ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY BAND ASSOCIATION

THE POSTING

ISSUE NO 01, JAN-MAR 2025

EDITORIAL: Errol Hatch

Welcome to 2025 and another year in the life of the association. I hope your festive season went off without any hiccups and you are all looking forward to 2025. On reflection of 2024 we had a typical reunion year with plenty of correspondence with members attending the reunion and the Veterans band put tie final touches on the program and band configuration.

We were saddened by the loss of members through the year but definitely not as many as past years. Health is now on the mind of all of us (well I hope it is) and the well being of our association is paramount to it's survival. As I read through our "WAY BACK" past editions of our newsletters and see names of members no longer with us it saddens me to think that no matter how hard we go about recruiting more ex's into the association the majority are going to be in the senior category.

The start of our association brought us hundreds of members over a short period and to duplicate this is not achievable but we will give it our best shot. Not much correspondence happened through January to March but there is enough to make interesting reading for you.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

Errol.

WAY BACK (PAST EDITIONS)

FEBRUARY 1997

This edition had over 30 pages of great articles and photos but contained at the end a questionnaire on whether you would likely attend the next reunion which was to be in Perth in 1998. It was also interesting to note that subs were $15.00 which in todays money is over $50.00. It also asked about attendance to the 2000 reunion in Sydney and your likelihood to attend.

I found the most interesting comment was the President advising that more members were getting access to the internet and emails becoming a form of interaction.

Great photo of the RAN massed bands in 1961 in St Kilda with George Hooker and LMUS Bill Farrell as Drum Major.

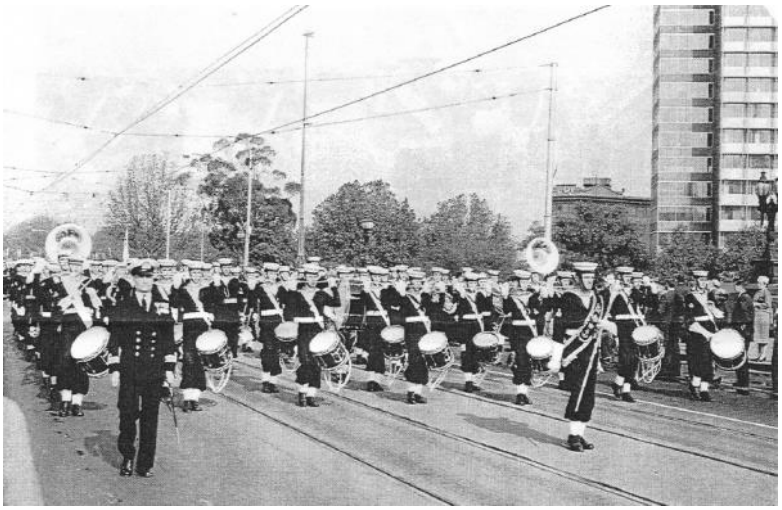
It is either a Trafalgar eve or Coral Sea march, whichever, massed band photos are rare to have.

The more I read these past edition it is important than ever that we keep these protected for prosperity as they are full of history of the Band. I will as usual attach this copy with this latest edition of our magazine.

MASSED BANDS, ST KILDA RD MELBOURNE, circa 1961. Probably TRAFALGAR EVE OR CORAL SEA MARCH.

LCDR George Hooker, LMUSN Bill Farrell, Drum Major.

Tenor Drums, Don Buntine and John Roche, front rank drummers include Ron Kirkwood, Speed Halliday, Ollie Grieve, Richie Watson. 2nd rank L/R Stretch Buddle, Jim Hawkins, Michael Higgs, Graeme Wright, Rob Himbury & Neville Jones (far right). Bass Drum looks like Moose Jeff. The only other I recognise is Phil Hopkins, trombone.



PRESIDENTS REPORT

It's a little harder now trying to dissect my thoughts into individual roles I'm responsible for. As President it has been six months already and I feel I have not offered any real insight into the direction I think the association needs to head.

That word association is actually my dilemma. In previous newsletters I have focused on increasing our membership in the association but even membership carries a indication that you have to give something to be a member. My whole train of thought is to get ex's involved in our association without the constant financial burden.

