

President's Report for the year 2017

I would like to welcome you all to this year's Annual General Meeting. 2016 was another busy year for our Association as we prepared for our Centenary of Anzac event *Salute to Servicewomen* and our 50th Anniversary Reunion celebrations in July 2017.

Strategic Planning

When the strategic plan was written the number one objective for the period 2014-2017 was to ensure that the association continued to be a viable and effective association for its members. Considerable thought was put into developing strategies and activities to achieve this, our primary objective. The annual report for 2016 continues to show the results of this planning in both our membership figures and our continued work in commemorating the contribution of servicewomen during the Centenary of Anzac.

I believe the association is on firm footing and has a bright future ahead with many younger women now members and engaged with our association. These women will be our leaders of the future.

Membership

End of 2016 service (ordinary) membership stood at 52 compared to 42 the previous year. We had one of these members deceased. Three 2015 members did not renew.

Of the 13 new members that joined in 2016, 5 are navy, 5 army (1 WW2), and 3 air force (1 WW2 UK) bringing the membership breakdown for 2016 to 12 navy, 20 army, 20 air force.

11 of these are WW2, 18 served in the post war women's services only and 23 have served in the period beyond WR service.

Associate members totalled 16 after 2 previous members did not renew.

Our total membership at the end of 2016 was 68.

Meetings

We held 6 ordinary general meetings and an AGM, with an average attendance of 15 (12 service and 3 associates) per meeting which is a 20% increase on average attendance from the previous year.

7 management committee meetings were held during the year with additional planning meetings for *Salute to Servicewomen* and our 50th Anniversary Reunion being held.

Newsletter

9 full colour issues and 2 flyers were produced by Leone Wilson, and were printed by her at the RSL Sub Branch and they continue to entertain and inform the members, and record our association's history.

Website/Facebook

Both channels continue to provide information to members and the general community about the Association, our activities and special events.

Sub Branch Support

Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch continued to provide invaluable support to our association by allowing the printing of minutes, general administrative items, and our newsletter.

We also value greatly being able to hold our meetings here, in the Sub Branch facilities.

Donations & Fundraising

We received \$160 in donations and \$891.05 from fundraising activities. We also raised over \$1000 for our history project, 50th reunion and *salute to servicewomen* which included the very well supported Christmas raffle.

We made the following donations.

Bundaberg Municipal Band \$50. Caledonian Pipe Band \$50. TS Bundaberg ANC \$100.

Commemorations

Our association was represented at the Anzac Eve service at Mulgrave Lodge and tributes were placed at the Bundaberg Citizen's Service, Burnett Heads, Moore Park Beach and the War Nurses' Memorial - where we conducted our service with the support of TS Bundaberg Cadets, Municipal Band Bugler and a piper from the Caledonian Pipe Band. This service was once again well attended by our members, councillors and the public.

We were represented at memorial services held throughout the year, including at Rats of Tobruk, Vietnam Veterans' Day and Burnett Heads Battle of Pozieres Centenary.

We held our Quite Moment at the Servicewomen's memorial at Lions Remembrance Park at the beginning of our Pre-Anzac Day bus trip, and we laid tributes at the Elliott Heads and Bargara memorials.

Veronica Bourke's name was forwarded to the Council of Ex Servicewomen's Associations (Qld) and was read at the annual service held at the Women's Memorial, Kallangur.

We were also represented at the Women's Auxiliary's AGM and War Widows events.

Activities

We had another busy year with a calendar of both social and commemorative activities. Super Saturday was conducted during January and August; we celebrated the Chinese New Year at Hidden Palace in February and had a lunch prior to the AGM in March at the Services Club. Our pre-Anzac Bus trip took in coastal areas from Elliot Heads to Bargara. In June we enjoyed an overnight bus trip to the Outback Spectacular Show and joined in the fun at the Maroochydore Ex Servicewomen's luncheon the following day. A bush BBQ was enjoyed at Gregory River Retreat in September and a mini bus full of members attended and enjoyed the annual Hervey Bay lunch in October and of course we had our Birthday lunch in July which was a riot of colour and fun with Carnivale as the theme. We ended the year with a Christmas lunch at Les Chefs.

