



Pittwater RSL Sub-Branch Newsletter



October 2022 - Number 33

Pittwater RSL Sub-Branch

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Current Membership: 109

The next Newsletter will be published in January 2023.

Pittwater RSL Club

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In this Issue	Page
President's Report	1+2
Vale Queen Elizabeth II	1
Vale	2
Interviews	3
This Day in History	4
New kitchen	4
Member Profile	5
Book Review	5
Birthdays	6
Temora Aviation Museum	6
New Members	7
Vietnam Veterans' Day	7
Daylight Saving	7
On the Horizon	8
Executive Committee	8

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Member,

I have now returned to the office, post shoulder surgery, and I would like to thank the Sub-Branch for the beautiful flowers and card.

August and September have been very busy periods encompassing the following.

The Royal Commission into the Defence and Veterans Suicide is ongoing. The Interim Report was released on 11 August 2022, and there were 13 key recommendations –

1. Simplify and harmonise veteran compensation and rehabilitation legislation
2. Eliminate the DVA claims backlog
3. Improve the administration of the claims system
4. Have the DVA to provide advice on its funding needs
5. Remove the DVA Average Staffing Level Cap
6. Increase protections for persons engaging with this Royal Commission
7. Provide exemptions from parliamentary privilege
8. Limit public interest immunity claims
9. Improve administrative release of information
10. Co-design information to increase awareness of redactions for access requests
11. Embed trauma-informed practices for information access
12. Encourage up-to-date consent for information access
13. Co-design education on information access mechanisms

Continued on Page 2

Vale Queen Elizabeth II

21 April 1926 - 08 September 2022



President's Report continued

Vale Julien Vanslambrouck. Due to my recent operation, sadly, I could not attend Julien's funeral service on Friday 15 July at the War Vets Chapel in Narrabeen to conduct our usual RSL Funeral Tribute.

However, Bob Wood and Sandra May represented our Sub-Branch with about 60 family and friends in attendance. Everyone was given our Funeral Tribute, detailing Julien's war service. In this Newsletter, Sandra has repeated his profile (page 3) which appeared in our Living Treasures Souvenir produced in Oct 2016, and has also included an interview with Julien.

Sunday 14 August – Vietnam Veterans' Day Northern Group Commemorative Service at Palm Beach RSL Sub-Branch. A big thank you to Vietnam Veteran Mark Ferguson OAM for another thoughtful service.

On Thursday 18 August – Long Tan Day, Bob Wood attended the Martin Place Commemoration with guest speaker Gary McKay delivering the Commemorative Service.

Also on this day, Sandra May and myself attended the 80th Commemorative Service for Pathfinders Bomber Command. Unfortunately, Darren Crabb was unable to attend as he was overseas, and I was lucky enough to have his spot. This Service was held at the Royal Automobile Club with a varied group of current and ex-RAAF members and family members of the Bomber Command. I personally enjoyed the day as I was able to catch up with a few mates from the RAAF.

On Thursday 08 September, Queen Elizabeth II passed away. The Club observed the 10 days of mourning. The protocol is to leave the Queen's portrait in prominent places with a black ribbon draped across the corner, until the protocol cessation is decreed by King Charles III.

I had the opportunity of meeting Dr Sophie Scamps MP in Mona Vale, and she alerted me to the Certificates of Appreciation that can be obtained for deserving members. The requirements are someone that has been in Operational Service, Border Control or on Peace Keeping Missions. Eligibility covers members from WW2 until today. I am currently contacting eligible members to see if they would like a Certificate of Appreciation.

WW2 POW Memorial Unveiling – Vision by Wal Williams OAM

On Friday 14 October 2022, you are invited to attend this Memorial unveiling. The Service will commence at 10:00am at Mona Vale Headland (Robert Dunn Reserve) Narrabeen Park Parade, Mona Vale NSW.

This Service is a collaboration between The Hon. David Elliott MP – previously NSW Minister for Veterans; The Hon. Rob Stokes MP – Member for Pittwater; Cr Michael Regan, Mayor, Northern Beaches Council and Ms Deborah Carter – President Pittwater RSL Sub-Branch.

A memorial Plinth will be unveiled to commemorate the Australian Prisoners of War, Nurses from Singapore, Nurses and civilian internees from Rabaul, and casualties on hospital ships, who lost their lives at sea in the South Pacific at the hands of the Japanese. The realisation of this poignant Plinth has been a post WW2 crusade for Wal. Four days before his passing in June this year, Wal dictated the words that will now appear on the Plinth.

