

# WESTERN OUTPOST NEWS

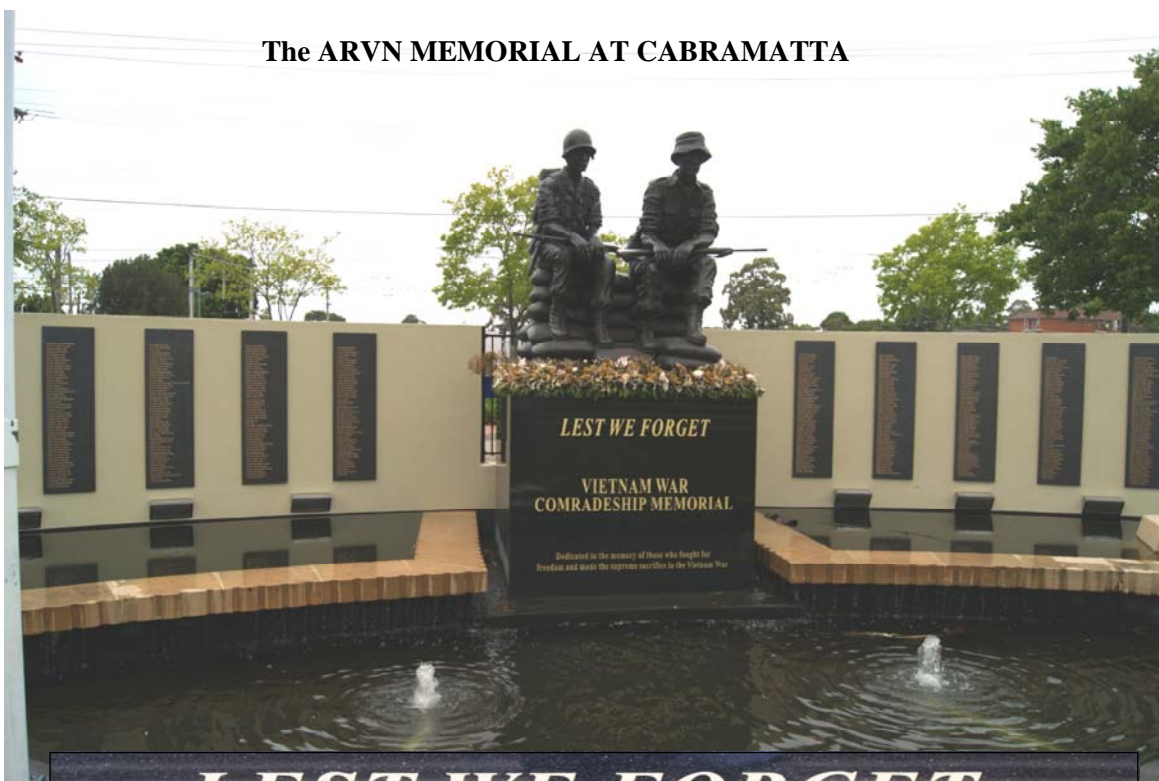


December 2012 Issue

St Mary's Outpost the  
'Train of Knowledge'

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

The ARVN MEMORIAL AT CABRAMATTA



***LEST WE FORGET***

**VIETNAM WAR  
COMRADESHIP MEMORIAL**

**Dedicated to the memory of those who fought for  
freedom and made the supreme sacrifice in the Vietnam War**

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**VVAA St Mary's Outpost will be closed for general business from 14th December until 14th January. We will be open in the mornings for a couple of hours during this period for admin purposes. Some welfare work will go ahead.**

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**\*\*\*\*\***

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**Google: St Marys RSL Sub Branch**

**Phone: 9623 6555**

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## From the Presidents Desk

Well here we are fast rushing towards the end of 2012. I guess that we will all find out shortly if the MAYAN calendar that supposedly has predicted the end of the World in December 2012 is right.

I suppose most of you are well aware of the disappointment we have had with the present government and its distribution of Building Excellence in Support of Training (BEST) funding. Although we have managed to gain access to both the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon MP, the assistant Treasurer, David Bradbury MP and the Minister for Immigration Chris Bowen MP. However, none of them were able to assist us as the funding had already been distributed. More disappointing than that was that Warren Snowdon placed the blame squarely at the door of the ESO Round Table Committee which is primarily made up from all of the major ESO's around Australia plus some representation from DVA and Treasury. Unfortunately for us this forum is extremely top heavy with ESO's who rely either solely or in a major part with paid Advocates to do the claims work.

Personally, and my Pension Officers and Advocates agree, we don't believe any ESO should be reimbursed for paid advocates as there is nothing that they can do that volunteers cannot or are not already doing, right up to AAT level. So, it would be an understatement to say that we are extremely disappointed in the likes of RSL, Legacy, the Vietnam Veterans Federation/Peace Keepers who have all managed to appropriate the major share of BEST Funding leaving volunteers to not only do the job for free, but to have to put their hands in their own pockets just for the privilege of volunteering.

For those who have read the minutes of the October Managements Meeting you will see that we have approved an increase in membership fees of \$5.00 per annum which takes effect from 1st January 2012, if you are quick enough to renew before that date i.e. by 31 December, the increase wont apply.

