cases above, the veterans is receiving or is eligible to receive the Service Pension.

Partners are eligible if:

- They are qualifying age;
- They have dependent children; or
- The veteran receives the special rate (TPI) disability pension; or
- The veteran is receiving, or eligible to receive, Special Rate Disability Pension under MRCA; or
- They are 50 years of age or over and the veterans receives an above general rate (AGR) disability pension.

### **Eligibility For Former Partners:**

Partner Service Pension may be paid to former partners who are legally married to, but separated from a veteran. Former partners are eligible if they meet the age of exemption criteria and the veteran is receiving, or is eligible to receive, the Service Pension.

Partner Service Pension can only be paid to a separated spouse for 12 months from the date of separation unless:

- They have reached social security age pension age before they had been separated for 12 months; or
- Special domestic circumstances apply.

A former partner is not eligible to receive Partner Service Pension if they enter into a de facto relationship with another person. Eligibility also ceases if the former partner and the veteran divorce.

More info from the 'train' if required. Call in person or phone: 9833 4700.

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## **St Marys RSL Bowling Club**

The bowling club invites all members and visitors to utilize the excellent facilities available with our two greens, spacious bowls lounge and function room. We have a great social bowls programme and free coaching for those interested in starting out. Bowls are available from the club, so there is no cost outlay to start your new pastime.

We also have a strong representation in both male and female pennant teams (representative) which is available to any member to enter. You don't have to be a champion bowler to play pennants. So come along and join in the fun.

### **Social Bowls Programme**

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Any Pairs</b>	<b>9.30am Start</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Any Pairs</b>	<b>10.30am Start</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Ladies Bowls</b>	<b>9.30am Start</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Mens Pairs</b>	<b>1.00pm Start</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b><u>Free Coaching</u></b>	<b>10.00am – 12 noon</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Any Pairs</b>	<b>1.00pm Start</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Turkey Trots(mixed Bowls)</b>	<b>9.30am Start</b>

**Contact the Bowls Office via Club Reception on 9623 6555**

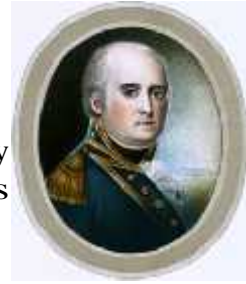


Bowling Club Greens and Function area.





## St Mary's Governor King Day Club



We had our Christmas lunch at the Henry Lawson Club and I must say that they treat us to a great meal which everyone enjoyed.

We ended the year with a great Christmas Raffle Day, with plenty of baskets with goodies mostly brought in by the clients and carers and also the Ladies Auxiliary with other presents so that everyone went home with something

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>, the members brought in photos of themselves when they were young and teenagers. This caused quite a bit of discussion as the photos were placed on the table and everyone was asked to identify each photo. There were only two identified correctly out of 30 photos.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> we had 36 members and volunteers attend and we welcomed a new volunteer as well as Michael Reilly and Debbie Burns returned from their holidays on the south coast looking tanned and refreshed.

Senior Constable Daniel Corliss from St Marys Police attended and spoke of the safety aspects around the house and when out shopping. This proved quite popular as she has asked to come back again

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Normal day with cards, Brain storming.

We had a visit from the new DVA coordinator Sandra Redding, who had some good suggestions and new ideas. It was our raffle day also and we raised \$104.00. Thanks once again to the Ladies Auxiliary for their donations of baskets

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May, we are planning a visit to Petersham to visit the Egyptian Room. This room is Heritage listed and should any one like to visit with us you will most welcome. The cost will be \$13.00 pp plus portion of the bus costs. But, the day club will off set some of the costs for the bus.

Wal Charlwood - Co-ordinator

**PO Box 3168**

**St Marys South NSW 2760**



**The Day Santa came to the Day Club**



**Wal, Sandra & Michael**



### **Forgetfulness, Dementia or Simply Just Brainy**

Older people do not decline mentally with age, it just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains, scientists believe.

Much like a computer struggles as the hard drive gets full up, so to do humans take longer to access information it has been suggested.