A Memorial Seat will also be dedicated to the late Wal Williams OAM in recognition of his drive to have the Memorial installed. Both will be north facing so people can see and hear the ocean.

After the Service concludes at 10:30am, you are welcome to attend the Pittwater Club Distillery for light refreshments.

We look forward to seeing you on Remembrance Day, Friday 11 November at the Lower Cenotaph.

Lest We Forget
Regards,



Deborah Carter

Deborah Carter
President



VALE

With great sadness, we report the passing of our former Sub-Branch Member

Julien Vanslambrouck

WW2 Belgian Army

Service No. 46/23405

27 July 1926 - 03 July 2022

and

Lt. Col. John Moore OAM RFD ED Retd

Service No. 3156188

National Executive & NSW Deputy Chairman
Reserve Forces Day Council (Army Reservist)

04 July 1942 - 16 September 2022

LEST WE FORGET

Julien was a true gentleman, and my thoughts were confirmed during his funeral service. He was also a very happy man with a large family. His wife, Paula, died in July 2014. They had two children, Adrian and Yolanda; Kerry, his daughter in law, and Colin, his son in law. He had 8 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

The following is an interview by Helen Johnston which appeared in the War Vets Narrabeen Newsletter in October 2016.



I was born in Zedelgem in West Flanders (Belgium) about five kilometres from Passchendaele, and I was just fourteen when the war broke out. I remember the Germans coming through and the machine guns advancing up the streets.

In 1944 when I finished my studies in mechanical engineering, I received both a Diploma and a letter from the Gestapo ordering me to present myself for service. After receiving my orders, which was to go to Germany to work in a factory, my father and I decided instead that I would go into hiding. It was a gamble, but we knew the Allies were going to land soon and I didn't want to be working for the Germans when they did. So I went into hiding in the countryside in the farmhouse of my father's friends for six months or so. Every time the dogs barked, I would hide, but the Gestapo didn't come looking. Eventually we were liberated and the gamble paid off.

After the war, I joined the Army, which was in great need of soldiers because Belgium was wary of Stalin's intentions. I was sent to Germany to help get the essential services moving - railways, post offices, shipping - in order for the country to recover. Germany, as you can imagine, was all bombed out and the living conditions for its people were shocking. I was posted in a place called Wessel on the Rhine, where I was harbour master and in charge of everything being shipped in and out, mainly coal.

In 1947 I was discharged from the Army and I wanted to get away and see the world, so I decided to head to Australia - the land of sweeping plains. I arrived in Melbourne with five pounds in my pocket, no job and no English. Eventually, through the kindness of strangers, I found work and lodgings and slowly started to learn the language thanks to comic books.

In search of a warmer climate, I moved to Queensland, working on banana plantations and sugar mills and eventually made my way back to Sydney where I worked for Bonds installing machinery.

From there I moved to New Guinea as a supervisor in a factory, and I met Paula, who became my wonderful wife. Our two children were both born there but when they reached school age returned to Australia, to Sydney, where I landed a job at Kellogg's. I worked for Kellogg's for the rest of my working life, for many years as the head of manufacturing for Asia, Africa, New Zealand and Australia. I virtually lived on a plane. I had a marvellous marriage and we all moved into a National Trust terrace house in Redfern so that Paula was close to restaurants, theatres and concert venues which she enjoyed with her friends while I was away. She loved music, and was an accomplished musician.

The effect of my job took its toll on my health, and at 60 years my doctor encouraged me to retire. We moved to Goulburn where I built a stone house by hand on a large block of land. That house saved my life and set me up for a long and healthy retirement. At the start, I was a soft bodied executive on medication. By the finish I was fit, happy and healthy. I also became very involved in the health sector via St Vincent de Paul, the southern area health service and the hospital. In 2009, Paula and I moved to War Vets Narrabeen to be closer to family. We were very happy and involved, especially Paula who used to play the piano in the care homes. Sadly Paula passed away in 2014. These days I keep myself busy helping at the pool, museum with St Vincent de Paul and teaching scripture.

I get great satisfaction from helping others, especially in a country which gave a young, almost penniless immigrant, so much opportunity.

