



Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch



Standfast 2025

Issue 273

Nov 2025

13 Budgen Avenue

Alstonville NSW 2477

Email: AlstonvilleSB@rslnsw.org.au

www.alstonvillersubbranch.org.au

PHONE/FAX 02 6628 6156

PO Box 692 ALSTONVILLE NSW 2477

FOR YOUR DIARY:

Next sub-Branch meeting 8th
November @ 1000 hr.
Followed by a light lunch

Committee @ 0900

Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch Office Bearers

President	John Porter	0477 773 140	All emails to:
Vice President	Robert Wilson JP	0414 708 662	AlstonvilleSB@rslnsw.org.au
Vice President	Phil Skinner	0427 291 292	
Secretary	John Gordon	0437 509 790	
Treasurer	Garry Henderson-Smith	0400 474 413	

Please return your Quilt Raffle Tickets & payment ASAP, it's drawn after the Service on Remembrance Day!!!!

Christmas Party next month, let the Secretary know if you will attend (and numbers). Also contact Sec if you would like to organize a lift!!!

NOTE:- Video interviews by the High School students will start up again shortly, please let the Secretary know if you are a Volunteer & he will arrange the time for you. We need your memories & experiences!!

Dear Members,
Many thanks to our committee for filling in for me at our last monthly meeting. I assume Phil Skinner VP stepped up, thanks mate.

We have just returned from a holiday in Vietnam and Cambodia. Vietnam was very clean, welcoming and vibrant. Since the Vietnam war and the eventual takeover of the South by North Vietnam, the country is in full growth phase. Motor vehicles are all new and using grab (uber) was very easy and cheap. A three course meal in a modern restaurant costs \$15-20.

Both Vietnam and Cambodia have very high regard for Australia. I only hope that continues.

Cambodia is less developed than Vietnam but Chinese money is flooding in. In Siem Reap, the Chinese have just built a massive new Airport and starting to develop lands in and around the airport. The locals are very friendly and caring.

The highlight of the trip was seeing Angkor Wat a 12th Century temple. The engineering is breathtaking.

I must mention that I came home with pneumonia, and that's not nice.

Next week starts our fund raising for Remembrance Day. Any help is good help, so come he come all.

Kinds Blessings 🙏



From the President

Sub-Branch Meeting Minutes

11 Oct 2025

The Chair, VP Phil Skinner, declared the meeting open at 10.07 hrs with the wreath laid by member Alan Brown followed by the Ode and a half minute's silence.

Attendance was 20 members, with 11 apologies.

MOTION: That apologies be accepted.

Moved – Alan Brown **Seconded** – Steve Bryce

CARRIED

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September

MOTION: That the Minutes of the meeting on 13 Sep as printed, be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Moved – Secretary **Seconded** – Grahame Gooding **CARRIED**

Business arising from minutes - Nil business arising.

Correspondence:

Secretary read the received and sent correspondence including: outwards Remembrance Day letters.

MOTION: That the Inwards correspondence be adopted, and the Outwards correspondence be endorsed

Moved - John Gordon **Seconded** – Rob Fry **CARRIED**

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the Revenue statements and accounts as at 30Sep and the Accounts for payment.

MOTION: That the Revenue Statement as at 30 Sep be accepted, and the Payment of Accounts for Oct be approved.

Moved – Treasurer **Seconded** – Kayleen Cooper **CARRIED**

State HQ – Resignations from RSLNSW Board – 4 directors, including the State president have resigned from the Board. The Board are advertising one casual vacancy at present.

One member asked when are we going to hear the other side of the story after the ‘beat up’ on the ABC. Short answer, probably never, the same as last time with Brown & Co.

Secretary’s observation – we need to get that stupid amendment to the RSL NSW Act rescinded! It was suggested from the floor that a motion should be drafted stating that & sent to DPC. Sec will draft & bring to next meeting for adoption.

FNDCD – Next meeting 23 Nov @ Evans Head

Welfare & Hospital visits

Down to 3 Welfare Officers & they are averaging 4-5 patients per week.