**Military Medal for Kids:** No one who is in the service now or who has served likes bullshit wannabies wearing medals. These are not wannabies - these are our kids that we have put through hell and high water due to our service. We certainly did not do it intentionally however, most suffered in some way or another. We all changed due to our service. I know I could have been a much greater father had it not been for what I became because of my service. I believe that my girls certainly DESERVE to wear a medal such as this and I intend to see that they do with my blessing and pride in how well they turned out without me and despite me. Anyone who is against this medal is still in the denial stage of recovery or has not had children. Please check out the link on our web page "links page" or just look up Face book at:

**[http://www.facebook.com/kids\\_medals](http://www.facebook.com/kids_medals)**

**Sick Leave:** As most of you know by now, I pushed myself just that bit too far and hard and therefore, earned an emergency admission to St John of God Hospital for some R&R; after discharge from hospital I will continue resting for a further couple of weeks. As this is the last publication for the year, from the Management Team can I wish everyone a Happy Christmas. See you in the New Year.

**Greg Cant - President**

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## St Marys RSL Sub Branch Report



Another year is drawing to a close, it seems the older you get the quicker the time passes. I think these polliwogs have taken out a few days without telling us.

I would like to thank all the Sub Branch members for their commitments throughout the year. A great job was done by Tony Fryer who undertook so many projects during the year and he was ably assisted by many others. It makes life a lot easier when we have these willing volunteers who are always ready to assist in the planning and the day to day matters that are required in the running of the Sub Branch.

A walkway commemorating the deeds of our service personnel is well under way and the design and contents should be ready to be tabled at our meeting in December. The photos included in the walkway will have to be rotated from time to time, consequently, we require backup photos. The War Memorial has photos on their web page at a cost of about \$36; we need our own photos and memorabilia (On loan or donated) if anyone can help.

The School Scholarships have been handed in, judged and the schools notified of the results. The presentation will be held at the RSL Auditorium on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 7.00pm. Again the entries were of a good standard. One of the students did a wonderful artistic poppy, which was used at our Remembrance Day Service and was attended by about 120 people, more than expected. Thanks to all those who assisted on the day and throughout the year for all the Remembrance Services held at St Marys, it would make life very difficult without you.

I would like to wish my committee, Sub Branch members and their families all the best for Xmas and the coming year. Also thanks to Michael and all of his staff at the RSL for their help throughout the year.

R. Kelly  
President

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**VVAA ST MARY'S**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**24th FEBRUARY 2013**

**VVAA St Mary's will hold the Annual General Meeting on  
Sunday 24th February 2013 in the \*\*RSL Northern Room at  
11.00am followed by a BBQ**

**The AGM shall include:**

- \*Confirmation of the minutes of the preceding AGM**
- \*Reports from the Executive concerning the preceding year**
- \*Consideration of any notices of motion received**
- \*Election of Office Bearers & Committee**

**Note 1: Copy of proceedings to be lodged with the Department  
of Fair Trading within twenty-one days of the AGM**

**Note 2: A quorum at the AGM shall consist of at least three  
executive/committee members and seven ordinary or associate  
members.**

**Nomination forms are available at the 'Train' and  
will be accepted up to and including Friday 15th  
February 2013.**

**Greg Cant JP  
President**

**\*\* You will be advised accordingly if venue changes**

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## **The American Elections - Points To Ponder**

With the American elections just over, I wonder if Australia has anything to learn from them at next years Federal Elections; I don't mean the fanfare and ballyhoo but some of the issues.

Like many Aussies I don't normally take a lot of interest in the American Politics, but this one created interest. I really thought that Obama was in trouble; Romney is not in the same league as Obama in the oratory stakes but despite that he seemed to be the real deal.



Why Obama?- looking back over the past 4 years:

1. Is America better off after four years ? Nearly 8% of Americans are unemployed.
2. The country is deeper in debt totalling \$16 trillion.
3. His foreign policy has left America weaker.
4. Nothing seems to have been achieved under his “Yes we can” inaugural speech.
5. He is back - and Romney's Republican's controlling the House, Democrats - the Senate, resulting in a smaller mandate for Obama.

Obama appears to be more ‘popular’ with America's minorities who simply voted again for America's first black President.

Australia's elections are different to America's, we vote for a particular Party, i.e. Labor, Liberal, Greens etc. The Americans on the other hand actually elect the President. We appear to be going down the same track with regard to popularity contests with our leaders, almost daily on our TV's we see polls on who is the ‘most preferred PM’ - it matters little who is the ‘most preferred’ - Because the public does not elect the PM, they elect the Party of their choice.

**Gary Fizzell - Editor**

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## **Journalistic Sensationalism at its Worst.**

In a recent article in the Sydney daily press, this article jumped out at me:

### **“Alcoholic War Vets Claiming Compensation”.**

Alcoholic war veterans are claiming compensation from taxpayers, blaming war service for their drinking.

Official statistics reveal 393 claims for “alcohol dependence” were lodged last financial year - and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs approved half of them.

Alcoholism is the 12th most common disability for which veterans claimed lump-sum compensation or pension payments last financial year.