Researchers say this slowing down is not the same as cognitive decline.

“The human brain works slower in old age,” said Dr. Michael Ramscar, “but only because we have stored more information over time. The brains of older people **do not get weak they simply know more.**”

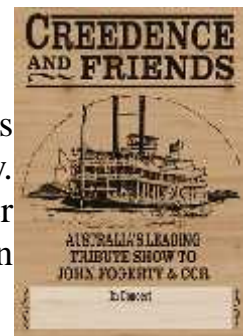
**SO THERE!! We are brilliant!.....Dr Forgothisname said so!!...**

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### **Entertainment News From Rooty Hill RSL**

Come on a musical adventure through the sights and sounds of Creedence Clearwater Revival and John Fogerty. Creedence and Friends take you to places no other Creedence tribute has gone, covering the musical life of John Fogerty.



The Creedence and Friends show chronicles the music of John Fogerty's Clearwater Revival Band, and the driving force behind a successful solo career. Fogerty's catchy melodies, dance floor sound and simple, down-to-earth lyrics proved a popular formula with fans from a wide cross-section of tastes. Country music lovers, rhythm'n'blues fans and even rock'n'roll audiences tuned in to his songs and discovered something they really liked.

Millions of people recognised him as a writer and performer of extraordinary talent. Now Australian fans can enjoy all the hits in one polished live performance delivered by professionals who genuinely admire and respect Fogerty's work. They really enjoy what they do.

Check out all the old favourites and a few more obscure tunes which may come as a pleasant musical surprise. Also enjoy songs from Fogerty's own solo career right up to and including 'Blue Moon Swamp'.

**Friday 18th April 2014**

**Tickets: \$5.00 Members; \$12.00 Visitors**

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## **ST MARYS RSL CLUB**

### **CORNER MAMRE ROAD & HALL STREET**

If you are planning one of life's magical moments, looking for somewhere to host your next business function, or just planning a party for your family and friends, then leave it to us to organise everything you need for that special day.

St Marys RSL & Ex-Servicemen's Club has a range of fantastic function facilities to suit most needs. Let our experienced and dedicated staff ensure that your most special of days is truly memorable. At St Marys RSL Club we will ensure that every aspect of your Wedding is planned to perfection with a variety of flexible menus and packages to suit any budget and spectacularly refurbished rooms.



Perfect for Meetings, Conferences, Seminars, product launches and exhibitions, St Marys RSL Club is the ideal venue for your next business event with:

- 120 person capacity conference room
- Full range of audio visual equipment
- A variety of flexible menus and packages to suit
- Excellent car parking facilities



We offer you only the best in professionalism and attention to detail. St Marys RSL & Ex-Servicemen's Club has the room perfect for all occasions, including:

- Birthdays & Family Reunions
- Retirements & Social Events
- Themed Parties & Special Celebrations

**For further particulars call us on 9623 6555**



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## Dogs Recognise Faces Same Way As Humans

If you notice your dog staring at the family portrait, it is not a coincidence. Researchers have discovered dogs recognise familiar faces in photographs the same way as humans do.

A study undertaken by the University of Helsinki found dogs can even recognise images of other dogs they know. The dogs involved in the study, published in journal *Animal Cognition*, were shown facial images of people and dogs they knew, as well as those of strangers.

Tracking their eye movement, researchers found dogs appeared to possess similar facial-processing systems as humans. To conduct their study, researchers placed 31 dogs in front of a computer screen before screening images of owners, strangers and other dogs. Researchers found that dogs gazed longer at both humans and dogs they knew. When an image of their owner appeared, the dogs were more likely to look directly into their eyes.

In comparison, when an image of a stranger was shown, their gaze was less fixed and moved around the face. A similar result occurred for images presented upside down. But in a reality check for dog owners, research leader Outi Vainio said dogs prefer staring at pictures of other dogs they know, regardless of how familiar the human.

“Dogs looked at images of dogs longer than images of humans, regardless of the familiarity of the faces presented in the images.” he said.



Definitely works,  
look into my Beagles  
Eyes and they follow  
you, but then he  
loves everybody.

