



Hobart Branch Newsletter

September / October 2008

Branch General Meeting.

Friday 17th October 2008

Derwent Room, Wrest Point Hotel
Casino. Commencing at 10.30 am.

Guest Speaker:



**Gillian
Groom**

*Chair
National
Rose
Garden
Committee*

Coffee Shop Luncheon.

Following the General Meeting, on Friday 17th October, there will be a buffet luncheon in the Wrest Point Coffee Shop. The concessional cost is \$18.50 each. Please book with Mr. Geoff Dodge on 6273 2395 or by Email to gldodge@gmail.com by Friday 10th October. The money will be collected in the Derwent Room prior to moving to the Coffee Shop.

Visit to the National Rose Garden.

The National Rose Garden is located on the banks of the beautiful Macquarie River at the historic Woolmers Estate in Longford, Tasmania. The two hectare garden provides visitors with a unique journey through the evolution of the rose dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The garden displays all the recognised rose families and represents one of the finest collections of historic roses in the Southern Hemisphere.

Gillian Groom's presentation will be followed by a bus trip to the National Rose Garden on Friday 7th November.

The cost will be \$50 each, including the bus trip, all entry fees, and lunch. At least 33 people are required to register and pre-pay for the bus trip to go ahead. The maximum capacity of the bus is 49 people.

If you would like to join the visit, please register by mail to "Rose Garden Bus Trip, A.I.R. Hobart Branch, PO Box 990 Sandy Bay 7006", to be received not later than Friday 17th October. Please enclose your cheque for \$50 each.

Alternatively you may register and pay at the general meeting on Friday 17th October.

You are welcome to invite a friend to accompany you to Gillian Groom's presentation on 17th October, and / or the bus trip on 7th November.

President's Report given at AGM for the Period Ending 30 June 08.

Preamble.

It is with a degree of sadness that I present the Annual Report of the Hobart Branch of A.I.R. for the year ending 30 June 2008.

The sadness stems from the fact that I am stepping down from an active role in the Association due to my age and the realisation that the running of the Branch should be passed on to the younger generation.

I wish to thank you all, members of the Association, the office-bearers and the Management Committee for the support that has been given me over a substantial number of years.

Membership.

The membership of this Branch is one of the highest of any Branch in Australia, at just over 600 persons. New members for the year almost matched the reduction in membership through deaths and resignations.

However the voting strength of our members is not sufficient to influence the decisions of politicians and therefore I would encourage each member to try to influence a non member, within the next month, to join the Association.

Peter Comas in addition to undertaking the responsibilities as Treasurer also maintains the membership data base and he should be congratulated for the attention he has given to both functions.

Kindred Association.

To further increase the pressure on politicians, the Hobart Branch rekindled the activities of a Kindred Association by bringing together like-minded retiree Associations to develop policies and submissions to the political parties.

The Kindred Association meets quarterly and includes representatives from:-

- The Council on the Ageing (COTA)
- Tas. Assn. of State Superannuants (TASS)
- Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association (SCOA)
- Assn. of Independent Retirees (AIR)

Political Activities.

The political forum prior to the last Federal election allowed speakers from various political parties to inform members of their policies affecting retirees and for members to direct questions to the speakers for further clarification of their policies.

The Hobart Branch is continuously drawing attention of the Division, the Board and the political parties to the concerns of retirees.

Submissions have been made to both the Labor Federal Government and the Liberal Opposition of the necessity to index the Income Test for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) but as yet no response has been received. The Income Test has not been indexed since 2001 although additional items have been included in the test, and this may result in some persons losing the card they were previously entitled to hold and therefore lose some benefits to which they were previously entitled.

The Medicare Levy Surcharge was increased in the budget for the year 08/09 which could result in some people exiting the Private Health Insurance Scheme, thus causing an increase in the premiums for the remaining members of the scheme. A recommendation has been made that the aged rebate now applicable to the premium be increased by a percentage figure that is directly related to any increase in the premiums resulting from the increase in the Medicare Levy Surcharge.

CBA Visa Card.

The Branch's Newsletter has informed you of the decision of the Commonwealth Bank to cease the payment of the monthly commission to the Board, which is calculated on the monthly expenditure charged to the cards collectively and to cease the annual fee-free provision for card holders.

The Bank has undertaken to communicate these decisions to card holders by early September 08. The Board has been able to negotiate the following on behalf of holders:-

- The credit card will not be cancelled, and the credit card number will not be changed.
- All existing direct-debit arrangements on a member's card remain the same and there is no need for any change.
- The annual fee has been deferred for one year.
- The reward program attached to a member's card remains "in situ".
- The accumulated reward points remain unaltered.

I sought to obtain information on what conditions would apply to the issue of a new card, but this information is unavailable. It is my opinion that in the current circumstances the Commonwealth Bank will not issue any new A.I.R. Visa Cards.

(President's Report Continued)

Branch Newsletter.

I think we are fortunate in having such an excellent newsletter which is so informative, and I would like to commend Ray Christie for the effort he puts into its production.

Social Activity.

The luncheon which has been arranged at the Wrest Point Coffee Shop after the general meetings has proved to be very successful, and together with the annual Christmas Luncheon do provide a means of getting together in a more congenial atmosphere.

Guest Speakers.

The various guest speakers at the general meetings have covered interesting and informative topics to help provide information which is relevant to retirees.

Changes to the A.I.R. Constitution.

In the current Constitution only the office-bearers of the Board and the delegates from the Divisions and Branches can vote on changes to the Constitution. Other members can speak, but cannot vote on the motion.

A.I.R. Is a registered Public Company and some members of the Management Committee of the Hobart Branch are of the opinion that all members of the Company should have the right to exercise a vote on proposed changes to the Constitution.

