



THE NAVAL OFFICERS CLUB

MINUTES OF THE 56th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB, MACQUARIE ST, SYDNEY, ON THURSDAY 29th MARCH 2012

The meeting opened at 1105, Vice President in the Chair.

1. Present:

CAPT David BLAZEY, LCDR James BUCHANAN, CAPT Geoff COLE, CDRE John DA COSTA, CMDR Jim DENNIS, CAPT Ralph DERBIDGE, LCDR Mike DOWNES, CAPT Joe DOYLE, CMDR John ELLIS, RADM Guy GRIFFITHS, LCDR John HAZELL, CMDR Nick HORSPOOL, RADM Tony HUNT, CMDR Jerry LATTIN, RADM Fred LYNAM, CAPT Paul MARTIN, CDRE Jim MCKEEGAN, CMDR Ron OSBORN, CAPT Ian PULLAR, CAPT Brian READ, CAPT Kevin RICKARD, LCDR Ron ROBB, LCDR Sam SAKKER, CMDR John SMITH, LEUT Barry SPENCER, CAPT Brian SWAN, LEUT Jim WARREN, CMDR Ron WHITMORE and LCDR Gerry YORK.

(Total 29).

2. Apologies:

LCDR Mal BARRATT, CMDR Ken BARNETT, SBLT Greg BARTELLS, CMDR Col BARTLETT, CHAP C. BAXTER, CMDR Warren BRASH, LEUT Ken BULLOCK, RADM Ron CALDER, RADM David CAMPBELL, CMDR Peter COLLINS, CDRE Ormsby COOPER, CAPT David DALTON, LEUT Judith DUNCAN, CAPT Peter DUNCAN, CMDR Alun EVANS, CAPT Wal FARQUHAR, LCDR Michael FURLONG, LEUT John GILBERT, CMDR Andrew GORDON, CMDR Nat GOULD, CAPT Ken GREIG, CMDR James GUEST, LCDR Henry HALL, CMDR Vic HARVEY, RADM David HOLTHOUSE, RADM Tony HORTON, CMDR Reinier JESSURUN, LCDR Michael KILLINGSWORTH, VADM Ian KNOX, CMDR Peter LAUNDER, RADM Geoff LOOSLI, LCDR Peter LYONS, LCDR Pelagia MARKOGIANNAKIS, CMDR Ian McGUCKIN, CMDR Ian MOLONONY, CMDR Bob MUMMERY, LCDR Selby MUNSIE, CAPT Barry NOBES, CAPT Ian NOBLE, CMDR R.(Jerry) O'DAY, RADM Chris OXENBOULD, LCDR Robert POTTS, RADM Ian RICHARDS, CMDR Les RENFREY, LEUT John RISCHBIETH, CMDR Bill RITCHIE, CDRE Brian ROBERTSON, CAPT Chris SKINNER, CAPT John SKETCHLEY, CMDR Anthony SMITH, CAPT Hugh STEVENSON, CDRE Nigel STOKER, CMDR Andrew St JOHN-BROWN, LCDR Ben WADHAM, CAPT Ian WATSON, CAPT Laurie WATSON, CMDR Frank WOODS, LCDR William WOODWARD, CMDR Peter WRIGHT and LCDR Terry YOUNG.

(Total 60).

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Minutes of the 55th AGM, held on 28th April 2011, were confirmed as presented (distributed to attendees before the meeting).

4. President's Report:

The President's report was delivered on his behalf by the Vice President. A positive report was delivered, summarising the past year's highlights and especially noting the various social events held by all the state divisions, even though a couple of them are small in numbers. It was noted that smaller divisions are sometimes arranging joint events with other Naval groups and this appears to be successful. The flagship event is the Christmas Parliament House lunch, now in its tenth year and always a sell-out. The inaugural 2011 Sydney Harbour Luncheon Cruise was outstandingly popular and the second is planned for 2nd June 2012 incorporating lessons learned from last year. The President thanked the Committee for its work, noting that every member is responsible for some particular activity and all contribute well to the team effort. The Membership Secretary and the Treasurer were commended particularly for their diligent and protracted work in bringing the number of outstanding annual subscription payments down. The report was **RECEIVED** by seconded motion and acclamation. A copy of the report is at the Annex A to these minutes.

5. Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer addressed the annual financial report, copies of which had been distributed before the meeting. The Club's finances are in good order and it is well able to meet its financial commitments as and when they fall due. Accounts are maintained and presented in conformance with conventional accounting procedures. Attention was invited to the independent auditor's statement confirming the correctness of the figures and their proper presentation, noting that last year a new and necessary financial commitment was included in the statement, viz: provision for life membership liability; this will gradually decrease over the next few years and could be amortised by 2016. The report was **ADOPTED** and a copy is at Annex B to these minutes.

/ The Treasurer >>>

The Treasurer was thanked for his excellent attention to the Club's finances and the work he devotes to ensure that reporting and monitoring are of a high order. This appreciation by the Club was supported by general acclamation.

6. Correspondence:

The Secretary reported that there was no correspondence relevant to the meeting.

7. Election of Officers:

All members of the Committee, except the President and Treasurer, (?) were due for re-election. The Vice President handed the chair to CMDR Ron Osborn (Returning Officer) who announced the now vacant positions on Committee. All previous sitting members of the Committee were willing to stand again and, as no other nominations had been received for the relevant positions, the Returning Officer DECLARED the incumbents re-elected. The re-elected Vice President resumed the chair and endorsed this declaration that was supported by general acclamation.

8. Appointment of an Honorary Auditor:

The Vice President advised that CMDR James Buchanan had agreed to continue as the Club's Honorary Auditor and he was nominated for the appointment. Moved, seconded and **CARRIED**.

9. Other Business:

No notices of business had been received by the Secretary but the Vice President invited points for discussion should anyone present wish to raise a matter. Four matters were raised (and allowed by the Vice President) as follows:

- a. CMDR Ron Whitmore expressed again his opinion that, in para 21 sub-para b of the Constitution, the word 'gender' should be plural and the indefinite article 'a' between the words 'signifying' and 'particular' removed. It was explained that this had already been noted and will be corrected in any future reprint of the Constitution but the expense of correcting such a minor error had not been considered worthwhile and the intention is to leave the matter lie for the present.
- b. CMDR Ron Osborn voiced his appreciation of the high standard of the Newsletter maintained by the Editor and this was supported by all present with enthusiastic acclamation.
- c. LEUT Jim Warren, in view of the aforementioned 'liability', asked why the Club persists with the category of 'Life Memberships'. He knew of many similar organisations that had abandoned this avenue of membership. The Vice President, supported by LCR John Hazell, explained that a significant percentage of members had committed to 'life' membership and their confidence in the Club had to be maintained. The present Constitution, and the related acceptance of the financial liability provision, adequately legislate for the continuance of 'Life Membership' as an option for members.
- d. CAPT Kevin Rickard suggested that the Club might consider the possibility of staging a national event of some kind. The Vice President agreed that the idea was good but the widely dispersed membership, and the predominance particularly of NSW Division members, would influence greatly the nature of such an event and its location. The Vice President elected to take the matter up for further consideration and discussion in Committee.

ACTION: Minutes Secretary.

10. Next AGM Meeting:

To be advised in a future Newsletter.

Closure

The Vice President declared the meeting closed at 1150 and the meeting proceeded to lunch..