Another 428 veterans claimed payments for depressive disorder, with 54 per cent of claims granted. And 579 claims were lodged for post-traumatic stress disorder, with 75 per cent approved.

Osteoarthritis tops the list of the 15 most common war injuries. Skin cancers accounted for 726 claims, with 97 per cent approved. Heart disease made up 500 claims, but a third were rejected. Veterans’ Affairs approved 62 per cent of the 20,703 disability claims lodged by veterans last year.

Elderly veterans have blamed bad diets, smoking and alcoholism on their war service. The AAT recently ruled that a heart attack which killed a World War II veteran at the age of 90 was a “war injury” caused by anxiety and racist taunts half a century earlier.

Ends

This journalist has put up a lot of facts and figures, no doubt gained from DVA (I hope) but I fail to see the point. She has failed to follow up with some explanation as to why these claims are prevalent and missed the point that Alcoholism, Depressive Disorder and many other complaints are all related to PTSD. So instead of highlighting Alcoholism singularly as a claim for compensation, it might have been more correct to start the article with PTSD, and the article might have begun:

**“More War Veterans Claiming Compensation for PTSD”** and then go on with some of the effects of PTSD i.e. Alcoholism, Anger, isolation, smoking/drugs, etc. But the headlines above must surely strike a chord with many vets.

Gary Fizzell - Editor



**A reproduction of the room in the “Battle Box” 15 Aug 1942 showing Lt Gen Percival (Standing) with Maj. Gen Gordon –Bennet on his right, and Maj. Gen Haig on his left.**

### **The Day Singapore Fell February 15, 1942.**

If you are visiting Singapore this museum is a must, not a bad idea to allow about 2 hours to see it all, you will certainly get a feel of what it was like on that historic and fateful day. When you listen to the audio which accompanies these wax figures you will get the impression that these Officers had no idea of what they were in for, nor the soldiers under them. What a tragedy!

The “Battle Box” was the underground bomb-proof bunker of Britain’s H.Q. Malaya Command, during WWII. Situated 9 metres beneath Fort Canning Hill, it was also the site where General Percival reached the fateful decision to surrender Singapore to the invading Japanese, on the 15th February 1942.

Meticulously restored, the Battle Box is today a unique war museum, enhanced with specially crafted wax figures. By visiting the bunker you will be brought back in time to that morning in 1942, and will experience a unique insight into the last few hours before the historic surrender.

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**St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch  
Colin Shepherd OAM School Scholarship Presentation Awards  
November 2012**

The 10th anniversary of our School Scholarships Program culminated in a very successful awards presentation at St Mary's RSL Club.

A crowd of 185 attended the evening and firstly, enjoyed a buffet dinner after which our MC Mr Ted Fish welcomed all to the function; Sub-branch President, Ron Kelly complimented the winning students on their work. This was followed by the presentation of awards to the successful students.

An invitation was then given to the many scholarship winners from past years to address the audience with a brief report on their '*educational journey since Year 10*'. It was very pleasing to see 20 past winners line up to share their own story...and the stories were extremely impressive and satisfying to hear. Congratulations to all of them.

Following the impromptu deliveries, Tony Fryer reminded all of the benefits that have flowed from the early vision of **Tom Paine** and **Colin Shepherd** over 10 years ago, in developing and introducing this program; and of the quarter-million dollars that the last 10 years have seen delivered by way of these scholarships; and the significant commitment that our Sub-Branch has to the local community and its schools in particular. Tony gave special thanks to the teachers of the respective schools for the time and effort required to coordinate the submissions at their schools, otherwise this program would not be as successful as it has become.

A special award was then announced and given to two teachers who have been program coordinators for their schools for the entire 10 years: **Stevenie Harman** (Colyton High School Trade School) and **Kathy Hadley** (Cambridge Park High School). Copies of the photos taken on the night are on our web site, should anyone require copies please contact the Secretary, St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch.



**Kathy Hadley & Stevenie Harman  
receiving their awards**



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**VVAA St Mary's Outpost Education Team**  
**November 2012 Report**

A review of the Education achievements for 2012 show the following:  
The E-Team responded to 98 requests/bookings involving:

- 67 School Presentations to a total of 4770 Year 10 students requiring approximately 250 hours of veteran to student engagement and interaction.
- 25 ANZAC/Remembrance Day guest speakers joining and presenting at school special assemblies with a total primary/secondary student audience of over 12000.
- 5 individual highly motivated secondary students study and assignment projects being supported through veteran/student interviews.
- 1 Senior Veteran Community retirement village group presentation.

School/Student donations in appreciation of the above services exceeded \$12000. For those new to the Outpost it is worth noting ALL E-Team programs are offered free of set fees or charges. Schools obviously wish to show their appreciation for the valued and professional program delivered. Donations cover the annual administration, resource management and running costs of the Team project and also help support other Outpost programs.

The future implementation of a National History Syllabus has had little impact on this years activities and programs when compared with the past few years. Information from the Board of Studies suggests that E-Team presentations on Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War will be welcomed in schools for the next two years before any real change is evident.