We did that at our AGM in October , removing the subscription to be a member so to increase our ranks. So our task in 2025 and beyond is to introduce ex's to our association either through emails, website or our social pages. Its not hard to explain our motivation in getting everybody to be a part of this group, having a central source of all things ex-Navy Band is a good cause to pursue.

Our RAN Band Association facebook page boasts over 250 members and the Veterans page about 225 so the question is how many of our members don't visit or are not facebook fans.

This question is part of a survey that will be conducted in future editions. I suggest from our listed membership there is at least another 50 to 75 that are not facebook users. That gives us over 300 ex-bandies in total in our group which is excellent.

The release of our next reunion in 2026 will be a good test. The invite is to all ex-Bandies and relatives of past members. It would be great if we can get numbers up to our 2000 and Victorian reunions to Adelaide and that would be a good stepping stone.

I also notice in our past newsletters the executive did advise future locations for reunions. I would like to put forward an idea for future reunions in another edition.

Enjoy the read.

Errol.

PERTH MEMORIAL OPENS

On the 1st of March a stunning memorial to HMAS Perth and its crew of 681 was opened in Perth by the Governor Chris Dawson and his wife Darrilyn. At our AGM in Launceston last year Bill Farrell put forward a motion to donate to this memorial. The meeting agreed to donate $500 to this significant cause. The result of ours and hundreds of other donations is a significant memorial to the hundreds of men who died when HMAS Perth was sunk in 1942.

In acknowledgement of the sacrifice of the fallen, the Governor passed on this message to the families of those killed, and the team who made the memorial possible.

"83 years ago on this day, of the 681 men aboard the HMAS Perth (I) – including personnel from the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal Australian Air Force, and four personnel from the ship's canteen – came up against seemingly impossible odds. Just days before in February 1942, despite a valiant engagement during the Battle of the Java Sea, the HMAS Perth had already been largely exhausted of ammunition and fuel.

And now, sailing alongside the USS Houston, just after midnight on March 1, 1942, they were steaming in the Sunda Strait, between the islands of Sumatra and Java, Indonesia. The intelligence had not been sufficient and the ships came up against not just another foe. But an entire Japanese landing fleet.

A Japanese aircraft carrier, a seaplane carrier, five cruisers, and a flotilla including 12 destroyers and 58 troopships. Despite the exhaustion from the previous battle, and the slenderness of the chances of victory, HMAS Perth, her captain and crew put up an astonishing and gallant fight. At times, so close to the Japanese fleet they could see their foe firing the four-inch guns aimed at them.

Only when HMAS Perth's guns were depleted, and they were left with just flares to fire back, did Captain Hec Waller DSO try and turn for safety. And even then, it took multiple direct hits before he made the call for his ship to be abandoned."

ADELAIDE 2026 SUMMARY

A fair amount of correspondence has passed between myself and the now confirmed committee in Adelaide and in the following pages I'm confidant that we have the makings of a great weekend in Adelaide.

This will be my first as President so I'm under pressure to help get it right and I'm looking forward to the task. The team in Adelaide are veterans in reunions also having held it in Adelaide previously.

The involvement of the Veterans Band is now always a consideration in a reunion but has not been deployed in the criteria for this reunion. We will save the band for a major event if and when comes to hand.

One of the questions ongoing with reunions is it necessary to have a state burdened with the requirement to hold it or do we find a location(s) that is affordable, easy to get to from around Australia and has the ability to accommodate the Veterans Band. Your thoughts regarding this is always welcome as part of our Adelaide presentation. More so than ever the cost to get to a specific location is a determining factor as our association is aging and easy travel is a priority when deciding to attend a reunion.

I look forward to your response to the program for the weekend and your answers to the questionnaire.

Errol Hatch/Doug Drysdale/Roger Downton.

WEBSITE/FACEBOOK/EMAIL UPDATES

Hi Errol,

I had a call from Roger Hure (bassoon - 1950's -60's) yesterday after I left a message on his answering machine about the passing of Melody Pleass some months back and he had just retrieved it.

