



Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch



Standfast 2026

Issue 280

July 2026

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FOR YOUR DIARY:

**Next sub-Branch meeting Sat
11th July @ 1100 hr. Followed
by a light lunch**

Committee at 0930

Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch Office Bearers

President	John Porter	0477 773 140	All emails to:
Vice President	Phil Skinner	0427 291 292	AlstonvilleSB@rslnsw.org.au
Vice President	Stephen Bryce		
Secretary	John Gordon JP	0437 509 790	
Treasurer			

Dear Members,

We are halfway through the year and it seems to be flying. My overseas moving plans have changed and we're now staying in lovely Alstonville.

We have plans to finish the hall portico in the next two weeks. Not before time. Family friends have offered to help finish the job which is very nice of them.

Our thoughts are with Bobby Wilson who has been very sick over the past month. Bobby has pneumonia and has spent some time in hospital. Please join with me in wishing him a speedy recovery.

Another one of our mates is also unwell. Col Biddle has been unwell for some time so let's wish him all the very best.

John G and I had a meeting with Brian Frost from RSL NSW, Anzac House. Brian's role is Community Relations and he had some great ideas for our Sub-Branch to try. Ideas such as designated coffee days, promoting RSL NSW and offering free coffees to military and Auxiliary members. Another great idea was to apply to VSF (Veterans Support Fund) for assistance with the payment of our annual insurance. VSF approved the payment of \$8,300 for our annual insurance premium. Fantastic News!! Whenever we outlay monies for coffee days, dinners, sports days and events, they are all claimable.

Now that I have let the cat out of the bag about framing the future plan, we can now concentrate on ideas as a collective group. As I keep saying, our future success is within our own minds.

I don't need to remind you that we are blessed to have such a wonderful Sub-Branch. Full of nice caring people who want to make a difference.

Veterans Support Funding



From the President

The RSL NSW Veteran Support Fund was established in 2023 to bolster the ongoing financial support that the League in NSW provides to organisations that align with our charitable purpose: supporting veterans and their families. By pooling donations from RSL sub-Branches, the Veteran Support Fund can make a greater impact on veteran wellbeing initiatives.

Blessings 🙏

John Porter
President

Sub-Branch Meeting Minutes

13 June 2026

Acting President Phil Skinner declared the meeting open at 11.11 with the wreath laid followed by the Ode and a half minute's silence.

Attendance was 19, with 5 apologies.

MOTION: That apologies be accepted.

Moved – Stan Green **Seconded** – Rob Wilson **CARRIED**

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May

MOTION: That the Minutes of the meeting on 9 May, as printed, be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Moved – Secretary **Seconded** – Garry Henderson—Smith **CARRIED**

Business arising from minutes - Nil business arising.

Correspondence:

Inwards

Secretary read the received and sent correspondence including:

State Circulars

Invitation from City of Lismore

Promo from firm discussing Estate Planning

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

Moved - John Gordon **Seconded** – Michael Letts **CARRIED**

Treasurer's Report

The Secretary presented the Financial statements and accounts as at 31 May and the Accounts for payment.

MOTION: That the Revenue Statement as at 31 May be accepted, and the Payment of Accounts for May/Jun be approved.

Moved – John Gordon **Seconded** – Grahame Gooding **CARRIED**

State HQ – upcoming visit by the State Community Relations Manager

FNCDC –

The FNCDC Meeting 24 May, Phil Skinner attended as Alternate Delegate. Resolution by Chair of meeting that election of President be deferred for 3 months. Sub-Branches in district all reported good ANZAC Day events with increased crowds. Murwillumbah SB reported that they had an on-line application for membership forwarded from State Office, the person turned out to be a Wanna Be with no military service but claimed to be a Vietnam Vet. He was caught out very quickly. There are also letters going to State Branch in relation to the treatment of Ben Roberts-Smith. Next meeting 23 Aug at Casino RSM.

Welfare & Hospital visits

Grahame Gooding reported that visits to St. Vincent's are continuing and better with the additional people. They average 5-6 people each week.

Hall Bookings

No changes,

Membership:

Membership no Changes.

Memorabilia

10% stock-take will be done on Tony's return.

Fundraising

Nothing to report

General Business

Visit by Byron Bay sub-Branch on 2 or 3 June – secretary will clarify. Please be here about 10am.

Hall Open days – volunteers are still needed to open the hall on Tuesday & Friday mornings, give you name to Secretary if you are available.

Portico working party – The donor (John Porter's son-in-law) and friends will fully instal and paint the portico on a weekend shortly.

Suggestion by Stevphen Bryce that we hold a Veteran & Family afternoon on a Sunday as a way of becoming more visible to younger families. Astronomy group will be having one soon & that will be a good test run!

