

Gosford RSL Club proud to receive the Spirit of Anzac Award 2021/2022

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Central Coast, New South Wales Apr 20, 2022 (Issuewire.com) - The Spirit of Anzac Award recognises a club that has made an outstanding contribution throughout the year to its members and the local community which epitomises the sacrifices of those who served in the defence of the nation and in the traditions of the ANZACs – courage, endurance, initiative, discipline, and mateship – values on which our RSL and services clubs were founded.

Gosford RSL Club takes its role as a key community organisation and social enterprise very seriously and always aims to be an active, integral part of the local community. The overall objective of Gosford RSL is to be a financially successful entity so as to continue providing a venue with up-to-date facilities, a safe and enjoyable environment for patrons and to continue to be a leader and contribute to the local community through sponsorships, support, and continued relationships with key local programs. Gosford RSL Club's business values date back to when the club was first formed following the 2nd World War. It was created to provide a place for returned servicemen and women to meet and the RSL

brand has always been a symbol of respect and honesty within the community.

The Club supports the Gosford RSL Sub Branch and is very proud of the heritage and history connected to this wonderful institution and the work that is done to assist and support diggers past and present.

Lest We Forget

Each year the RSL Club funds and assists with organising the Dawn Service, the Anzac Day breakfast, and the Main March. Senior Managers attend the services, hand out programs, assist attendees to their seats and provide transport to the services from the Club.

Management also cooks and serves the complimentary breakfast to approx. 700 members, veterans, and service personnel. Lunch is provided to Sub Branch members, the Defence Force, and Cadets who participated in the march and Kokoda Youth Challenge Trekkers. A contribution of \$10,000 pa.

Gosford RSL is a Major sponsor of Coast Opera Australia's "Salute to the ANZACS"

In the true spirit of ANZAC Day, Coast Opera Australia performed in concert a unique tribute from the grounds of the Central Coast Stadium on April 25th. The performance included the Last Post and The Rouse, music, song, and the Coast's very own award-winning Bush Poet. At sunset, a minute of silence is observed. The concert echoes through the Gosford district, it is a most moving and uplifting salute to our ANZACS.

The club assists with the Annual Remembrance Day Services, providing seating, sound equipment, and transport. A light lunch and refreshments are provided for the Sub Branch members following the service. One minute of silence is observed at 11 am within the Club.

The Club has an extensive display of war memorabilia in the Museum located in the Club foyer. To educate our Members and their families, a War Memorial information kiosk is displayed at the entrance of the Museum. The interactive kiosk presents information on WW1, WW2 the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Modern Warfare, and the Centenary of Anzac.

Gosford RSL is a Gold Sponsor of the Last Post ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial each day. At the end of each day, commencing at 4.45 pm, the Memorial farewells visitors with its moving Last Post Ceremony. The ceremony begins with the Australian national anthem followed by the piper's lament. Visitors are invited to lay wreaths and floral tributes beside the Pool of Reflection. An individual's story is told, and the Ode is recited by Australian Defence Force personnel. The ceremony ends with the sounding of the Last Post.

We're here & we care initiative

Gosford RSL has had a long-standing relationship with Coast Shelter, and contacted them to see what additional assistance they may need during the Covid lockdowns. Unfortunately, their volunteers were in lockdown so they were struggling to provide the meals for the homeless at the centre each day.

Coast Shelter is a not-for-profit charity based on the NSW Central Coast which provides accommodation and support programs for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or escaping domestic and family violence.

Coast Shelter has been operating for 26 years and provides accommodation to over 200 men, women, families, and youth every night. In addition to this, Coast Shelter also coordinates the provision of over 1,000 free meals every week through the Coast Community Centre.

Gosford RSL has been supplying meals to Soul Soup since 2019, another amazing program whose goal is to help the less fortunate on the Central Coast, and were more than happy to ramp it up, even more, to help Coast Shelter feed our homeless. Our team of chefs and staff prepared delicious wholesome meals and delivered them to Coast Shelter 5 days per week.

The Club invited the community to jump on board to 'help us help them'. Donations of any non-perishable / canned food items were being dropped at the contactless donation drop-off point located at the Club entry.

The community response was so strong that the Club was then able to extend the program to help four Community Groups, Coast Shelter, Soul Soup, Mary Mac's Place, and Central Coast Disaster Relief. A total of 1000 meals per week.