A sincere "Thank You" to Outpost members who have contributed to the success and achievements throughout 2012. Your efforts have enhanced an important component of the Team's presentations. Specifically, connecting the veteran community with maturing students, soon to be part of the voting public, to help them understand Australian military history, heritage, values and beliefs. Through supporting school programs the Team endeavours to help develop good Australian citizens and contributors to our country's future.

As this school year draws to a close bookings for 2013 are being noted in the new diary.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of the Outpost family.

**Vin Cosgrove - Outpost Education Team Coordinator.**



**George Perrin with his son Theodore standing beside him at the Mitchell High School 'dress up' stage of the presentation.**

**Cobber (left) and Digger  
our two models which are  
sometimes used in  
displays by the E-Team.**

**A bit of a 'knowing look'  
by Digger - Must have  
been in the bush too  
long!!**



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## **Health Cuts Hit Soldiers**

**(Also see Article on Page 15 Re: Coordinated Veterans Care Program (CVC))**

About 80,000 military personnel will receive lower standards of care, delays in treatment and won't be able to choose their preferred doctor under sweeping changes to defence health care.

Medicos have warned wounded troops could be forced to take out private insurance to avoid the impact of the contracts those who treat soldiers, sailors, and air force staff are being forced to sign. Surgeons and other specialists will be hit by a 'not negotiable' 40 to 50 per cent drop in fees to treat military personnel at bases around Australia under government-imposed budget cuts.

The new military fees are well below Australian Medical Association rates. All personnel, including those wounded in action or hurt on base or at home, are covered for full medical and dental care.

The latest assault on military entitlements, part of a \$154 million 10 year budget cut to defence health services, follows an aborted attempt by top brass to remove family reunion travel from members over the age of 21.

Specialists are refusing to sign so-called garrison health services contracts with Medibank Health Solutions after the government owned firm won a new \$1.3billion four-year contract in June.

"I urge the decision makers to look at the potentially destructive effect these contract changes will have on morale by limiting access to quality medical care for injuries they suffer in the service of their country," one orthopaedic surgeon said.

Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons national co-ordinator Stephen Milgate said members were very concerned about the trend towards US-style managed healthcare and many senior surgeons would refuse to sign the contract.

MHS spokesman Dr Ian Boyd said: "Our goal is to provide the best healthcare options for every eligible ADF member, but we also have to be responsible and cost-effective with the programs delivery."

**(Press release - 17/10/12)**

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## **St Marys RSL Bowls**

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.

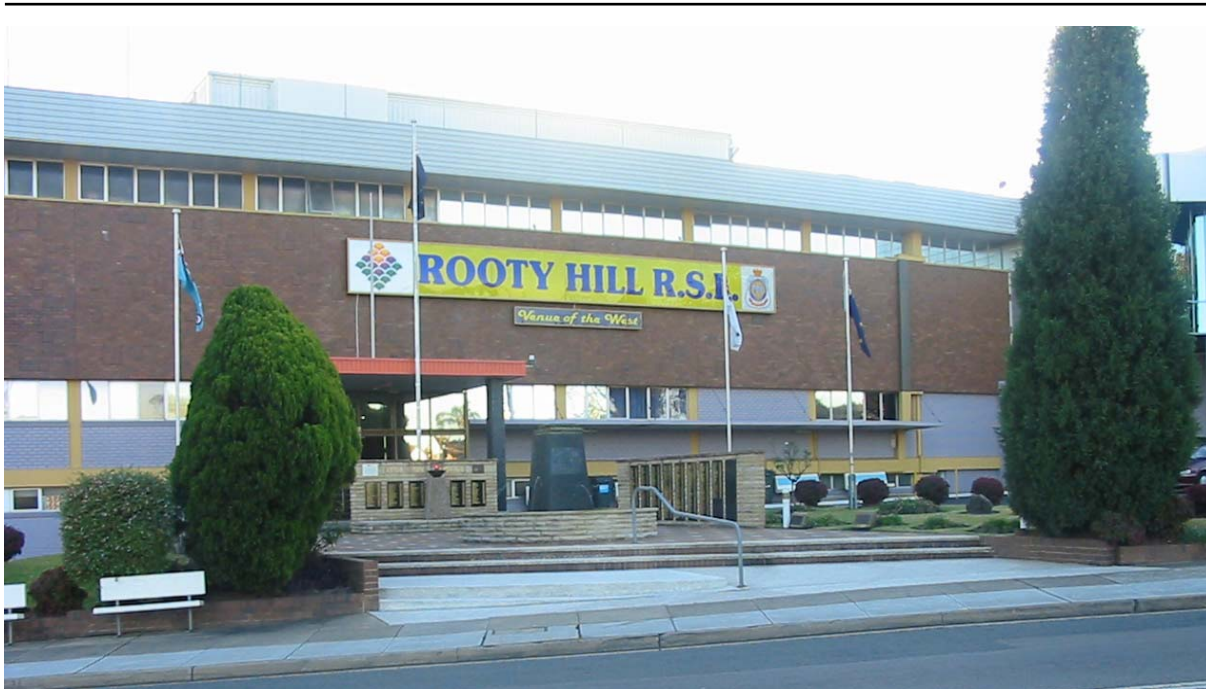
### **Social Bowls Programme**

<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.
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## **Club Lounge**

The Club Lounge caters for those looking for a relaxing atmosphere with a fun vibe for unwinding with friends, after work drinks or a place to start the night out on weekends. Tray service is available in the Club Lounge, allowing you to sit back, relax and be served by our friendly staff. Enjoy a wide range of beer, wine, spirits and cocktails that are on offer from the Main Bar.