Hall Bookings

As normal, UPA have booked Tues 2nd Dec.

Membership:

Membership is now 80 after loss of Nev Herber.

Memorabilia

10% stocktake completed, items are going into the new cabinets slowly, and a few re-arrangements on the walls.

Fundraising

Raffle ticket sales again next week at Florist, volunteers welcome.

Badge Sales 3-7th and 10th Nov; rosters are at back of hall.

Remember to return your Quilt Raffle books for the draw on 11th Nov.

General Business

Stan Green advised that he had found an ad for Defence Service Homes Insurance and that one day’s service gains you access. He did some comparisons and they seem very competitive, but only building insurance.

Garry Henderson-Smith said that he has done some research, and members could save 3-4 hundred by switching.

Kayleen Cooper asked that as the Laurel Club will be flying out on the 11th, if they are in-flight would it be OK to say the Ode at 11am. The meeting agreed that it would be most appropriate and suggested the aircraft captain might do it for the whole aircraft!

Sadly, we are farewelling Ruth Campbell today, she will be on her way to Shellharbour before the end of the month, so this is her last meeting. Chair Phil Skinner wished her the very best from all the members and thanked her for the untiring work she has done for the sub-Branch.

Grahame Gooding also spoke on his relationship with Ruth and her late husband Bob, which was echoed by the Secretary. Have a safe journey and enjoy being closer to your family, we will miss you!

Meeting closed at 10.37.

Next Meeting: Sat 8th Nov @ 1000hrs

Signed

Phil Skinner
Vice-President

John Gordon
Secretary/Treasurer



Seniors from a Canadian perspective!!!

Why seniors matter — and how they contribute to our everyday lives

A version of this commentary appeared in the Windsor Star, Calgary Sun and the Winnipeg Free Press

Stories abound in the media about how seniors are going to bankrupt the health care system or how the Canadian pension system will collapse under the burden of a growing senior population.

What we don't hear in the midst of all of these doomsday stories — which are not based in evidence, and are simply wrong — is how seniors contribute to society.

The fact that people live longer than ever should be celebrated as one of the biggest success stories in history. As the saying goes: "Getting old is better than the alternative."

How do seniors contribute to society? Like any younger person, they shop, they use services (which employ people), and they pay taxes. They also volunteer; in fact, many organizations would be hard pressed to function without their older volunteers.

Seniors also give generously: they make more charitable donations per capita than any other age group.

Seniors babysit; they look after grandchildren. One can only imagine what would happen to our economy if, suddenly, no grandparents were available to look after grandchildren. How many parents would have to scramble to find other care options (already scarce) — or would have to miss work because they couldn't find alternatives? How many soccer games or ballet classes would be missed if grandma or grandpa were not there to drive the grandchildren?

Seniors do housework, home maintenance and yard work — not just for themselves, but for others as well.

They provide transportation or run errands for others. They provide emotional support and friendship, like the senior who looks in on a house-bound friend to make sure that everything is alright and stays for a chat.

Seniors provide care for spouses or friends. Think of the wife who takes on more and more responsibilities in and outside the home as her husband starts to get frail. She may not think of herself as a caregiver, but without her, what would happen to him? Who would get the groceries, run errands, do the cooking, take him to medical appointments? Other family members are not always available to help. They may live too far away or have health problems themselves.

There are organizations that can help out — but the bulk of these supports are made possible because of volunteers. And the volunteers are typically seniors.

Then there is the husband who takes care of his wife who has Alzheimer's, who, from moment to moment, can no longer remember what day of the week it is, never mind what month or year, whether she has eaten, or what she just did; who keeps asking the same question over and over again, forgetting the answer as soon as it is given. He makes sure she gets dressed, eats properly, takes her medication, accompanies her to the doctor, and keeps her life as normal as possible. Without him, she would not be able to live at home anymore but would have to be admitted to a care home. Because of him, she is able to stay in familiar surroundings for as long as possible. Because of him, she is not a "burden" on the health care system.

