



# Australian American Association Queensland Division – Brisbane

## Twenty Ninth Issue Newsletter dated 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025



Australian American Association Queensland Division - Brisbane

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Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland.



### 2025 – 2026 Board of Directors,

#### Australian American Assoc, Brisbane:

- ❖ Mike Harris - President & Life Member,
- ❖ Tony Chau - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President & Treasurer,
- ❖ Helen Stanley - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President,
- ❖ Teresa Pokoj - Secretary & Life Member.
- ❖ Alice Langford - Board Member
- ❖ Dr Peter Glazebrook - Legal Advisor,



***Photo of the Association's Board of Directors.***

from left:- Tony Chau [1<sup>st</sup> Vice President], Alice Langford [Board Member] Maurice Hand representing his wife Helen Stanley [2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President], Mike Harris [President], Teresa Pokoj [Secretary], and Dr Peter Glazebrook [Legal Advisor].

***The Australian American Relationship is linked across both sides of the Pacific Ocean, with a common heritage and many countless and cherished ties.***

***We also remember those who paid the price for our freedom. Lest we forget.***



***The Proud Insignias of the Royal Australian Navy and the US Navy 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet.***

#### Annual Report Given by the Association's President Mike Harris. at the AGM held on 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2025 at Coorparoo RSL Club:

My report covers the Association's activities and achievements, since the last AGM held at the Coorparoo RSL Club on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024. I have enjoyed my 23 years of continuous connection with the Australian American Association Brisbane, serving 20 years on the Executive Committee, which includes the Board of Directors as Vice-President from 2015 to 2019, and as President from 2019 to 2026.

I extend a special and heartfelt thanks to our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, and her husband, the Honourable Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD, for their steadfast support of our Association. Their continued support has been invaluable to our mission and activities.

I also gratefully acknowledge the support extended by the Former U.S. Consul General to Australia, the Honourable Christine Elder, and warmly welcome the U.S. Consul General, Mr Jeremy Cornforth. My appreciation also goes to the U.S. Navy 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet and Australian Defence Force personnel for their ongoing cooperation. In particular, I thank HMAS Moreton's Former Commanding Officer Captain Rosemarie Apikotoa and her staff for their exemplary participation, organisation and assistance in ensuring that our Annual Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration remains a highly dignified and commendable service. I further welcome the new Commanding Officer of HMAS Moreton - Commander Christopher Unwin.

I extend sincere thanks to our members for their loyalty and support, and to the Board of Directors for their dedication. I acknowledge:

- 1st Vice President Tony Chau and his wife Jill McKeon for representing our Association at numerous wreath-laying ceremonies and other events, and for Tony's untiring work in maintaining our office computers, printers and website.
- 2nd Vice President Helen Stanley and her husband Maurice Hand for their generous donations of raffle prizes, which significantly enhance our fundraising efforts.
- Board Member and former Secretary Alice Langford and Secretary Teresa Pokoj for their diligent preparation and submission of grant applications, as well as for their organisation of wreath-laying and other events.
- Dr Peter Glazebrook, who continues to represent our Association with distinction at many ceremonial occasions.

I am deeply appreciative of the important work completed over the past year, particularly in relation to our Website, Facebook Page, Quarterly Newsletters and timely News Flashes. These platforms have greatly strengthened public awareness of our Association, promoted forthcoming events, highlighted recent activities and broadened our network of friendships. The effective use of these communication channels has markedly improved our outreach. We have been invited to a range of events where we have been able to distribute our key promotional brochure - "Who We Are", which has once again increased our list of contacts among kindred organisations.

#### **Successful Activities and Events**

Over the past 12 months, our Brisbane Association has proudly organised and participated in a series of successful events:

- January 2025 – Australia Day Luncheon held at Secretary Teresa Pokoj's home was highlighted by the ever-popular *Australiana Quiz Contest*, and lively games and the many great raffle prizes won.
- May 2025 – The 83rd Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea service, held at the Australian American War Memorial at Newstead Park. This major commemoration service was attended by

the Consul-Generals of the US, Japan, France, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea; as well as representatives of the US Ambassador, Indian Consul General, Australian Prime Minister, Queensland Premier, Brisbane Lord Mayor, Federal and State Governments, the U.S. and Australian Armed Forces, Returned Services Organisations, Veterans and their families. With approximately 300 invited guests with 76 wreath-layers, this year's service was an outstanding success. My sincere thanks again go to the U.S. Navy 7th Fleet Band, HMAS Moreton's Commander, and the Royal Australian Navy Band Qld for their magnificent participation.