... open the doors to the promise of something new... a seductively decorated lounge where you can chill, chat and unwind with friends. You'll find our new lounge nestled between the Southern Terrace and the Fred Chubb Lounge. Discover it today.

**The Stardust Cafe** is the ideal venue for catching up with friends day or night in a comfortable and friendly environment.

The Stardust Cafe is open till late from Tuesday through to Sunday and offers a large selection of light meals, hot & cold beverages and delicious sweets.

The Stardust Cafe is the ideal location for a quick snack before attending some of the great live entertainment.

### **Stardust Cafe Trading Hours**

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 10am - 8pm
- Wednesday & Thursday 10am - 9.30pm
- Friday: 10am - 1am
- Saturday: 9am - 1am
- Sunday: 9am - 9.30pm

**See in club for Public Holiday & Long Weekend Trading Hours**

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## **Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program**

Some questions were raised with **Mr Ian Campbell, Secretary Department of Veterans' Affairs**, regarding the Gold Card and CVC, the answers are listed below which should be of interest to all Gold Card holders.

1. When a Gold Card holder receives advice about enrolling in the CVC Program and the holder (a) decides not to be enrolled, and (b) has unplanned hospital admissions, then will the holder continue to have all such unplanned admissions as a Private Patient under the Repatriation Private Patient Scheme (RPPS) as entitled before commencement of the CVC program on 1st May 2011?

The answer to this question is YES. A Gold Card holder will continue to receive all entitlements, including unplanned admissions as a Private Patient under the RPPS, that they received prior to the commencement of the CVC program, regardless of whether they choose to enrol or not enrol in the program.

2. When a Gold Card holder gives consent to be enrolled in the CVC program and is provided with a Care Plan, and does not comply with some requirements of the Care Plan, e.g. lose weight, do exercise, quit smoking and has unplanned hospital admissions caused by not complying with some requirement of the Care Plan; then will the Gold Card holder continue to have all such unplanned admissions as a Private Patient under the RPPS as entitled before 1st May 2011?

The answer to this question is YES. A Gold Card holder who chooses not to follow suggestions made in their Care Plan and has unplanned hospital admissions caused by not following these suggestions, will continue to receive all their entitlements, including unplanned admissions as a Private patient under RPPS.

Gold Card holders will continue to receive all of their entitlements, including unplanned admissions as a Private Patient under the RPPS regardless of whether or not they choose to enrol in the CVC Program and regardless of whether or not they choose to follow the Care Plan provided to them as part of their program. The CVC Program provides planned and coordinated care for Gold Card holders who are most at risk of unplanned hospitalisation due to chronic illness and complex care needs. It is completely voluntary as to whether a Gold Card holder chooses to enrol in the program, there is absolutely no impact on any entitlements.

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### **About the CVC Program**

The coordinated Veterans' Care Program provides ongoing, planned and coordinated primary and community care, led by a general practitioner (GP) with a nurse coordinator, to eligible Gold Card holders who have chronic conditions, complex care needs and are at risk of an unplanned hospitalisation.

As part of the program:

- The GP ensures that any changes to the practice are carried out before enrolling a participant on the program.
- Potential participants are proactively identified.
- Potential participants are assessed by the GP for eligibility to participate in the program.
- If eligible, the GP explains the program and the person provides informed consent to being enrolled on the program.
- A comprehensive assessment of the person is carried out by the practice nurse or the GP if no practice nurse is available.
- A personalised Care Plan for the individual is prepared.
- The Care Plan is agreed with the person and a patient, friendly copy provided to the person and any carer or family member as agreed.
- Consideration is also given to the need for social assistance services.
- The general practice nurse, a community nurse or the GP coordinates treatment services set out in the Care Plan.
- The nurse coordinator provides regular feedback to the GP who is responsible for the overall provision of care to a person under the program.
- The Care Plan is regularly reviewed, updated and renewed.

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**TAB FACILITIES**

Sports Bet  
FOX Sport  
SKY Channel

**TERRACE CAFE**

Check Board for Specials  
Open Daily for Lunch & Dinner  
Serving Light Meals, Snacks, Sweets & Coffee

**Monday**

Bingo 11.30am  
Rock & Roll Dancing 7-10pm

**Tuesday**

Bingo 7.30pm

**Thursday**

Bingo 11.30am  
Texas Hold'em Poker 6.30pm  
DJ Stuart plays 60's, 70's & 80's in the Lounge  
and **MEMBER'S BADGE DRAW**  
\$3000-\$5000 From 7pm

**FRIDAY**

Bingo 11.30am  
DJ Stuart In Lounge 8pm -12.30

**Saturday**

Meat Run 4-6pm  
Duo in Lounge Area 7.30pm-Midnight  
Live Band in Audi 1<sup>st</sup> Sat/Month

