



Central Coast Branch

December, 2025.

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GREETINGS TO ALL MEMBERS.

What terrible circumstances are now existing in the world, where neighbouring countries are tirelessly engaged in the demolition of their neighbours' facilities, with no concern for the death and injury caused to innocent families. And then, of course, we have witnessed the incredible scene at Bondi beach on Sunday, 14th December. There is no doubt we are located in the fortunate part of the planet where disagreements are at least only on a neighbourhood or community level, bad enough as some of those can be. But, in our small corner of the planet, we are in a position to observe the world at a distance and enjoy the interaction of those closest to us, members of our families and friends. And so we should make the most of the time we have available. Each of us has a time line and we should all be very aware of that fact.

SCHEDULED BRANCH MEETING.

The Branch Meeting was held at the Ourimbah RSL Club, Ourimbah, on Tuesday, 16th December, 2025, commencing at 11 a.m., chaired by Chairman, Geoff Talbot. Geoff welcomed our long absent Member, Ron Dawson, who is usually engaged in other activities filling in his time, and our frequent and much revered visitor, Les Potter. It was great to see them both present at the last Meeting of the year.

A summary of the matters dealt with at the Meeting is set out hereunder.

Attendances:

The following Members, wives and partners were in attendance:

Geoff Bown, Peter Caddy, Ernie Carmichael, Barry and Marj Clark, Bill Connors, Ron Dawson, Peter and Anne Drinan, Bruce and Jan Gibson, John and David

Green, Grant Harridge, Ray Hatcher, Russ Jackson, John and Anne Kent, Bryan Lowe, Brian McVicar, John Marheine, John and Noelene Nicholas, Les Potter, John Roger, Phil Stubbs-Mills, Geoff Talbot, Paul Thomas, Russ Whitcher.

Apologies were recorded.

Deaths.

The names of Members who have passed away since the last Meeting were read out by the Secretary and a minute's silence was observed.

A tribute was also paid to the retired Police officer, Peter Meagher, killed in the recent massacre at Bondi Beach, and the two young Constables seriously injured in that event.

Chairman Geoff also expressed thanks to the numerous Police who attended that scene and eventually overcame the assailants.

The minutes of the last Meeting, held in August, 2025, were read by the Secretary, John Marheine.

Correspondence.

Correspondence in: Nil.

Correspondence out: Nil.

Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer's report was read by the Treasurer, Ray Hatcher.

Russ Whitcher asked the Treasurer how well the balance of funds at the end of this year compared with those of last year. The Treasurer did not have figures from the previous year available at the Meeting but Chairman Geoff said that, according to his recollections, this year's closing balance is similar to that of the previous year. Geoff told the Meeting that the payment of \$8.00 per Member, previously paid to the Branch by the Association, has now been reduced to \$6.00 per Member.

Our OBE Roll Call.

Gents:

Ted Aitken, Keith Rhodes, Bruce C. Doust, Russ Jackson, John Green, Kevin Turner, John Marheine, Noel Murphy, Edward (Mick) Arnold, Wally Maher, Ernie Carmichael, Donald Harding, Bruce Gibson, Bill Ide, Barry Clark, Neil Ashman, Brian Zimmerli, Lawrence Huntington, William Dent, Ernest Benson, Mervyn Lane, Brian McVicar, Tony Thorrington, Paul Dixon, Jim Bonner, Dick Reid, Keith Hockley, John Nicholas, Carl Ripphausen, Bede Irvine, Father Jim Boland, Bryan Lowe.

Ladies:

A. Staunton, Myrlene Hauser, Adele Dale, Pauline Braithwaite, Maureen Groch, Marj Clark, Wilma Walsh, Bev Carmichael, Jan Gibson, Virginia Connolly.

WELFARE REPORT:

Our Welfare Officer, Barry Clark, told the Meeting of those Members coming under notice by reason of their health. Barry said that Trevor Carroll, a long time sufferer of throat cancer, has recently had an MRI which revealed yet another problem and he is to go into hospital after Christmas for exploratory surgery. Barry will follow Trevor's progress and encouraged Members to call Trevor in order to keep in contact.

Barry said that Bill Ide is progressing well in his nursing home situation and would like to come to Meetings but is dependent on Father Jim for the arrangement of transport. Barry said Father Jim is having serious back trouble but has been in hospital recently with breathing problems, due to long term smoking, but he recovered well and now seems to be all right.

