

# Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 4

November 2025



**REMINDER**  
**General Meeting**  
**Sunday 23 November**  
**10.30am**  
**Bring your Partner**

**Christmas Lunch**  
**Wednesday 17 December**  
**Cost: \$10.00**  
**Contact Secretary to Book**  
**0484 280 759**

## From the President's Desk

### Memorabilia Management

The month of August has once again been both productive and rewarding within the Sub Branch, with a significant amount of focus directed toward reviewing and understanding the extensive collection of memorabilia held by the organisation. However, we did get everything into one storeroom. The primary task ahead is to determine the most effective way to sort, catalogue, and manage these items. Once this process is completed, members will be updated, and other Sub Branches that have

expressed interest in selected memorabilia will be advised accordingly.

### Events and Engagements

During August, I had the pleasure of attending the Life Members and Presidents Lunch at the Mermaid Beach Tavern. The event was an enjoyable afternoon, attended by approximately 40 people, providing a valuable opportunity to meet several new faces and strengthen connections with fellow Sub Branches.

Blue Shirt Friday continues to gain popularity and achieve success, largely due to the leadership and dedicated efforts of Geoff. His commitment has been instrumental in driving this initiative forward.

Looking ahead, I encourage all members to put forward ideas for new social engagements. Your suggestions are essential in ensuring our Sub Branch remains active, vibrant, and enjoyable for everyone involved.

### Recent Representations and Recognition

This past weekend, the Sub Branch was represented at the Southport Yacht Club's Blessing of the Fleet and Sail Past on Saturday, followed by the Breaking of the Flag Ceremony on Sunday, in accordance with Naval tradition. Members in attendance included Michael, Kevin, Rod West, and myself. A special mention goes to Rod, who was awarded a prize for Best Dressed Boat, which is a fantastic achievement.

### Noteworthy Events in September

September was relatively quiet in terms of significant occurrences. From 12-15

September, HMAS Diamantina visited the Southport Yacht Club. I was honoured to be invited by Skipper Lieutenant Commander Sam Mairs to attend sunset drinks and the Sunset Ceremony on board. The evening provided an excellent networking opportunity, with a number of senior military personnel present.

On 16 September, I attended Skip and MMS Training at the District, which offered valuable insights into the personalities of district representatives. This was followed by the District Representatives Meeting on 20 September, which I attended in place of Ken and Michael, who were unable to be present. Key topics discussed at the meeting included the requirement for members to hold a Blue Card and the introduction of the new Honours and Awards System. Further information on both items will be circulated once available. Additionally, I held discussions with State Vice President Arron Hassel regarding the proposed redesign of the RSL Crest/Badge, which is scheduled to be addressed at the RSL Australia meeting in October. It has since been redesigned and awaiting release.

The smaller "Lest We Forget" sign has now been repaired and installed in the office. I also spoke with Kevin O'Brian, author of a book on Long Tan, and we have scheduled a book signing during morning tea on 19 November. John has already circulated the event flyer.

On 2 September, I met with a State Government contractor to discuss the redevelopment of Naval Park and Humpries Boatyard. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

### October / November Activities

October was a steady month, with one of the main highlights being the ESO Forum at Southport Golf Club, attended by John Reibling, Mark Anderson, and myself. The Forum featured participation from 11 District Sub Branches and over 15 external organisations affiliated with the RSL. The primary focus was on the range of services each organisation provides and the differences between Sub Branches across the District.

During the Forum, I highlighted several key activities and services offered by our Sub Branch:

- ANZAC and Remembrance Days

- Poppy and Funeral services
- Ongoing support to veterans and their families
- GCUH Veterans Network (Ken Orr)
- Monthly morning teas, including guest speakers
- Sponsorship of Barefoot/Twilight Bowls every Thursday night
- Broadwater Southport Rotary/RSL Youth Leadership Program (for veterans' dependents)
- Schools Program
- Sailing Back To Life
- Birthday and welfare phone calls to all members (Sandy)
- VSC Services with Mark and Rodger, including JP qualifications
- Blue Shirt Friday (veterans and mates welfare drinks)
- Upgrade of Naval Park
- Bowls Club facilities

A booklet containing contact details for all the organisations that attended the Forum has been distributed; however, there are a few typographical errors, and an updated version will be published shortly.

