

PRESIDENTS REPORT FOR THE 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION OF NSW

Introduction

This report covers the period from September 2019 until September 2020. During this period the Battle for Australia Association of New South Wales has held only one formal meeting of the Committee but has been able to conduct its affairs by other means. We have held one event to commemorate the activities which constitute the Battle for Australia held on 14 February 2020 and we have also conducted the 2020 Commemorative Service at the Cenotaph on the 2nd September 2020, but with COVID-19 restrictions.

The Committee

The Committee has only met once since the since the last Annual Meeting in September 2019 due to COVID-19 restrictions since February. The Office Bearers are

- President – Doug Roser
- Vice President – David Ross
- Secretary – Geoff Brown
- Treasurer – John Butcher

The other members of the Committee during the period of this report have been:

Harry Allie
Chris Dawson – Public Relations/Media
Warren Glenny
Eileen Henderson
John Howells – Website
Ian Kain
Dick Matthews – Australian Legion of Ex-Service Men & Women Rep
Ted McKeown
Darren Mitchell
Geoff Usher – RAAF Association Rep
Liz Watts

Invited members have been

Lisa Whitehouse – NSW RSL
Nick Young (NSW Office of Veterans Affairs)
Hadyn White, the Executive Officer to the Deputy Commissioner NSW & ACT, DVA,

Only one meeting of the Committee was held during this period ie on 26 November 2019 at the Offices of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Financial Report

A copy of the accounts for the period July to August 2020 has been distributed to the Committee and are attached to this report. They show we have net assets of \$62,975.31 which,

given our limited expenditure requirements, is adequate to meet our expected expenses. A vote of thanks must go to John Butcher who does a great job as our Treasurer.

Membership

Our Treasurer, John Butcher, has also been looking after our membership and while membership of both individuals and organisations has declined slightly, membership is not holding up too badly. However, as our population ages we must re-focus our membership drive.

Other Battle for Australia Associations

With the COVID-19 restrictions the other members of our group have not held their normal events. We have been kept aware of their activities and have published them on our website.

Website

Our website continues to display our Association and our activities and we are so grateful that it is under the management of John Howells. A special vote of thanks to John for his efforts in arranging and managing our website.

Events

During this period our Association has conducted one event in 14 February 20 and our main Commemoration Service on 2 September 20.

- A presentation on 14 February 2020 covering the Battle for Australia. This year we were very fortunate to have a presentation by Dr John Edwards "Prime Minister Curtin's 'Battle for Australia' - the Politics and Strategy behind a phrase". Dr Edwards is a Senior Fellow at the Lowy Institute and an Adjunct Professor with the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy at Curtin University. He was a member of the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia from 2011 to 2016. John has published six books, including most recently a two-volume biography of Australia's wartime Prime Minister, John Curtin's War. The first volume won the 2018 Prime Minister's Prize for Literature in the history section. John holds PhD and M Phil degrees in economics from George Washington University and a BA from Sydney University. The event was held at the Anzac Memorial Auditorium, downstairs in the new south wing Anzac Memorial Hyde Park South from 1000 to 1200 on Friday 14th February 2020. The presentation was a huge success and the video of the presentation can be seen on our website.
- The Battle for Australia Commemoration Service held at the Cenotaph on 2nd September. This year the Sydney Battle for Australia Commemoration Service was held at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney on Wednesday 2 September at 11:00. We were very limited to a group of 50 including the Defence Ceremonial attendees under a COVID Safety Plan which ensured seating for the 1 per 4 square meter rule and included sign-in procedures. Her Excellency, The Honourable Margaret Beazley

AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, gave the commemorative address. We are so fortunate for her wonderful support. Those who attended the Service were most impressed that we went ahead with the Service given the COVID-19 restrictions. Sadly, many of the organisations who are usually able to be included could not be there. A copy of the Service and the Governors Address are included in our website. The cost of staging the event was a little over \$4,300 but I was so delighted that so many who wanted the ceremony held were able to view it and remember the Service occasioned by the Battle for Australia Commemoration Service.

I must express my appreciation for the support and efforts of all Committee Members who assisted with the planning and arrangements of our 2 events. We are fortunate to have such wonderful support of our Committee Members and our Membership

Summary of this year

At the last General Meeting in September last year Geoff, our Secretary, resigned giving 1 year's notice. I also resigned giving one year's notice and both of us agreed to transfer the responsibility over to my successor, David Ross. We were fortunate to recruit Megan Lavender as the new Secretary from the AGM this year. I had taken over as the organiser of the Service from 2015 and in October 2016 I was elected as the President. This year was to be a year of transferring knowledge to the new team. However, with the COVID-19 restrictions from February the year has not been in any way normal. Keeping track of the events under COVID-19 was a major task and agreeing to hold the Service when the NSW RSL agreed that the Service could be conducted was a major task and not an event which we could pass to the new team, making it up as we went along. The organisation of the event was a roller coaster and kept us extremely busy until it was over. So, we have not transferred some of the knowledge to the new team but Geoff and I will continue to work with the new team until this is done.

As the out-going President I express my sincere thanks to the Committee and thank all of you for your great support during my time as President. Our organisation is in good shape and has the necessary support from the Governor, the NSW RSL and the federal and state governments to continue the objectives of the Constitution.

Group Captain Doug Roser OAM RAAF (Ret'd)
President Battle for Australia Association of NSW

13th September 2020