Barry said that he had called Neil Ashman on the morning of the Meeting. He said that Neil no longer drives, has a number of difficulties and virtually does not leave his home. He said that Russ Whitcher rings Neil every couple of weeks to keep in touch

Social Club.

Russ Whitcher said that the pre-Christmas lunch at the Royal Hotel at Wyong seemed to have been a success. He said he had looked around at the group during the time we were there and he saw many happy faces. Russ said that he thinks we will hold the occasion at the same location next year, perhaps even trying the new area that has been built at the hotel.

Russ said that much thought has been given to a mid season, or mid year function and he and Peter Caddy will look into suitable locations for such an occasion.

Chairman Geoff mentioned that a presentation was made to Father Jim at the luncheon at the Royal Hotel. Photos of this presentation appear later in the Newsletter. Geoff said that he had asked Father Jim how he was travelling and he indicated that he was going reasonably well, now using a wheel chair but he had an

unfortunate fall in the hotel when he misjudged stairs for a ramp. However, he did seem to have been all right after that incident.

Geoff also thanked members of the Branch's social club for their efforts in trying out new places.

General Business:

Grant Harridge, who lives at Koolewong, gave a dramatic description of the recent bush fires which destroyed homes on the Central Coast, in the regions of Koolewong, Point Clare and Tascott. He said that, whilst his home remained intact, the fires came within 100 metres of his house and he said it was incredible to watch the speed of the fires which destroyed one house after another.

Grant said it had become necessary to evacuate his house and he said that the NRMA had rung to see how they were and, whilst he was talking on the phone, the NRMA arranged accommodation for his family. He said that a short while later, when the fires were out, new power poles were being installed. He said it had been so fortunate that no lives were lost during that time.

Les Potter, our always welcome visitor, thanked those Members who attended his 90th birthday party, joining family and friends at the Pennant Hills Bowling Club. He said that he enjoyed his involvement with our Branch, valued taking part in our functions and he wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Indeed, we look forward to seeing more of Les in the New Year.

Chairman Geoff mentioned that one of our Members, John Green, had turned 90 years of age on the day of our pre-Christmas luncheon, 26th November, and he was at the luncheon with his two sons, David and Michael, David having bought him to the current Meeting.

Russ Whitcher thanked all Members present for their support and expressed best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Russ also mentioned his meeting with Les Potter's son, Geoff, now the principal of the new Gosford library. It has been suggested that, at some time in the New Year, one of our Meetings could be held at the library. Chairman Geoff said that Geoff Potter has told him that there are nine large meeting rooms in the library building, in addition to the library itself. A Meeting at the library would indeed be an experience, and would involve a tour of the library.

Our long time Member, Ron ("Smokey") Dawson, said that he does not get to our Meetings very often because of other commitments. He is particularly involved in the Bateau Bay men's shed which meets on Tuesdays but had closed down early this year allowing him to attend the Meeting.

Whilst on the subject of sheds, Paul Thomas, who lives at Woy Woy, said that a new shed is being built for the West Tigers and he thought this might be of interest to Members.

Bill Connors thanked the committee for the work they have carried out over the last year and he wished everyone well for Christmas and the New Year.

Peter Caddy proposed that our Branch should send a letter to the Commissioner of Police, acknowledging the response of Police to the incident at Bondi on 14th December, 2025, and also expressing our condolences for the loss of life. This proposal was made into a motion by the Chairman, Geoff, and was seconded by Bruce Gibson.

John Green said that he had been absent from Meetings for a long while, he said that it was good to be back and he wished everyone the compliments of the season. John's son, David, apologized for their late arrival to the Meeting.

Peter Drinan also conveyed his best wishes for the season and said it was appreciated being among colleagues at the Meeting.

Brian McVicar thanked those Members who regularly assist in the preparation of food at the sausage sizzles. He made the point that we are all getting older and that we need younger Members. However, there was then some discussion about ways to attract younger Members but, despite the number of retired Police living on the Central Coast, there is a lack of willingness to become involved in older groups. Brian said that he had brought gifts for the ladies which he would distribute later.

Brian said that there are at least 1,000 retired Police living on the Central Coast and he has previously sent letters to each retired officer in the hope of encouraging them to join our Branch but this was not successful.

John Marheine told Members that, since the last Meeting, it had become necessary for him to buy a new stapler and a hole puncher at a total cost of \$16.00, and he asked that he be reimbursed for the purchase of those items. It was agreed that the relevant amount would be reimbursed to the Secretary.

