

## Conference hailed a success

**The Association's 3rd Annual Conference "Meeting the Challenges" staged in Canberra from 16-19 September has received an overwhelming "thumbs up" from delegates.**

The Conference, sponsored by Aristocrat Technologies, incorporated the Association's Annual General Meeting.

With a focus on marketing and management issues an array of speakers led the 185 delegates through a range of topics to provide them with new ideas to innovate in their clubs.

The conference dinner in Anzac Hall at the Australian War

Memorial, attended by over 200 delegates, partners and guests, was voted the highlight of the weekend.

Guest speaker at the dinner, best selling author of "Spirit of the Digger", Patrick Lindsay, told delegates that the spirit of the digger reflects so many of the good things about being Australian. It's a spirit we should respect and honour and emulate.

"It's a spirit which is central to your industry - one you can draw on as you face the challenges before you", he said.

Lindsay says the industry now must fight for survival. "You have a

duty to pass on that tradition to the next generation. The odds may seem as daunting as they were to the young diggers of Kokoda, but look what can happen when you band together and fight with all your might.

"You can combat the Carr Government's gaming tax. You can deal with the problems of amalgamation and centralisation. You have the spirit. You know how to use it" he said.

Delegates have again indicated their preference to return to Canberra for next year's conference. Tentative dates for the event are 20-23 November 2005.

## ...to Pat Rogan

**The Services Clubs Association has paid tribute to the work of retiring ClubsNSW Chairman, Pat Rogan during its recent Conference in Canberra.**

Pat served the people of NSW for 25 years, during which time he was Shadow Minister for Minerals and Energy, Acting Speaker, Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Accounts Committee and Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment. Notably, Pat was instrumental in having the Chelmsford Royal Commission established and it became a turning point for mental health treatment in this state. Aside from being Chairman of ClubsNSW he was President of Clubs Australia and New Zealand and held a number of other industry positions.

SCA Chairman, Craig Fantom, said it had been a pleasure working with Pat on several of these bodies.

"Despite Pat's obvious allegiance to the Labor Party he served for many years, I have to say that in the time I've worked with Pat in the Club



**SCA Chairman, Craig Fantom makes a presentation to outgoing ClubsNSW Chairman, Pat Rogan.**

industry, I've never known him to be as passionate to the cause as in the current gaming tax debate."

Mr Fantom said the Association particularly wanted to recognize the 'behind the scenes' support Pat gave to the Association when it was being mooted just over three years ago. While others questioned the need for another Association, Pat was, as usual a voice of conciliation which saw that this sector of the industry needed a voice.

# From the CEO

Graeme Carroll

## SCA Office move

The SCA has moved into new offices in Hurstville, having outgrown the serviced office environment it has operated from for the past two and a half years.

The new office is located at Suite 21A, Level 4, 33 MacMahon St, Hurstville. The new telephone number is (02) 9579 4555 and the facsimile (02) 9579 4666. The email address for the CEO, Graeme Carroll is unchanged at gcarroll@servicesclubs.asn.au as is the Association's website address www.servicesclubs.asn.au. Inquiries relating to the Association can be directed to either Graeme or Executive Assistant, Rachel Pfrengle (rachelp@servicesclubs.asn.au).

## ACE awards

The Association has become a sponsor of the annual Australian Club Entertainment (ACE) awards.

As services clubs are major supporters of entertainment and in line with the Association's move to establish a new touring circuit for emerging and established artists the sponsorship is seen as a natural move for the organisation.

The sponsorship is for the Technical Support Category.

## New members

The Association welcomes three new members to its ranks.

Castle Hill RSL and Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL Club in Sydney and central coast club, Toukley RSL have joined the Association.

## Business news

If you're a dedicated follower of business news, you may recall the recent disclosure of annual R&D spend in the private-sector for 2002-03. Aristocrat Leisure Industries secured fifth placement for overall spend across Australia and New Zealand, preceded only by two automotive manufacturers, and two technological companies.

The Melbourne University's Annual Scoreboard served to highlight the increasing demand for innovation across Corporate Australia. It also marked a vast disparity between the investment levels of many big-name companies despite their unanimous reliance upon technological advancement.

## Local knowledge wins day

**Local knowledge enabled the Seven Hills RSL Team to win the inaugural Kokoda Track Golf Challenge, sponsored by Stargames, at the Fox Hills Golf Course earlier this month.**

The team of Wally Fisk, Claude Tattersall, Barry Wilson and Barry Barnes returned a score of 96 points in the Irish Fourball Stableford event, six points clear of the runner-up team from Rivertstone Schofield's RSL - Ken Powell, Ray Coles, Brian Smith and Norm Cosby with 90 points on a countback from the Aristocrat team of Eddie Flahey, B. Handling, S. McLean and G. Petherbridge.

The individual event was won by Ken Powell of Riverstone with a score of 42 points, from Ray Coles on 40, Barry Wilson on 39 and Les Todd and Barry Barnes, both on 37.

Long drive of the day - over 300 metres - went to Michael Douglas of Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL, while nearest the pins went to Ray Coles and Andrew Charles.

The day raised another three educational scholarships for descendants of the fuzzy wuzzy angels who assisted Australian troops during the World War II campaign on the Kokoda Track.