- 4 July 2025 – Independence Day Soiree held at the United Service Club, once more featuring the popular "Americana Quiz Contest," enjoyable games and many raffle prizes won.
- Monthly Meet & Greet Nights – held at the United Service Club. These 10 event gatherings per year, have grown immensely in popularity and provide an enjoyable and relaxed environment for members and friends to socialise.

#### **War Memorial Services**

Over the past year, our Board and members have proudly attended more than 20 War Memorial Services, laying wreaths on behalf of the Association. I especially thank our Secretary, Teresa Pokoj, for crafting all wreaths from flowers grown in her own garden - an extraordinary contribution that saves our Association more than \$4,000 each year in florist fees.

#### **Publications**

As Publications Editor for the past 13 years, I am pleased to have produced numerous Quarterly Newsletters and News Flashes. Our major promotional brochure, "Who We Are", has again been updated and remains an essential tool in introducing our Association to the wider community.

#### **Looking to the Future**

Looking ahead, I am committed to expanding our fundraising efforts, seeking corporate sponsorships and pursuing further grants. To date, we have not secured corporate sponsorship, and this must remain a priority.

We also urgently need more active members to assist in the hands-on organisation of our expanding program of activities. Membership numbers have declined this year, and a renewed, well-planned membership drive for 2026 is essential.

As we move into 2026, I am optimistic about increasing our membership, deepening relationships with kindred organisations and enhancing our public presence. Our website, Facebook Page, newsletters and other communication channels serve us well, but additional avenues must be explored to better share our story and broaden our reach. The generosity of our supporters has strengthened the Association's capability to hold its events, has enriched member experiences, and has helped sustain the financial viability of our Association.

#### Acknowledgements of the Generous Support

I extend heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organisations for their most generous and substantial donations of raffle prizes, cash, food and services. Their contributions significantly support all of our fundraising efforts, including our providing of morning tea at the Annual Battle of the Coral Sea event:-

- Hamper - donated by Grace Grace MP State Member for McConnel.
- Hamper - donated By Cr Kim Marx Runcorn Ward.
- Hamper – donated by United Service Club.
- \$200 Bottle of Symphony Hill Wine - donated by Tony Chau Vice-President of Australian American Association & his wife Jill McKeon.
- 6x Bottles of Leo Buring Sparkling 5 Star wine donated by Former Senator Santo Santoro, Life Member of the AAA Brisbane.
- Bottle of Champagne- G.H. Mumm donated By Jayne Keogh, Naval Association, Australia.
- 2 X Hand Soap Dispensers – donated by the Korean Veterans Society Gold Coast.
- Cocktail Set & Wine Chill Stick donated By John Gates& Moya McGirr, Members of AAA Brisbane.
- US Navy Cap – donated by AAA Brisbane.
- Kedron Wavell RSL for cash donations.
- Former Coorparoo RSL & Community Club now Parkside Community & Services Club, for Raffle Prize Donations.

The following donations were specifically made, to cater for morning tea at the May 2025 Battle of the Coral Sea event:-

- The two Anonymous persons - for Cash Donations.
- The Hon Christine Elder Former US Consul General - for Cash Donation.
- Captain Kasper Kuiper Chairman of the Qld Maritime Museum and AAA Brisbane Honorary Member - for Cash Donations.
- The Hon Santo Santoro Former Senator and AAA Brisbane Life Member - for Cash Donation.
- The Hon Teresa Gambaro Former MP and Member of the House of Representatives - for Cash Donation.
- Norman Love AAA Brisbane Member - for Cash Donation.
- Alan Moulton AAA Brisbane Member - for Cash Donation.
- Rob McLear AAA Brisbane Member - for Cash Donation.
- Clifton Hefner Former AAA Brisbane President & Member - for Cash Donation.
- Mark Neylan AAA Brisbane Member - for Cash Donation.
- Emilia Seibold AAA Brisbane Member - Cash Donation.
- Lori Cartagena AAA Brisbane Member - for Cash Donation.
- Dr Betty Lee, AAA Brisbane Member - for Cash Donation.
- Dr Peter Glazebrook, AAA Brisbane Board Member - for Cash Donation.
- Wendy Siebrecht, Naval Association of Australia - for Donation of Trays of Cakes.
- Alice Langford, – AAA Brisbane Board Member - for Donation of Sandwiches & Wraps.
- Teresa Pokoj AAA Brisbane Secretary & Life Member - for Donation of Banana Cakes, Date Cakes & Biscuits.
- Mike Harris AAA Brisbane President & Life Member - for Cash Donation.