**Sunday**

Raffle, Trivia & Music 4-8pm

**ST MARYS RSL CLUB**

**"The Place To Be"**

*FORTUNA Chinese Restaurant*

Open for Lunch at Noon & Dinner at 5pm (Except Mondays)

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

Is gambling a problem for you? G-Line (NSW) is a confidential, anonymous & free counseling service.  
FREECALL 1800 633 635

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Have a Laugh:

A distraught senior citizen  
phoned her doctor's office.  
"Is it true," she wanted to know,  
"that the medication  
you prescribed has to be taken  
for the rest of my life?"  
""Yes, I'm afraid so,"" the doctor told her.  
There was a moment of silence  
before the senior lady replied,  
"I'm wondering, then,  
just how serious is my condition  
because this prescription is marked  
'NO REPEATS'



An older gentleman was  
on the operating table  
awaiting surgery  
and he insisted that his son,  
a renowned surgeon,  
perform the operation.  
As he was about to get the anaesthesia,  
he asked to speak to his son.  
"Yes, Dad, what is it?"  
"Don't be nervous, son;  
do your best,  
and just remember,  
if it doesn't go well,  
if something happens to me,  
your mother  
is going to come and  
live with you and your wife"

### ***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.*

***Phone: Cheryl Mullavey 9625 9363***



### **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.

**WE URGENTLY NEED A TRAINER FOR OUR WEDNESDAY CLASSES TO ASSIST BETWEEN 9am - 12 Noon.**

**For more info call Keith 9833 4700 or email [vietvet@tpg.com.au](mailto:vietvet@tpg.com.au)**

### **Aussie Banner & Flag Co. Pty Ltd (ABF Signs)**

**Boats, Banners, Awnings, Vehicles Factories, Shop Fronts, Magnetic Signs, Illuminated Signs, Computer Vinyl Signs.**

**Banners & Bunting  
Flags (National, Corporate, School)  
Exhibitions & Street Banners.**

**1/20 Hall Street St Mary's 2760**

**Contact: Tom Bell 0418 447 389**

**Phone: 9623 2937**

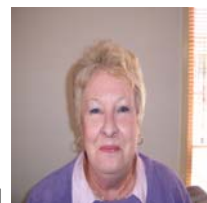
**Fax: 9623 2934**

**[ausban@pnc.com.au](mailto:ausban@pnc.com.au)**

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## Nepean Wives Of Vietnam Veterans Support Group

### Report by Maureen Clements



This year we celebrated our 13 years together with wonderful friendships being formed. We have shed tears, enjoyed lots of laughter and of course lots of talking! What a time it has been over the past years. We enjoyed our birthday lunch in the Chinese Restaurant at St Mary's RSL Club.

We dissolved our incorporation this year and are now under the umbrella of the 'Train'. Thank you to the boys for taking us under your wings; this action has taken a great burden off us as we were finding it more and more difficult to raise the necessary funds to keep us going. Luckily we have gained four (4) new member this year.

Our Cancer morning tea in May this year was a huge success with funds raised going straight to the Cancer Centre at Nepean Hospital plus the ***'Look Good Feel Better Foundation'*** A big 'thank you' to all who attended, especially Reno and the boys.

Once again we were fortunate to receive a Grant through the St Mary's RSL Club which enabled us to have two bus trips one of which was to the Central Coast where we visited the Japanese Gardens and Art Gallery. We had lunch at Central Coast Leagues Club and a stop-off at the Sara Lee Factory. This was a great day and enjoyed by all; our next trip will be in the New Year.

Our Christmas Party will be held on 13 December in the Northern Room of the St Mary's RSL Club. Thank you to Michael Wiezel for his support.

Our Krafty Kritters craft group is going well with lots of ladies enjoying making different types of craft. Some knit, do cross stitch, make quilts etc. and of course - lots of talking and laughter. Thank you to Nanette Pearson, our craft teacher, for her continued support.

The Vitality Fitness group has folded for the time being, thank you to Sally Trail and Sietske Moulday for keeping it running over the past few year. We shall have a new Fitness instructor next year ad he will tailor the class to fit in with our ailments and ages. More news to follow on this in the New Year.

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**Cpl Daniel Keighran** our most recent Victoria Cross recipient joins the ranks of an elite group of soldiers from the Boer War right through to the current conflicts. The quality that is instantly recognisable in Keighran is humility.

Keighran was born in Nambour, in the Sunshine Coast hinterland region of Queensland, in 1983. When Keighran was in Year 5, he moved with his family to Lowmead, approximately 80 kilometres north west of the Qld regional city of Bundaberg.



His family lived on a 'forty-acre block' where his parents bred paint horses. His mother also taught dressage and his father occasionally organised rodeo events. Keighran attended school in nearby Rosedale and graduated from high school in 2000. That year he was a torchbearer for the 2000 Summer Olympics torch parade and received a *Pierre de Coubertin* Award in recognition of his "Olympic Spirit".