Salute to Servicewomen – Centenary of Anzac Project

The association in partnership with Elements Art commenced developing ideas and plans to deliver a significant commemorative event to honour the sacrifice and celebrate the contribution of servicewomen during the Anzac Centenary. The event concept was for a portrait exhibition of women veterans from the Bundaberg district to be held at the WW II Hangar 161 at the airport. The *Salute to Servicewomen* was to be the centrepiece of our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

By the end of 2016 we had received just over 50 nominations to participate in the portrait exhibition from local women veterans. A number of home photographic sessions were conducted by Wayne Poulter in conjunction with association member hosts and were in addition to the scheduled photographic sessions held in August and the special day that was arranged in November.

During the year the event developed beyond just the portrait exhibition to include servicewomen displays, commemorative tributes marking the first time Australian servicewomen were awarded medals for bravery under fire, rolls of honour for Australian servicewomen and two commemorative services; one at War Nurses Memorial and the second at the Servicewomen's Memorial. It was decided to formally combine both 50th Anniversary and *Salute to Servicewomen* events into one week long program of commemoration and celebration.

A grant application was prepared for the costs to produce two Rolls of Honour for Australian Servicewomen – one for indoor occasions and the other for outdoor use. Also to assist fund seating and shelter for the community commemorative service at the Servicewomen's Memorial on 16th July 2017.

A number of members have been instrumental in planning and coordinating various aspects to *Salute to Servicewomen* and in addition to the committee have been working very hard to ensure these special events are delivered to the Bundaberg community to the highest standards we are able. Jeannie Roberts has led the charge with the collection of items for the Servicewomen's display and Gloria Garbutt has created a number of special items for presentations.

History Project

The final stage of the five year history project went into overdrive during 2016 with new stories being received from members and new chapters being written. Our official association history book was named *Mothers, Daughters, Wives - Stories of the Bundaberg & District Ex Servicewomen's Association* and will be officially launched by Air Commodore Sue McGready CSC as part of the official opening of *Salute to Servicewomen* on 7th July 2017. Again you will see how the history project has also evolved, along with the reunion weekend to be a part of the *Salute to Servicewomen* program of events.

I would like to acknowledge the work undertaken by Leone Wilson who dug through 50 years worth of association minutes to write our chronological history. Janet Rasmussen, Jeannie Roberts and Kay Derome were (and continue to be) my "Circle of Knowledge" as they undertook the huge task of editing and fine tuning the book with me. I would also like to thank all the members who submitted their story and photos to the history project.

50th Reunion

Plans were finalized for all aspects of the reunion weekend by year's end. The reunion luncheon on Saturday had to be rearranged and is now to be held at the Sails Room at Across the Waves club – with the *Salute to Servicewomen* exhibition being reassembled at ATW for our luncheon, a big logistical effort by Elements Art and we are very grateful for their wonderful support to the association and to servicewomen in general.

The Saturday Luncheon was named *Salute to Servicewomen, Bundaberg 50th Anniversary Golden Luncheon* to link both our 50th Anniversary celebrations with the commemorative nature of our *Salute to Servicewomen* exhibition and services.

Committee

I would like to thank the committee for their hard work and support during the year. 2016 saw a change in treasurers with Sharon Barsby taking over the reins from Kay Derome. Sharon has been instrumental in getting some fundraising items in place such as our pens and hats to support both the 50th Reunion and *Salute to Servicewomen* events.

Members

I would like to thank all the members and committee who have given me your support during a very busy and challenging year as we work to deliver *Salute to Servicewomen* which incorporates our history project and our 50th Anniversary reunion weekend to the best of our capabilities.

We can all be justly proud of the success of our first Centenary of Anzac events of 24 September 2014, including our revitalization of War Nurses Memorial Park and I also hope we will all be proud of the association's final Anzac Centenary event – *Salute to Servicewomen* to be held over the period 7th to 16th July 2017.

Jennifer Waldron
President
20 March 2017