### General Updates

Thursday Night Bowls is becoming increasingly popular, with up to 34 bowlers attending. As the weather continues to warm up, attendance is expected to rise. However, the Bowls Club is currently struggling without a manager, and I am monitoring the situation closely.

Remembrance Day was a great success, with over 200 people attending the event. Feedback from external agencies has been overwhelmingly positive. One consideration for future events is to assess the amount of seating available to accommodate all attendees.

Finally, if you are invited to represent the Sub Branch—or believe you need to represent the Sub Branch—at any congresses, meetings, forums, or discussions, please inform the Board or the Executive Committee. It is important to ensure that you are authorised to speak on behalf of the Sub Branch.

### From the Secretary's Desk

Since our last meeting, several updates and activities have taken place that I would like to report on.

We have successfully downsized our storage facilities to one shed, which will provide a cost saving for the Sub Branch. There is still some work to do in sorting through our stored items and organising them in a more professional manner.

Our Sub Branch continues to support veterans and their families in need and providing advocacy services through our Veterans Support Centre, which is managed by **Mark Anderson**. I'd like to thank Mark for his ongoing commitment and support in this important role and Sandy Riebeling for her efforts in ringing members on their birthdays and doing welfare calls.

Along with **John Riebeling, Craig Thomas, and Harry Hansen**, I attended **SKIP and MMS training** at the District Office on **16 September 2025**. This training has improved our knowledge and efficiency in using the RSL systems and programs.

Our **Veterans' Morning Teas** continue to go well. I'd like to remind everyone that these gatherings are open to all veterans—whether or not they are members of our Sub Branch—and they are welcome to bring family members and carers. These mornings are a great opportunity to socialise, share experiences, and seek advice or support.

We received **medals from the Queensland Public Trustee**, found among the estate of the late **Mr. Toner**. The medal belonged to **L.F. Johnston** and is now displayed in our Sub Branch display cabinet.

I attended the **District Secretaries Network Session** at the District Office, where all District Secretaries met to discuss ways to assist one another in performing our roles, recruiting new members, and strengthening inter-branch communication.

I also attended a **seminar on changes to the Blue Card system** and how these may affect us. The key takeaway is that Blue Cards are required for anyone who works directly with children. Blue Card checks are more comprehensive than standard police checks, as they cover all Australian states. For Sub Branch members, Blue Cards are not generally required, as we do not have direct control of children. When attending schools or ceremonies, members are always accompanied by teachers or staff. However, it was the view of

the presenters that holding a Blue Card is always beneficial, as it provides an extra layer of protection and reassurance when working around children.

**The mutual arrangements with the Bowls Club** continue to run smoothly. Any inquiries we receive from people mistakenly contacting us instead of the SOPO Club regarding event bookings are being referred to the Bowls Club, which they greatly appreciate.

However, I am still receiving occasional calls from members of the public wishing to book events or meals. When asked, they usually say they found our number through a Google search. We may need to explore options to better inform the public that there is **no longer an RSL Club in Southport**, only the RSL Sub Branch.

Lastly, I'd like to remind members that **all veterans are entitled to an RSL Tribute (Poppy Service)** when they pass away. Please share this information with family, friends, and fellow veterans. Arrangements can be made through funeral directors or by contacting the Sub Branch directly.



**An Article by Steve Bloxham**

On behalf of the Hua Hin Veterans Group, we extend our sincere thanks to the Committee and Members of Southport RSL for their valued support.

