

RSL of Australia Ltd

Presentation by Greg Melick



RSL History



- The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) was founded in 1916 by returning Australian soldiers from World War I to continue to provide the camaraderie, concern, and mateship shown among diggers during the conflict.
- Early in the 1914-1918 Great War, it was evident that those returning from Gallipoli and the Western Front would require support, along with the families of those who would never return; this ethos of compassion and service remains today as the motivating influence of the League.
- Our purpose is to help veterans and their families by offering care, financial assistance and advocacy, along with commemorative services that help all Australians remember the Fallen.

RSL Pillars



- Advocacy
- Welfare
- Commemoration
- Mateship
- Sustainability

RSL Advocacy



- Assist serving and ex-service personnel with their DVA claims
 - Over 300 advocates Australia wide
 - More than 3,000 claims lodged in 2018
- Lobby direct to Government on behalf of serving and Ex-service personnel and their families
 - Productivity Commission
 - Remuneration and conditions
 - Commutation of super benefits
- Participate in multi-organisational lobbying when appropriate
 - ESORT
 - VAC (States and National)
 - Ad-hoc - e.g. 9 ESO's led by RSL SA/NT made a joint submission to the Productivity Commission

RSL Welfare



- Direct assistance in urgent/emergency cases
 - Food and/or fuel vouchers
 - Temporary accommodation - often in collaboration with other organisations
- Support for personnel on overseas deployment through AFOF
- Grants for specific purposes through the RSL Foundation
- Financial, operational and in-kind support for adaptive sports
 - RSL Active
 - Invictus Games
- Support for those transitioning out
- Home, hospital and nursing home visits
- Co-operation with other agencies (e.g. Open Arms)

RSL Commemoration



- ANZAC Day services and marches - State and Sub-Branch levels
 - RSL volunteers are the mainstay of these events often supported by grants from State and Local Government
 - ANZAC Appeal seeks donations from the public
- Remembrance Day events
 - Held across Australia, run by State and Sub-Branches
 - Poppy Appeal seeks donations from the public
- Support for unit/place/time/battle commemorations
- Nightly reciting of the Ode at Sub-Branches
- Australian War Memorial
 - RSL is a strong supporter
- Virtual War Memorial
 - An RSL initiative

RSL Mateship



- Delivered primarily at the Sub-Branch level
 - Many have their own venues providing hospitality services to members and the community
 - Provides a place to meet with like-minded people and a means of connection and belonging
- The concept of mateship is extended to local communities
 - Visits to sick, injured and/or lonely members of the community
 - Grants to sporting, educational and community bodies

RSL Sustainability

- We have an ageing and diminishing traditional membership base
 - Need to become more relevant and attractive to the contemporary veteran
 - Still need to cater to the wants and needs of our traditional base
- Traditional funding streams are under pressure
 - Increased competition for Government grants
 - Pressure on charitable giving by the public - so many causes
 - Member based income is falling
- New member benefits being explored
 - Financial services, travel & accommodation, telecommunications, child care
- New funding streams under development or consideration
 - Closer control of RSL IP licensing
 - Sponsorships
 - Public giving via request at high volume transaction sites
 - Ideologically aligned business opportunities

RSL - The Organisation



- We do not hide from the governance and financial management failures of past years
 - The RSL did not evolve organisationally to meet Government and community standards
 - We sometimes lost focus on those to whom the RSL belongs - its members
- We have set about a process of renewal and re-vitalisation
 - Close liaison and co-operation with the ACNC and the ATO
 - Recruitment of experienced and skilled business people into senior roles
 - Training for boards and committees
 - Subtly updated branding to be rolled out over the next 18 months
 - Updating of Constitutions - National , State and Sub-Branches
 - Broadening and deepening of member benefits and funding streams
 - Deeper and more meaningful links to Government
 - Greater engagement with the broader ESO community
 - Commitment to putting our members back at the heart of everything we do