Rather than creating catastrophic visions of the impact of the "Gray Tsunami," it would help if we took a more balanced approach to the aging population. We need policy solutions to address the real challenges, such as: How do we ensure that family and friends who care for older adults and play such an important role in their lives receive the supports they need? How do we provide supports in communities to make them as age-friendly as possible so that seniors can continue to contribute to society and have the best quality of life? Acknowledging seniors' contributions would help to make ours a more age-inclusive society

that does not pit one generation against the other. It would also be a more accurate reflection of how most of us engage with each other in our everyday lives.

And in Australia, the Australian Institute of Family Studies says.....

The new ‘young old’

In 2016, the proportion of Australians aged 65 and over was 15%. It is expected to rise to 25% by 2056.

In 2013–15, Australian life expectancy at birth was 80.4 years for males and 84.5 years for females (ABS, 2016).

Older Australians are living longer, and this means a new stage of life is emerging between the end of the conventional working age and the onset of old age. These older Australians are remaining productive for longer, working for longer, and continuing to contribute to Australian society. They often lead vibrant, active lives.

Strong social networks are associated with wellbeing in older Australians. Adults who engage in social activities with family and friends are more likely to be in good health. Older adults who engage in physical activities are also healthier.

Generally, females engage in social activities more regularly than males. Women also tend to increase their social activities as they get older, while many men’s social engagement drops off at 75 years and older.

It is important to note that those older people who were more physically active and socially engaged when they were younger people, are also more likely to be active and socially engaged when they get older. We need to start when we are younger because our habits persist.

Older Australians are also strongly engaged in volunteer activities. Nearly one quarter of people aged 65–74 years spend time doing voluntary work (ABS, 2011).

Caring for grandchildren

Older Australians are also providing a vital source of child care in many families.

Apart from parental care, the most common types of care for children under 13 years who attend school are grandparents(18.6%), followed by before/after school care (14.8%).

The most common types of care for children who don't yet attend school are long day care (36.9%) and grandparents (25.8%). Forty per cent of children under three years of age are cared for on a weekly basis by a grandparent. This care often supplements other forms of child care.

Some grandparents reside in the same household with their children and grandchildren. On average, 5% of Australian children are living in a three-generational home with their parent/s and grandparent/s (Baxter & Warren, 2015). This is particularly common among Indigenous and Asian households. These grandparents often provide some child care.

A brilliant story!

Vienna, Austria.

Hedy Kiesler was 19 years old and starring in "Ecstasy," a Czech film that featured cinema's first on-screen female orgasm. Scandalized conservatives called her a whore. Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels banned the film.

But Friedrich Mandl, one of Austria's wealthiest arms dealers, saw something else. He married her—and then imprisoned her.

Mandl was a fascist who sold weapons to Hitler and Mussolini. He locked Hedy in his castle, dressed her up for dinner parties with Nazi officials, and forbade her to act. She was his trophy wife, his beautiful possession, forced to sit through endless business meetings where fascist arms dealers discussed military technology.

But here's what Mandl didn't realize: Hedy was listening. And Hedy was brilliant.

While her husband and his Nazi clients discussed torpedoes, radio frequencies, and military communications, Hedy Kiesler was absorbing every word. She understood the technology. She saw the problems. And she started thinking about solutions.

In 1937, Hedy escaped. She drugged her maid, stole her clothes, fled to Paris, and then to London. Louis B. Mayer, the head of MGM Studios, saw her and offered a contract. She sailed to America, changed her name to Hedy Lamarr, and became a Hollywood star.

The world saw a stunning actress. Time magazine called her "the most beautiful woman in the world." She appeared in films like "Algiers" and "Samson and Delilah," her face on movie posters across America.

But Hedy's brain was somewhere else. She was thinking about the Nazis. About the war. About the technology she'd heard discussed in Mandl's castle.

She knew that radio-controlled torpedoes could be jammed by the enemy, making them useless. If you transmitted a signal on a single frequency, the enemy could detect it and disrupt it. Torpedoes would veer off course. Ships would be safe.

