



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
(NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH INCORPORATED)
"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"

Combined Services RSL sub-Branch

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DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

**THE NEXT GENERAL MEETING WILL BE IN 2025
ON THURSDAY 13th FEBRUARY 2025 TO BE HELD AT
11.00 AM ON LEVEL 2, 5-7 BARRACK STREET, SYDNEY
(Light luncheon and refreshments served afterwards)**

OUR GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE ROBYN RICHARDSON

Robyn is Scholarships Manager with AVCAT (Australian Veterans' Childrens Assistance Trust). AVCAT supports veteran families through tertiary scholarships for children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans.

OUR CHAPLAIN THE REVEREND ANDREW NIXON AT OUR NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Chaplain Andrew Nixon (a senior Police Chaplain and also Reserve Chaplain in the RAN) provided a talk on the chaplaincy role in the Defence Forces and also linked it up to a focus on personal wellbeing.

In his presentation Andrew provided his background in the Navy and other chaplaincy roles. He then introduced the dimensions of Wellbeing as shown in the chart below. One might see the chaplaincy role applies to Spiritual Wellbeing but dimensions of wellbeing can interact with each other and to evaluate the wellbeing of an individual



may require understanding in a number of those dimensions.

Also in understanding our Spiritual Wellbeing we can ask some basic questions.

- Who am I?
- Where do I come from?
- Where am I going?
- Why?

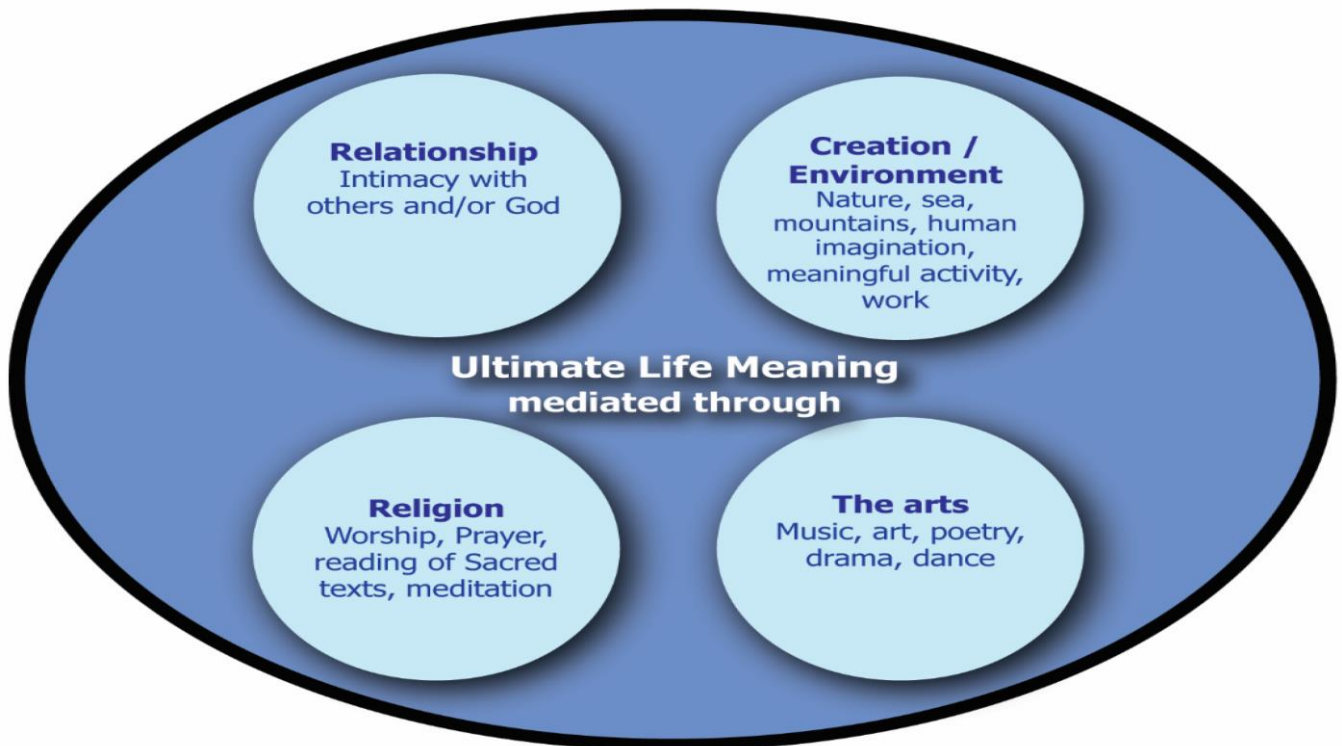
A Chaplain does have responsibilities around Spiritual Care and does focus on this dimension of Spiritual Wellbeing but needs to be aware of the broader dimensions.