Gary







### **Computer Training Classes**

Computer Classes are conducted at the Vietnam Veterans Train situated at the St Marys RSL Club in Mamre Road St Marys as follows:

Tuesday: 9.00 am - 12.00pm

Wednesday: 9.00AM - 12.00 pm (Ladies Class)

Thursday: 9.00 am - 11.00 am

Thursday classes teach Digital Photo manipulation using Photoshop Elements 5, only 5 students at a time. **Bookings essential.**

The Tuesday and Wednesday classes are informal and we teach mixed classes from the 'beginner' to the more experienced and retired seniors wanting to familiarise with current software and learn to use the Internet to send E-Mails and carry out research & other technology related issues.

**For more info call Keith 9833 4700 or email  
vietvet@tpg.com.au**

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Veterans' Transport - Booked Car With Driver. (BCWD)  
Information provided by Mr **Brent Morgan, Director  
Veterans' Transport Services.**



**The DVA and the NSW Taxi Council** would like to provide an update on the progress that is being made on the actions identified as important to building on taxi transport services for eligible DVA clients. Since the inaugural Round Table held in Sydney on 6 August 2013 where key operational and strategic issues affecting veterans' transport in NSW were explored, particularly in relation to taxi services, there has been regular engagement between DVA and the NSW taxi industry represented by the NSW Taxi Council. The purpose of these meetings has been to follow up on the initiatives identified at the Round Table and to ensure we are focused on achieving realistic and effective outcomes.

**Improving The Return Journey:** The NSW Taxi Council has adopted the use of the **return journey card** as an industry wide policy. At the end of the forward journey, taxi drivers should provide DVA clients with a return journey card that has the network phone number. This number should be called when the DVA Client is ready to go home. The importance of this is that the network will already have the veterans travel and booking details in their system and can immediately arrange for a car to be sent to transport the DVA client home.

It is important that DVA clients ask the driver to give them a return booking card. Drivers who have undergone additional training for the specific purpose of transporting DVA clients are all aware of the requirement to hand out these cards, however they may sometimes forget, if this is the case it is the clients responsibility to ask the driver. More drivers are undergoing training.

**Access To Parking:** It was identified at the Round Table that one of the key inhibitors to the NSW Taxi industry providing an effective door to door service is the restriction on access to key parking space at or near medical facilities, especially in the city of Sydney. The Taxi Council has written to NSW Roads & Maritime Services seeking access to disabled parking spaces for all taxis, including those taxis that undertake DVA work enabling a higher level of service to the disabled and mobility impaired. Drivers find it difficult to provide the necessary service with these parking restrictions, often ending with them receiving heavy fines.

The number to ring for BCWD is: **1300 550 455**  
For information and complaints: **133 254**

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## **NEPEAN WIVES OF VIETNAM VETERANS REPORT**

**Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans Women's Support Group** meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 10.00 a.m. in the Youth Club of St Marys RSL. Our Group is open to all women of returned servicemen of all conflicts and we enjoy getting together and sharing each other's company.

At our meetings we invite many guest speakers to come and talk to us such as, Police Officers offering safety around the home, Fire Officers, on similar subjects, Occupational Therapists, even our local Funeral Director Michelle Latham.

Our Craft Group meets on Tuesdays from 1pm to 4pm cost is \$5.00 which includes the best afternoon tea around as well as fitness which is at St Marys from 11.00am till 12 noon. Everyone is welcome to attend these activities including members of the community. We also meet for dinner on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

A group of 12 ladies attended our regular 'retreat' at Bullwarra Terrigal which turned out to be very successful it enables us to do whatever we like, some like to shop, some go for walks, others read and take advantage of the great swimming pool or just go to the beach.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> March we are going on a bus trip and joining the Riverman's Postmans Trip.

