

# Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

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**If you have been wondering where the Sub Branch is now located,  
it is here— at the Southport Bowls Club  
We are at the southern end of Marine Parade, Southport  
Our offices are located towards the rear of the building.**

**SEE YOU SOON**

# REMINDER

## General Meeting

### Sunday 25 August

### 10.30am

### Bring your Partner

#### From the President's Desk

**Legal** One of the constant topics of the newsletter has been the on-going saga of our legal fights with the old Memorial Club [MC]. It all started before our eviction from the building at the beginning of the COVID lockdown back in 2020. The first case—which turned out to be the last one settled—began when the MC saw fit to hold back two \$40,000 monthly payments off the loan between us and them. That case was very much put on the back-burner when we took the MC to court for their abrupt and uncalled-for eviction of us.

History now shows that we won the case and were awarded a considerable sum of money in compensation and on top of that award, we were granted costs. The MC did not like the result and submitted an appeal which cost us even more money. They lost the appeal with costs against them. Not being content with that, the MC attempted to take the matter to the High Court, costing us more money. They failed to get approval to take the case to the High Court and we were granted costs.

So, in the end, there were three legal actions of which we won all three with costs. The amount that was awarded to us was paid with interest in early March, however, costs had to be calculated by a third party and at the time of the settlement of the loan case, had not been finalised.

Once the payment of the judge's award was paid—in fact even before that—our legal team had turned their attention to the question of payment of our loan. The original case for an amount of \$80,000 was changed to a demand for the payment of the full amount outstanding of the loan, some \$558,000+ including the interest that had been accumulated since the MC ceased paying in December of 2019.

In both cases, the judge had ordered both parties to undertake a mediation. The first one failed and that is why it went to court. The second mediation took place in Brisbane on 17 May this year. I fully expected the mediation to end the same way with no agreement, however, after over eight and a half hours and very much to the surprise of both myself and our legal team, we received an offer from the Memorial Club to settle. After some further negotiations, an agreement was reached. An agreement document was drawn up and signed by both parties. It was agreed that the following statement would be the only one put out by both parties:

*We are pleased to announce that Southport RSL Memorial Club Inc and the Returned and Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch) Southport Sub-Branch Inc have reached a commercial agreement which successfully resolves all legal proceeding between them. Although the details of the agreement are confidential, the terms are considered to be in the best interests of the members of both organisations.*

**Member Engagement** One on the issues that has been an ongoing concern for both myself and the rest of the management board has been the seemingly lack of support that the Sub Branch receives from a majority of our members. We conduct a General Meeting four times a year, one of which is our AGM. For the last couple of years, we have struggled to get a quorum to legally run those meetings.

I recently did a survey of our members based on ages and found that the largest group are those aged between 70 and 79. I am guessing that a good many of this age group are now retired and should have time on their hands where they could front up to our meetings.

So, how about it? Want to get more involved in your Sub Branch?

**State Congress** On the 22 June I drove to Brisbane in the early morning and attended, on behalf of our Sub Branch members, the 2024 State Congress, or in other words, the RSL State AGM. The meeting turned out to be one of the quickest I have been to with all the motions being approved without any arguments at all. For those of you that don't follow what is happening in the State branch, Steven Day was re-elected at State President. The full documentation of the meeting is

available at the Sub Branch office. The draft minutes of this year's meeting will be available on the State web site by the time you are reading this Newsletter.

**Success isn't just about what you accomplish in your life, it's about what you inspire others to do.**

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THE HENLEY ON BROADWATER

By Jack Snell

For some years now the Southport RSL Sub-branch has had a connection with the retirement community at The Henley on Broadwater, a high-rise building right opposite the Southport Aquatic Centre. About 10 years ago (I am told), various members of the Sub-branch volunteered to conduct an Anzac Day service there each year. Seven years ago, when Jack Snell moved in there, he took over conducting the Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services on behalf of the Sub-branch for the residents and has continued to the present.



**Jack Snell at the Podium ANZAC Day 2024**

The Henley is unique in that it provides for retiree residents 'to age in place' combining independent living and the various levels of aged care in the one building. One floor is a private aged care facility, but the rest comprises apartments with residents who range from those capable of independent living through to those needing varying degrees of support. Since many find it difficult to attend commemorative services it makes sense for the Sub-branch to provide them in-house.



