

State President's Monthly Newsletter

December, 2014

President's Retirement

The former State President, Don Rowe, recently committed to producing a monthly President's Newsletter and while I will be sitting in the chair temporarily I intend to keep this initiative alive.

As every member should be aware of by now, Don's immediate and severe health issues led to medical advice to stand down immediately. As a colleague and friend of Don I have been as shocked and saddened as many of you will have been on hearing this news.

We all wish Don, his wife Sally and his family all the very best for the future and we hope and pray that Don has an early restoration to good health and may he enjoy a long and happy retirement.

On Don's retirement it fell upon the Senior Vice President, John Haines AM to step into that role. However with many and varied commitments, such as Chair of the Kokoda Walkway and others and with no warning of the upcoming responsibilities to be thrust upon him, John decided that the burden of travel and twelve to fourteen hour days at ANZAC House amongst other things was too large a burden to carry at this time and decided to step down from the role of Acting State President.

John, however, will retain the position of Senior Vice President and I will personally be reliant on his counsel and guidance through the transition until the results of a by-election are known.

With two vice-presidents remaining and as per the RSL NSW Constitution, a ballot was held by State Council and I am humbled to have received that support until the role is filled permanently.

Election of New State President

Shortly sub-Branches will receive correspondence (Circular 59/14) from the State Secretary as the Returning Officer informing of the election processes we will need to collectively deal with including nominations and the postal voting system under our constitution and I trust that every sub-Branch will exercise their democratic right to vote.

Meeting with the Minister

My very first task on moving into the President's office at ANZAC House was to meet with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator Michael Ronaldson where we talked about a number of issues and I can report that I have conveyed to the Minister the concerns of the majority of our membership over recent government decisions.

Senator Ronaldson was courteous towards men that meeting but as all members would expect, he could give no guarantee that there would be any change of direction.

North Bondi RSL sub-Branch Initiative

One of the great initiatives I have seen recently is the one by the North Bondi RSL sub-Branch with the establishment of their Veterans' Centre at Bondi Junction recently opened by the Governor of NSW, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) in company of several government ministers and departmental heads. I will watch with keen interest to see how this venture progresses and trust that the model chosen will provide a template for further expansion. The opening of the Veterans' Centre at North Bondi is in keeping with our mission, put simply that is of course, to care for the ADF Family; I hope and trust that all members of The League in New South Wales continue to always keep our mission at the forefront of all deliberations.

At this time I would like to wish every member of The Returned and Service League of Australia, their families and supporters all the best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a safe and fulfilling New Year.



Peter Stephenson OAM
Acting State President RSL NSW
Vice-President northern Country