On that note, keep thinking about what activities we could create to attract members, Service or Auxiliary, Grahame Gooding mentioned Twilight Bowls social event.

Commemorative events coming up

27 Jul – Korean Veteran's Day

Victory In Pacific Day – 15 Aug

Vietnam Veteran's day – 18 Aug

Phil Skinner mentioned that he and Geoff Vidal attended the 2026 UN Peacekeepers service at Mullumbimby SB on 29 May.

6 June was the 82nd Anniversary of D Day, Miscellaneous info – over 300 Australians took part in D Day with 14 killed – 12 RAAF and 2 Navy.

Chair then called for nominations for the positions of President and Treasurer.

Nomination of John Porter as President by Bob Wilson, seconded Geoff Vidal. Unanimously approved, welcome back John.

No nominations for Treasurer as yet.

John Porter then spoke about his changing circumstances and spoke about how he realised that role of the sub-Branch (and members) plays in his life now.

Brian Partridge mentioned his suggestion at the last meeting about getting a landscaper to advise on the front of the building, he said he has re-thought and landscapers charge like wounded bulls so maybe incorporate some pruning into the working bee.

Meeting closed at 11.56.

Next Meeting: 11 July at 11am, Committee meeting at 0930

Last night I was walking home and decided to take a short cut past the cemetery... 3 girls walked up to me and explained that they were really scared to walk past the cemetery at night, so I agreed to let them walk along with me. I told them "I understand... I used to be freaked out too when I was alive..."

Never seen anyone run that fast!!! 😂😂😂😂😂



DARING DEEDS Captain Lionel Matthews (From an article on the AWM website)

On 2nd March 2015, the War Memorial accepted the donation of a George Cross which had been posthumously awarded to Captain Lionel Colin Matthews for extreme and selfless courage while a prisoner of war. The George Cross is ranked just behind the Victoria Cross and is awarded for acts of extreme bravery performed by civilians and military personnel when not under enemy fire. It is no longer awarded to Australians, as it was superseded in 1975 by the Australian Cross of Valour.

Lionel Matthews was born in Stepney, South Australia in August 1912. His military career began when he enlisted in the Citizen Military Force, though he later transferred to the Royal Australian Naval Reserve (RANR) where he trained as a signaller. Matthews married Lorna Lane in December 1935, at Kensington, SA. Their son David was born the following year.

Matthews left the RANR to work in Melbourne, and there enlisted in the Militia in April 1939. He rose rapidly in rank and was commissioned lieutenant in January 1940. In June he transferred to 8th Division Signals of the Second Australian Imperial Force, where he commanded the Wireless Operating section. In February 1941 they were sent to Malacca, in Malaya.

On 8th December 1941, Imperial Japanese forces invaded Malaya at Kota Bharu. The Japanese troops quickly drove the British and Malayan defenders back towards Singapore. It was during the withdrawal, at Gemas, that Matthews earned his Military Cross. He was promoted to Captain just before the surrender in February 1942 and became one of the more than 15,000 Australian soldiers who became prisoners of war when Singapore fell.

The Japanese sent groups of prisoners to other regions on work parties. Matthews became part of 'B' Force, almost 1500 men, sent to Sandakan in Borneo in July 1942. Matthews soon became the PoW Intelligence Officer and helped create and direct an underground intelligence organisation. Through connections with locals, he was able to arrange provision of medical supplies and arranged parts for the construction of a secret radio. In July 1943, the network was betrayed. Matthews could have escaped but chose to remain with his men. Despite brutal interrogation over the following months, he never gave away his mates. Finally, with other members of the network, he was tried by a Japanese military court in Kuching. On 2nd March 1944, he was found guilty, sentenced to death and executed the same day.

Final word can be left to Lieutenant Rod Wells, his second-in-command, who, but for a code transcription error, would have shared Matthews' fate. He stated that Matthews confided that if the work done by the organisation was of any use to the allies, then his life was not in vain. "When the death sentence was passed, Matthews had full control of himself. He shook me by the hand, wished me good luck and said he was pleased to be going with such loyal friends." Those were the locals who had also been sentenced to death. Matthews' final act was to refuse a blindfold as he faced his executioners.

- 1:- If you are at least 6 feet 2 inches tall, you are taller than 94% of the world.
- 2:- A cyberchondriac is someone who scours the Internet looking for details of their illnesses.
- 3:- Amazon's largest warehouse is the size of 17 American football fields.
- 4:- The original name for the butterfly was 'flutterby'.
- 5:- It often rains diamonds on Uranus and Neptune.

Remembering the only sailor to escape HMAS Sydney (II)

A ceremony IN 2024 honoured him, and the 644 other crew who died on board.

“Water bears no battle scars,” Vice Admiral Michael Noonan said at the ceremony unveiling a memorial to the sailors who died on HMAS Sydney (II) in November 1941.