The following article was written by Julien and appeared in our Living Treasurers Souvenir, 09 Oct 2016.



JULIEN VANSLAMBROUCK - 27 July 1926

**Service No. 46/23405
Belgian Army - Private**

I was born near Passchendaele, Belgium, and I was 14 when WW2 started.

At 15, I went to a Mechanical Engineering school and graduated in 1944. However, as Germany occupied Belgium, I was summoned by the Gestapo and told that I would soon be sent to Germany as a labourer in an aircraft factory.

My Father knew that the invasion of Europe was about to happen so he told me not to show up for the Gestapo deportation. For their safety I did not tell any of my family, but I hid in a family friend's farm until we were liberated by Canadian troops at the end of 1944. If I had been found we would have all been shot.

At the end of the war, looking for work, I enlisted in the Belgian Army. Because I could understand a little German and was an Engineer, I was put in a special unit and sent to Cologne in the British sector. We were tasked to help rebuild the German service infrastructure. I worked on the logistics of truck transport from Cherbourg to Czechoslovakia, Railways and was harbour master at Wessel on the Rhine monitoring the loading of coal barges. This unit was disbanded in 1948.

I worked almost two years in Germany and was discharged in 1947. I wanted to get away from the Army and the possibility of being sent to the Belgian Congo, so I boarded the Italian boat 'Cyrenia' and made the 30 day trip to Melbourne in 1949.

I embarked on a new adventure, arriving in Australia not knowing any English.

October

03, 1992 **Dedication, Australian Vietnam Veterans' National Memorial.** The Vietnam Veterans' National Memorial, Anzac Parade, Canberra, was opened by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Paul Keating, MP, and honours those Australians who served and died in the war in Vietnam.

13, 1969 **HMAS Brisbane returns to Sydney.** This was the end of the Brisbane's first deployment to Vietnam. A turret from HMAS *Brisbane* is on display outside the Memorial.



19, 1945 **War Widow's Guild of Australia founded.** The guild's first president was Mrs Jessie Vasey, widow of Major General G.A. Vasey. It is still an active organisation today. Major General Vasey was killed in an aircraft accident near Cairns while returning to operational service.

November

02, 1942 **Kokoda airstrip re-occupied.** The capture of Kokoda, New Guinea, and its airstrip enabled the Australian advance across the Owen Stanley Range to continue.

18, 1916 **Somme campaign ends.** After four months and more than 1,200,000 casualties on both sides, General Douglas Haig calls off the Somme offensive.

27, 1939 **Inauguration of the Empire Air Training Scheme.** Over 37,000 Australian airmen trained under the scheme, in Australia, Canada and Rhodesia, one of the Commonwealth's greatest achievements in war time.

December

05, 1939 **First official RAAF operation of the Second World War.** A Sunderland aircraft of No. 10 Squadron RAAF, flew on the first official RAAF operation of the Second World War. This was the beginning of six years of war for 10 Squadron, which flew as part of RAF Coastal Command continuously against U-boats in the battle of the Atlantic.

09, 1917 **Jerusalem occupied by the Desert Mounted Corps.** The capture of Jerusalem, a city significant for Christians, Jews and Muslims, was one of the triumphs for British empire forces in the Middle East in 1917.

20, 1915 **Last Australian troops evacuated from Gallipoli.** The evacuation of Gallipoli, largely planned by Brigadier General C.B.B. White, was a triumph of careful planning and bold execution.



Sub-Branch Office New Kitchen

New



The office kitchen has been well overdue for a facelift for the last few years. The sink and shelves were in a timber cupboard that was rotting, splintering and extremely unhygienic. The fridge also lived in a cupboard. This cupboard now houses many archived folders.

This was meant to happen mid-2021, but with many Covid lockdowns, it was further delayed.

The new kitchen was finally installed late July 2022.

Thanks to everyone involved - Leigh Arnold, Jason Manning, Deborah Carter, Graeme Lee, and to Sandra May who made sure everything was done to the new plans and design choices.

A big thank you to our installers, Nathan Gibson, the Club's carpenter and Adam Garrick, a Club Bowler and a carpenter, for constructing the new kitchen in two days!

Old



Brett Mace - Member Profile



I joined the Navy in 1977 as a 15-year-old Junior Recruit at HMAS Leeuwin before leaving after 14 years' service in 1991 as a Leading Seaman Physical Training Instructor. During my time in the Navy, I enjoyed postings to HMAS Cerberus (x2), Albatross, Derwent, Creswell, Brisbane (x2), Penguin, Watson and Kuttabul.