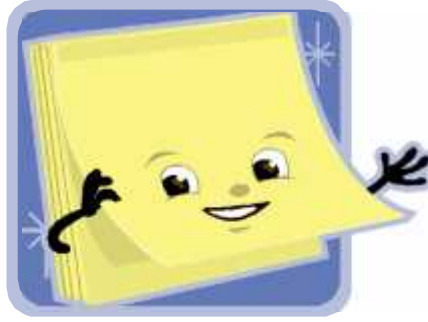
Our group will be celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> birthday of our formation in November, this will be a very exciting month for all of us, with hopefully, a great celebration to mark this event. Not many groups survive this long, there certainly is a need for this service as our numbers keep growing.

At our last General Meeting the following members were ratified to Executive Positions:

President	Mrs Maree Johnson	96237126
Vice President	Mrs Cherryl Mullavey	96259363
Secretary	Mrs Maureen Clements	0418253199
Treasurer	Mrs Barbara Woolfenden	98647502

**Maureen Clements—Secretary**

***Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans Women's Support Group***  
***This is a non-profit community based support group for wives***  
***of veterans and are part of the VVAA St Marys. The group***  
***meet on the second Thursday of each month at 10.00 am at the***  
***St Mary's RSL Youth Club Hall.***



## **IMPORTANT MESSAGE REGARDING DAYS OF OPERATION FOR PENSIONS AT THE VVAA ST MARYS OUTPOST**

Pension claims at the 'Train' are now carried out on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday between the hours of 9.30am to 1.00pm, however, these timings are flexible depending on availability of Pension Officers.

Anyone wishing to see a particular Officer should phone the office first to ensure they will be in attendance.

Veterans attending the 'Train' for the first time to start a claim should allow for at least two hours for the interview as initial interviews can be time consuming.

Interviews are carried out on a 'first in first served' basis



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**Web: [www.heavenlycelebrations.com.au](http://www.heavenlycelebrations.com.au)**

### **Planning Ahead - Hints:**

**Why Would I Need an Enduring Power of Attorney?** If you lose your decision-making ability through illness, accident or trauma and you have not made provision for another person or agency to manage your financial affairs on your behalf, it may be necessary for an administrator to be legally appointed to make those decision for you. The guardianship and administration board of your state or territory chooses the administrator. The person or agency appointed for the board may not be the same as you would have chosen for yourself.

An enduring power of attorney enables you to take action now to ensure that your best interests are safeguarded if you lose your ability to make decisions for yourself at some time in the future.

### **What is a limited power of attorney?**

A limited power of attorney allows a person to act on your behalf in specific circumstances only, for example in dealing with a specific financial matter such as the sale of a house. You specify what the person can do on your behalf and for how long. It applies **only while you are capable of making your own decisions**. If this capacity is lost, a limited power of attorney is no longer valid.

More information can be obtained in the 'Planning Ahead' Guide Booklet available at the 'Train'.

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**Planning Ahead - Legal And Financial Issues: Your Will:**

**Why You Need A Will:** A Will is a legal document that enables you to exercise your right to select the relatives, friends and others who will inherit your assets when you die. If you die without a Will it may cause unnecessary hardship and distress to your family and friends.

**What if you don't make a Will?** If you don't make a Will, your assets will be divided among qualifying relatives and dependants, according to a formula set out in government legislation. If you have no relatives, or they cannot be traced, your estate will be paid to the state government. If the result of that statutory distribution leaves members of your family or other dependants in needy circumstance, they can apply to the court for an order under family provision legislation for part of the estate to pass to them. This depends on their needs at the time of the application.

**How to make a Will:** You may choose to make your own Will. If you choose to do this you must ensure that it is a clear and valid Will which is a legal document. You may also choose to consult a solicitor, public trustee or private trustee to assist in drawing up your **Will which must be signed by yourself and two independent witnesses who are not beneficiaries.** Your executor should be made aware of his or her appointment as your executor.

More information on Wills which was prepared by Mr Michael Fitzgerald is available at the 'Train' on request.