He told me he is in reasonable health for a bloke in his mid 80's and that his wife had passed away some time back. Roger was looking forward to a cruise departing in the next few weeks.

I didn't serve with Roger but knew of him through other members of our Association.

Cheers

Jim

WA update

I have been corresponding with Ted Tait (RAN Band Reserves) who has taken up the mantle along with Bill to keep our sandgroper group in the loop. Ted has committed to help increase our membership in WA and we know there are potential ex's there to contact.

They did have a Christmas lunch but unfortunately I didn't receive any happy snaps to record the event. But some members did have a impromptu meet up for coffee in February to discuss things going forward and generally have a relaxing morning. A good start to a year for our Western Australian members.

From left Peter Cobb, Bill Farrell, Andrew "Andy" Rourke, Ted Tate, Robyn (Andy's better half) Brian Horlock.

The photo was taken by Bill's daughter Sally-Anne.

Gordon "Pud" Jackson

Recently I took a small trip to Sydney and met up with old Albatross mate Brian Torrens. I stayed at the Coronation hotel in Park Street, couldnt get more central, close to Town hall and Criterion hotel.

My window looked onto Park Street and at 4am there were still people walking about (talk about city that doesnt sleep). I was most impressed by the light rail that runs along George street from Cental station to Circular Key which I used quite a bit. We had a great time and I got to Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo which I dont think has changed that much since the 60s, nore has Torro changed that much.

cheers,

Gordon Jackson

WEBSITE/FACEBOOK/EMAIL UPDATES

Dave O'Meara April, facebook

The 50 year reunion! In Mudgee, I caught up with my old oppo Ian 'Boma' Browne and his wife, Lorraine. 'Boma' and I were at HMAS Cerberus from 1973-74 and then shipmates onboard HMAS Melbourne in 1975 where I had the bunk above him. Hadn't seen each other since 1975 and it was great to catch up.

Blue McNally February, facebook

Great to catch up with these legends for lunch at Mooloolaba surf club. Paul O'Hara, Sammy Samson, John and Cathy Granger, Ken and Sue McCallum, Gary and Chris Sander, John and Gloria Bloom, Gary and Chris Krause and myself and Gail.

Should be more of these.

Blue.

Doug Antonoff forwarded on behalf of Jim Hawkins.

Hi All,

This is not an update as such but a post I am trying to get on every ADF or personal social media platform. The information is important if you believe you have been or are being ripped up by any ADF superannuation scheme. Military Superannuation. Thanks to the efforts of Senator Jacqui Lambie the Senate Finance and Public Administration Reference Committee are about to commence a wide-ranging review of ADF superannuation schemes. This is an opportunity for ex-service organizations (ESO"s) and individuals to make submissions on any of the ADF superannuation schemes. How delightful it would be if all serving and ex ADF members could be represented by ESO's singing from the same book. Alas that will not happen, everybody involved in ADF superannuation schemes should ask their ESO to provide them with a clear statement of what their intentions are. If we are not heard by this committee we will never be heard.

The Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc (ADFRA) have developed a facts-based submission on DFRDB. Our research spans many years, and we are confident the facts presented regarding DFRDB should flow on to other schemes. Due to procedural restrictions, we are not permitted to circulate our submission until it has been accepted by the Senate Committee. Basically, our goals are to have restoration of full retirement pay on the attainment of life expectancy for those who commuted, Have Fair indexation applied to the period 1977 to 2014 and to remove the "notional rate" from the Act for those that did not commute, and this would flow on to spouses pensions. You can read about ADFRA's efforts at adfra.org and you may consider taking up the offer of free membership.

We currently have about 5000 signed up members but we need more to make the pollies listen, We need serving and ex ADF members to sign up and give us the numbers. Membership is open to anyone who believes Governments have for too long neglected the post service conditions dished out to those who committed to military service.

There could be outcomes for every member of the ADF since 1 October 1972 and every serviceman/woman needs to be made aware of this.

