

Brief History of State Bank Victoria Retired Officer's Club Inc.

The Club was formed back in 1941, when The State Savings Bank of Victoria Officers' Association (SSBOA) invited all Retired Officers' of the Bank to form a "Retired Officers' Club. A meeting was subsequently held on Thursday, 13th November 1941 and the Club was established. The first President of our Club was Mr George W Paxton and the first Committee Meeting held at the SSBOA Rooms at Champion House, 57 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

We know from our records that the Club had 100 members in 1958 and met quarterly in State Bank premises for formal general meetings of retired bankers

It was in the 1980s that some marked changes occurred, the Club became incorporated as the State Bank of Victoria Retired Officers' Club Inc. under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981.

Briefly, the Statement of Purposes for the Club was broadened to; -

- (a) Provide more opportunity for retired bankers to meet regularly for social purposes and pursue their interests in any matters of concern to them;
- (b) keep members informed, by means of a Newsletter, of the business transacted by the Club at meetings and the activities of members of general interest to readers.
- (c) To organise social functions and tours for members and partners.
- (d) To raise funds for public charities and disburse such funds as the members may direct.

The broadening of the "statement of purposes" facilitated major change to the operation of the Club when Members' wives / partners were invited to join in all social activities.

The Club's social agenda immediately expanded, and a series of holiday trips were organised for members and their partners. We owe a huge debt of thanks and appreciation to John McKernan, Life Member of the Club for his enormous contribution to building up the social agenda. John organised marvellous tours involving up to 40 members to the USA and New Zealand and to every state in Australia. The success of these trips resulted in the Club building a much larger membership base.

State Bank Victoria supported the Retired Officer's Club for 50 years by providing a room for meetings; printing Newsletters and hosting an afternoon tea at Christmas each year for members and partners.

The Demise of State Bank Victoria.

The trauma of the unexpected sale of State Bank Victoria to the Commonwealth Bank by the Victorian Government in 1991, brought about major change to the operation of the Retired Officers' Club. Whilst our Club still had access to a room for meetings, we no longer had security of a room housing the Bank's Honour Roll; Club Records and Memorabilia. The Committee managed the difficult situation the Club faced by liaising with CBA Melbourne administration. The Club continued to facilitate a Christmas Lunch function for members and the CBA generously contributed funds for most of the cost of our luncheon. This situation continued until 2004 at which time CBA introduced and funded the combined CBA & SBV Retired Officers Christmas luncheon which has proven to very successful.

Bank Memorabilia.

The demise of SBV saw the Victorian landscape change as nearly 600 branches were rebadged to CBA overnight. State Bank Signs, passbooks and chequebooks very quickly disappeared. A small group of dedicated Club members recognised that the 150-year history of Victorian banking was vanishing before their eyes and volunteered their time to work to preserve Bank Memorabilia.

The State Savings Bank of Victoria and State Bank Victoria banking records, branch fittings and marketing items have, as a result of the removal of State Bank identity from the public arena, taken on an irreplaceable value. The Club has sought to protect the importance of the rich heritage of memorabilia associated with the Bank's critically important role in the nearly 150 years of the early development of Victoria.

Many members have generously donated a huge range of memorabilia items. The near "150 years of State Bank Victoria history" has provided an amazing collection of historically important banking records; staffing information, photographs and operational items. Some irreplaceable records have been donated to the State Library of Victoria and the Public Records Office in North Melbourne as a means of protecting the Bank's heritage.

The State Bank Victoria "Honour Roll" Commemorating State Bank Officers killed in the First & Second World Wars is still proudly displayed in the CBA branch premises in Bourke Street, Melbourne. Club Members gather each year on Remembrance Day to hold a "Service" to pay tribute to fallen colleagues by placing a wreath at the foot of the Honour Roll.

Club's Current Committee.

The Club is presently administered by a committee of 13 Members and meets for three General Meetings each year plus the Annual General Meeting.

All Club Members are welcome to join us at our meetings and are always formally welcomed by our President. Minutes of all Committee Meetings are printed in the

quarterly newsletter to ensure Members have a complete understanding of all matters being addressed at General Meetings.

Each year the Club's Financial Statements are formally audited, and an Annual Return is lodged with Consumer & Business Affairs in accordance with the Statutory Rules 1983 of the Associations Incorporations Act of 1981.

Life Members:

Club Records show that the Club has in the last 20 years bestowed the Honour of Life Membership to 23 members, 3 of whom are serving on the present Committee.

Club Membership.

The Club currently has about **600 Members**. This figure becomes even more significant when you consider that State Bank Victoria disappeared as a banking entity 29 years ago.