Sorry if I have missed acknowledging anyone - mea culpa [my fault].

**Ship Display Gifted to Our Association by the Maroochy RSL Sub Branch.**



I acknowledge and sincerely thank the dedicated staff of the Maroochy RSL Sub Branch, for your generous support in the donation of the beautiful "Old Ironside" - The USS Constitution display ship. The *Old Ironside* is not merely a display piece; it represents an important symbol of US Naval heritage and historical remembrance, which included its record in battle, and which earned it that compelling nickname during the 1812 War against the British.

I am deeply grateful for the care, respect, and professionalism shown throughout the process, from the initial discussions through to the final arrangements for its transfer to Brisbane. Acts such as this reinforce the strong bonds between our two organisations and reflect a shared commitment to honouring and preserving such maritime heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your generosity, cooperation, and goodwill. We look forward to continuing our positive association with the Maroochy RSL Sub Branch in the years ahead.



The Christmas Spirit is a concept that encompasses a range of enduring values such as joy, charity, generosity, kindness, and forgiveness - qualities that stand in gentle contrast to the stresses and pressures often associated with the modern holiday season. At its heart, Christmas serves as a timely reminder of our shared humanity and the importance of goodwill towards one another, encouraging us to pause, reflect, and reconnect with what truly matters.

The origins of the Christmas Spirit can be traced to a blend of historical, religious, and cultural influences. Central to this is the Christian tradition, which celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ - an event that symbolises love, humility, peace, and compassion. The nativity story reminds us that greatness is found not in power or wealth, but in service to others and care for the vulnerable.

Biblical teachings further reinforce these values, urging generosity to the poor, forgiveness of one another, reconciliation in times of division, and sincere care for one's neighbour. These teachings continue to shape the moral foundation of the Christmas season, calling us to act with empathy and understanding in our daily lives.

The Christmas Spirit has also been shaped by the enduring legacy of St Nicholas of Myra, whose quiet acts of kindness and secret gift-giving to those in need laid the foundation for traditions of generosity that continue today. His example reminds us that true giving is not about recognition, but about selfless service and the joy found in up-lifting others. Together, these influences give Christmas its deeper meaning - a season that encourages unity, gratitude, and hope, and inspires us to carry these values forward into the year ahead.

On behalf of the Australian American Association, Brisbane - Board of Directors and Members, I trust you all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and I extend our warmest wishes for good health, prosperity, and every happiness in the coming year.



**Mike Harris.**

**President, Life Member & Newsletter Editor  
Australian American Association, Brisbane.**

The following photos have been taken from some of the many events organized this past year by our Association, or by a Kindred Association.

**Our Association's Main Signatory Event - the "83rd Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea" Wreathlaying Service, held at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park, Brisbane on 3rd May 2025.**



The RAN Band Qld from HMAS Moreton, Brisbane who combined with the Quintet Band from the US Navy 7th Fleet, playing at the 2025 Battle of the Coral Sea Wreath-laying Event.



Her Excellency The Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland receiving the Vice Regal Musical Honour.



Welcome Address given by Australian American Association Brisbane President - Mike Harris. [Mike and the Association's Secretary - Teresa Pokoj, are co-organizers of the Annual Battle of the Coral Sea event and have been responsible for organizing the past 6 Annual Battle of the Coral Sea events, held from 2020 to 2025.

