

Celebrating 100 Years

CELEBRATION PHOTOGRAPHED BY TONY MARTIN

Darwin RSL members and friends gathered to celebrate the club's 100th year with a Memorial Church Service, Cocktail Party and Gala Dinner in September 2017.



Darwin RSL club c.1923.

On 13 September, a cocktail party and the burying of a time capsule in the RSL rear carpark followed the church service at Christchurch Cathedral. A commemorative plaque marks the spot of the 500 cm x 200 cm stainless steel cylindrical time capsule. Containing significant memorabilia including a copy of the Darwin RSL's first 100 years history book, photographs of Darwin today, a Darwin RSL Club Shirt, video interviews of RSL members and a letter from current Darwin RSL president Don Milford titled 'Welcome to the past', addressed to the future RSL Darwin president 100 years from now, as well as plans for the future including an eternal flame and upgrades to the Cenotaph on the Esplanade. The cylinder was then filled with argon gas to prevent decomposition and preserve its precious historical cargo. To be opened on 13 September 2117, the time capsule will provide a permanent record and an interesting glimpse of Darwin and the RSL for future generations. The Gala Dinner at SKYCITY Darwin on Saturday 16 September, was huge compared to the first dinner dance held at the Darwin Town Hall on 13 September 1917.



The time capsule plaque.

A TIME CAPSULE WAS BURIED TO BE OPENED SEPTEMBER 13, 2117.



Service personnel WWII Darwin.



Darwin RSL club & league committee's opening of existing RSL Club. c.1973

THERE ARE NOW 2,500 SOCIAL MEMBERS AND 400 SERVICE MEMBERS IN THE DARWIN RSL.



Don Milford BEM.



Visiting QLD RSL representatives enjoy the 100 yrs. cocktail party.



Current serving member at the 100 yrs cocktail party.



RSL Sub-Branch President Don Milford & RSL Social Club Chairman Peter Murray.



Commander Viktor Pilicic and guests at the 100 years Gala Dinner.



Torch bearer representing service members.



Chief Minister Michael Gunner.



Australian Army Band Darwin entertain guests at Gala Dinner.



Ted Egan entertains.



Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis and his wife Aihong Yuand.



RSL Sub-Branch President Don Milford BEM with Administrator John Hardy and his wife Marie.

'That original evening raised a total of forty pounds ten shillings, but it was the starting funds for the establishment of the first RSL in the Northern Territory, and what is now a multi-million dollar business,' said President of Darwin RSL Sub-Branch, Don Milford BEM. 'Over 150 members and guests enjoyed our 2017 gala dinner. It was a fantastic night with live performances, special guest speakers, fantastic food and drinks including port.' The club has been in the existing RSL building on Cavenagh Street since 1972 and it has recently been extended with extensive interior upgrades now including state-of-the-art facilities in the gaming areas and toilets. Further expansion is planned in coming years. 'While Darwin RSL survived the Bombing of Darwin in 1942, it sustained some damage during Cyclone Tracy in 1974, but this was repaired in about five days in time for New Year's Eve celebrations,' continues Don. 'Like the city of Darwin itself, our RSL has continued to grow and prosper. We now have around 2,500 social members and 400 service members.' Today Darwin RSL still offers compassionate support for serving and ex-service Defence Force members and their families and promotes awareness of the need for a secure and progressive Australia.

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