But what if the signal kept changing frequencies? What if it "hopped" from one frequency to another in a pattern only the transmitter and receiver knew?

The enemy couldn't jam what they couldn't predict.

In 1940, Hedy met composer George Antheil at a dinner party. They started talking about music. Then about technology. Then about synchronized player pianos—how they could play in perfect synchronization using perforated paper rolls. And Hedy had an idea.

What if you could use that same principle to synchronize radio frequencies? The transmitter and receiver could hop between 88 different frequencies (she chose 88 because that's the number of keys on a piano) in perfect sync, making the signal impossible to jam or intercept. Together, Hedy and George developed the concept. They called it "frequency hopping."

In 1942, they were granted U.S. Patent 2,292,387 for a "Secret Communication System." They donated it to the U.S. Navy, hoping it would help defeat the Nazis.

The Navy rejected it. Some accounts say they dismissed it because Hedy was "just an actress." Others say the technology was ahead of its time. Whatever the reason, the Navy shelved the patent and told Hedy she could better serve the war effort by selling war bonds. So she did. Hedy Lamarr raised \$25 million for the war effort by auctioning kisses and appearing at rallies. The world celebrated her beauty while ignoring her brain.

Her patent expired in 1959, unused and forgotten.

But in the 1960s, military engineers rediscovered frequency-hopping technology. They used it in Navy ships during the Cuban Missile Crisis. They used it in secure military communications.

By the 1980s and '90s, frequency hopping became the foundation for:

Wi-Fi

Bluetooth

GPS

All modern wireless communication

Every time you connect to Wi-Fi, you're using technology Hedy Lamarr invented in 1941.

But for decades, she got no credit. No royalties. No recognition.

In 1997—56 years after her patent—the Electronic Frontier Foundation finally gave Hedy Lamarr the Pioneer Award, acknowledging her contribution to wireless technology.

She was 83 years old. She'd been ignored for more than half a century while her invention changed the world.

When she received the award, Hedy said: "It's about time."

Hedy Lamarr died in 2000 at age 85. For most of her life, she was remembered as "the beautiful actress."

Her technological genius was dismissed, forgotten, or credited to men.

Today, her face is on currency in Austria. Her patent is recognized as foundational to modern technology.

And every smartphone, every GPS device, every Bluetooth connection exists because a woman the world dismissed as "just a pretty face" was actually one of the most important inventors of the 20th century.

She escaped a Nazi arms dealer's castle. She became a Hollywood icon. And she invented technology that now runs the modern world. But for most of her life, people only wanted to talk about how beautiful she was.

Hedy Lamarr's story isn't just about underestimated genius—it's about how society treats brilliant women.

How we reduce them to their appearance. How we ignore their contributions. How we credit men while erasing women.

The U.S. Navy told her to sell war bonds with her beauty instead of using her brain to win the war. Then they secretly used her invention anyway. That's not just sexism. That's theft.

Every time you use Wi-Fi, remember: a Hollywood actress who the world called "just a pretty face" made it possible.

And she did it while trying to defeat the Nazis who'd threatened her, imprisoned her, and tried to reduce her to a decoration in a castle. Hedy Lamarr didn't just escape. She won.

In honor of Hedy Lamarr (1914-2000), whose beauty the world celebrated but whose genius the world tried to erase.

My wife just stopped and said, "You weren't even listening, were you?"

**I thought to myself...
"That's a pretty strange way to start off a conversation."**

I once lived just a stone's throw away from a family who all died of mysterious head injuries.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF RA SIGS IN 2025

HONOURING THE FALLEN SIGNALLERS OF SANDAKAN

On Anzac Day 2025, the CCF (CERTA CITO Foundation) had the solemn honour of laying a wreath in remembrance of the Signallers who were interred and perished at Sandakan POW Camp. Their sacrifice stands as a deeply significant chapter in our military history.

