

City of Albury RSL Sub-Branch President's Report

For the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday the 15th of March 2026.

It is with much pleasure that I provide the President's report for the year past. Another busy year that has seen the sub-Branch continue to grow and to support our members when several other sub-Branches have been forced to become chapters of larger sub-Branches due to reduced membership numbers. Some, simply because they have not been prepared to accept affiliates as members. Wagga Wagga now has five sub-branches to manage. Together we are strong. Affiliate's play an important role within the sub-Branch. We would not continue to function as a strong sub-Branch in supporting the wider veteran community and our members without the support of our affiliates. I thank all of the affiliates that are members of this sub-branch.

I have been your President since 2013 with a 15-month break in 2018 and 2019.

The make-up of the committee since the last voting AGM has been vital to the continued successful operation of your sub-Branch. Your committee has carried out their duties with distinction, professionalism and with pride across all areas of the operation of the sub-Branch. This has included the maintenance of the building, the lawns and gardens, the kitchen and support for ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and Vietnam Veterans Day. I remain most grateful for their support. I ask members to not leave it to others to lead the sub-Branch into the future, if you are interested in a position, please speak to the Secretary after the meeting and ask how you can assist in directly supporting other veterans.

Another major step forward in supporting our veterans has been the establishment of two volunteer compensation advocates here in ANZAC House. The advocates are Wayne Taylor level four and Wayne McMillan level two. Both are ex-servicemen and already have a client base of over 160. This is now capped until we can expand the facility. This service has seen veterans coming from across the border, down from Wagga and calls from Melbourne, Sydney and South Australia. This is a free service to veterans. Whether you served full time for 24 hours or 24 years, you are a veteran, and each will have perhaps a different entitlement. Make an appointment, it costs nothing to ask. If you have a family member or a friend that could qualify, ask. Do not pay for this service.

ANZAC Day 2025 was very well attended as we were again totally free from the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. The Dawn Service and the 10am Commemorative Services saw very large crowds attending. The 9am street march also saw very large numbers turn out to cheer-on the veterans, first responders and the hundreds of school children. This is a community event that we continue to lead.

In August on Vietnam Veterans Day, we held a service in our memorial garden.

The State Congress was held last year in Tamworth where I voted according to your wishes. I have attended the Wagga Wagga RSL for the Far South Western District Council meetings along with Harry Hacking or Mark Lunnon.

The sub-Branch is always represented, and a report is submitted for each meeting unlike several other sub-Branches. Being involved is the name of the game. At state Congress two years ago, I moved a motion in relation to National Membership which after debate, the motion was passed with an 81% majority and was being processed by state Headquarters. An update on this matter, it has been decided at State not to continue along these lines. A shame, as free membership has simply added numbers but not active members to support sub-Branches.

The Remembrance Day service was held in St Matthews Church on the 11th of November that saw a large attendance. We have now been conducting this service for 13 years in the church away from the problems of previously holding the service in QE2 Square and being subject to the weather on the day and the provision of logistics.

Fund raising last year was very successful given the support that we received from Australian Defence Force Members from the Albury Wodonga Military Area.

Last year we hosted a two-day mental health first aid course with some 20 attending. Later we hosted a safe talk training course on the Monday and on Tuesday a wellbeing support officers course attended by 24 members.

As you are aware, I had been working closely with AlburyCity for four years on a major refurbishment program of the World War Two Memorial Bowl. The project was jointly funded by AlburyCity and the NSW Government. The project has been completed, and we formally opened the refurbished Memorial Bowl in November at a total cost of two million dollars. A truly great outcome for the veteran community.

As an important part of the operation of the sub-Branch, we as a team have conducted several RSL Tributes at funerals when requested to do so by families. This has often included attending funerals of non-sub-Branch members. Occasionally a family may for whatever reason not wish an RSL Tribute and that is their choice. I thank Harry for his support in sharing with me the conduct of these funerals.

If you would like to assist Harry or me with this service, ask as it is an honour to see a veteran farewelled appropriately.

I continue to ask the membership for your assistance with a number of projects across the operation of the Sub-Branch. We need support from members that are retired or working part-time to assist with the front desk. Without your support we cannot continue to function. This is only for 4 hours.

This year I would like to see more members get involved with the Bowls Great for Brains activity held on Thursdays at the Commercial Club.

This is at no cost with bowls being provided, just bring flat soled shoes, a hat and water. At present Harry and Gary are attending along with other veterans and first responders.

Veterans' Health Week was held last month and was a great morning of fun bowls, a chat about healthy eating and lunch and was well attended. We will support Veterans Health Week again this year, so listen out for details and participate.

I remain most grateful for the support freely provided by the committee across many areas of the operation of the sub-Branch, and also the ladies that readily assist in the kitchen.

I congratulate you all for your attendance at our monthly meetings as it is reassuring.

This all goes well for the sub-Branch as members and guests are mixing and socialising.

In summary, a very busy year, but a very fruitful year for the sub-Branch.

The Secretary will inform you about our slow increase in membership.

Throughout the year I have attended many functions representing the sub-Branch and have been invited to attend many others.

Being your President is a privilege.

I said at the last AGM that I will be stepping down this year after 12 years as President however I have been unsuccessful to finding a replacement.

I will ask the Returning Officer to simply extend my appointment through until the 26th of April so I can see ANZAC Day completed.

I will then need to take leave from the sub-Branch whilst I continue to undertake medical treatment.

I submit my report for your kind consideration and am happy to take any questions.

Graham Docksey

15th of March 2026