**MICHAEL JOHN FITZGERALD SOLICITOR**

**Level 8  
65 York Street Sydney 2000**

**Phone: 9283 2500 or 0419 440 990**

**FAX: 9283 2600  
ABN 18095746334**



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## Connecting The Dots To DVA

A recent article circulating the emails, quoted Dr Peter Hendy MP with this quote: **“I advocate that Service Pensions, War Widows Pensions and TPI Pension should be reduced in value and that the Department of Veterans Affairs be disbanded with disabled war veterans and war widows administered by various Departments such as Welfare and Health.”**

Well, didn't that cause a stir. Here is a edited version of one senior ex-service members reply, not only to Dr Hendy's remarks, but some interesting observations of his on the subject.

“ Subtle changes with Defence over the years started to add up in my mind and now here we are with sudden clarity. The changes started about 20 years ago with the civilianizing of the Defence Department when nearly all of the military privileges were civilianized into the same bucket as those who worked for the Feds and that is of course the Public Service dudes. A whole host of changes occurred in the Services. Civvies running everything from Messes to Guards on the front gate, to CO's of Regiments losing their perks like batmen, flats, CO's car and driver. Everything from managing the food, to accommodation standards to travel entitlements, civilians were in place. The CO's role was to manage the Regiments finances and OH&S programs, leaving the operational side to Executive Officers (formerly known as your good old 2IC) seems the CO rank wasn't high enough (public services entitlements list) to warrant a sole user vehicle.”

“Young soldiers nowadays are required to ‘live out’ unless they can demonstrate a ‘compassionate need’ or ‘operational need’ to live in. And even there, they have to sign a leasing agreement for their room with a civvy organisation contracted to the Defence Department. The senior NCO's have no right to inspect rooms unless it's a periodical lease agreement room inspection. The disappearance of the Soldier's Clubs and the Sergeant's Messes and Officer Messes were all part of the civilianizing process lest the Defence personnel had more privileges than the Public Service dude that worked alongside of him. Defence bases now have all-rank clubs partitioned off into areas. There were many many changes, and service conditions lost, which went unnoticed unless you kept your finger on the pulse. All of this change (and it is still occurring), is all part of the Master Socialisation Plan, including the civilianization of the Defence Force committed to by both sides of Government. The object of course in the long run, was to save money through economies of scale and standardization of resources.”

(Continued next page)

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“The prospect of DVA folding however is never far away considering its role and purpose in life, and that is to hand out money for compensation, pensions and payments for those who worked for the Federal Government and those being of course former Defence Force Personnel. If you believe DVA is safe from all of this social reorganization, or your pensions and benefits are safe...read on. DVA is not an island. This is another Government of constant denials and back flips. Abbot promised indexation to both the DFRDB and TPI pensions prior to election. Rudd and Gillard did the same. All of them realised they could not afford it.”

“Fifteen years or so ago was the invention of COMSUPER. A brainwave to consolidate all the Government Super Boards their retirement, provident and superannuation funds under one controlling roof. All funds except that of course the Commonwealth Parliament Super Scheme, covered by an Act of Parliament and administered by the Department of Finance and quarantined from public scrutiny. COMSUPER is another measure of controlling equity and parity of retirement funds. COMSUPER as you will notice sends out your income statement from the DFRB/DFRDB each year. If you have a barney say with DFRDB, you are required to apply through COMSUPER.”

“Now enters the ‘Social Security Act’ or the reviewed amended Act which now underpins the new ‘Department of Human Services’ the new grand paymaster. This new Department controls Social and Health-Related payments and Services. It is responsible for un-employment payments and all other payments and, with a little bit of remote viewing - all DVA payments. This Department now brings together all the little functions that other departments are responsible for, when dealing with people who need money. That is you and me folks! Much like COMSUPER, this department includes CENTRE-LINK who works out what you have to be paid and Department of Human Services pays the money. Getting the picture? If you want anything out of CENTRELINK you have to deal with Human Services. So you can see where all this is going. Inevitably, everything dealing with the public welfare system will be under the one roof.”