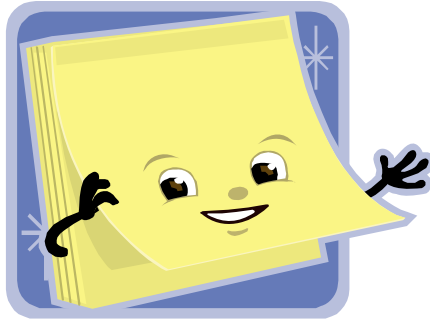
Keighran joined the Australian Army in 2000. Prior to Afghanistan he had served in East Timor and Iraq, he has certainly served his country gallantly and with distinction. He was promoted to Lance Corporal in 2005 whilst within Mortar Platoon of the Support Company, 6 RAR. He was again promoted to Corporal within the same unit in 2009.

Keighran was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions while serving with the 6th Battalion, RAR in a fire fight with insurgents during the Battle of *Derapet* on 24 August 2010, an action of Operation Slipper. During the battle, "with complete disregard for his own safety" repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to draw it away from a team treating a battle casualty (his friend, Lance Corporal Jared McKinney). Keighran's actions were key in allowing the Coalition forces to withdraw without further casualties.

The Governor General, Quentin Bryce, when awarding the VC to Keighran, described him as a man of profound physical and moral strength. A man selfless in the face of threat, courageous in the face of terror, generous in the face of suffering and humble in the face of an honour bestowed.

Keighran now serves in the Australian Army Reserve attached to 11th/28th Battalion, Royal Western Australian Regiment. His civilian career is in the mining industry in Kalgoorlie, WA. He currently works at the Frog's Leg Gold Mine.

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## **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, 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

No Pension claims are carried out on Tuesdays or Thursdays however, the office is open for general enquiries.



## Sunset Station Singers Report by Maureen Clements

We have enjoyed another fun year singing together with our Choir Master Mark Bowden and his capable assistant Megan Brown. What a great time we have each week with our rehearsals which are held every Monday night in the Northern Room of the St Mary's RSL Club at 7.00pm till 9.00pm, sometimes we go over time because everyone has such a wonderful time. Once again 'thank you' to Michael for making the room available.

This year we sang at the ANZAC Dawn Service, Vietnam Veterans day Commemorative Service, Fairfield RSL for the Ladies Auxiliary High Tea and we are booked to perform at the EdenGlasie Nursing Home and Hunts Hotel for their Christmas show.

We love to visit the nursing homes, so if you know of any that might like us to perform please contact me on 9675 3998 or 0418 253 199.

New members are always welcome to come along and join us, don't worry if you reckon you can't sing because altogether we sound great. Remember it is all about just joining in and having a bit of FUN.

On a sad note we will miss our two beautiful Angels - Gloria and Lesley, but Heaven has a special place for them now.

Until next time have a great Christmas and New Year.

***Maureen.***

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## Train Washers and Fishing Report

### Reno Ciantar - Station Master

As we draw close to the Christmas break, it is time to recall the achievements of the 'washers' for the past year. We are a volunteer group of Veterans that get together every Thursday and carry out the maintenance of the 'Train' which includes washing it, grass cutting, hedge clipping, cleaning the platform and the office.

Throughout the year we accept responsibility for the preparation of the Ceremonial area before each of the Services held by the St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch & the St Mary's VVAA, these include ANZAC Dawn Service, Boer War Day, Vietnam Veterans Day & Remembrance Day. In addition, there is a small group of 'washers' who attend the 'train' on Mondays to carry out additional work such as extra painting all the carriages, building new doors & erecting awnings over the toilets, maintenance on the Gazebo & the finally for the year we closed off the two double doors on the car park side of the double deck carriage where there is now medal boards displayed.

The 'washers' work as a great team & take a great deal of pride in their work, many are ex tradesmen in their own right, so the work is very professional, we have painters, metal workers, wood workers, plumbers, electricians etc - so no job is considered to be "too difficult" they have a lot of fun on the day, if anyone would like to join us, you will find the work addictive, then drop in and see me (Reno) the only thing is: "You must be thick skinned" you will inevitably have the P#\$\$% taken out of you.

To all the 'washers' and ladies, too many to thank individually, thank you for your efforts over the past year none of this could be achieved without you giving so freely of your time. A special thanks to **Michael Power our supervisor Painter**, who has been brilliant with his professional advice and assistance.

(Fishing Report next page)



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## FISHING - With Reno

Fishing over the past year has been a bit patchy; we didn't get our first full days fishing in until June because the first six months of the year was taken up with Memorial Services and wet weather. But like all fishermen we just keep going, hoping that today is the day that the BIG one didn't get away.



It's a good thing that we take our food with us or we would starve but as far as a fun day goes it is great. The fishing group do two boat trips a year on the Hawkesbury River and the rest are land based. We also organise two charter trips off Kiama, this is separate to the fishing group - if you are interested in this or just coming to fish contact me at the 'Train'.

Some people say we ***“never catch anything we just go there to eat”*** well the last trip of the year which was a boat trip, we caught more than our fair share with really good fish caught and heaps of undersize thrown back.

Anyone who is interested in joining us, the day starts at 5.00am when we leave home so that we can try and beat the morning traffic and attempt to reach our destination in time to have some breakfast, clean up and get on with the fishing.

At around 9.00am we have morning tea, ***“fix the problems of the world”*** and go back fishing. Lunch is around 12.15pm where we talk and finish solving the World problems, pack up and head for home before the afternoon rush period.