Chairman Geoff told the Meeting of the commencement of a new email system, "Dream Host", and he encouraged all Members to go onto it. However, he said that he has now been engaged on the system for 6 months and in that time has received only three emails. Geoff said that he would encourage Members to engage with the Retired Police web site, www.retiredpolice.com.au and then click on "Branches". He said that there are some significant benefits available to Members: Jax Tyres being one organization providing discounts, Viking Cruises is another. Amplifon is another. He said there are quite a few benefits advertised and Members should check to see what is available.

The raffle was won by John Green, with No. 22.

The Meeting closed at 11.51 a.m.

Sausage Sizzle.

What a wonderful day it was. Tuesday, 18th November, 2025, at the Valley Tavern at Niagara Park, where a dedicated team of operators gathered under the guidance of Head Chef, Brian McVicar, to provide their specialty, the unequaled production of great food.....of course, mixed with great friendship and conversation. The outcome was indeed a tribute to those who prepared it. It has been said many times before: if you missed it, serves you right. Try again next time. The following photos show the happy team who gathered at the Valley Tavern for yet another great day.



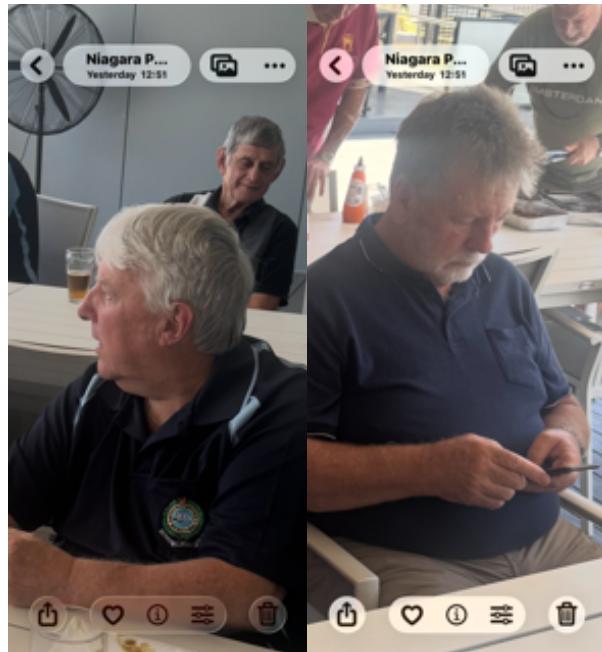
And there he is, Head Chef Brian McVicar, about to take his place at the helm. And, in the second photo, he is organizing the start of proceedings, with able assistant, Geoff Bown, ready to take over when necessary.



And here's the happy group. L to R: Geoff, John, Bill, Bruce.



And more yet. L to R: Michael, Barry, Barry, John.



And others completely distracted. L to R: Peter, David.



Warning from Russ: BEWARE!!! The next photo shows the terrible, horrifying, never to be trusted, hired assassin.....with poor old John Roger sitting innocently in the background.

And Head Chef Brian does have other talents. The following is a clear demonstration of his incredible abilities.

The original meaning of a deck of playing cards;

52 cards for 52 weeks in a year.

2 colours representing day and night.

4 suits for the 4 seasons.

12 court cards representing the 12 months in a year.

If we add each of the cards, (ace + ace + ace + ace + two + two, etc., including the jokers, we will get 366, the number of days in a leap year. (How about that!!)

FIRST AID AND RESUSCITATION INSTRUCTION.

On Wednesday, 19th November, 2025, a group of dedicated personnel attended the lecture for First Aid and Resuscitation methods conducted jointly by our Chairman, Geoff Talbot, and Bill MacLean, a retired fire officer, who now conducts regular lectures, at the Ourimbah RSL Club. The instruction provided by both gentlemen was extremely helpful and enlightening and was most appreciated by those in attendance. If the information provided assists in the saving of one life, then the occasion was well worth the effort.

The photo below shows those who attended with Bill MacLean speaking.



The Ladies Coffee Club.