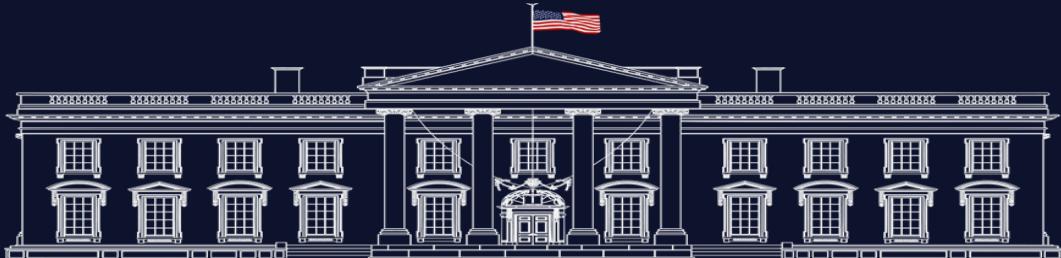


Australian American Association Brisbane First Vice-President – Tony Chau presenting the Acknowledgement of Country.



Event 'Master of Ceremony' and Former Senator the Honourable Santo Santoro, Life Member of the Australian American Association, Brisbane welcoming guests.

Our Australian American Association Brisbane was most honoured to receive the following “Presidential Message” from Donald J Trump, President of the United States of America, for our special Commemoration of the 83rd Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea Service, held at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park, Brisbane, on Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025.



## **Presidential Message on the 83rd Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea.**

**The White House May 4, 2025.**

Today, I extend my heartfelt greetings to the people of Australia as we commemorate the 83rd anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, a pivotal moment in the fight against tyranny and a defining chapter in the enduring alliance between our two nations.

At the height of World War II, American and Australian forces fought for 4 grueling days against enemy naval and air forces in the Coral Sea. Through their heroic bravery, their unwavering resolve, and the grace of Almighty God, our Allied forces halted at great cost a major enemy advancement for the first time in the Pacific Theatre and sank an enemy aircraft carrier for the first time—marking a significant turning point in the war and paving the way for the enemy’s eventual defeat.

As we commemorate this historic battle, we also remember the 656 Allied service members who gave their lives for our liberty. The courage of those fallen heroes not only changed the course of the war but also forged a glorious bond between the United States and Australia that endures to this day—a friendship that remains foundational to Indo-Pacific security and prosperity.

Today, we honor the fearless determination of those who fought at the Coral Sea, and we solemnly remember those who laid down their lives to secure the future of freedom. Their sacrifice will forever be etched in our hearts, and our nations remain eternally grateful.

**Donald J Trump.**

*President of the United States of America.*



**Australia Day Celebration held at the Residence of Association Secretary Teresa Pokoj on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025.**

Following our January 2025 monthly meeting, we held a most enjoyable Australia Day celebration with 20 guests attending. We had a good lunch with some fun games and an Australia Day Quiz was held.



From left - Dennis Cho President of the Korean Veterans Association, and AAA Members - Wendy Moulton, Alan Moulton and Trish Taylor.



Happy group attending the Australia Day celebration, who also indulged in - the ever-popular and lively game of Thong-Throwing and the Australiana Quiz Contest, and with fantastic raffle prizes won.



**ANZAC Day March Organized by the RSL SED and held in the Brisbane CBD on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**



From left - AAA Member Alan Moulton, Secretary Teresa Pokoj and President Mike Harris who attended the ANZAC Day March, as guests of the event organizer the RSL SEQ. They viewed the two hour March, seated with the Association's Patron the Queensland Governor, and the Queensland Premier and other dignitaries.

**Victory in Europe Day Organized by the RSL SED and held on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**



Members of our Association's Kindred Organizations, from left - Jerry Bongard Commander of the American Legion AU03, and also Member Joseph Noune and President Frank Lamy from Veterans de l'Armee Francaise d'Australie.

**Official Visit by Delegation of Admirals & Commodores from the United States of America, Japan and Australian Navies to the Australian American War Memorial at Newstead Park, on 11th July 2025.**

The Admirals Delegation of 13 persons included the US Navy 3 Star Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon (Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Installations and Logistics), 2 Star Rear Admiral Naoya Hoshi (Director General of Logistics Department, Maritime Staff Office, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) and Commodore Catherine Rhodes (Director General Logistics, Royal Australian Navy (RAN), Naval Captains and Staff Members.