Confirmed:

Date:

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ANNEX A: President's Report

ANNEX B: Annual Committee Statement and Financial Report (separate document; master in official file).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I apologise for my absence today, but I am leaving you in good hands. I have pleasure in presenting my third report. It has been a privilege working with this dedicated and hard working Committee, who act as a team with all members allocated contributing roles and responsibilities. The Committee for some years has benefited from the continuity, experience and dedication of its members. I believe the Newsletter is excellent, bearing in mind that it is the voicepipe of a social club and cannot be like the glossy, costly magazines or journals of professional bodies - it is self funded, does not carry advertisements and has an honorary editor and non-reimbursed contributors - it is a high-end expenditure item for the Club. I wish to commend the present and immediate past editors for their efforts. The website remains a work in progress but it is shaping up well. Given our existing administrative arrangement, and the high percentage of our members "online", the website will become increasingly important to the efficient operation of the Club. Although, not a member of the committee, James Buchanan, our Hon. Auditor, has provided much valued advice, particularly with our more complicated system since we began accounting for our provision for Life Members.

The new Constitution, which was included in the March Newsletter as a detachable centrepiece, is working well after two years in operation - it is also now available on our website.

Life Membership - Provision for Future Liability

Last year for the first time, we introduced this liability onto the balance sheet to properly record the potential future costs to provide the ongoing service for our life members, numbering just over 300. I repeat my statement of last year, that this liability has no deleterious effect on the current solvency of the Club. This year the Life Members' liability has been modestly reduced by some \$2,240 from \$85,400 to \$83,160. We have been thwarted in our targeted reduction this year to the extent of some \$6,000 by the fact that the Australian Bureau of Statistics increased the life expectancy of the 65 year old male by one year to 84 years of age. While this is good news for many of us, we do not expect such actuarial increases to be a regular annual event, and we still forecast being able to bring the shortfall in funds to around \$5,000 by 2015 and zero the year after.

We have continued to make a profit on most of our Sydney functions, which goes into the Club revenue, and most of that helps to reduce the liability we have to continue to service Life Members.

Annual Subscriptions Received In Advance

John Ellis will shortly present his Hon. Treasurer's report for the year. I would just like to comment on the excellent work done by John and the Membership Secretary, David Blazey, in chasing outstanding subscription payments. This is not immediately obvious from the income statement for subscriptions in advance as at the end of February, however, annual subscriptions received were in fact some \$700 more than last year.

Membership

During the period under report 27 new members have joined the Club. This figure is made up 10 new Life Members and 17 Annual Members (including 5 REOC). This has been offset by 35 losses made up of 18 resignations and 17 deaths. 25 REOCs have accepted Honorary Membership. Life and Annual Members have therefore only slightly declined over the period and total 647.

All Annual Member subscriptions have been adjusted to 1st March to simplify accounting records. Subscription Renewal Notices have now been introduced for Annual Members, and are included in the March Newsletter each year, and for subsequent issues if reminders are required. "Red Spot" reminders are no longer in use.

We have given considerable thought to increasing our membership, particularly younger ones. One of the most successful means is word of mouth, so I would ask everyone to see if they can recruit one or more of their retired naval friends.

REOC

During the year I attended the RANC Graduation in June and Captain Geoff Cole represented me in December, where we presented Club Prizes to the top Officer of each of the three Reserve Entry Officer's Courses, and you will have read about them in our latest Newsletter. About half the graduating REOC's accept the 12 months Hon. Membership, but only 11 percent of these go on to become full members, and very few attend our Sydney functions.

NSW Functions

Our NSW Functions Sub-Committee has focused on post-analysis, desirability, forward planning and delivery, and the social programme has been well supported this year. A mixed luncheon at Victoria Barracks replaced the BBQ's at Penguin. Unfortunately, the Naval messes in the Sydney area cannot compete with Victoria Barracks for convenience, price and quality of food. Our inaugural mid-year Harbour Cruise was a success and this year's one will be longer and better and I would encourage as many as possible to attend and bring your friends. As usual the Parliament House Christmas Luncheon was a great success. I would like to express my appreciation to Ralph Derbidge for his initiative in establishing the Harbour Cruise as an annual event, and the effort he put into organizing it, and ensuring that it ran smoothly. I encourage members to support enthusiastically the social programme to obviate potential losses on events, a number of which enjoy discounted fees that are subject to minimum patronage. The flagship event remains the structured and popular Christmas Luncheon in the Stranger's Dining Room at Parliament House, now in its 10th year. It has been supported consistently by upwards of 200 diners. Part of its appeal to members, guests and their ladies might rest with the "mystery" Guest Speaker, strangely always a noted female.