The Christmas of 1941 was a nightmare for the families of the 645 sailors who were on HMAS Sydney (II), hoping and praying that their boys might have somehow survived the warship’s tragic final battle.

They held onto this hope for years, even after the body of the only man to escape was found, ironically washed up on Christmas Island. In 2021 it was revealed that the body was that of Queensland country boy Able Seaman Thomas Welsby Clark.



Portrait of Thomas Welsby Clark (image courtesy of the Australian War Memorial)

Thomas was born in New Farm, Brisbane in 1920 to a well-to-do family. His father was a successful grazier and businessman in western Queensland and Thomas was educated at Slade Anglican school in Warwick.

Young Thomas spent many happy times on his father’s properties and was an accomplished horseman. After school he studied to be an accountant and worked for a practice in Mary Street in Brisbane.

When World War II broke out, he joined up as a Naval Reservist, then moved to full-time service as an Able Seaman on HMAS Sydney (II). The official photograph of Thomas is striking, showing a strong jaw, a determined expression, sharp eyes, and confidence beyond his years.

HMAS Sydney (II) met her fate in a battle with the German raider HSK Kormoran in the Indian Ocean off Western Australia. Somehow Thomas escaped in a Carley float (life raft) but died of head injuries, and in 1942 his body was washed up on Christmas Island and later buried in an unmarked grave.

The Navy never stopped looking for the wreck of HMAS Sydney (II). Eventually she was located in 2006 and the pieces of the puzzle started to come together. Thomas’ grave on Christmas Island was exhumed and his remains investigated further prior to his burial with full military honours in Geraldton, Western Australia.

Earlier research showed clues to his identity. He was tall, fair-haired, blue-eyed and had a fresh complexion. His teeth had gold fillings – a sign that he was from a wealthy and caring family. Thomas’s leg bones showed a life of horse riding, so a country upbringing was assumed, and his identity narrowed down. Finally, after 15 years, DNA revealed his name and a handful of living family members from all over Australia.

Thomas' nephew Colin Clark travelled from Queensland to Western Australia when Thomas’ body was rededicated to the war graves at Geraldton Cemetery.

On 30 November 2023, the sailors of the Royal Australian Navy who served and perished on HMAS Sydney (II) were remembered in a ceremony at Jack Tar Memorial in South Bank, Brisbane.

The funny side of life:

These were posted on an Australian tourism website, and the answers are the actual responses by the website officials, who obviously have a great sense of humour (not to mention a low tolerance threshold for cretins!).

Q: Does it ever get windy in Australia? I have never seen it rain on TV, how do the plants grow? (UK).

A: We import all plants fully grown, and then just sit around watching them die.

Q: Will I be able to see kangaroos in the street? (USA)

A: Depends how much you've been drinking.

Q: I want to walk from Perth to Sydney - can I follow the railroad tracks? (Sweden)

A: Sure, it's only three thousand miles. Take lots of water.

Q: Are there any ATMs (cash machines) in Australia? Can you send me a list of them in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Hervey Bay? (UK)

A: What did your last slave die of?

Q: Can you give me some information about hippo racing in Australia? (USA)

A: Af-ri-ca is the big triangle shaped continent south of Europe.

Aust-ra-lia is that big island in the middle of the Pacific which does not ... Oh, forget it. Sure, the hippo racing is every Tuesday night in Kings Cross. Come naked.

Q: Which direction is North in Australia? (USA)

A: Face south, and then turn 180 degrees. Contact us when you get here and we'll send the rest of the directions.

Q: Can I bring cutlery into Australia? (UK)

A: Why? Just use your fingers like we do.

Q: Can you send me the Vienna Boys' Choir schedule? (USA)

A: Aus-tri-a is that quaint little country bordering Ger-man-y, which is ...

Oh, forget it. Sure, the Vienna Boys Choir plays every Tuesday night in Kings Cross, straight after the hippo races. Come naked.

Q: Can I wear high heels in Australia? (UK)

A: You are a British politician, right?

Q: Are there supermarkets in Sydney and is milk available all year round? (Germany)

A: No, we are a peaceful civilization of vegan hunter gatherers. Milk is illegal.

Q: Please send a list of all doctors in Australia who can dispense rattlesnake serum. (USA)

A: Rattlesnakes live in A-mer-ica, which is where YOU come from. All Australian snakes are perfectly harmless, can be safely handled, and make good pets.

Q: I have a question about a famous animal in Australia, but I forget its name. It's a kind of bear and lives in trees. (USA)

A: It's called a Drop Bear. They are so called because they drop out of gum trees and eat the brains of anyone walking underneath them. You can scare them off by spraying yourself with human urine before you go out walking.