The Hua Hin Veterans Group was established in February 2025 and has already grown to over 180 members, with numbers continuing to rise.



Our community brings together men and women who have served in any Defence Force and now call Hua Hin home.

Our members, both men and women, have proudly served in conflicts and operations across the globe. Among us we are honoured to have a World War II veteran, as well as veterans of the Korean War, Malaya, Borneo, Vietnam, Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other conflicts. The strength of our group lies in its diversity, with members representing many nations including Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Germany, and other NATO countries.



With Mark, the Owner of the Bar

We provide a space for veterans to connect, share memories, and support one another, while also honouring our shared history. With the strong backing of the veteran community, we are committed to holding commemorative services for both ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day—to remember all who served, and especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice.



Some of the Group

With the strong support of our community, we remain committed to honouring our shared history. Each year, we hold our ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies at Cheers

Restaurant & Bar, owned by our great supporters Mark and Koy.

In December 2025, our group will undertake a pilgrimage to Kanchanaburi to pay our respects to the fallen at Hellfire Pass, where we will also lay a wreath on behalf of the Southport RSL.

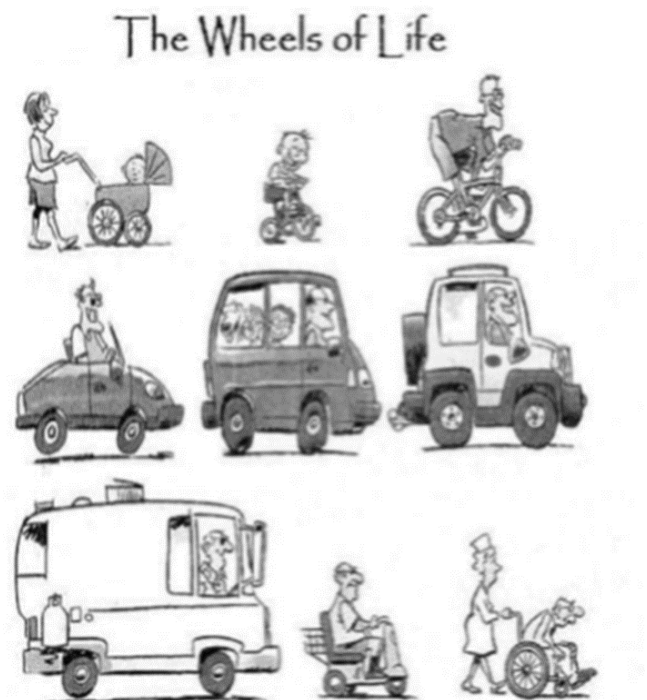
Beyond remembrance, the Hua Hin Veterans Group is also a social community, with regular monthly meetings and pool nights hosted at various local venues who proudly support our group.

### Membership

- **Veterans:** Full membership is open to those who have served in the Armed Forces.
- **Emergency Services:** Police, Fire, Ambulance, and other service personnel are welcomed as **Honorary Members**.
- **Family Members:** While not eligible for membership, family members are warmly invited to attend meetings, events, and commemorations as guests.

Our group stands on the values of **respect, remembrance, and camaraderie**.

**Lest We Forget.**



### A Veteran's Tale

Corporal AT Dean

2/3 Ordinance 22nd Brigade, 8th Division AIF

#### Part 3

We could see your friends The Japanese plainly across the Straits of Johore and they could likewise see us with the use of binoculars. It was the peace before the storm, with Japanese aircraft now and again to let us know we were not forgotten. Quite a strange experience.

