

Local Heritage Register: Returned Services League (RSL) Building



RSL Building 1992, Mackay Regional Council

Building Name:	R.S.L. Club
Street Address:	70 Sydney Street
Property Description:	Lot 7, 8 and 9 on RP700850
Land Area:	1200m ²

Description

This distinctive building in the core of the city demonstrates the importance of the R.S.L. to society.

The R.S.L. has had a long presence in the Mackay region, first meeting in a small timber building in Sydney Street before moving to a new site in Macalister Street in 1923. The league was originally known as the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) and formed in 1916.

History

In September 1916 a conference was held in Brisbane regarding the care of returned soldiers and

by 1917 the first meeting of the Returned Soldiers Association was held in Mackay.

It is important in demonstrating the pattern and evolution of Queensland's history, as a memorial to the participation, and loss of, members of the Mackay community in various conflicts.

The Building

The R.S.L. Hall was designed by prominent Mackay architect, Harold Vivian Marsh Brown, constructed by William and Frank Guthrie, and officially opened on 26 November, 1955.

Tenders were called in January 1954 for the 'first stage' at a cost of £30,000. The second stage

was to be an upper level hall which remains unconstructed.

The building is set back ten metres from the street, with lawns in front, constructed in the Modernist School. It is asymmetrical featuring a flat front with vertical metal windows, down to floor level, along most but not all of its length. The sunshade begins on the right, which is horizontal and cantilevered over the windows and fins between. The fins taper from the awning face back to the facade line at ground level.

A small porch and exit door is set on the left, the main porch being on the right. This has a lower flat roof supported on a triple steel pipe column in it's free corner. The floor is raised up several steps. On the porch roof is a giant model fur felt or "slouch" hat, its "Rising Sun" badge turned to the street.

A small steel pipe flagpole stands central in front of the building.

Local Heritage Register: R.S.L. Club

Sly Grog

The club was built at a time when licencing was topical as R.S.L. clubs were not licensed. Some clubs in Queensland had closed amid the debate as to whether the R.S.L. should serve liquor and support Liquor Act reform.

In 1954 the R.S.L. approached the government to amend the Liquor Act to allow clubs to sell liquor and the Mackay club was one



RSL Building, 2016, Mackay Regional Council

which did make representations to the government through a sub-branch resolution.

The building ceased operations as an R.S.L. Club on 28 November, 2006, citing commercial reasons . It is now used as office space.

Statement of Historical Significance

Criteria	Significance
A: Historical significance	Meets this criterion through the long presence in the Mackay region. It is important is demonstrating the evolution of Queensland's history, as a memorial to the participation, and loss of, members of the community in World War 1 and later.
B: All aspects of heritage significance	Does not meet this criterion.
C: Scientific significance	Does not meet this criterion.
D: Architectural significance	Does not meet this criterion.
E: Aesthetic / architectural significance	This criterion is not met because the building has been subject to a number of alterations which have diminished its aesthetic and architectural values.
F: Aesthetic or other significance	Does not meet this criterion.
G: Social significance	The R.S.L. Hall has a special association with the Returned Services League and with other allied groups. It has a strong spiritual and social association with returned service personnel, and the general community, as a focal point for Anzac and Remembrance Day commemorations.
H: Historical significance	Does not meet this criterion.

References:

- www.rsl.org.au/About-Us/History
- <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2006/11/27/1798458.htm>
- Daily Mercury, 'RSL calls Tenders', Tuesday 19 January, 1954, page 4
- Daily Mercury, 'Cabinet Move Likely on Club Liquor', 3 April 1954, page 16
- Woods, R., 1995, 'Heritage Places Criteria', Mackay City Council

For more information phone strategic planning on 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529)