Regards, Jim

It's official, Adelaide will host the RAN Band Association reunion from the 8th through to the 10th of May 2026 at the Lakes Resort Hotel, West Lakes. The invitation is to all association members, ex-bandies nation wide, permanent members and partners and family members of our past colleagues. It is a wonderful opportunity and an invitation for those not previously association members to join us in a wonderful weekend of social events.

The Lakes Resort Hotel situated on the beautiful West Lakes (30 minutes from Adelaide) offers the perfect venue for all our activities be it our get togethers or the great tours that have been organized for you. Accommodation overlooks the lakes with seaside views also, great restaurants and a massive Bar for our catchups at the end of the day or to just enjoy a quite ale or wine with mates. Beach side caravan parks are only minutes away and the airport is 15 minutes down the road. The West Lakes Westfield shopping centre is across the road and public transport is available to the city centre.

Your committee has looked at all aspects of the weekend to make it a stress free experience for you and we are confident you will enjoy the location and leave Adelaide with a satisfied taste for the next reunion. What are we offering is a affordable reunion with the official functions within the resort and tours leaving from the main entrance of the hotel. Parking for those travelling by car is free and abundant at the resort. We will be providing a shuttle bus that will be utilized for guests and run by volunteers to ferry you to the city and to some of our tours.

We are excited to provide you with a interim itinerary of the weekend. Final pricing and a the official booking form will be released shortly. We have a questionnaire that we would like you to send to us so we can get a feel of the numbers. Email admin@ranbandassoc.net your answers or any questions you might have with regards to the weekend.

As we do not have association membership anymore the reunion will have a registration fee of $25.00 per person which covers all administration costs listed in the following programme.

On your arrival at the resort you will be handed a ***reunion welcome pack.*** This will contain the weekends itinerary, Name Tags, tickets to the Cocktail Party, tour tickets (if booked) and the official lunch. These tickets are specific to you as they also have numbers which are draw numbers in the two raffles (covered in the registration Fee) on the Friday and Sunday and get you entry to the functions.

So what do we have in store for you.

THURSDAY 7TH OF MAY

Guests arriving Thursday can enjoy the facilities of the resort. Our special room rate covers Thursday also. Your ***reunion welcome pack*** will be at reception or if staying at another location will be available from the Bar from 4.00pm Thursday.

FRIDAY 8TH OF MAY

Guests arriving will receive their ***reunion welcome pack*** at reception as stated above.

6.30pm: The Meet and Greet cocktail Party $38.00 a Head

The party commences in the Lakefront Banquet room. An open bar is provided for Beer, Wine, Soft Drinks and Tea & Coffee for the first hour (Covered in your registration Fee).

7.30pm: Welcome Speeches by the executive and committee.

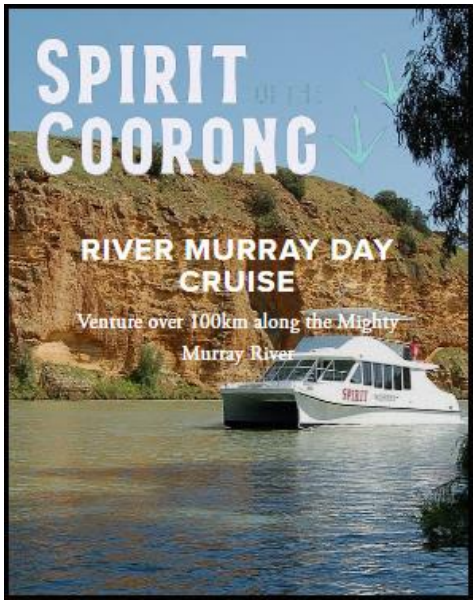
7.45pm: Grazing tables with sumptuous servings will be available for guests to help themselves. Tables & chairs along with Bar tables will be located around the room for you. Bar is open for members to obtain their own drinks.

9.00pm: Food winds up and the evening concludes. Guests are welcome to make their way to the Lakes Bar (Next door) to continue to socialize and enjoy the evening.

The Knots Kitchen is open for those that would like to sit for a coffee or a light meal if still peckish. A limited menu has been made available to guests by the hotel.