ACT DIVISION

The Committee of the ACT Division consists of:

Mike Taylor	Chairman and Secretary
Deane Walkington	Treasurer
Viv Littlewood	Assistant Secretary
Bob Ray	Activities Manager

Arrangements. The ACT Division has operated throughout the financial year with a program of social events similar to previous years viz:

- Except for January and October, monthly luncheons at various locations within the ACT.
- A major mid-year luncheon usually onboard the MV Southern Cross with partners and friends at which a Battle Honours presentation is given.
- A major Christmas event for members, partners and friends. This was a Brunch at the Commonwealth Club last November and a similar function will be arranged in December.

In a change of routine, Financial Reports are not now presented each month due to the paucity of funds held; but will be audited and made available at the AGM, and if requested by a member. All functions are self-supporting as are administrative expenses of running the Division. At this date the Division had a very small amount of cash assets in the Division's Commonwealth Bank Account.

Membership. There has been virtually no change to the number of Club members in the ACT Region who are supported by the Division's committee. New members recruited have replaced those who have left the region. The committee currently supports 118 former Naval Officers and widows in the ACT region who are forwarded notices of meetings and functions. Impressively, only 10 are posted letters.

Functions. During the past year nine functions were held. Mostly these took place in a separate dining room at the Southern Cross Yacht Club. The main objective of all meetings is to enhance fellowship and maintain naval friendships.

The annual Battle Honours Cruise on Lake Burley Griffen was held in June. Commander Viv Littlewood RAN (Retired) gave a presentation in two parts on The Fairmiles. The first gave background detail of the history and organization during and after WWII; and then the highlights of the wartime operations of these young crews and their aggressive Commanding Officers. Truly the guerilla force of the RAN. A version of the presentation was included in the Naval Officers Club Newsletter.

Another highlight of the function calendar was at the September meeting at the Yacht Club. Commander David Nicholls RAN (Retired), a member of the Search Sub-Committee of AE1 Incorporated (<http://www.ae1.org.au/about-us.php>) gave a detailed and thorough 40 minute power point presentation on the search for the submarine AE1. The submarine was last seen off Duke of York Island, PNG on 14th September 1914. Plans for a final search continue.

The Division continues to provide functions for members in the spirit mentioned above and averages about 28 - 32 members attending each luncheon. The AGM will be held on 3rd April 2012.

VICTORIAN DIVISION

Once again they had a successful twelve months, with four lunches, the Creswell Oration and the Black Tie Dinner. The numbers at the lunches are steady at around 40 and the Trafalgar Night Dinner at the Melbourne Club a sell out. Unfortunately, because of another function in the Melbourne Club that night they could not fit everybody in who wanted to come and had to go to a first come basis. This year they will try to get a bigger room for this very popular dinner. The excellent Nelson Oration was given by Rear Admiral Robyn Walker. The Creswell Oration Lunch was on the Navy's birthday, the 1st March, in concert with the Navy League of Australia (of which John Redman is also the Victorian President) and the Naval Historical Society at the William Angliss Institute. The Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Ray Griggs delivered a very appropriate Creswell Oration to over 60 members.

QUEENSLAND DIVISION

Queensland Committee

Laurie Watson - President. Relieved by Andy Craig in February 2012

Gary Northern - Treasurer

Alan McIntosh

Mary Lacey

Merv Russell

Jim Burrow

Lucas Skoufa

Wal Farquhar - Sunshine Coast rep and organizer of functions held north of Bribie Island

The committee met on six occasions during the year with other ad hoc meetings as required to finalise event arrangements.

The Queensland Division had an active year in 2011, despite the membership being spread over such a wide area. The "core" numbers in the South East of the state are spread from the NSW border to Noosa, so it is always a challenge to attract critical numbers to a function.