Spiritual wellbeing is often a misunderstood concept. It refers not to any particular religious or spiritual practice or ideology but to the human need for meaning, purpose and connection to something greater than ourselves.

Religion is only one aspect of the contribution to Spiritual Wellbeing as may be demonstrated in the following diagram:

Meaning and the spiritual dimension



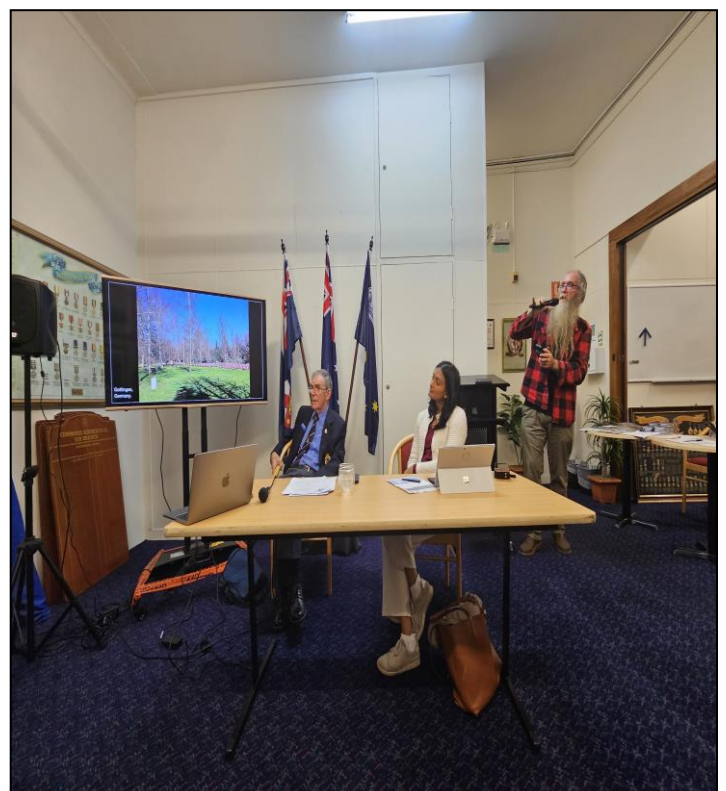
(Rev. Prof. Liz MacKinlay)