SATURDAY 9TH OF MAY

Saturday has been set as a free day for you to take up the organized tours with other guests and enjoy a relaxed day together or you can organize your own day.



The exclusive tours for the reunion currently include the following.

7.00am: Murray river cruise on the Spirit of the Coorong.

This amazing tour is great value. You depart by coach to Goolwa for a 8.30 departure on the Spirit of the Coorong. Enjoy morning tea as you cross Lake Alexandrina into the mouth of the mighty Murray and make your way up to Murray Bridge where you are met by your coach for the return trip to the Hotel.

This fully guided tour includes morning tea and a sumptuous lunch and is a wonderful experience for those that have not been on the Murray, The wildlife and scenery is spectacular.

Price per person $175.00 all inclusive (worth every cent)

8.30am: Day tour of the Barossa Valley with Real Aussie Adventures.

This tour is limited to 24 guests so you will need get in quick when the booking form is released. Picked up at reception at the Lakes Resort Hotel we make our way up to Chateau Yaldara to start your 4 winery tour. You'll enjoy a extravagant platter lunch then visiting the spectacular views of Menglers hill. Your last winery will be Lindsay wines before making your way back to Adelaide returning around 5.30pm.

Price per person: $169.00 all inclusive

10.00am Adelaide/Hahndorf/Birdwood Motor Museum tour.

A small tour group of 12 taking in the Adelaide circuit then up to Mt Lofty lookout, a walk through the historic Hahndorf with morning tea before visiting the famous Birdwood Motor museum. Lunch at the famous Bloomberg Hotel for a good old pub lunch before motoring back through the Adelaide hills.

Price per person $89.00 all inclusive

For guests not participating in the tours there will be a shuttle bus throughout the day to the city centre, so check the timetable in your ***reunion welcome pack***.

BACK AT THE RESORT

6.00pm: Happy Hour

The Lakes Bar is where you need to be for the happy hour where we can meet up with everybody and discuss the days events.

7.00pm: Free Night

The evening is free for guests. You might like to arrange dinner with your mates or you are free to enjoy the evening. There are some great venues in the city or some to die for seafood restaurants in Glenelg which is just down the road. There might even be a AFL game at the famous Adelaide oval. We will highlight events as we get closer to the reunion date.

SUNDAY 10TH OF MAY

9.30am: The Association AGM

The AGM will take place in the annex at the Lakes Resort Hotel. All registered members are welcome. To be a member of the association now we only need your email address, phone number and a very brief history of your band service for our administrative requirements .The executive will be advising of future reunion locations and proposed dates along with other business matters.

10.00am Morning tea

Morning tea in the Mr Neptune's cafe for those that are not involved in the AGM. For those checking out your baggage can be stored until it is time to depart for your return trips.

12.00pm: RAN Band Association Official Lunch $68.00 a Head

Doors open to our official lunch and with your tickets you will be accompanied to your table. The bar will be opened for drinks and a sumptuous two course lunch will commence at 12.30pm. We will be entertained by a small group from the RAN Reserve Band Adelaide (To be confirmed)

Speeches, Raffles and a major door prize will be drawn through the afternoon as we enjoy the view and company from the Lakeside Function Room.

The lunch will draw to a close at 4.00pm and guests can continue to socialize at the Lakes Bar.

We hope we have provided you with enough choices to make your weekend a memorable one. The questionnaire attached will give us an idea of prospective numbers for the weekend and whether we need to increase our tours.

We look forward to your responses.

The organizing committee.

