



A BRIEF HISTORY OF DROMANA-RED HILL RSL SUB BRANCH

In 1919 ex soldiers of World War 1 returned to the Dromana-Red Hill area, resolved to honour their mates, who did not return, by building a Memorial Hall on the foreshore at Dromana. They raised the funds, did the work and opened the Hall in 1920 for the use of Returned Soldiers. The first amenity purchased was a billiard table which provided many happy and recuperative hours for the Diggers.

During the 20's they looked after mates in need, particularly war widows and families. As the country moved into the days of the great depression of the 30's they continued the welfare work within the means of a small local population, providing funds, emergency food and firewood.

During World War 2 they formed a "home guard" group, teaching and drilling young men not eligible for service, and shared their Hall with local groups such as the local Lodge and Boy Scouts.

On the return of World War 2 Servicemen, the Hall was found to be too small for the numbers eligible to join the RSL.

In 1948, those who lived in the Red Hill area decided to form their own sub Branch, while those in Dromana raised funds to build a new, larger Memorial Hall which was eventually opened on "Armistice Day" 1963 on the land they had purchased in the town. This Hall was large enough to take three pool tables to continue the recreational tradition.

The Red Hill Sub Branch continued the RSL traditions in their area for the next 36 years, when their numbers diminished by age and the "the Grim Reaper", decided to "return to mother" and amalgamate with Dromana in 1984. In doing so, they sold their property, at purposely undervalued price, to the Girl Guides.

During the 70's and 80's welfare work and Remembrance were greatly expanded, including parcels for troops to Vietnam and premises were altered for the granting of a liquor licence in 1981. The Sub Branch gained the reputation as one of the friendliest and best welfare units in the State. It was one the first RSLs to welcome Vietnam veterans, to elect one of them as President and also to elect an ex service woman as President.

During the 1990's / 2000's, increasing numbers necessitated building extensions - a new dining room, conversion of the old pool room to form a larger office etc. However, with the advent of time, a decision was made in 2010 to close the sub-branch. The Western Bulldogs subsequently purchased the building in late 2010 and are operating it as a community club. As a result, they have provided a permanent office for the sub-branch to continue its work in the community.

In terms of RSL Welfare, Remembrance and Community Service, Dromana-Red Hill Sub Branch has had the unflinching support of its Women's Auxiliary since 1919, has always served and is "serving still" after 82 years.

The Dromana-Red Hill RSL Sub-branch is based in offices at the Peninsula Club, Cnr Gibson & Noel Streets, Dromana and can be contacted on 03 5987 3155.