**Some of The Henley Veterans and Friends**

Residents seem to appreciate the effort, as there is usually a good turnout of around 50 or so at each service. In more recent years, the Sub-branch has provided remembrance poppies on a gold coin donation basis in the week prior to both Anzac and Remembrance Days. We usually raise around \$40 to \$50 on each occasion. Every little bit helps.

Several residents are ex-service personnel, including a former RAN Fleet Air Arm pilot, a former WRAAC colonel and a former RAAF member who flew Sabre jets. Others have seen National Service and Reserve Service in the Army and there are also war widows who proudly wear their loved one's medals. Another of our Sub-branch members, Alexander Murdoch, who was decorated with the French Croix de Guerre, having participated in the D-Day landings, is a regular attendee.

While this engagement is relatively low-key, it is another service that helps not only the commemoration of veterans' service to the nation but also the importance of the RSL's role in this process.



“How much longer did he tell you to stay on this banana diet?”

### A Difficult Situation

Anonymous

I have heard versions of this story since, and I do not know whether it has happened to more than one guy, or if it has just been repeated by people hearing what happened to me. So, I won't tell you my name, but my brother might do me in.

It was 1959 and I was taking my girlfriend to see *My Fair Lady* at Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne. I was wearing my recently purchased Fletcher Jones trousers, the first pair of strides I had owned with a zippered fly, they even came with instructions on how to operate a zipper properly.

I couldn't afford premium tickets so we were way up in the Gods, almost back row of the top balcony, but we still had a good view with our two seats next to the aisle. Thank goodness we weren't down in the stalls where my embarrassment would have been witnessed by many more people. Julie, my girlfriend, nudged my arm, pointed down with her eyes and whispered “Look,” and of course my fly was open. I couldn't close it while sitting, according to the instructions it could only be closed while standing, so I folded my hands on my lap and

whispered back I would fix it when the lights went down as the show started.

When the lights went down, I stood to carry out the task just as the girl in front of me made herself comfortable and flicked up her hair. Don't know why she did it, never found out, but more than a few strands of her hair became stuck in my fly as I drew the zip up. The zip jammed, I couldn't move it up or down. Believe it or not, my first thought was for my new pair of FJ trousers, will the zipper be ruined? Then reality hit, embarrassment, people behind calling for me to sit – of course I could not, the girl ... “Let go my hair!” the boyfriend glaring at me and half out of his seat. I stammered some sort of plea like “It's stuck, I can't shift it,” showed him my hands, and discovered quite a bit of hair seemed to be stuck where it ought not be. The girl could not turn around, I could not move, an usher started moving towards us, then another, torches shining, someone laughed, but mostly there were shushes! and shut-ups! and sit-downs!

Julie was horrified, something like, “What did you do that for? Take it out”, then she looked away and hid her face. I tried to pull the hair out, the girl screamed, the boyfriend stood, he was much bigger than me, and I wished I was somewhere else. “Sir, you'll have to leave”, from a female usher. “OK mate, you're outta here!” from the male. I whimpered I couldn't do anything and prayed the show would go on and the lights stay down. The male usher was pretty efficient, he saw the problem, produced a penknife from his pocket, mumbled something about an idiot and started to saw at the hair. Well, the knife seemed pretty blunt and certainly not made for the job, it was taking forever. When he finally freed the girl's hair, he grabbed my arm and ushered me rather firmly down the stairs and into a side door, Julie following along with the other usher.

We were instructed to leave quietly or the police would be called, I was only 15 and felt like a ten-year-old; having no idea of how to stand up for my rights, we agreed to leave. I noticed Julie was crying and asked if she had been hurt. She glared at me with more venom than the other girl's boyfriend. We found ourselves out on Exhibition Street, my fly still half open with hair sticking out, Julie demanding I take her home. I was facing the theatre trying to fix my fly, someone passing by said I was

disgusting, and where were the cops when you needed them? Would it never end? Eventually I managed to slide the zipper down, brushed out the hair, and thanked God as my fly finally closed. “No harm done,” I said weakly.

Just to wrap up, the walk back to Flinders Street Station seemed twice as long with Julie, distant, and not speaking. We took the train back to Camberwell and I escorted her home, still with hardly a word between us. Next day I called around with a box of Winning Post chocolates to apologise and was greeted by Julie’s mum who informed me I was not welcome and Julie didn’t want to see me again. And so, it came to pass.