Accommodation

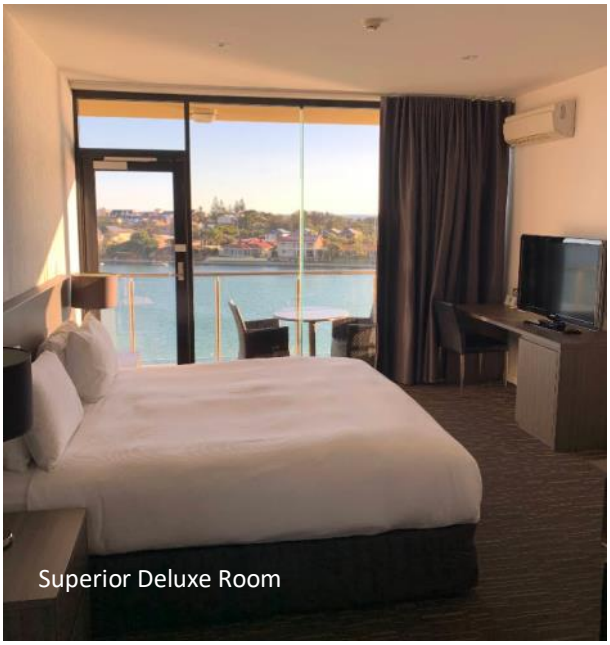
The Lakes Resort Hotel has over 72 four and a half star rooms and offer 2 room types. They have provided event rates for the association over the weekend.

Superior Deluxe Room: (All rooms overlook the West Lakes).

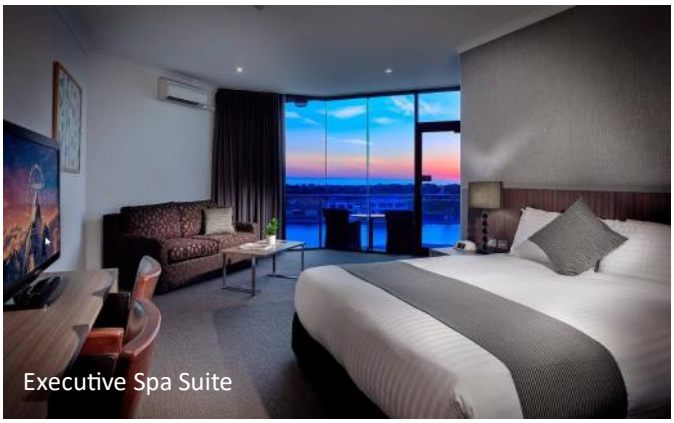
Room Rate $175.00 ***This includes a full breakfast for two guests***

Executive Spa Suite:

Room rate $200.00 ***This also includes a full breakfast for two guests.***



Superior Deluxe Room



Executive Spa Suite

2026 REUNION QUESTIONAIRE

This questionnaire is for the organizing committee to make sure we can provide the best experience over the weekend and that we have allowed enough venue room for all our guests.

Name ……Partner/Wife's Name……

Mobile No:……..Email Address……..

Please Circle your answers and return by email to: admin@ranbandassoc.net with responses. I would even welcome a call on 0400 706 503 so we can chat about the weekend.

1) Are you likely to participate in the 2026 Reunion……..YES……..NO

2) If you have a partner, will they also join you……..YES……..NO

3) How would you likely travel to Adelaide……

4) If by Caravan can we help book with other travelers.……..YES……..NO

5) Are the tours of any interest to you……..YES……..NO

6) If YES which one is of main Interest……..

7) Is there any tours that you might suggest if what we are offering is not of interest.

……

8) Will you likely stay at the Resort……..YES……..NO

9) Your suggestions regarding reunions generally……

……

10) Would you like to have the Veterans Band perform at future reunions……..YES……..NO

11) Would you participate in the Veterans Band performances……..YES……..NO

12) If YES, What instrument would you be playing……

Note: Not all locations can accommodate a Veterans Band involvement. The logistics Involved in rehearsal space, support from locals and a reason for the performance are vital factors for a successful reunion with the band.

Email: admin@ranbandassoc.net **Phone:** 0400 706 503

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SA: Roger Downton
TAS: David Hardstaff
WA: Ted Tait/ Bill Farrell

RAN Veterans Band/Events Manager:
Ralph Daines.

Public Officer
Ralph Daines

Web: www.ranbandassoc.net

VALE
It is always sad to report the passing of members and partners of members we remember so well.

Keith McGuiness
Passed away on the 17th of January 2025
Keith joined the band in March 1965

BILL HAWKINS
Son of Jim Hawkins passed away with family and carers by his side on the 6th of April.
Condolenses to Jim and Lindy.
RIP Bill.