Natural Disaster Support

In addition to the support of the local community through ClubGrants Gosford RSL holds annual raffles to assist local communities effected by natural disasters. In 2021/2022 two major raffles were held with over \$40,000 raised for Disaster Relief Australia. Led by Veterans, Disaster Relief Australia seeks to change the narrative around the Australian veteran. DRA improves veterans' well-being by providing them the opportunity to continue to serve communities devastated by natural disasters. In doing so, they are able to regain a sense of purpose and identity not found since their military service. DRA recognises that veterans hold a unique and valuable skill set. Australian veterans are a national asset, and DRA seeks to showcase that to the world.

Staying connected during Covid

The Management Team made a conscious decision to stay connected with its members, staff, and local community during both 2020 / 2021 lockdowns and community restrictions. Many of its members are elderly and rely on the Club for their meals and community interactions. They often comment how the staff is their family, and the Club a home away from home. The Club delivered care packs of essential items to senior members who lived in the local retirement village. The packs were well received but the interaction with the team was what was more important to recipients, who on the most lived alone. A team of staff members was set up to call elderly members to check their wellbeing and offer phone numbers if they needed assistance or had any concerns.

Although the Club was closed to the public, takeaway and home delivery from the Brasserie were implemented. The Club purchased a mobile food truck and set it up in the front carpark as a drive-thru BBQ. This has become very popular and is still operating daily.

To stay connected and offer our community some form of entertainment, online raffles with live entertainment and bingo sessions were LIVE streamed through Facebook. These weekly raffles became more popular than the original in-house raffles, with hundreds of people joining us.

As the club only had a skeleton crew, weekly zoom sessions were offered to keep our staff engaged. The sessions ranged from cocktail making classes, cooking classes, Friday afternoon drinks, counseling workshops, and informative discussions from the CEO to keep everyone up to date.

Supporting our troops overseas.

Gosford RSL has commenced its 3rd year of preparing Care packages for our troops overseas. Staff members donate suitable items and volunteer packing days are held at the Club. These care packs contain various non-perishable items, a letter of appreciation on behalf of all Australians, and RSL Membership contact details. Importantly, these packs are professionally prepared and meet all Defence and host nation transport and import requirements.

Annual Seniors Day

The Club holds an annual free Seniors information Day to celebrate our senior community and encourage them to continue to lead active lives, stay socially connected, and engage in new activities. The day delivers a diverse range of information, services, and opportunities to inspire and educate our seniors on the programs and groups available to them on the Central Coast. Unfortunately, this year due to Covid restrictions we were unable to have the stalls as visitors couldn't congregate, but we were able to offer a free Orchestral concert. The concert was a full house and many commented how it had been

so long since they had gone out, enjoyed a show and connected with friends and the community.

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Gosford RSL Red Cross Blood Donation Group.

A group of staff members including the CEO and Senior Management team is committed to donating whole blood and plasma at the local Lifeblood Gosford Donor Centre. The club allows the team to donate during work hours. It is very rewarding to think every single donation will change someone's life.

ClubGrants

Gosford RSL supports over 30 local associations, sporting groups, and community initiatives through the ClubGrants Program. The two major programs Gosford RSL has funded for many years are the Gosford RSL Max Potential Youth Leadership Program - since 2008 and the Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge - since 2010.

Kokoda Youth Challenge

Unfortunately, the 2021/ 2022 treks could not take place due to Covid. Past trekkers were invited to attend the Anzac Day Service, they laid wreaths and were provided lunch at the Club after the service. The objective of the Kokoda Youth Leadership Program is to influence young people to become positive leaders as a result of their Kokoda experience. The final session of the program involves a goal-setting program that requires participants to make a commitment to achieving a personal goal and a community service goal after they return to Australia.

The trek takes place in the September school holidays each year. The local young adults join many other students from all over NSW and also several from interstate to undertake this arduous walk in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. They follow in the footsteps of those who fought in the Kokoda Campaign. They learn the history of the campaign along the way and pass-through villages where they interact with the local inhabitants. To date, more than 20 local trekkers have been sponsored by Gosford RSL Club to take the Kokoda Challenge and all have found it to be a life-changing experience.

Max Potential

The Max Potential program, an initiative of ClubsNSW, offers 22 weeks of personal leadership development, including coaching, to young leaders from schools, TAFE, universities, and the community to help them maximise their potential during the final years at school and beyond.

Max Potential also encourages students to focus on the local community and ways that they can work to improve it. Gosford RSL Club has been successfully facilitating the program in the Gosford City local government area since 2008.

The young people have an opportunity to impact others and their region through a community project, supported and partnered by local community leaders and networks. Their personal leadership outcomes are publicly celebrated at the final "Showcase" in Sept.

Gosford RSL Club is committed to continuing its contributions to the local community, Veterans' welfare, and the RSL, through sponsorships, support, and developing relationships with key local programs.

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