The Admirals Delegation was welcomed by 3 members of the Australian American Association, Brisbane Board of Directors: - First Vice-President Tony Chau, Secretary Teresa Pokoj, and President Mike Harris, who informed the Delegation about the history of the Australian American War Memorial and the adjacent War Memorials located along the “New Farm-Newstead-Hamilton Reaches” of the Brisbane River. Captain Kasper Kuiper, Chairman of the Maritime Museum of Queensland, also attended this welcoming occasion.

Following their visit to the War Memorial, the Admirals Delegation and Association Board members, attended a much-enjoyed luncheon together at the ‘Breakfast Creek [Brekky Creek] Hotel’.

On the afternoon of that same day, the US Navy’s Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon, the Japanese Navy’s Rear Admiral Naoya Hoshi and the Royal Australian Navy’s Commodore Catherine Rhodes, took part in the *Signing Ceremony* of the Three Nation’s “*Trilateral Naval Logistics Arrangement for Further Cooperation*” aboard the US Navy Carrier “*USS America*” during the ship’s visit to Brisbane.



The Association’s President Mike Harris, informing the Admirals Delegation about the history of the Australian American War Memorial, and the adjacent War Memorials located along the “New Farm-Newstead-Hamilton Reaches” of the Brisbane River”.



The US Navy’s Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon, Japanese Navy’s Rear Admiral Naoya Hoshi and Royal Australian Navy’s Commodore Catherine Rhodes, taking part in the Signing Ceremony aboard the US Navy Carrier “*USS America*” at ‘Port of Brisbane’.

**The Association's 2025 "Annual Thanksgiving Dinner", held in the "Norman Pixley Room" at the United Service Club on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.**



Lewis Lee OAM, again did an outstanding job as "Master of Ceremony" at the 2025 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Lewis is also the Chairman of Australians of Chinese Heritage War Memorial Committee and is an Honorary Member of the Australian American Association Brisbane.

Lewis acknowledged all the guests attending the Thanksgiving Dinner, who included:-

- Dr Denver Beanland AM and his Wife Lee Beanland – As guest speaker Dr Beanland gave a delightful and interesting speech entitled – "Thanksgiving Day".
- Major General Darryl Low Choy who is President of the United Service Club, Queensland.
- Captain Kasper Keiper and his guest Deborah. Kasper is Chairman of the Maritime Museum of Queensland.
- Teresa Pokoj Secretary of the Australian American Association, Brisbane - Teresa designed and made all of the lovely, personalized place-mats for the guests. She also prepared the wonderful prizes for the evening's Raffle, and she made the Norwegian Shortbread Biscuits for sale – Many thanks Teresa, for all the great work that you do for our Association.
- Association Members John Gates and Moya Mc Girr.

- Association Member Doctor Maurice Heiner with two of his good friends Roger & Julie Short who spend a lot of their time visiting the USA.
- Association Member Alan Moulton. Alan is also a National Service Association Queensland Committee Member.
- Association Member Lori Cartagena - who is an author of books, and as a very young woman, spent quite a lot of time entertaining the troops in Vietnam - Lori has some really fascinating and interesting stories to tell, especially all about that early and exciting period of her life.
- Association Member Brien Doyle born in the US and who is a former US Soldier.
- Association Member Sally Elliott who is a much respected Australian Movie Producer.
- Association Member Margaret Gates,
- Marcel Poualion from the French Combattants' de Brisbane.
- Representatives of the Rotary Club of Hamilton - Victor Gado who is President, Neil Bray who is President Elect and Jenny Richardson who is Secretary.
- Patrick Ringold OAM President of the Queensland Naval Association of Australia, and who is also, Secretary of the Seafarers Day Committee, Brisbane.
- The AA Association's Board of Directors Member Alice Langford and Association Member Peter Cumming,
- From the Naval Association of Australia - Jane Keogh and Terry Ryder,
- Captain Tom Stodulka who is Qld Division Navy League Vice President,
- Representatives from the Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch – John Meadows President and Michael Dagg Secretary, and
- Mike Harris President of the Australian American Association, Brisbane - Mike is also a member of the Australian Army Engineers – Sappers' Association of Queensland.