The Rooty Hill RSL team (above) & the Ingleburn RSL team (left)



Peter Wilkins from Stargames (left) presents trophies to the winning Seven Hills RSL team



The Chatswood RSL team

services clubs association

# SCA Conference Pictorial



**"Thank you for another excellent Conference. Once again, you had industry relevant speakers who could inform without boring. The social side was also a highlight - the right combination of organised activity and free time to catch up with old friends."**

*Terry Ashton, ER Strategies*

**"Congratulations on the conference again this year. The Twin Towns crew certainly found it to be another very worthwhile session and enjoyed the content and the networking."**

*Rob Smith,  
Assistant General Manager,  
Twin Towns Services Club*

**"On behalf of the Director's and Management of Castle Hill RSL Club Ltd., I wish to convey our appreciation on a wonderful Services Club Conference. If this is a reflection of the professionalism of what the entity provides I'm sure we want to be part of it."**

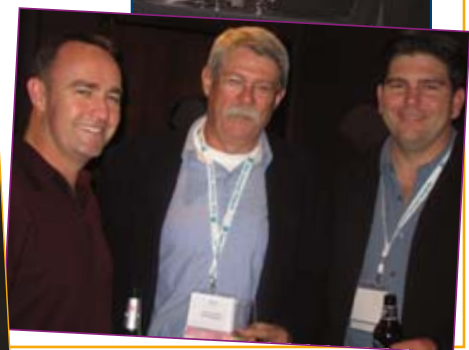
*Rick Cumming, President*

**"Our directors have returned from the conference with nothing but praise for the organisation and content of the conference. The word is that of the industry conferences the SCA is now considered the most informative."**

*Malcolm Anderson  
General Manager  
Nelson Bay RSL*

**"The conference dinner at the War Memorial was the most spectacular event I have ever attended - I felt such honour and privilege to be in attendance."**

*Jenny Abood  
Associate Director - Fixed Interest  
ABN AMRO Morgans Limited*



# Restaurant business never been so tough



Iain Hewitson chats with Garry Davies of the Swansea RSL Club.

Delegates to the recent Services Clubs Conference in Canberra were told that clubs are facing identical problems to the rest of the food industry - spiralling costs, increasing competition, customers who are more discerning and, last but not least, smoking bans.

Renowned celebrity Chef, Iain Hewitson, said that in over 35 years in the restaurant business he had never seen it so tough.

"GST didn't help, tougher drink driving regulations didn't help, councils and governments allowing cafes and restaurants to open willy nilly and in ever increasing numbers didn't help and, although we are all terribly sympathetic to the farmers, the drought and the increased food costs associated with this is almost the last straw. And let us not forget that the proliferation of new restaurants has also made it almost impossible to hire and keep decent staff unless you are prepared to pay big dollars and then the loyalty is often on a par with today's elite footy players - offer me a few extra bucks and I'm off", he said.

On the question of in-house catering versus contract catering, he had this to say: "If contracting out your catering

you have to ensure that both your members' and your needs are being catered to, that the quality and pricing is at the level you expect and that the caterer can make a profit whilst delivering such. You also must know exactly what you do want and what is your target audience, and not expect your caterers to be mind readers who can anticipate your every whim".

He said the alternative, in-house catering, also has its difficulties. "First of all you have to find qualified, competent, reliable staff. You then need management who control your food operation, have an understanding of staff training and supervision, costings, motivation, promotion, etc. But there is one advantage with in-house catering - you do have more control over the operation and more control over the direction it's going."

Mr Hewitson said that in formulating plans of business for new restaurants he was always mindful of not trying to be all things to all people, but instead aiming for a particular audience that was maybe not being looked after in the area.

"This is not easy in clubs, which definitely cater to a wide range of people. But in looking at a number of club menus the range of cooking styles and ingredients is boggling. While in some cases this has and always will be successful, to others menus such as this are seen to be daunting and a bit off-putting and, to be honest, there are few chefs who are capable of cooking such a diverse style.

"A club has to be on top of its game. It doesn't have to serve the best food around, but it must be consistent, fresh and cooked with care".

On the question of discounting, Mr Hewitson said he had seen lots of pubs, clubs and restaurants offering dirt-cheap food. "But I would ask you this: does the person who shops around for a bargain come in, buy half a dozen beers and spend \$50 on the pokies? I don't think so! I think they come in, eat three baskets of bread, have the Parma & Pot for \$10 and then clear off."

Mr Hewitson said another area where many clubs could improve is front of house.

"In a recent survey, amazingly, the majority of people felt that service was the most important thing when they visited a restaurant or cafe. So, instil in your staff the edict that 'the restaurant or bar that likes you the best is the one that you like the best'. They must be cheerful, helpful, know the menu and wine list and, above all, appear as if their main purpose in life is to make sure that the customer genuinely enjoys their experience in your establishment.

The second most important factor to those surveyed was the establishment's ambience, with food and then wine lists rating third and fourth respectively. Maybe your dining rooms and bars need a bit of a spruce up- not a multi-million dollar makeover, but it's amazing what a fresh coat of paint, a few wine racks, some plants and even some new lighting can do to a place.

"Also pay some attention to fourth place and get rid of all those super commercial wines from your list. Although you may be putting a fair mark up on them, the wine shop down the road is most probably selling them for less than you pay for the blessed things."

## The Power of Choice

**Have you heard of Player's Choice Original? This break-through in gaming technology features four top-rating Aristocrat games plus a variety of denominations in one stand-alone machine.**

The player-selectable functionality not only lets players try new games without leaving their chair, but helps operators to get the right mix of games for their floors.

Steve Parker, Group General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Aristocrat Leisure Limited, says that variety on your gaming floor is an insurance policy on your gaming investment.

"Player's Choice is a very practical evolutionary step towards the ultimate revolution in slot gaming - that is, downloadable games."

Mr Parker says that Player's Choice

will modernise the appearance of any gaming floor with a 19" LCD top box that functions as an interactive score card during game play and an animated display board at rest.

"In this age of increased barriers to opportunity, Player's Choice represents a new league of Aristocrat products that can meet the varied needs of venues better than ever before", he said.



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