After leaving the Navy, I formed Sports Management Companies which specialised in event management and coaching which included the formation of STEAM Sports - a multi-sport training organisation. Other roles included Manager of Australian Triathlon World Championship Teams (1995-98), the development of a sports program for street kids in Sydney's Kings Cross, along with the creation of the NSW Triathlon Club Championships. I am also a founding partner and director in X-Tri Australia, a multi sports events company which held the licence and developed Canberra & Yeppoon Half Ironman events.

From 2001, I re-located to Chennai, India to undertake the role as Head Coach and Development Manager for the Indian Triathlon Federation and to develop the Indian Triathlon Academy. This role also included race director for the 2003 Asian Triathlon Championships, held in Chennai. On leaving India in 2005, I commenced a role with the world governing body, The International Triathlon Union (ITU) facilitating the development of high-

performance sport programs in Asia and the Pacific.

In 2006, I was appointed High Performance Manager for Equestrian Australia, a role I held until February 2013 where in this time I led two successful Olympic and one Paralympic campaign that achieved a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and a gold medal at the 2012 London Paralympics. As Assistant Chef de Mission in 2006 and Chef de Mission in 2010 at the World Equestrian Championships, the teams achieved gold, silver and bronze world championship medals.

I am currently the Chief Executive Officer with the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) having been in this role since May 2013. During this time, I have led a national transformation of the organisation through the redevelopment of the operational and governance structures culminating with the approval of a Professional Standards Scheme for Building Surveyors approved in legislation in all States and Territories on 01 July 2021.

In February 2019, I was appointed as the inaugural Chair of Equine Pathways Australia, a national charitable not-for-profit organisation that provides people with disabilities, whether congenital or acquired through accident or illness, access to equine pursuits both vocationally and as athletes (at both amateur and elite levels) that enriches their lives and the lives of their supporters and families. This is a voluntary role.

www.equinepathways.org.au

Book Review

Bob Wood

"A Hundred Miles as the Crow Flies"

Author: Ralph Churches

DID YOU KNOW that the largest single break-out by POWs in Europe during World War II was instigated and led by an Australian Lance Corporal in 1944?

I'll bet you didn't. It was never publicized and the participants were sworn to secrecy. It was only in 1984 when SBS TV were planning to write a TV episode about the escape that the leader of the escape decided to write his story which he had to publish himself in 1995 because no other publisher was interested.

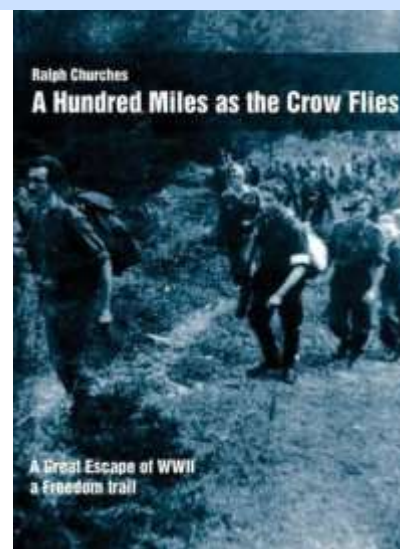
Ralph Churches was a South Australian (aka a 'crow eater', hence his nickname as 'The Crow') who served in the 2/48 Battalion and on his Corps HQ and was captured by the Germans in Greece, by which time he had been promoted to Lance Corporal. He was held as a POW in southern Austria and Slovenia, always with the intention of escaping, if he could.

The prisoners were forced to labour on building railway lines in this area. He must have had a flair for languages because he taught himself German and acted as a go-between for the prisoners with their German guards. Eventually, in 1944, he made plans with an English fellow-prisoner, Les Laws, to escape, provided that they could establish contact with the Yugoslav partisans. This contact was eventually achieved and their proposed escape party grew from two to eight. After slipping away to connect up with the partisans it was decided that the next day they would go back and, with the partisans' help, "spring" the whole of their work gang. Altogether over 100 men were liberated from their captors and started a long, overland trek through rugged terrain to link up with allied officers who were working with the partisans.