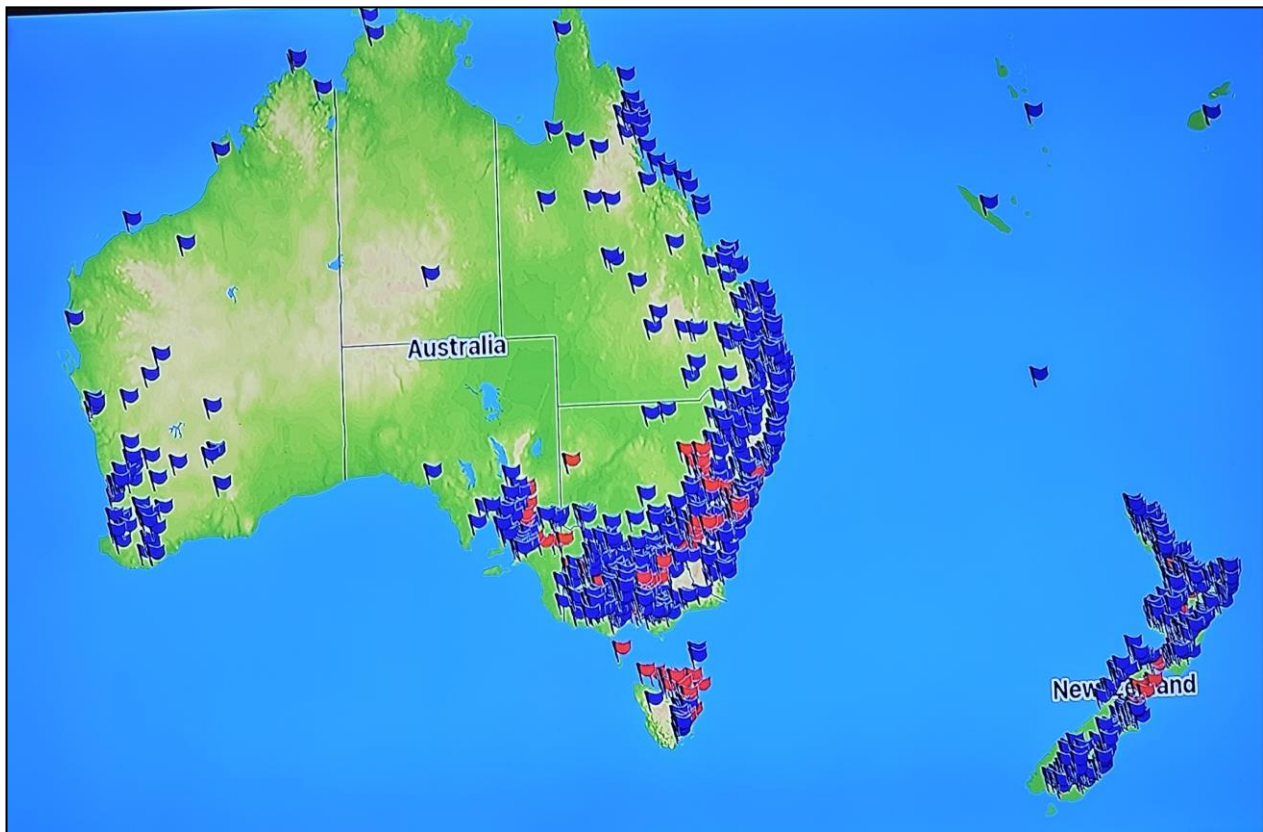
MIC WHITTY- CYCLING JOURNEY ACROSS THE WORLD

Mic was introduced to us earlier this year during his visit to Sydney catching up with his Ex RAAF mate and fellow veteran, Garry Snow, in Barracks on Barrack. Mic decided to join our sub-Branch.

Mic was available to speak at our November Meeting and presented us with progress of his journey.

In his presentation, he showed how his journey started. Mic's journey is to visit every single Commonwealth war cemetery (over 26 thousand) using his old French post bicycle across the world.





Mic said on the upper photo all those with blue colour flags are those he still needs to visit here in Australia and New Zealand. His journey was full of dedication, endurance, commitment, and inspirational journey.

To find out more about Mic's journey and you have an electronic copy of this Newsletter, click the RSL website link below or click on his own website.

If you have a paper copy of this Newsletter, go to Google on the Internet and look up the details below.

[Follow veteran Mic Whitty's cycling journey across the world | RSL NSW](#)

[Mic Whitty](#)

Compensation Advocacy

Injured in the ADF?

If you are a Veteran or current/former ADF member, and have an injury or illness causally related to your ADF service, or you were discharged on medical grounds, you may be entitled to benefits you didn't even know about.