The fishing day was never meant to be a serious one, just have a day out, do a spot of fishing and have a lot of fun with the boys, if we manage to catch a few that's a bonus.

Fishing is the first Wednesday of the month and all are welcome, if anyone is interested in coming along, I am at the 'Train' every Thursday from 7.00am till 11.00am.

Until next year - wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Reno

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## **Two New and Important Websites for Members**

Two new websites has been established for the VVAA St Marys Outpost and the St Marys RSL Sub-Branch; they will be constantly updated with information to keep you in touch, they are interactive so that you can send emails direct to us with comments or suggestions.

You will find similar information on both sites, mainly to do with Pension and Welfare. Present and Past Newsletters can also be found on both sites in colour.

Listed below under each of the logos is what you would find on each of the web pages:

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**Presidents Message  
Advocate/Pension Officer  
Welfare  
Health  
Drop In Lounge  
Train Washers  
Education Team  
Computer Classes  
Fishing Club  
Sunset Singers  
Up Coming Events  
Past Events  
Present/Past Newsletters  
VVAA NSW Newsletters  
RSL Sub-Branch Website  
How It All Began  
The Outpost Train  
VVAA National Contacts  
Links  
Contact Us  
[www.vvaastmarys.com.au](http://www.vvaastmarys.com.au)**



**Home  
Welfare  
Advocate/Pensions  
Commemorative Services  
Present/Past Newsletters  
Health  
RSL Social Guild  
RSL Women's Auxiliary  
RSL Youth Club  
St Marys VVAA Outpost  
Governor King Day Club  
History of the RSL Sub-Branch  
Past Exec. RSL Sub-Branch  
Links  
Contact us  
  
[www.vvaastmarys.com.au/  
StMarysRsl Sub\\_Branch](http://www.vvaastmarys.com.au/StMarysRslSub_Branch)  
  
Easy Log In  
Google St Marys RSL Sub Branch**

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## **The Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)** **Cabramatta Memorial**

On 11th November 2012 the ARVN branch of the Vietnam Veterans opened a Vietnam War Memorial in Cabramatta, the Memorial was originally opened in 1991, however, due to vandalism over the years the Memorial needed upgrading and was officially reopened on the 11th. It is a wonderful tribute to both the ARVN and particularly to the Australians who lost their lives.

The bronze statue depicts an Australian soldier sitting side by side with an ARVN soldier and underneath the statue is engraved the full list of Australians who gave their lives. The Vietnamese community, as well as the ex ARVN soldiers, greatly appreciate Australia's commitment to the war.

Later on that night of the 11th November, 20 members of the VVAA St Marys as well as Executive Members of the St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch and the CEO of St Marys RSL (Michael Wiesel) attended a dinner with the Vietnamese community which was actually a fund raising night to raise money for the VVAA NSW to specifically assist with our Welfare commitments. This indeed was a tremendous gesture. All throughout the night they heaped praise on the efforts of the Australians, they truly are the most wonderful friendly people. It is not known at the time of writing this newsletter, but it is understood the fund raising effort was in the vicinity of \$70,000.  
(continued next page)



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## An Edited Version of Vietnamese Perspective of The Vietnam War

My perspectives and experience of the war derive from what I have witnessed, heard and told as a young man. I was born in 1961 in Saigon, VN. Like many other families in South VN, my father was a soldier and a young army officer in the Republic of Viet-Nam Armed Forces (ARVN) when he married my mother. He rose to the rank of Brigadier-Colonel and became the Commanding officer of the 1st Armoured Brigade in the 1st Military Zone based in the City of Hue in Central VN. Whilst I was too young to understand fully the complexity of the war, my family and I were very much affected by the war like the rest of my people in South VN.

I would like, first and foremost, pay my family's respect and eternal gratitude to Australia for accepting us as refugees 33 years ago. I would like to thank the 521 Australian soldiers who died and more than 55 thousands Australian veterans who have fought in VN. Thanks to your involvement, my people were able to enjoy our freedom longer and the rest of South East Asian countries had more time to strengthen their democracy and their national defence against the threat of Communism. You are our Heroes, our Freedom Soldiers and our Benefactors. Thank you for the suffering, the humiliation, the rejection, the broken families and the broken lives many of you have had to endure for our sake upon your return from your tour of duty in VN. It was our country and our people that you have fought and died for simply because it was, and still is, Australia's ethos today that Australian Defence Forces would respond to the call of its allies and the UN to protect world's peace, freedom and democracy anywhere. Thanks to your deeds and your sacrifices that my family and I and all other Australians are enjoying our freedom and the Australian way of life today.

**Norman Truong**

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

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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 manned regularly 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 9833 4700
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	0416 231 993
Secretary:	Sam Vecchio	9833 4700
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	9833 4700
A/Sec.	Gary Fizzell	0418 114 976

**Management Committee**

The VVAA St Marys Outpost Management Committee meets regularly at the 'Train' to discuss important points relevant to the proper management of the Outpost, which will then be raised at the Bi-Monthly General Meeting. The Office is open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 2.00pm although closing time is flexible depending on circumstances.

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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