Life at Nee Soon was good, swimming pool, sports facilities, gym etc. We took over a big rubber factory and turned it into our own Australian Base Ordinance area. The English base in Singapore was the boss cocky and they had their officers visit us now and again to see that we were not having trouble. We were the only AIF troops on the island, our unit of fifty-two soldiers. All other AIF troops were sent up north into Malaya for training. We still had our PT route marches etc to keep us fit. I digress here — our first route march was to Johore Bahru and back. Twenty-six miles all told and at the first Kampong we came to the native women reached out and took the doormats in. Our Major Geo McKay called halt, and told us to take heed and as our reputation had preceded us and to please take notice. It was nice to have a commander with a sense of humour. It was a week or two before we got to see Singapore and when we did it was quite an experience. Over the next twelve months a few things happened and I will relate as many as I can remember. Nee Soon was just a one street village, was mostly Chinese but also a scattering of every other eastern nation and all seemingly nice people. We learned later that underneath they were a shade different. They had the usual fifth column but we were too dumb and innocent to see it.

We did not have a lot of spare time with daily work in the depot and then there was guard duties at night, then your usual parades and PT. We usually had weekends free and open leave outside of this, which was not a great deal. The parades were usually a visit by the big brass of Base Ordinance in Singapore, which was British Army. One occasion on such a visit the officer in charge was a Colonel McViddy and he was a short gentleman with a large stomach (alcohol) and we had a sergeant named Cyril Roberts and the first time Cyril saw him he

walked up to him, no pomp or ceremony, and tapped him on the stomach and said "that cost a few quid to put that there". Cyril was exactly the same build. Every visit after his first question was "Where is the little Sergeant?" We never expected that outcome.

Now and again, we went into see Singapore but on army wages bus fare and the like kept you down to maybe a visit a week. Got a laugh on one occasion coming back to camp on a piggy bus (a small bus with four seats across the back and about ten other seats. Halfway back along Thompson Road a young Chinese lass and her husband got on the bus. He was carrying the baby and, although there was a language barrier, you could tell at a glance that he objected to carrying the baby. There were four RAAF in the back seats and one of them called out "*Give him a clip on the ear Sister*". She turned round and said in perfect English "I will if he does not shut up." From then on it was very quiet in the bus.

Language is one thing that a lot of our boys realized could get you into trouble. Much later, most of the population could speak English even the Malay Police had a red tag to denote their knowledge (our boys learnt the hard way especially with the Nippon.

Time marched on and about August we were shifted to be part of the big lease ordinance of the British Army at Alexandria (Singapore). A big depot with roads and railway lines through it and each department a depot in itself and we were under English Officers mostly. It was a different kettle of fish. Our accommodation was Attap (a kind of palm) huts, Indian charpoy bed — a wooden frame with a cord mattress, no boys to do our chores and start to use your meal tin and cup (our laundry was still looked after.) It did not take us long to get used to it, and one NCO had to maintain the cleanliness of each hut (I drew the short straw for our hut). Inspection by the orderly officer every morning and they didn't take an excuse and I did not win the popular NCO contest either. Everything went well for a while and in September and November we were put on alert with no leave as Japan was starting to stir things up and no leave was granted over that period and so came the beginning of December and we were beginning to believe that everything was okay. At 3am on the morning of the eighth of the month we were awakened by a lot of ack ack

noise and exploding mines and bomb blasts and we all said the Pom are putting on a really good practise this time (?) and it all quietened down after about half an hour and we all went back to our cots only to realize a few hours later that the war in the far east had sneaked up on us.

From there on it was a different life. Air raids in the daytime and on moonlight nights concentrating on the airdromes on the Island was, at first, the Jap's main function and there were four of them over at Sembawang (3 miles from Nee Soon) was the only RAAF station, while Seletar and Tengah on the west coast were British, and Kallang was the flying boat terminal in the east of Singapore. We used to get newspapers from Australia now and again at Kallang. Sembawang was an air drome we used to visit now and again. Our boys used to get joy flights by courtesy of the RAAF until one day during a big parade there a Tiger Moth flew over and a slouch hat landed on the ground. Routine orders next day stated no more army personnel in RAAF aircraft. How, in heavens name, could anybody be wearing such a hat in an aircraft? (Only an Australian but that was before the war when such a thing was possible). Life changed. Now we were digging slit trenches, puffing up barriers, not having as many coolies to do a lot of the work we were doing now. Steel helmets and gas masks were the order of the day and total black out every night.