The membership is made up of **32 Honorary Members** (Life Members or members over 90 years of age), **77 Complimentary Members** – widows, or widowers of former Club Members, plus we have **5 Members with special needs** requirements and they also receive complimentary membership because of their circumstances. Members pay annual membership subscriptions of \$10.00 per year. We also provide a complimentary copy of each Newsletter to the Commonwealth Bank Social Club and the Commonwealth Bank Retired Officer's Club.

Our Club Lifeline – the Quarterly Newsletter.

The importance of the quarterly newsletter cannot be overstated. The regular feedback from Members is always complimentary in respect to the Newsletter. We hear of the fights in the household as to who gets to read the "goss" first. We even have a case where a Member's offspring continues to pay annual membership fees years after the Member has passed on!!! **Why**, they just love the Newsletter.

Our long time Editor, Steve Mason has a special gift in journalism. Members regularly report that reading the newsletter, is like reading a "letter from Grandma". A wonderful turn of phrase, full of warmth, wit and great interest. Steve is in his 90s and only recently retired as Editor after 30 years.

Our quality "Newsletter" magazine, with print layout and photo editing to a very high standard is all thanks to our skilled desktop publisher & New Editor - Bill Roper. Our Club has also had outstanding service from two valued typists, Andrea Whitty who handled the job for 9 years and formerly Joan Fraser for more than 20 years.

The end result is that Members get "four fabulous Newsletters each year" for their \$10.00 membership subs, "what a bargain". The Newsletter is delivered in colour electronically, via an email link, to nearly 400 Members who have internet access,

and mailed in hard copy, black & white form to nearly 200 Members who don't have a computer or prefer hard copy.

State Bank Victoria Website.

Our Club is ever so fortunate, members also have access to the vitally important State Bank Victoria Website. The Bank's near 150-year history is covered on the professional website in a wide range of memorabilia items and personal contributions. Staff Magazines; Bank Calendars, a "Memorial Page", hundreds of photos of staff; SBV sporting teams; branch premises plus some very important historical gems.

We owe a huge debt of thanks and appreciation to Nick Oklobdzija who manages the website on a voluntary basis.

We urge all members to access the website and suggest that they ask their grandchildren to show them how to explore the wonders of the amazing collection of SSB and SBV history held on the website. The website address www.statebankvictoria.org is on the back cover of each newsletter.

Club Members Generosity towards Underprivileged Children is Overwhelming.

All Club Members should be justly proud that their Club **has raised a mammoth \$202,000** for Under Privileged Children's Charities since 1982. This truly amazing figure highlights the generosity of Club Members year in and year out. Unfortunately, we only have records back to 1982, exactly when the Club commenced raising funds for charity is not known. Berry Street Victoria, a children's protection charity since 1877, and the Children's Protection Society Inc, have both received donations in excess of \$90,000 over the last 38 years. Every Club Member is justly proud that our Club has been able to make such a difference for underprivileged children in Victoria.

Club Social Calendar.

The combined CBA- SBV Christmas Lunch today is a highlight of our social calendar. Over 200 of our members and partners attend the Christmas lunch for retired Bank personnel. This function each year provides the wonderful opportunity to rekindle the camaraderie that existed in the Banks when they were working.

Two Club BBQs are held each year, these provide further opportunities for members to meet with former colleagues and friends socially and enjoy fine steaks and sausages supplied by the Club.

The Newsletter also reports on the many other social activities taking place between former State Bankers all-round the State to enable members to get together and relive such wonderful memories.

CBA Assistance to our Club.

In the 29 years since CBA took over SBV they have provided many valued services to our Club Members. We formally acknowledge and sincerely thank CBA for providing our members with the same benefits and considerations provided to the Commonwealth Bank Retired Officers' Club.

The CBA Staff Social Club Office in Melbourne is our contact centre, the two girls who run the Social Club (both former SBV), are just brilliant, they cheerfully and efficiently co-ordinate a wide range of services for members of both Clubs: -

- Retired Officers Christmas Lunch,
- A valued home in the Bank for the SBV Honour Roll (recently installed in its rightful home in Bourke Street) and the Club's Memorabilia Collection,
- Support and catering for the important "Remembrance Day Service" each year utilising the SBV Honour Roll,
- A meeting room for our 3 Committee Meetings each year,
- Providing printing and mailing services for our 4-quarterly newsletters including office space for our volunteers to facilitate the mail outs.

Conclusion:

"The State Bank Victoria Retired Officers Club" is something "very special". It is administered by a caring group of dedicated, skilled volunteers from the "State Bank Family" whose sole purpose is to make Club membership a most enjoyable link with former work mates and a wonderful institution.