Guided by teams of partisans, the march took about two weeks and they covered over 150 miles (100 miles as the crow flies) to reach a village called Semich in Croatia where the allies had a secret landing strip to fly in supplies to Tito's partisans and fly out seriously wounded fighters. Throughout this journey they were constantly aware that they were in German occupied territory and they were, at one stage, ambushed by Germans and suffered some casualties. All-in-all 98 of them made it to Semich and, after some days of delay, were flown to Southern Italy. From there, the poms went back to Blighty, the French went home to France and the Aussies and Kiwis sailed home across the Indian Ocean.

Ralph finished the war as a Sargent and went back to work, initially in the bank. He was awarded the BEM by the King. The only reason that I know anything about this and have a copy of the book, is that Ralph's daughter, Bev, is a neighbour of mine.

This is truly an amazing true story, hitherto unheard of. Since 1985 it has been the subject of newspaper stories, TV documentaries and, of course, this book; but most people know nothing about it.





October - November - December

Sandra May-Crabb



OCTOBER

John Roxburgh	08
Joseph Tiernan	13
Peter Williams	15
James Roche	19
Ed Koeppen	26
Zamri Burns	27
Joe Crumlin OAM	29

NOVEMBER

Paul Batson	01
Margaret Tierney	07
Carolyn Noble	08
Aldo Sirotic	17
Jonathon Conrad	20
Keith Stevens	27

DECEMBER

Phil Lewis	01
Joseph Chase-Berry	01
Sandra Langfield	04
John Faul	05
Scott Johnston	07
Robert Wood	10

DECEMBER

Andy Perry	11
John Thorby	11
Brian Sargeson	15
Dennis De Silva	15
Chris Christensen	17
Stan Juracich	25
Ted Blackwood	30

TEMORA AVIATION MUSEUM - by an unbiased Editor!

Sandra

For those not familiar with this world class Museum's history, this is a brief background to its connection with the RAAF in WW2.

Temora has a rich and noteworthy aviation history having been home to the No. 10 Elementary Flying Training School (10 EFTS) set up by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in May 1941. No 10 EFTS was the largest and longest lived of the flying schools established under the Empire Air Training Scheme during World War Two.

Throughout WW2 more than 10,000 personnel were involved at the school with upwards of 2,400 pilots being trained. At its peak the unit contained a total of 97 de Havilland Tiger Moth aircraft. Four satellite airfields were set up around the Temora district to cope with the demand to train RAAF pilots.

No 10 EFTS ceased operation on 28th February 1946 – making it the last WW2 flying school to close. Since then, Temora has continued its aviation heritage, becoming the preferred airfield for a growing number of sport aviation activities including gliding, parachuting, aerobatics, ultra-light aircraft operations and model aircraft.

When Sydney businessman David Lowy AM expressed interest in establishing an aviation museum dedicated to aircraft and pilots who had defended Australia, Temora Aerodrome had all the attributes – rich in aviation history, hospitable people, an encouraging and co-operative local council, good weather, flat terrain and uncontrolled air space below 20,000 feet.

The Temora Aviation Museum was incorporated in late 1999, construction of the facilities then commenced and a Governing Committee made up of a group of experienced and diverse people was formed. The first hangar was completed in February 2000 and David Lowy AM donated the initial aircraft for the collection. The Museum was opened for public viewing in June 2000. In 2020, David donated ten (10) aircraft to the RAAF.

Darren Crabb, our Sub-Branch member and Pittwater RSL Club Senior Vice President, met David during early 1999. Later that year, David invited Darren to be his personal pilot worldwide. David also appointed Darren as Director of Flight Operations at Temora Aviation Museum. Darren held this post until 2014, when he stepped aside to let someone else take the reins.

Darren still flies with the Lowy Group worldwide, and is still involved with the Museum as Air Boss for major air shows, such as Warbirds Downunder, which will be on 15 and 16 October this year. <https://aviationmuseum.com.au/> Unfortunately, we were advised on 28 September that this Air Show has now been cancelled due to flooding in the entire surrounding areas of the aerodrome, precluding all necessary infrastructure that was due to be set up, starting two weeks before the Air Show.



C.1942

Tiger Moths surround the Base

New Sub-Branch Members, and a new Club employee

Welcome to two new Affiliate Members - Gaye and John Kaye. You may have already met them, as both are Club members and attend most of our Commemorative Services.