There are five Acts that provide compensation coverage for current and former members of the ADF. They are:

- Defence Act 1903 (DA)
- Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA)
- Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (Defence Related Claims) 1988 (DRCA)
- Military Compensation Act 1994 (MCA)
- Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)

Combined Services RSL sub-Branch offers the services of an ATDP accredited Level 4 Compensation Advocate to provide assistance to veterans in their dealings with DVA. A Level 4 Advocate provides assistance with initial liability claims and appeals regarding decisions under the VEA, DRCA, and MRCA to the Veterans' Review Board and the Administrative Appeal Tribunal/Administrative Review Tribunal.

Combined Services RSL sub-Branch also offers the services of a Wellbeing Support Officer.

The Compensation Advocate is available for appointments weekly on Tuesdays between the hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. The Compensation Advocate also holds appointments on the 3rd Saturday of the month at the ANZAC Memorial Hyde Park between the hours of 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. Please call Bill Forsbey on 0411 266 932 or email to pensions@outlook.com.au to arrange an appointment time and date.

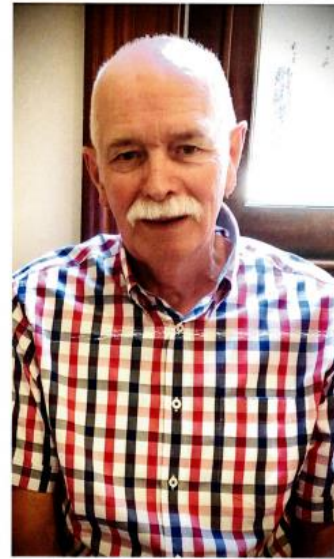
VALE

HONOURING THE LIFE OF

RAYMOND GEORGE COOKSLEY

Raymond was born on 9th September 1948. He passed away on 31 October and his funeral was held on 11th November at Rose Chapel, Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium, North Ryde.

Nikhita Sahay, our Secretary/Treasurer, and Kim Metra, our Business Support Manager, attended the funeral and conducted a Poppy Memorial at the Service.



RAYMOND GEORGE COOKSLEY
"RAY"

09.09.1948 - 31.10.2024

Raymond George Cooksley was a national serviceman who served in the Australian Army from the 10th of July 1969 to the 09th of July 1971 as a Signaller. His final unit was the 104 Signal Squadron. 104 Sig Sqn has the distinction as the longest serving (5 years and 8 months) active service tactical signals unit in the Australian Army - both past and present.

This Sqn was part of the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam. Raymond was one of over 800 soldiers who served in the Squadron during its war service in South Vietnam. The 1ATF Communications Centre (COMCEN), manned and owned by 104 Sig Sqn Comcen Troop, played the key role in keeping Australian and Allied units in contact with each other throughout the war.

- At the 1ATF base at Nui Dat, the 1ATF Communications Centre (COMCEN), manned and owned by 104 Sig Sqn Comcen Troop, played a key role in keeping Australian and Allied units in contact with each other. More than 1,000 telephone and telegraph circuits fed into the COMCEN, including 70 microwave channels from bases

outside Nui Dat. Staffing the COMCEN was 50 men, working two shifts to keep communications operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the telegraph area, the soldiers handled over 700 messages on some days. Next door, the 200-line switchboard averaged 4,300 connections each day. In peak hours, two switchboard operators handled 3 calls every 10 seconds. Messages received in the COMCEN were registered, and prepared for dispatch by clerks, such as Raymond. Depending on the priority of the message, it was either delivered by special delivery or the more usual Dispatch Rider (DR).

For his honourable service in a time of need, Raymond received the Vietnam medal, Vietnamese campaign medal, Australian active service medal 1945-1975, Anniversary of National Service 1951 1972 medal, and the Australian Defence medal.

Raymond joined the sub-Branch on 2nd March 2011. In civilian life he worked as an insurance consultant.