Q: I have developed a new product that is the fountain of youth. Can you tell me where I can sell it in Australia? (USA)

A: Anywhere significant numbers of Americans gather.

Q: Do you celebrate Christmas in Australia? (France)

A: Only at Christmas.

Q: Will I be able to speak English most places I go? (USA)

A: Yes, but you'll have to learn it first.



A GUY WALKED INTO A CROWDED BAR, WAVING HIS UNHOLSTERED PISTOL AND YELLED, "I HAVE A 45 CALIBER COLT 1911 WITH A SEVEN ROUND MAGAZINE PLUS ONE IN THE CHAMBER AND I WANT TO KNOW WHO'S BEEN SLEEPING WITH MY WIFE."

A VOICE FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM CALLED OUT,

"YOU NEED MORE AMMO!!!"

**Just before I die,
I am going to
swallow a bag
of popcorn
kernels.**

**My cremation is
going to be epic!**

Troubled Parent Posted...
THIS MORNING MY KID
SAID THEIR EAR HURT
AND I SAID ON THE
INSIDE OR OUTSIDE,
SO THEY WALKED OUT
THE FRONT DOOR,
CAME BACK IN & SAID
BOTH. MOMENTS LIKE
THIS GOT ME
WONDERING IF I'M
SAVING TOO MUCH
FOR COLLEGE..

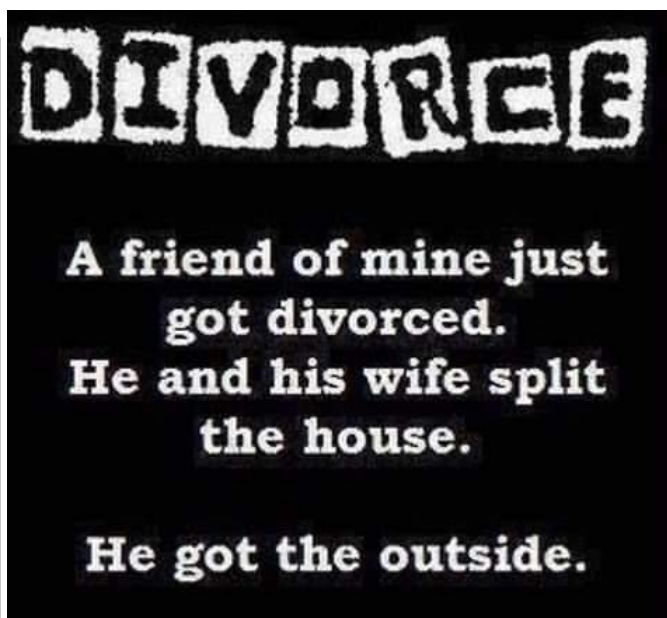
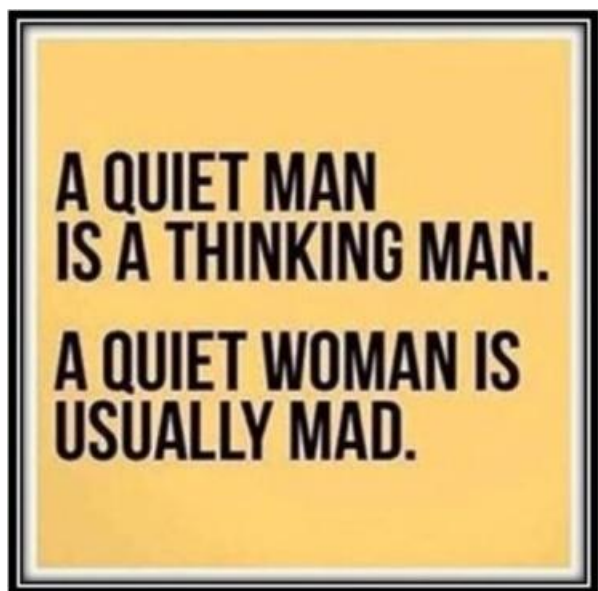
1:- Simply rubbing the inside of a banana peel against your skin will brighten up and tone your skin, help reduce acne, and enhance your glow.

2:- Space smells like a combination of diesel fuel and barbecue, according to astronauts. The smell is caused by dying stars.

3:- There are more than 50,000 earthquakes throughout the world every year!

I haven't lost all my marbles yet ...but there's definitely a small hole in the bag somewhere!!

My wife was moaning at me for watching Qatar vs Switzerland. She said 'I bet you can't even name 3 Qatar players!' I said Eric Clapton, Hank Marvin and Jimmy Hendrix! She went quiet!



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Many happy returns to:

Mr	John	Sewell	15-Jul-27
Mr	Rob	Fry	22-Jul
Mrs	Kayleen	Cooper	28-Jul

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”.

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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.

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