I stupidly told some of my mates what had happened, and was ribbed about it off and on for years. I was a radio and TV apprentice studying at RMTTC, then known as Royal Melbourne Technical College, it changed name in 1960 to RMIT. Julie was studying at Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy, and we met one lunch time. I never ventured near Emily Mac again, but now and then heard some girls saying “That’s him” and pointing me out.

I moved to NSW a few years later and I didn’t return to Melbourne until 1969, married and with a couple of kids. I never heard of Julie again, but I guess she survived, and we live on the other side of town now.



“What’s the fish like today?”

**“One for the road” means peeing before you leave the house.**

## **ANZAC Strike Wing**

By John Riebeling

No. 455 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force began operations in the European Theatre of Operations as part of RAF Bomber Command but transferred to Coastal Command at the end of April 1942. Still flying the Handley Page Hampden at that time, crews were immediately required to train in the delivery of airborne torpedo attacks, in advance of flying anti-shipping operations against Axis vessels operating in Norwegian coastal waters.

Flying from their home base at Leuchars in Fife, their Hampdens were not particularly suitable for this type of mission and initial success rates were disappointing, with many crews paying the ultimate price for their aircraft's lack of capability. Things improved from December 1943 onwards, when the unit traded their Hampdens for Beaufighters, with crews immediately developing tactics to maximise the impact of their capable new aircraft.



**Bristol Beaufighter TF.X, NE775/X2,  
455 Sqn RAAF, June 1944**

Operating in tandem with No.489 Squadron (RNZAF), the two formed the 'ANZAC Strike Wing', using the combined strength of both squadrons to launch devastating attacks against Axis shipping in the North Sea. Beaufighters configured as heavy fighters attacked and neutralised enemy anti-aircraft defences before the bomb and torpedo-equipped aircraft swooped to deliver their destructive blows.

The Strike Wing's tactics proved so effective that they were later called upon to clear the sea lanes of the English Channel in the months leading up to D-Day, paying particular attention to the E-boats which posed such a threat to Allied invasion planning.

**Old age is coming  
at a really bad time.**

## A Brief History of Our RSL

by Steve Bloxham

In April 1919, a group of returned soldiers from World War I established the Southport RSL Sub Branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia.

In August 1938, the control of the building was transferred to the RSL Sub Branch from the School of Arts, and it became the clubhouse of the Southport RSL. A modern brick building was erected on the site in 1957.

The Southport War Memorial, initially erected at the end of Nerang St beside the Broadwater, was unveiled on 25th April (Anzac Day) 1922. John Appel, the local member, unveiled the memorial in the presence of the largest-ever crowd in Southport. The memorial proudly stands next to the foreshore of the Broadwater Parklands in Southport.



The central marble plaque reads: "Erected by the residents in appreciation of those who enlisted from the town of Southport in the Great War 1914-1919." It lists 17 names in alphabetical order of those killed. Two other marble plaques are headed "Enlistments," with 70 names, including 3 nursing Sisters.

In the past few years, our RSL was temporarily located on the top floor of the Southport Bowls Club. It wasn't until 2024 that an agreement was finally reached between the Bowls Club and our RSL, making the Bowls Club our new permanent home.

Since relocating to our new offices, which are now situated at the rear and on the ground floor of the Bowls Club, we have established two areas: the main office and the VSC office.

These areas have been fully renovated with new furniture and six display cabinets showcasing memorabilia. The display cabinets are currently filled with memorabilia.

We will have an official opening of our RSL on Saturday, 24th August 2024. This event is currently being organised by our board members. Once they have finalized the details, you will be emailed all the necessary information

### Current Board Members

John Riebeling	<b>President</b>
Ken Orr	<b>Deputy President</b>
Harold Hansen	<b>Treasurer</b>
Michael Burg	<b>Secretary</b>
Claude Palmer	<b>Director 1</b>
Sandra Riebeling	<b>Director 2</b>
Steve Bloxham OAM	<b>Director 3</b>
Kevin Lloyd-Thomas	<b>Director 4</b>
Craig Thomas	<b>Director 5</b>
Keith Bazley	<b>Director 6</b>

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