*"They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old,
age shall not weary them nor the years' condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning.
We will remember them".
Lest we forget*

OVERNIGHT TO SINGLETON

On Friday 8th November members of Combined Services, Masonic, and Blacktown RSL sub-Branches went by bus to Singleton. They visited the Infantry Museum that afternoon and shown around by senior staff. Afterwards, they had an excellent dinner at Club Singleton followed by an overnight stay at a comfortable motel. The following day we started off with an excellent breakfast and the bus took us to the Singleton Army Base again for the Infantry Centre Open Day. It was a great opportunity to see the Army displays including obstacle courses and the military dogs. The upgrading of the military equipment and weapons for the individual soldier was most interesting for me. After the Open Day we arrived back in Sydney that afternoon on the bus.

Many thanks to Kim Metra and Stan Beaman for organising the trip and also many thanks to Stan for driving the bus.

More photos and videos can be seen on our FB page.























NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

At the November General Meeting, the following three City of Sydney Chapter Members were elected to the Committee.

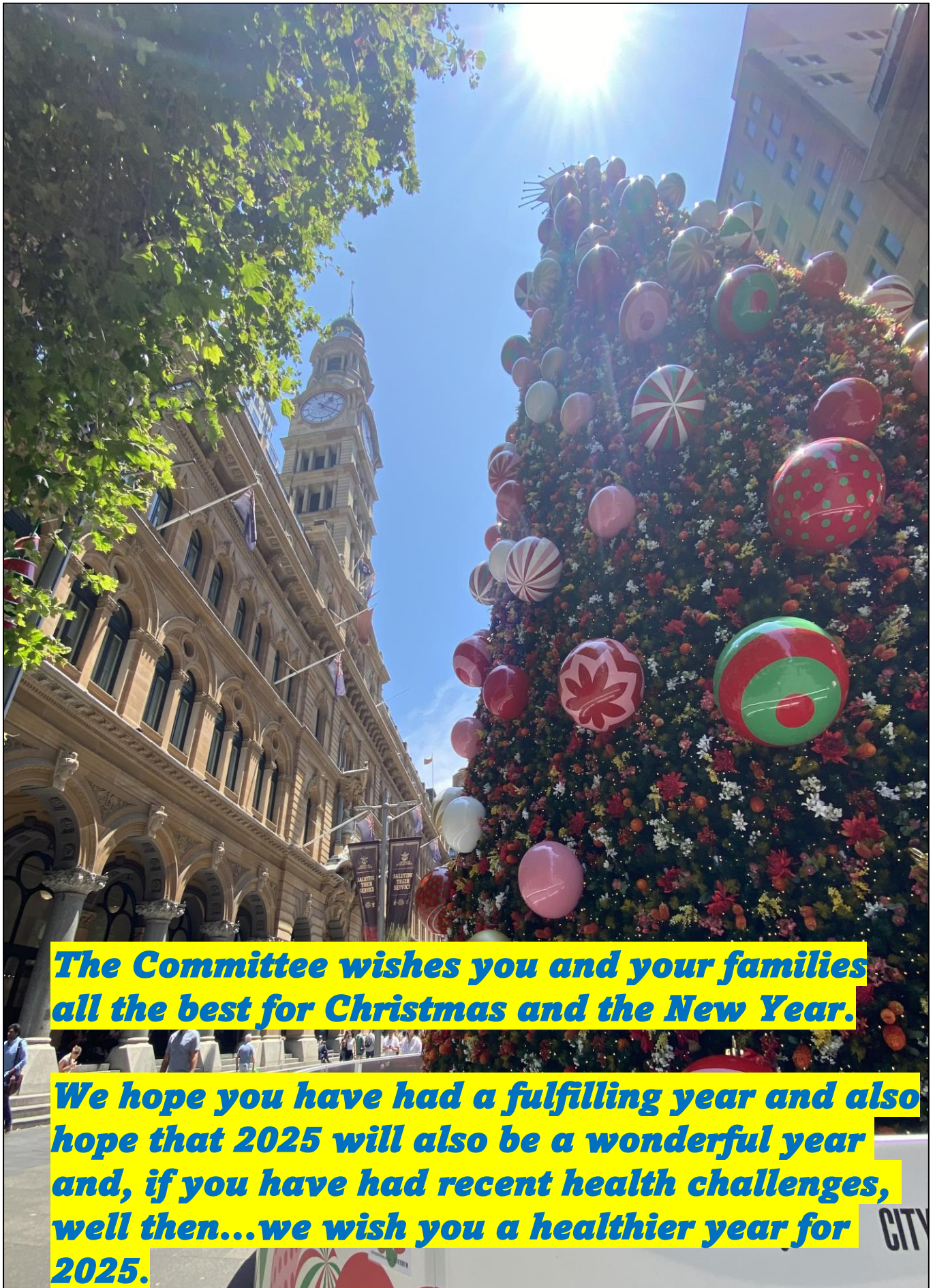
Bill Forsbey, Immediate Past President of City of Sydney RSL sub-Branch, John Ekert, Chapter Coordinator and former President of City of Sydney RSL sub-Branch, and Daniel Caffery, Assistant Chapter Coordinator. Our congratulations to them.