**I'm so old I remember  
multiplication was  
called "Times Tables"**

### **In Memory of a Fallen Comrade: A Call for Awareness and Preparation**

By Heath Mason

It is with a heavy heart that we mark the loss of our fellow soldier, a brother-in-arms, and a dear friend, who tragically passed away from cancer at the young age of 48. His passing is a stark reminder that life is precious, fleeting, and sometimes brutally unfair. While we honour his memory and the sacrifices he made during his service, it is equally important to reflect on the lessons his untimely death teaches us – lessons

about health, preparedness, and the importance of taking action while we still can.

Cancer does not discriminate. It strikes regardless of age, fitness, or profession. Our comrade was someone who many of us would have thought was in the prime of his life. Yet, despite his strength, resilience, and years of military training, this illness claimed him far too soon. While we can never completely prevent the randomness of life, there are steps we can take to reduce the risks we face, and ensure that our families are protected no matter what happens.

### **The Importance of Annual Health Checks**

One of the most critical lessons we can learn from this tragedy is the importance of regular health screenings. Annual health checks are more than just a box to tick – they are an opportunity to catch issues early, when they are most treatable. Conditions like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes often develop silently, without obvious symptoms until they reach a dangerous stage.

Speaking to your GP about your health is not a sign of weakness, nor is it a waste of time. It is a demonstration of responsibility – not just to yourself, but to your family and loved ones. Routine check-ups can include blood tests, cancer screenings, and other preventative measures tailored to your age, gender, and family history.

For men in their middle ages, many cancers – including prostate, colorectal, and skin cancers – can be detected early through these screenings. Early detection drastically increases survival rates. While we cannot guarantee outcomes, we can give ourselves the best chance to fight and survive.

To honour the memory of our fallen comrade, let this serve as a reminder to all our members: do not wait until you feel unwell. Schedule that annual check-up. Talk honestly with your GP about your family history, lifestyle, and concerns. Your life could very well depend on it.

### **The Unseen Battle: Preparing for the Unexpected**

Another critical lesson, one that often goes overlooked, is the importance of having a will. Many people assume that wills are only for the elderly or those with significant assets. Nothing could be further from the truth. Life is unpredictable. Accidents, sudden illnesses, or



unexpected events can occur at any age. Having a will ensures that your wishes are respected, your family is protected, and the burden of legal uncertainty is lifted from those you leave behind.

For someone in their 40s or 50s, it might feel premature to think about death or estate planning, but planning ahead is an act of care. A properly structured will can provide clarity about guardianship for children, the distribution of assets, and your personal wishes for your final arrangements. Without one, your family may face unnecessary stress, delays, and financial uncertainty during an already difficult time.

Middle-aged adults, particularly those with dependents or significant responsibilities, should consider their will as part of their overall life strategy – alongside health checks, insurance, and financial planning. It's not a morbid task; it's a responsible one. It's a final act of service to those who depend on you.

### **Lessons from Service: Duty Beyond the Uniform**

Our comrade's life was defined by service – to his country, to his mates, and to the ideals we all share. Yet, even those who are disciplined and accustomed to planning for every eventuality can fall victim to the silent threats of illness or unforeseen circumstances. His story reminds us that duty does not end with our service. Duty extends to our health, our families, and our future.

By embracing regular medical check-ups and ensuring proper legal arrangements like a will, we honour not only our own lives but also the sacrifices of those who fought beside us. We extend the same care and protection to our loved ones that we afforded our fellow soldiers on the battlefield.