“When? They are working on it. Watch the May Federal Budget. They will announce this term, but starting next financial year - that's the prediction. If they do amalgamate Federal Departments, what will come into questions now are the equity, parity and equivalency issues that we faced with civilianizing of the Defence Department. It would be naive to ignore the possibilities of the Governments ulterior agenda with their ‘Welfare Reform’ and their Socialisation Program and their industrial Reform”

**Chris Brown OAM Independent Advocate for Veterans Rights.**



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## Book Review “Australia’s Secret War”

At the present time as the Government begins to take on Union Power and Corruption, a timely new book reveals the union movement’s role in one of the most shameful periods of Australian history. What the wharfies did to Australian troops - and their nation’s war effort - between 1939 and 1945 is nothing short of an abomination.

Perth lawyer Hal Colebatch has done the nation a service with his groundbreaking book, Australia’s Secret War, telling the untold story of union bastardry during World War 2.

Using diary entries, letters and interviews with key witnesses, he has pieced together with forensic precision the tale of how Australia’s unions sabotaged the war effort; how wharfies vandalised, harassed, and robbed Australian troop ships, and probably cost lives.



One of the most obscene acts occurred in October, 1945, at the end of the war, after Australian soldiers were released from Japanese prison camps. They were half dead, starving and desperate for home. But when the British aircraft carrier HMS Speaker brought them into Sydney Harbour, the wharfies went on strike. For 36 hours - the soldiers were forced to remain on-board, tantalisingly close to home. This final act of cruelty from their countrymen was their thanks for all the sacrifice. Colebatch coolly recounts outrage after outrage.

Then there were the coal strikes which pushed down coal production between 1942 and 1945 despite the war emergency. There were a few honourable attempts to resist union leaders, such as the women working in a small arms factory in Orange, NSW, who refused to strike and “pelted union leaders with tomatoes and eggs”.

A planned rescue of Australian POW’s in Borneo late in the war apparently had to be abandoned, writes Colebatch, because a wharf strike in Brisbane meant the ships had no heavy weapons. There was no act too low for the unionists. For instance, in 1941, hundreds of soldiers on board a ship docked in Fremantle entrusted personal letters to wharfies who offered to post them in return for beer money. The letters never arrived.

At one point in 1942 a US Army Colonel became so frustrated at the refusal of Townsville wharfies to load munitions unless paid quadruple time, he ordered his men to throw the unionists into the water and load the guns themselves.

Colebatch offers various explanations for the treasonous behaviour of the unions. Many of the leaders were Communists obsessed with class warfare. Fervent “identity politics” led them to believe they were victims, and the servicemen and women were “puppets of capitalism whose lives were of no consequence”

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**St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch**  
**Corner Mamre Road and Hall St.**

The RSL Sub-Branch monthly meeting is held the second Wednesday of each month at 6.30 pm in the auditorium, refreshments provided. The office is open most mornings between 10.00am-12noon and can be contacted on **9623 6555**.

**St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch Committee**

President:	Ron Kelly	0408 684 276
V/President:	Terry Burn	0407 834 499
V/Pres:	John Foeken	0409 329 688
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	02 9623 6555
Secretary:	Tony Fryer	0414 557 692
A/Secretary:	Ron Blakely	0411 131 849
Committee:	Greg Cant	0425 208 622
	Michael Wiesel	02 9623 6555

**VVAA ST MARY'S OUTPOST COMMITTEE**

**PHONE: 02 9833 4700 FAX 9833 4022**

President:	Greg Cant	0425 208 622
V/President:	Tony Mullavey	0416231993
Secretary:	Sam Vecchio	9833 4700
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	9833 4700
Assistant Treas.	George Perrin	9833 4700
A/Sec/Office Mgr:	Gary Fizzell	0418 114 976

This newsletter is produced and printed at the VVAA St Mary's Outpost in association with the St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch. It is provided free of charge to members of both associations. Views and statements made within the magazine are not necessarily the views of the St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch or the VVAA St Mary's; the Editor and the organizations are not giving legal, accounting or other professional advice and therefore do not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the opinions or information contained in the magazine. We believe that the sources are accurate at the time of publication. Care should be exercised by readers who attempt to use this publication as a source of reference material for any purpose other than its intended use, which is light informative reading on topics of interest for the veterans of both associations.

Gary Fizzell - Editor

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