Teresa Pokoj - Secretary of the Australian American Association Brisbane, gave the "Grace before the Meal" prayer:-

*"There is no time like this "Historical Day of Celebration" to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the many wonderous blessings in our lives. We come together as guests of the Australian American Association Brisbane, to share a traditional meal and to enjoy their generous hospitality. We thank you Dear Father for the food brought to our tables and the hands that prepared it. May the meal nourish us and our mutual conversations. In a spirit of optimism please bring hope and encouragement to us all and to those who are disheartened, lonely, sick or needy. This is a meal to foster a spirit of thanksgiving in us all. Let it be so. Thank you, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen".*



Guest speaker Dr Denver Beanland AM PhD FRHistSQ, holds a Bachelor of Arts with first class Honours in History (2003) and a PhD in History (2008) from The University of Queensland. He is also the author of many published articles and is regularly invited to speak at conferences and events.



From left - Dr Denver Beanland AM with his Wife Lee Beanland, and Australian American Association Brisbane Member Lori Cartagena and President Mike Harris.

Association Brisbane Board Member Alice Langford giving a Vote of Thanks and a presentation to Guest Speaker Dr Denver Beanland AM. Alice said that Denver delivered an engaging and informative presentation on the history of Thanksgiving Day. Through clear insights and thoughtful storytelling, he brought history to life and deepened our appreciation of the tradition. Alice thanked Denver, for sharing his knowledge and for instilling our guests on the enduring spirit of Thanksgiving.



Association Members John Gates and Moya Mc Girr enjoying the Thanksgiving Dinner.



From left – Two Association Members Doctor Maurice Heiner and Alan Moulton.



From left - Julie & Roger Short enjoying the Thanksgiving Dinner with their good friend - Association Member Doctor Maurice Heiner.



From left - Roger Short with Association Members Lori Cartagena and Doctor Maurice Heiner.



Lewis Lee OAM and Lee Beanland with her husband Dr Denver Beanland AM.



Association member Margaret Gates, Marcel Poualion of French Combattants' de Brisbane and Association Member Sally Elliott.



Representatives of Hamilton Rotary Club Jenny Richardson Secretary, Neil Bray President Elect & Victor Gado President.



Our Association's Board Member Alice Landford, Member Peter Cumming and John Meadows President of Pine Rivers RSL.



Representatives from the Pine Rivers RSL from left - John Meadows President, Michael Dagg Secretary with Patrick Ringold OAM.



From left - Qld Naval Association's - President Patrick Ringold OAM with QNA Members Terry Ryder and Jane Keogh.



Lori Cartagena won First prize of a bottle of 'Symphony Hill' Wine valued at \$200, donated by Tony Chau our Association Vice-President & his wife Jill McKeon.



Captain Kasper Kuiper won Second Prize of a Christmas hamper, donated by the United Service Club, Brisbane.



Brien Doyle won a bottle of Leo Buring Sparkling 5 Star wine which was donated by Former Senator the Hon Santo Santoro, Life Member of the Association.



Michael Dagg won a bottle of Leo Buring Sparkling 5 Star wine which was part of a case of 6 bottles donated by Former Senator the Hon Santo Santoro, Life Member of the Association.



The Association's President Mike Harris giving a vote of thanks and presenting MC Lewis Lee OAM with a gift in appreciation. Mike took a special moment to acknowledge someone who has once again played a pivotal role in the success of the evening. Lewis did an outstanding job as MC for our 2025 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. His professionalism, warmth, and effortless command of proceedings, kept the evening flowing seamlessly and brought both dignity and good humour to every moment and, we are deeply grateful for Lewis' efforts.



Patrick Ringold OAM won a Wine Chill Stick donated by John Gates & Moya McGirr, Members of the Australian American Association, Brisbane.

Our Australian American Association, Brisbane was most honoured to receive the following “Thanksgiving Message” from Mr Jeremy Cornforth, United States Consul General to Australia, for our special celebration of Thanksgiving, held at the United Service Club, Brisbane on Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.



**Thanksgiving Welcome**  
*from the*  
**Consul General of the United States of America**



I am sorry that I am unable to join you tonight for this special celebration of Thanksgiving.

A cherished American tradition, Thanksgiving is a time to gather with friends and family, reflect on our blessings, and celebrate the values of gratitude, community, and togetherness. While this holiday may be uniquely American, its spirit transcends far beyond borders, and tonight, we honor the deep friendship between the United States and Australia.