### **Practical Steps for Prevention and Preparation**

1. **Schedule Regular Health Checks:** Make an appointment with your GP for an annual check-up. Discuss screenings appropriate for your age, including blood tests, cancer checks, and lifestyle assessments.
2. **Know Your Family History:** Many cancers and other diseases have hereditary components. Understanding

your risks allows your GP to tailor your screenings.

3. **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** Exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet, and avoid excessive alcohol and tobacco. While it cannot eliminate risk entirely, it significantly reduces it.
4. **Create or Update Your Will:** Regardless of age, everyone should have a legally valid will. Review it every few years or after major life events (marriage, children, significant assets).
5. **Consider Life Insurance and Superannuation Nominees:** These financial measures can provide critical support for your loved ones in the event of your untimely passing.
6. **Communicate with Family:** Let your loved ones know your wishes regarding medical care, end-of-life arrangements, and estate matters. Transparency reduces confusion and stress during difficult times.

### **Local Resources in Southport for Will Preparation**

For members in Southport seeking to arrange or update their will, several reputable services can assist:

- **LegalVision** – Online and in-person consultations for wills, estates, and general legal advice.
- **Slater and Gordon Lawyers** – Established legal firm offering estate planning services.
- **Queensland Legal Aid** – Provides guidance and assistance for will preparation, particularly for those on lower incomes.
- **Gold Coast Legal Services** – Local boutique firm specializing in wills and estates.
- **Southport Community Legal Centre** – Offers affordable advice and support for basic will preparation.
- **EzyWills** – Quick, simple, and legally compliant will preparation service.

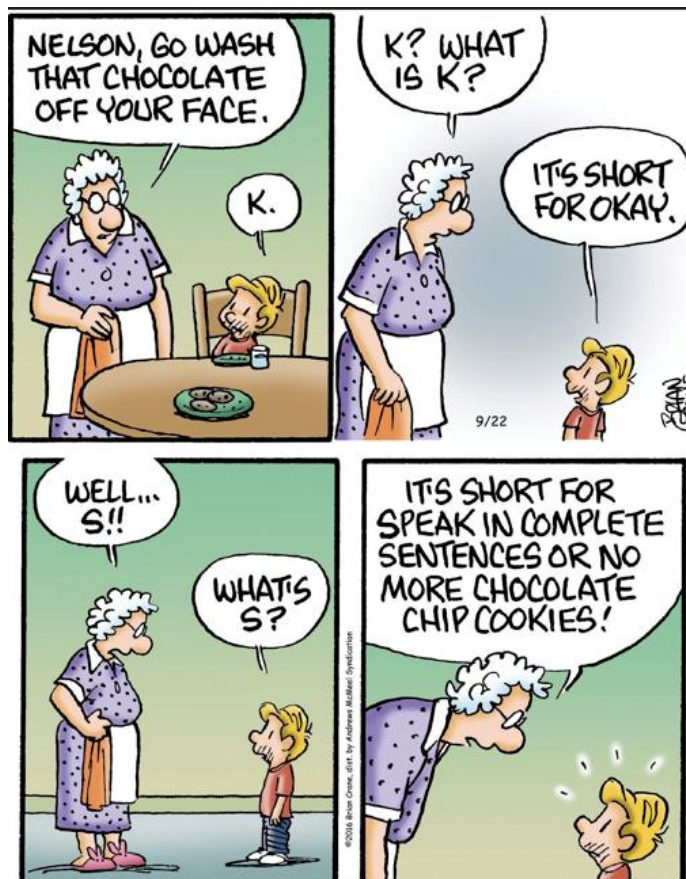
### **A Call to Action**

In remembering our comrade, we are reminded that life is precious, unpredictable, and sometimes cruel. But we can take proactive

steps to protect ourselves and our families. Regular health checks, early discussions with your GP, and having a will are not just administrative tasks – they are acts of courage and foresight.

We honour those we have lost not only by remembering them but by taking their lessons to heart. Let the memory of our fallen brother inspire us to live responsibly, plan wisely, and care deeply for the people we love.