Functions. The Division had three very successful functions during the year. These admirably achieved the goal of maintaining the sense of comradeship and 'connection'. The functions have been reported separately but, in summary:

- The first activity was a sea day in June in the Pumicestone Passage at Caloundra, organized by Wal Farquhar.
- The second was the Trafalgar Night Dinner, held on the 206th anniversary of the battle at the United Service Club. Our guest of honour and guest speaker was the Governor of Queensland, HE Ms Penelope Wensley AC. The Governor, a former diplomat and Australian Ambassador to France, delivered a splendid address which considered the battle and its consequences from 'the other side'.
- Finally, the always popular pre-Christmas lunch was held at Sees Restaurant in Mooloolaba.

Membership. Growth remains a challenge. The Queensland membership grew slightly during the year, but with one exception, all new members were from REOC, whose retention rate is traditionally low. There are many former NOs in the SE Queensland area, but competition from other, often more local, groups makes it difficult to attract them. That said, we will continue our best efforts to recruit more members.

Finally, their grateful thanks to Laurie Watson who has presided over the affairs of the Division in recent years. He will be much missed and Andy Craig is very conscious that he has large shoes to fill!

SA DIVISION

Although numbers have grown from 13 to 19 over the year, the diversification of ages, distances and life styles (working v retired) continues to make a stand-alone NOC function impractical. However, the discussions with other service related organisations mentioned in their last report have resulted in mutually satisfactory arrangements in terms of membership and events. NOC members will be invited to attend appropriate functions hosted by the Naval Military and Air Force Club - Navy League of Australia - Naval Association of Australia and the Adelaide Port Division. When and if the NOC has a function members of those organisations will be invited.

On the evening of 8 July 2011 members were invited to attend a Naval Dining in Night at the NM and A Club. Six officers (some with dual membership!) and their partners attended and enjoyed a most entertaining night.

Alan Ferris and his wife, Gail, representing the NOC, were guests of the Naval Association of Australia (SA Division) at their "Centenary of the RAN Dinner" held at the Adelaide Town Hall on the evening of 17 Sept 2011. The Governor, RADM Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR and Mrs Scarce were guests of honour.

Several members attended a centenary of the RAN, in conjunction with Navy Week, luncheon on Sunday 18 September 2011 hosted by the Navy League of Australia. The then Fleet Commander, RADM S Gilmore AM CSC RAN, was the guest speaker. An invitation to join officers of the Adelaide Port Division at their annual dinner at the NM and A Club on 21 October 2011 was accepted and thoroughly enjoyed by several members. The growing interaction with these officers and the Navy League will, in Alan's view, assist in providing ongoing opportunities for their members to participate in events relating to the RAN of yesteryear and today.

Finally, Alan would like to express his appreciation to CMDR M Doherty RAN, who, as CO NHQ SA, assisted him greatly during his term of office. CMDR Doherty retired in January 2012. Alan will be meeting his successor, CMDR Alan Williams ADC RAN, later this month.

WA DIVISION

The Western Australian Division remains a fledgling organisation, albeit they have managed to have regular lunches and meetings held in alternate months patronised by just a few members. Ideally, they would like to see more members participating but understand the pressures of work and family life.

A highlight of the year was a visit to the WA Parliament House. The visit was hosted by LEUT Joe Francis RANR, the current Member for Jandakot, and included a tour of the Houses and a fine luncheon of Western Australian produce and Margaret River wines. Seven members, four wives and two daughters made up the numbers for the day.

As guests of the Naval Military and Air Forces Club of WA, four members attended a presentation by CDRE Bob Trotter on the 'Finding of HMAS SYDNEY'. A small number of members are also members of the NM and AF Club and Bob Mummery is trying to develop a relationship with the NM and AF Club wherein the organisations can assist one another by invitation to various functions of interest. It can certainly help the building of both.

A visit has been arranged to a private Nautical Museum on Sunday 25 March 2012. Interest in the visit is growing and Bob will forward a report on that visit.

CONCLUSION

Finally, I believe that the Club continues to be in good shape and I move that my report be accepted.

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