A motion to this effect has been forwarded to the Board and will be voted on at the AGM to be held in Queensland in October 08.

National Conference 2010.

Geoff Dodge and a subcommittee of the Hobart Branch have agreed to run the National Conference of the Association to be held in Hobart in October 2010. We congratulate Geoff on the initiative and the endeavour he and his sub committee have shown in this regard. He will be making a presentation at the AGM of the Association in Queensland in October 2008. Any person who would like to be involved in this undertaking should contact Geoff Dodge.

Geoff Dodge as Secretary of the Branch has undertaken the duties of the position with enthusiasm and has adopted a most meticulous approach to these duties and so should be commended.

Conclusion.

I would again like to express my thanks for the support given me in the various positions I

have held in the Association, and I move that this report be received and is now open for discussion.

Ashton Shirley.
15th August 2008.

Financial report for the Period Ending 30 June 08.

The Treasurer, Mr. Peter Comas, presented the audited financial report for the period 1st July 2007 to 30th June 2008.

Statement of Receipts and Payments:

Carried Forward:	\$ 1525.25
Receipts:	\$16,747.64
Payments:	\$16,413.28
<u>Surplus:</u>	<u>\$ 1859.61</u>

Income and Expenditure Statement.

Income:	\$16642.64
Expenditure:	\$16913.28
<u>Deficit:</u>	<u>\$ (270.64)</u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th June 2008.

Fixed Assets:	\$ Nil
Cash in Bank:	\$ 1859.61
Fixed Deposit:	\$ 3000.00
Liabilities:	\$ 105.00
<u>Net Assets:</u>	<u>\$ 4754.61</u>

New Branch Management Committee for 2008 / 2009.

The new committee was appointed at the Branch AGM which was held on Friday 15th August 2008.

President: Mr. Geoff Dodge.
Deputy President: Mr. Patrick Murray.
Past President: Mr. Ashton Shirley.
Secretary: Mr. Stan Purdue.
Assistant Secretary: Margaret Wilmot.
Treasurer: Mr. Peter Comas.
Newsletter Editor: Mr. Ray Christie.

Committee Members:
Hon Ken Lowrie OAM
Mr Cliff Iles AM.
Mr. Donald Forbes.
Ms. Judy Skinner.

Chair of the 2010 Conference Committee:
Mr. Geoff Dodge.

The Committee meets monthly at the Derwent Sailing Squadron, Marieville Esplanade.

Matters Raised at the Members Forum following the AGM.

Following the AGM, a Members Forum was held to give members an opportunity to raise matters of concern with the Branch Committee. These matters were raised:-

- John Palmer asked whether the commission from the Commonwealth Bank to A.I.R. will cease on 1st Sept. 08. The president confirmed this is the case.
- Cliff Iles commented that the job of A.I.R. is not finished. He noted that as time goes on there will be fewer in the workforce supporting more elderly people. He commented on the plight of single pensioners in nursing homes.
- Mrs. Forbes suggested that the A.I.R. Board should engage a professional lobbyist to prepare submissions to Government. Ashton Shirley said that the Hobart Branch has recommended that this work should be outsourced rather than the proposed restructure of the Board, including non-member Directors.
- Patrick Murray proposed that more of the business under consideration by the Committee should be discussed at general meetings, to seek input from members.
- Ashton Shirley noted that Cabinet Ministers are often unavailable as potential guest speakers.

Reminder about Membership Fees for 2008 / 2009.

Members are reminded that membership fees are now due. The fees are as follows:

- Single - \$35.00.
- Couple - \$50.00.

Membership fees should be posted to The Treasurer, Hobart Branch A.I.R. PO Box 990 Sandy Bay Tasmania 7006.

Annual Christmas Luncheon.

The annual Hobart Branch Christmas Luncheon will be held at Wrest Point at 12 noon on Friday 19th December, following the general meeting.

This luncheon is always well attended and it is a highlight of the year. It features traditional excellent Wrest Point catering and service. The menu and the cost will be advised in the next Newsletter. Pre-booking will be necessary.

A.I.R. National Conference and Annual General Meeting 2008.

The National Conference will be held at Caloundra on 24th to 26th October 08 and the National AGM will be held on 27th October 08.

Details of the program are in the current A.I.R. National Magazine.

Review of Super. Pension Indexation.

On 26th June the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, Senator Nick Sherry, announced a review of the indexation of pensions for Australian Government Civilian and military Superannuation Schemes.

A.I.R. has made a submission, which supports one prepared by the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association (SCOA).

The Review will consider whether indexation by growth in the CPI is appropriate, or whether there are more appropriate measures.

Meeting with Tasmanian Senators.

On Tuesday 29th July, President Ashton Shirley and Committee Member Ray Christie attended a meeting with Julie Collins MP, and a number of Senators including Senator Joe Ludwig, the Minister for Human Services. Several items of interest to retirees were discussed, and President Ashton Shirley presented the Minister with a discussion paper on Medicare Rebates and CSHC thresholds.

Update on the A.I.R. Visa Card

You will have noticed in the President's Annual Report that A.I.R. has been able to negotiate an agreement with the Commonwealth Bank that will enable current card holders to continue using their cards without incurring a fee for the next year. However the Bank will cease paying A.I.R. its commission based on card usage from 1st September 2008. Card holders will by now have received a letter from the Bank confirming this agreement.

Disclaimer: A.I.R. Does not offer financial advice. The articles in this Newsletter are of a general nature for the information of members. A.I.R. Does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Members should seek financial advice from a licensed financial adviser where appropriate. A.I.R. is not associated in any way with any political party.

Association of Independent Retirees (A.I.R.) Ltd. Hobart Branch. PO Box 9900 Sandy Bay 7006.