Do not wait for a tragedy to remind you. Schedule that check-up. Speak to your GP. Draft your will. Take action today – because life is precious, and preparation is love in action.



### New Crown for ADF Crests

It took a little while to get done but the three branches of the ADF have now released their new crests with the King's Crown.



### VISA REJECTED!

I decided to travel to the USA.

At the embassy for the visa interview:

**Officer:** Where to in the US?

**Me:** San Jose.

**Officer:** It's pronounced as San Hosey. J is pronounced as H in the US.

**Me:** Oh. Okay.

**Officer:** So how long do you plan to be in the US?

**Me:** From Hanuary to Hune or Huly.

**VISA REJECTED!**



## HMAS DIAMANTIA II VISITS THE GOLD COAST



**HMAS Diamantina II**

The HMAS Diamantina (II), a modern Huon-class minehunter, visited the Gold Coast in September 2025, docking at the Southport Yacht Club. This was the ship's first visit, marked by events like a special Sunset Ceremony for the public. The previous vessel, the River-Class frigate HMAS Diamantina (I), is now a museum ship permanently berthed in Brisbane.



**HMAS Diamantina (II) at the Gold Coast**

**Vessel:** Huon-class minehunter, which visited in September 2025.

**Location:** Docked at the Southport Yacht Club's Mega Yacht Berth in Main Beach.

**Significance:** This was the ship's first visit to the Gold Coast.

**Events:** The visit included a special public Sunset Ceremony.



**HMAS Diamantina (I) in Brisbane**

**Vessel:** River-class frigate that served during and after World War II.

**Current status:** It is now a museum ship permanently dry-berthed at the Queensland Maritime Museum in Brisbane.

### 2026 Quarterly Meeting Dates

| AGM                               | Sunday, 22 Feb 26 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Quarterly General                 | Sunday, 24 May 26 |
| Quarterly General                 | Sunday, 23 Aug 26 |
| Quarterly General                 | Sunday, 22 Nov 26 |
| All meetings commence at 10:30 am |                   |

| Position         | Year of AGM |      |      |
|------------------|-------------|------|------|
|                  | 2028        | 2026 | 2027 |
| President        |             |      |      |
| Deputy President |             |      |      |
| Secretary        |             |      |      |
| Treasurer        |             |      |      |
| Director 1       |             |      |      |
| Director 2       |             |      |      |
| Director 3       |             |      |      |
| Director 4       |             |      |      |
| Director 5       |             |      |      |
| Director 6       |             |      |      |



"You here again, Carole?!"



"I hope it tastes good. It's for the cat."

**SOUTHPORT BOWLS CLUB**

# Breakfast

**SATURDAY  
& SUNDAY  
FROM 8AM**

[www.theclubsouthport.com.au](http://www.theclubsouthport.com.au)  
5531 2626

### Current Board Members

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Craig Thomas       | <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>       |
| John Riebeling     | <b>Director 2</b>       |
| Geoff Young        | <b>Director 3</b>       |
| Kevin Lloyd-Thomas | <b>Director 4</b>       |
| Sandra Riebeling   | <b>Director 5</b>       |
| Heath Mason        | <b>Director 6</b>       |

**Southport RSL Sub-Branch Inc.**  
**Corner Marine Parade & Queen Street**  
**PO Box 31**  
**SOUTHPORT BC QLD 4215**  
**T 0484 280 750**  
**E [secretary@southport.rslqld.net.au](mailto:secretary@southport.rslqld.net.au)**  
**W [www.southportrsl.org](http://www.southportrsl.org)**

**Editor:** John Riebeling  
**Contributors:** AT Dean  
S Bloxham OAM  
H Mason  
C Thomas

**Sponsors:** Ms **Angie Bell MP**, Federal  
Member for Moncrieff (**Printing**)  
  
Mr **Rob Molhoek MP**, State  
Member for Southport (**Mail**)