John has also taken many photographs for us. He is also the voiceover for the Ode, which is broadcast in the RSL at 6pm every night.

Welcome to new Service Member, Tom Kelsey, GNR 9th REGT.



Welcome to Zara Bennett, PA to Jason Manning, Pittwater Club CEO. Zara commenced on 30 August, and will be available in the office from Monday to Thursday.

Recently the Sub-Branch created a new 2 page document detailing the Sub-Branch's history and services provided to our Members and the community. Our intention is to give each new Club employee a copy of this document to fully appreciate what the Sub-Branch stands for, and why we exist.

Zara was the first new Club employee to receive this document.

Vietnam Veterans' Day



Martin Place Service on 18 August 2022

Palm Beach RSL Club held a Service for Vietnam Veterans' Day (Northern) on Sunday 14 August 2022.

Pictured left are Bernie O'Neill, Gary Everitt, John Ciccolini and Ted Curtis.

One of our new wreaths, top left, was presented to Palm Beach RSL Club



DAYLIGHT SAVING STARTS - CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS

On Sunday 02 October 2022 at 02:00am
Clocks will be turned FORWARD one hour



General

Mission

Providing for the well-being, care, compensation and commemoration of all Service personnel, especially those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

We engage with the general community promoting the patriotic spirit of ANZAC, providing information on our activities, and encouraging membership of, and interaction with, the Sub-Branch and their families.

50 Year Certificate

If you have been a Sub-Branch Member, continuously of any Branch, for longer than 50 years, please contact Deborah as soon as possible. Thank you.

Some helpful website links...

If you are feeling stressed and need someone to talk to, we highly recommend:

<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/suicide-intervention>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

<https://www.ruok.org.au/>

Welfare

Our Welfare and Membership Officer can assist you with enquiries regarding war pensions, obtaining service records, membership eligibility and any other queries you may have.

Please contact Deborah Carter on 8401 0785, or send an email to: pittwaterrslsubbranch@gmail.com

If you know of any Commonwealth service member, regardless of RSL affiliation, the Sub-Branch can arrange an RSL tribute.

We Would Like Your Profile

Many members have already provided their profiles. 300+ words about your career would make your Editor very happy! Please email your copy to Sandra. smay44@bigpond.net.au Thank you.

Progress Report from RSL NSW: Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Hearings

At every General Meeting we always report on Circulars and Communique we have received from RSL NSW Head Office. These are always available to read in the Sub-Branch office. However, we thought you may want to read a small excerpt from the recent report dated 14 July 2022.

"If you are thinking about testifying at a hearing, require support after listening to hearings or media coverage, or any other kind of help, the RSL NSW Royal Commission Office can provide support or direct you to the appropriate support for your needs. The Office's contact details are submissions@rslnsw.org.au or 0499 441 291. If you, or someone you know, needs mental health support, you can contact:

- ♦ Lifeline Australia - 13 11 14
- ♦ Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467
- ♦ Open Arms - 1800 011 046 (current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families are able to seek this free and confidential support)
- ♦ ADF Mental Health All-hours Support Line - 1800 628 036 (for current serving ADF personnel and their families)
- ♦ Safe Zone Support - 1800 142 072 (for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families). When you call Safe Zone Support, you do not need to identify yourself if you do not wish to.

ON THE HORIZON October, November, December



Sunday 09 October	10:30am	General Meeting	The Meeting Place
Friday 14 October	10:00am	WW2 Lost At Sea Commemoration	Mona Vale Headland, (Robert Dunn Reserve)
Tuesday 08 November	09:00am	Honour Our Fallen	Mona Vale Cemetery
Friday 11 November	10:15am	Remembrance Day Service (undercover car park)	Form up at carpark entrance
Friday 11 November	12:00pm	Lunch	Distillery
Sunday 13 November	10:30am	General Meeting	The Meeting Place
Sunday 11 December	10:30am	General Meeting	The Meeting Place
Sunday 11 December	12:00pm	Christmas Lunch	Venue to be advised

Executive Committee - Contact Numbers

Deborah Carter	President	0414 470 913
Terry Jones	Vice President	0466 892 771
Graeme Lee	Secretary	0490 014 693
Bob Wood	Treasurer	0409 712 349
Support Team		
Sandra May-Crabb	Newsletter Editor, Office Manager	0417 944 244
Inese Carrodus	Office Assistant	0449 525 316

