

MORISSET DAY CLUB SOMES TO LIFE

This year we celebrated the first birthday of the youngest day club in our “family” at Morisset. Today they are a productive club where members and volunteers alike have grown into their roles, learnt new skills and made new friends. But it’s not always smooth sailing to set up a day club, and the story of Morisset, is a testimony to the dedication of the volunteers who made it all happen.

The decision to start a day club in Morisset was a sound decision with the Lake Macquarie South RSL sub-Branch and the local community attending a public meeting and all agreeing that a day club would be a great asset to the local community. Enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers attended training conducted by representatives from Department of Veterans Affairs and the Club first opened their doors with much anticipation on Friday 30 October 2014, but where were the members?

Despite extensive advertising through local media, flyers and posters, word-of-mouth, letter box drops of flyers and the volunteers actually knocking on doors and offering to transport to get interested members to the day club there were none that first week. Not to be defeated, the volunteers turned up

each week and opened the doors and waited. They practised planning menus, conducted entertainment and hosted their phantom club day for several weeks. They discussed strategies to attract the members they knew were out there in their community.

After the Christmas break the volunteers decided to renew their efforts as they knew that there was a need for social services in their area. With the ongoing support from Community Support Advisers at DVA and Tom Barnsley the State Coordinator from RSL they put the word out about the club and the first members came through the door. Throughout 2015 the numbers of members has steadily increased and now the Morisset RSL Day Club has 27 members and continues to grow. Congratulations on your first year, Morisset!

There are sixty-eight day clubs in NSW all supported by RSL sub-Branches and Community Support Advisers contracted to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The RSL Day Clubs are run every week by over one thousand dedicated volunteers and attended by nearly two and half thousand members.

The Captain Cook RSL day club at Miranda was the first day club to open

in 1977. The newest club is the Morisset RSL Day Club.

VOLUNTEER AWARD

Grafton’s Big River day club co-ordinator Helen Cashel has been awarded the title of Northern Rivers Senior Volunteer of the Year.

Helen’s work at the day club started when her mother attended the gathering, and as she gained more time, through days off or eventual retirement, the attraction to the group grew. The group starts each Thursday with a cup of tea, and then the day consists of entertainment, craft and exercises.

Helen says her volunteer schedule often keeps her from time to herself, but she is matter of fact about why she chooses to spend her time in retirement to help others.



“It is a lot of hard work, but someone has got to do it, and volunteering is not about me, it’s about helping other people. I’m rewarded because I know that people are happy to come each week, and they get something out of what you’re doing.”

In addition to running the day club,



Members and volunteers celebrating Morisset RSL Day Club’s official opening in 2015.

Helen also finds time to teach mah-jong, is President of View Club, raising money for the Smith Family, Wraps with Love, craft for oncology and assisting the Grafton sub-Branch on ANZAC and Remembrance Days with Poppy sales. The Big River Day Club is fortunate to have a person like Helen to act as co-ordinator.

**Denis Benfield, Hon Sec
Grafton RSL sub-Branch**

VOLUNTEERING AT A DAY CLUB HELPS YOUR SUB-BRANCH AND MEMBERS!

For further information about volunteering in a Day Club contact the DVA Community Support Advisers Sandra Bedding and Cheryl Davey

Email: nsw&actdayclubs@dva.gov.au

www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/activities/day_clubs

Ph: 9213 7225 or toll free 1800 555 254 extension 27225.

For further information about becoming involved in a Day Club as a sponsor contact: Tom Barnsley, State Coordinator, RSL Day Clubs Ph 02 9264 8188

YOUTH CLUBS

RECIPROCAL TOUR REPORT

Our October meeting confirmed the hosting clubs along with planning an itinerary of outings. The final meeting for the year was held at Seven Hills RSL Club on Saturday November 21 at 1pm. We are looking forward to showing our visitors the same great hospitality they showed to our group. The tour in April 2016 was discussed.

We now have a list of the New Zealand tour members. Four management and 24 children-13 girls, 11 boys.

Manager – Mel Kennedy Papakura RSA

Assistant Tour Manager – Judith Chatwin- Howick RSA

Assistant Manager – Wayne Coleman- Titirangi RSA

Assistant Manager – Leo Cantel- Glen Eden RSA

Hosting Clubs are: Hornsby RSL Youth Club, Canley Heights and Fairfield RSL Youth Clubs (co-hosting) and Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Youth Club.

Due to the lack of billets and hosting clubs we will be taking them to Canberra for four Days.

A full itinerary will be ready in the New

Year. Venues we feel that are a must are: Commemoration Sunday, ANZAC Day in Sydney, Kokoda Track, War Veterans at Narrabeen, War Memorial in Canberra and the New Zealand Embassy among others.

The Welcome will be held at the Hornsby War Memorial Hall and the Farewell at Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club.

Kerry and I were invited to attend the Rooty Hill RSL Youth Club 50th Anniversary Dinner. It was a great night. Food and entertainment were tops. Best of all was catching up with those who have worked tirelessly over the years for their youth club and also the support they have always given to the reciprocal visits.

Rounding off the year I attended the Youth Club Eisteddfod at the Hurstville Centre. Unfortunately Kerry was not well enough to attend, missing an incredible day. From the babies to the seniors every routine was outstanding, the costumes again were creative. Full marks to everyone. The tiny tots again stole the show.

Next was to Canterbury Hurlstone Park Youth Club Concert. The gymnasts were first to perform, very clever routines and

costumes and happy, talented children who kept us entertained until the lunch break. The dancing was amazing, all groups from the tots to the teens, everyone danced their hearts out. Again the costumes were amazing as was each number performed.

Full credit to all the teachers and helpers of both venues. Everyone who attended enjoyed the shows.

Last but not least was Gladesville RSL Youth Club Concert, held at The Concourse Theatre Chatswood. Once again we were not disappointed, as with the other clubs the numbers performed were top class as were the costumes. A great way to lead up to the festive season.

I would like to thank all who have supported us over the years, the youth club members, the billeting families and the behind the scenes helpers without whom these tours would not be possible.

We wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy festive season and look forward to what 2016 brings. Until next year, stay safe.

More next issue.

**Esther Kitching OAM JP
Youth Councillor**