CITY TATTERSALLS CLUB

The Club is still operating its two venues Barracks on Barrack at 5-7 Barrack Street and the Castlereagh Club with its world class gymnasium at 199 Castlereagh Street. There have been recent changes in management and could be further changes in the new year. However, both venues are providing normal services Monday to Friday and in the evenings.

However, we are advised that for Christmas and New Year, they will close from 21 December and re-open on 6 January.

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON



The Committee wishes you and your families all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

We hope you have had a fulfilling year and also hope that 2025 will also be a wonderful year and, if you have had recent health challenges, well then...we wish you a healthier year for 2025.

Birthday Celebrations January - February 2025

JANUARY

Mrs. Paterson
Mr. Blackwood
Mr. Grimley
Mr. Graham
Mr. Crennan
Mr. Yuswak
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Wells DSC, AM

Mr. Chard
Mr. Fox
Mr. Farmer
Mr. Street
Mr. Anderson
Mr. Coffill
Miss Metra

FEBRUARY

Mr. Taylor
Mrs. Frost
Mr. Koffel
Mr. Campbell
Mr. Forsbey
Mr. Capel
Mr. Snow
Mr. Raffo
Mr. Lawson



We complete our Newsletter with a Christmas message from our Chaplain:

God didn't speak much...

You may be somewhat surprised by that title. But it's true. God didn't speak very often, or to many people, when you consider the many thousands of years of human history. I will miss a few people, but here is a quick summary. See what you think.

God speaks daily to Adam and Eve in the garden... until they get evicted. He then speaks to Cain and Abel, but things are just not the same. There is Noah, of course, but very few others until we get to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After that, hundreds of years go by until God speaks to Moses and his successor Joshua in order to rescue His people from Egypt and establish them in their own land as promised.

Once there, God speaks to the nation through certain prophets, but they are relatively few in number: no more than about 30 across a period of some 14 centuries.

Then, famously, after the prophet Malachi, all communication from God stops. Completely! 400 years of absolute silence. I guess if you want to say something that people will *really* hear when you say it, a silence like that will underline it.

So, when the next (and last) prophet, John the Baptist, appears saying, "Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand" and "Prepare the way for the Lord" he rightly raises massive expectations from his hearers. And with that, everything changed.

Immediately, Jesus bursts onto the scene and begins his public ministry. He heals the lame and diseased, restores sight to the blind, even raises the dead to life again. But most importantly of all he speaks. Prolifically! All day, every day; to individuals, groups and vast crowds. And all the people are amazed at his teaching, because his words have such authority. For they are the words of God himself.

At Christmas we celebrate the wonderful truth that God visited us, walked with us, talked with us. Just like in the garden long ago. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas celebrating God's love for us in Jesus.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14

EDITORIAL

Ron Hack, PRESIDENT

Nikhita Sahay, SECRETARY / TREASURER

Kimberly Metra, BUSINESS SUPPORT MANAGER

20 December 2024