

Ladies & gentlemen, welcome to this historic event marking the 90th anniversary of Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch. I would now like to welcome our official guests;

Mr Ray James, State RSL V/President, RSL State councillor, President Ingleburn RSL sub-branch & his wife Pauline, Central Council of Women's Auxiliaries state president.

MR Khal Asfour, Mayor Canterbury Bankstown Council.

Mr John Graham, President, F S M D C.

Mr Alan Barnes, President, Kingsgrove RSL sub-branch

Mr Garry Tonkins, President, Belfield RSL sub-branch & his wife Bev

Mr Ron Duckworth, President, Bass Hill RSL sub-branch

Mr Ken McIntyre, President, C/berry Hurlston Park RSL sub-branch

Mr Ron Jones, Treasurer, Campsie RSL sub-branch & his wife Margaret

Mr Bill Roberts OAM, National President, V V F & his wife Chris

Ms Alice Kang, director of marketing & community relations, Concord hospital

Mr Bruce Pawley, Chairman, Bankstown RSL Community Club & his wife Lyn + directors

Bankstown RSL War Widows

The Vietnamese yellow jacket ladies who are very supportive of the sub-branch as well as the Vietnamese veterans back in their homeland

And of course not forgetting our current sub-branch members and their wives / husbands / partners, etc.

Just ten years after the cessation of hostilities in the Great War the Bankstown Sub-Branch was granted it's Charter & so Bankstown RSL came into being on 17 September 1928, originally founded as a sub-branch by twenty-six returned servicemen from the 1914-1918 war. There were some very lean years of course during the depression where practically all members were unemployed, but they endured.

Membership continued to increase during the thirties but at this stage meetings were being held in member's homes as well as various halls, picture theatre's, shops & offices. The Parish hall in Kitchener Parade became available & a decision was made to purchase it ASAP. However finance was a big obstacle. Hearing of the sub-branches predicament, prominent Bankstown citizen Harry Maxwell came to the rescue & made the necessary arrangements & for the first time the sub-branch had a real home.

After a short time it became evident that the hall was not big enough & it was decided to erect a club room at the rear of the hall. Despite all these setbacks the sub-branch's progress was rapid & the progress was largely due to the Women's Auxiliary which was formed after the sub-branch was established. They willingly assisted at all functions & contributed substantially to the finances of the sub-branch. It was not only Harry Maxwell

but also the Women's Auxiliary who made the purchase of the Parish Hall possible. **Although we don't have a women's auxiliary here at Bankstown any more I would now like to acknowledge some past members here with us today. Pat Fitzpatrick, Yvonne Ribbons, Esther Redgrave & Margaret Oliver.** Now, building progress was interrupted by World War 2 but it was finally completed. Then the blow came. The war in the Pacific was on in earnest & with hundreds of thousands of Americans in Australia & a considerable number of them based at Bankstown airport, Headquarters Eastern Command issued an order effectively taking over the sub-branch premises & within 24 hours the Americans had taken up occupation. They remained for 3 months & upon their departure the R.A.A.F. utilised the premises for the W.A.A.F. (Women's Auxiliary Air Force)

During the war membership steadily increased with the addition of the 2nd world war veterans. The influx strained the resources of the sub-branch to the limit. Practically overnight the membership went from just hundreds to something like 1,600.

In 1952 the committee decided to appoint a full time Secretary-manager. In the latter part of 1954 legislation was passed allowing clubs to apply for a liquor licence, however the sub-branch constitution was not acceptable to the Licencing Court & it became necessary to form a separate club from the sub-branch. So, the Bankstown RSL Club was established on February 16, 1955 & a liquor licence was issued in May of that year with the club commencing operations on May 15.

The expansion of the club was so great that in 1958 the board of management decided to retain the services of architect Edward McKiernan to design the new premises & commencement began in January, 1960 & completed in March, 1961. It must be remembered that it is only due to the foresight of those 26 great men & their women's auxiliary all those years ago which has allowed Bankstown RSL to progress to what it is today.

The Sub-Branch has been a steadily growing part of the Bankstown community now for 90 years and has been an integral part of the Bankstown RSL Community Club for many years. The sub-branch enjoys a great working relationship with the Community Club & I'm sure that Hon Secretary John Woodley & Hon Treasurer Ian Morrison would both have considerably less hair if it were not for all the admin & general assistance that the sub-branch receives from the club staff & I would like to say thank you to the club CEO Mr Scott Dixon for allowing that to happen.

If all goes to plan, in January 2019 The Sub-Branch will move with the Community club to brand new premises on the corner of Marion and Meredith Streets. I'm sure most of you have seen the remarkable progress at the building site. Later on the hotel will be built on top to complete the new premises.

So, ladies & gentlemen, I'm sure you will all agree with me that things have come a long way since those early beginnings. However, having said that we must never forget all the hard work that was put in by our founding fathers & their Women's Auxiliary some 90 years ago.

Thank you & enjoy the rest of the celebrations.