And how wonderful it is to see the girls all decked out in their festive season finery, ready to prepare for the summer festivities and the challenges they will need to face in the coming year, now not so far away. Well, they've managed us and cared for us through the years, they surely know how to do it with grace and we are forever thankful for the efforts they have made. We can only look forward to the care and supervision continuing. We are all now aware that our time on the planet is not never ending, though in those earlier years when we thought we were invincible, we may have thought so, but we must appreciate the efforts those girls have made, over the years, for our benefit, and do our best to acknowledge and reciprocate. Particularly as they wait so patiently for the Meetings to finish so they can order lunch.

The ladies of the Ladies Coffee Club would like to thank our Chairman, Geoff, and his able assistants, for the provision of food, drinks and good will on particular occasions during the year. It has been greatly appreciated and we wish them all well in the coming year.

MR POTTER'S BIRTHDAY PARTY.

What a wonderful day it was. A huge gathering of family and friends attended the Pennant Hills Bowling Club, on 22nd November, 2025, to celebrate the 90th birthday of one of our closest and most respected friends, Les Potter, who, whilst not a Member of the Central Coast Branch of the RFPA, is one of our frequent visitors who is always welcome at our gatherings.

The following photos show Les receiving a presentation from our spokesman and presenter, Russ Whitcher, and the later photos show Les displaying the folder which included a photo of him in uniform in the early days of his Police career.









Here Les is seen displaying the folder whilst wearing the gold necklace, the symbol of our esteem, flanked by daughter, Christine, on his right, and son, Geoff, on his left.

THE CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON.

On an extremely hot day, Wednesday, 26th November, 2025, the happy group of Central Coast Members, with some family and friends, gathered at the Royal Hotel, at Wyong, for the annual Yuletide get together. And what a great day it was. Apart from the fine food provided at this hotel's restaurant, we were certainly spoilt by the airconditioning inside which made the day even better. It was good to see so many in attendance at this busy time of year.

Below is a photo showing our Chairman, Geoff, shaking hands with our much loved Father Jim Boland after Geoff had presented him with a plaque acknowledging his service in his role as chaplain and first responder. Whilst we know that our Father Jim has not been in the best of health in recent times, it was good to see him fit and able to get around with his machine, very ably assisted by his friend, Carmen. (And no, Geoff doesn't have a halo. That's a reflection from a sky light.)





Above is a photo of the plaque presented to Father Jim. The endorsement reads: "For significant voluntary service with Retired and Former Police Association of NSW".

And yet another photo of Geoff with Father Jim. We wish him good health for the future and hope to see him at many more functions.



And yet another birthday.

On the following page is a photo of our esteemed Member and ex-Cadet, John Green, who celebrated his 90th birthday on the day of the luncheon. And he's looking pretty fit for all those years.



And John is seen with Michael, one of his two sons present at the luncheon. The other son, David, is seen in a later photo.



And yet another photo of John sitting at the table with John Roger.



And here they are!! Well, some of them anyway.







And there she is, at the end of the table: Marj Clark, who turned 101 years a few days before the luncheon. And she looks fitter than most, (if not all), of the rest of us.

THE WEB SITE.

Members are advised that they should check the Central Coast web site from time to time to see what messages may be displayed. The connection may be made as follows:

www.retiredpolice.com.au

Then click on “Branches” seen in the top right hand corner. Then click on “Central Coast” and scroll down. Apart from messages advising of up coming events, the latest Newsletters can also be seen on the site.

THE CALENDAR.

20th January, 2026. Sausage sizzle at the Valley Tavern, Niagara Park.

17th February, 2026. General Meeting at the Ourimbah RSL Club, Ourimbah.

17th March, 2026. Sausage sizzle at the Valley Tavern, Niagara Park

21st April, 2026. General Meeting at the Ourimbah RSL Club, Ourimbah.

19th May, 2026. Sausage sizzle at the Valley Tavern, Niagara Park.

16th June, 2026. Annual General Meeting, at the Ourimbah RSL Club, Ourimbah.

And what does the future hold.

Well, Summer has started, with all the good things and bad that it brings: Bush fires, floods, tornadoes, drunken driving and, as if that weren’t enough, we have countries at war with each other, indicating that mankind has never learned from history. Here on the Central Coast, things are a little more peaceful, with only the occasional emergency siren within our hearing and weather which is comfortable – in the most part. And so, with peaceful conditions all around, we should consider ourselves blessed, make the most of each day and acknowledge the efforts of those closest to us. Our time on the planet is limited, we need to make the most of that which is available to us and never forget those who have gone before us. Let us hope that our future brings all those things most desired.

With best wishes for the festive season to everyone.

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