The U.S.-Australia relationship is built on shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to a better tomorrow. Events like this Thanksgiving dinner remind us of the importance of fostering connections, strengthening relationships, and honoring the traditions that bring us closer.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Australian American Association, particularly to its President, Mr. Mike Harris, and those on the Executive Committee, for organizing yet again another wonderful event for the U.S.-Australian community in Brisbane. Your continued and unwavering efforts play a pivotal role in the strong ties that exist between the United States and Queensland, for which I am very grateful. I only wish that I could be present with you tonight to celebrate this most American of holidays.

As we gather – both in person and in spirit – let us take a moment to reflect on the blessings we share, the friendships we cherish, and the opportunities ahead. May this evening be filled with joy, laughter, and the true spirit of Thanksgiving.

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Jeremy Cornforth**  
**U.S. Consul General**



**Inaugural Meeting with United States Consul General – Mr Jeremy Cornforth [6<sup>th</sup> person from left] at the ‘Qld Maritime Museum’ Southbank, Brisbane.**

*[Photo taken on the deck of “HMAS Diamantina” - a WW2-Era Frigate].*

“On Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025, the historic surroundings of the Queensland Maritime Museum at South Bank provided a fitting backdrop for an inaugural meeting with the United States Consul General, Mr Jeremy Cornforth. Framed by Brisbane’s riverfront and steeped in maritime heritage, the occasion brought together key representatives from organisations dedicated to strengthening Australian - American ties.

Consul General Cornforth was warmly welcomed by Captain Kasper Keiper, Chairman of the Queensland Maritime Museum [who is also an Honorary Member of the Australian American Association Brisbane] along with members of the museum staff. Their shared passion for history and service, set the tone for what proved to be an engaging and constructive exchange.

The meeting was further enriched by the presence of Mr Jerry Bongard, Commander of the American Legion AU03, whose contributions highlighted the enduring bonds forged through shared service and mutual respect.

Representing the Australian American Association Brisbane were - President Mike Harris, Vice President Tony Chau, Secretary Teresa Pokoj, and Board Member Alice Langford, each bringing valuable perspectives to the discussions.

Discussions ranged across areas of common interest, including heritage, community engagement, and the ongoing importance of fostering strong people-to-people connections between Australia and the United States. The atmosphere was both cordial and forward-looking, marked by thoughtful dialogue and a shared commitment to collaboration. The meeting concluded with a strong sense of mutual appreciation and optimism, leaving all participants encouraged by the depth of conversation and the opportunities ahead. It was an auspicious beginning to what promises to be a productive and enduring relationship.”

Australian American Association, Brisbane - President Mike Harris 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

**Christmas Luncheon held on Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at the newly-opened Parkside Community and Services Club, Greenslopes, Brisbane.**



Some of the many guests who attended the Christmas Luncheon, held at Parkside Community and Services Club, Greenslopes.



Association Member Maurice Hand won Second prize of a Cocktail Set donated by Mrs Irena Rutina.



**Drawing of the Christmas Luncheon Raffle Prizes.**



Association Member John Gates won First prize of a Christmas Hamper donated by Grace Grace MP State Member for McConnel.



Board Member Doctor Peter Glazebrook won Third prize of a US Navy Cap donated by the Australian American Association, Brisbane.



**Association's October 2025 "Monthly Meet and Greet Evening" held in the Military Bar at the United Service Club, celebrating President Mike Harris' 83<sup>rd</sup> Birthday].**



Guests attending the "Monthly Meet & Greet Evening Event" in the Military Room of the United Service Club, Wickham Terrace, Brisbane City. This event is one of the 10 enjoyable Monthly Evening Events that the Association has held annually at the United Service Service Club, over the the past 3 years.



Australian American Association Brisbane Board of Directors attending the October 2025 "Monthly Meet & Greet" Evening.

Pictured from left: - Maurice Hand [an Association Member who represented his wife – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice president Helen Stanley], Vice President Tony Chau, Secretary Teresa Pokoj, Board Member Doctor Peter Glazebrook and President Mike Harris.



**Thanking our Members, Partners and Supporters and wishing them a Happy and Prosperous New Year.**

31.12.25\*\*



MANY THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS, PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS (Please contact any these organizations click on the icon and select the link)