Among those who endured the brutal conditions at Sandakan, Captain Lionel Matthews, GC, MC, remains an enduring symbol of courage. His unwavering leadership in Malaya, Sandakan, and his final days in Kuching Prison exemplifies heroism in the face of adversity. As part of the underground resistance, Matthews led a brave movement alongside Lieutenant Rod Wells, Lieutenant Russ Howlett, and Corporal Cyril Mills, whose ingenious efforts resulted in the construction of a secret radio receiver—a remarkable act of defiance that deserves recognition.

Equally important is the remembrance of the over 60 Signalmen of the 8th Division, dispatched from Singapore to Sandakan, British North Borneo. Initially assured humane treatment, they instead suffered forced labour, relentless brutality, and starvation. Tasked with constructing an airstrip to support the Japanese war effort, their suffering intensified following the arrest and removal of the underground leaders in mid-1943, leading to drastically worsening conditions.

By early 1944, rations were further reduced, and medical aid was withheld. In 1945, the notorious Death Marches began—260-kilometer treks through unforgiving jungle terrain, where malnourished and ill prisoners were forced to carry Japanese supplies. Many perished from exhaustion, execution, or disease, while others succumbed at the final camp in Ranau. By August 1945, as Japan surrendered, every remaining prisoner had either been executed or had died from starvation and disease. Of the 70 Signalmen sent to Sandakan, the only survivors were 14 of those who were transferred to other camps before the Death Marches commenced. The approximately 50 Signallers who remained at Sandakan or participated in the marches did not survive.

The tragic fate of the Sandakan prisoners, including the Signalmen of the 8th Division, continues to resonate today. We honoured their sacrifice as part of the RA Sigs Centenary, ensuring their legacy is never forgotten.



The funny side of life:

**WHEN PUNISHING
KIDS, DON'T TAKE
AWAY THEIR
ELECTRONICS. TAKE
THEIR CHARGER. WATCH
THE AGONY AS THEIR
BATTERY SLOWLY DIES.**

I'm at the age where
my mind firmly
believes I'm 29, my
humor suggests I'm 12,
and my body possibly
died in the civil war.

-The Ultimate Eighties Page-

**After my funeral I want one
of my friends to take my
phone and text everyone
"Thanks for coming"**

**What if they're not stars,
but holes poked into the
top of the container so we
can breathe.**



**If you've never tried blindfold
archery, you don't know what
you're missing.**

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

Louise Lancett	09 Nov.
Dusty Miller	20 Nov.
Angela Bryce	25 Nov.
Betty Duncan	25 Nov.

Information:

DVA – Lismore VAN Office:
 Suite 8 Level 1 17 Conway Street
 Lismore (next to Australian Hearing)
 Email: NSWVANLismore@dva.gov.au
 Ph 1300 838 372
 DVA
 GPO Box 9998
 Brisbane QLD 4001

DVA Gold Card – Many Vietnam and other Returned from Active Service Veterans are not aware of their entitlement to a DVA Gold Card which is not means or asset tested.

To check for your entitlement complete the DVA form D3057 “Application for a Gold Card for Veterans of Australia’s Defence Force”. Those under 70 and not in receipt of any DVA payment can complete DVA form D0506 “Claim to determine Qualifying service by current or ex-member of the ADF”.

SPONSORS – THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT

- Alstonville Plaza Meats & Deli
- Alstonville Quality Meats
- Alstonville Cellars
- Village Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, Alstonville
- Federal Hotel, Alstonville
- Melanie Stewart Real Estate, Alstonville
- Coles Supermarket, Alstonville
- Parkview Funeral Home, Ballina
- Guardian Funerals – Alstonville, Ballina, Lismore
- McGraths Real Estate, Alstonville

RSL Tibouchina Day Club

When: **Wednesdays @ 10:00am**

Where: **Rous Mill Hall**

What: Enjoy good company, live entertainment, light exercise (suitable for the elderly). Mental stimulation activities, morning tea, lunch
 A bus will pick you up and return you to your home within the Alstonville / Wollongbar villages for a \$10:00 contribution.

Who: For members of our community who are looking for social interaction in a friendly welcoming environment.

Contact Murette for more details: **0421 272 643**