

# Sub-Branch Signal

May 2026

The Sub-Branch Signal is the monthly newsletter of the Returned & Services League of Australia WA Branch Inc. containing the latest news, events and updates sent to subscribed members via email and published on the RSL WA website.

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# From the State President

Mr Duncan Anderson



Colleagues,

**Anzac Day.** I cannot express my gratitude more deeply enough for the immense work undertaken to deliver another successful Anzac Day across Western Australia. We can all be incredibly proud of our collective achievements. Services of all shapes and sizes were held throughout the day with praise coming from all corners of the State. The RSL continues to play a pivotal role in commemoration; commemoration will remain a key pillar for future generations.

Anzac Day remains above politics, above agendas and focussed on those that have served. While a few individuals felt the need to disrupt services, I gained immense confidence from reports that they were the absolute minority. Thank you to all involved with responding in a professional and sensible manner.

A final word on Anzac Day. I encourage those that were responsible for services to conduct a review of what worked well and where improvements can be made. RSL WA stands ready to assist with how services are run across the State as part of our ongoing commitment to improving the quality of commemoration.

## **National**

The focus is quickly shifting to Western Australia. The Indian Ocean Defence and Security Conference will be held in May. This gathering of military leaders from across the region highlights the strategic significance of Western Australia. The RSL from across Australia is engaging in this opportunity to continue to raise the profile of the amazing work done by the League across the Nation. This will also be an opportunity for the Board of RSL Australia to meet.

Challenges with the Defence Estate Review continue. The CEO and I were fortunate to meet with the Minister for Defence to discuss challenges in Western Australia. It is evident that Government has made clear decisions without a real desire to consult. Government is engaging but is unwilling to view decisions through different lens. The RSL will continue to advocate where others are unable, with a clear focus on force posture.

## **State**

The Board of RSL WA met on 7 May 2026. The Board considered motions and how Congress would run for 2026. This key event is an opportunity for Sub-Branches to engage with colleagues from across the State and with RSL WA. This year Sub-Branches will be invited to present a short synopsis of what their Sub-Branch has been up to. Please ensure adequate notification is provided to RSL WA in the lead up to State Congress.

**Memorabilia.** Throughout the year I receive requests for memorabilia for Sub-Branches. Specifically, is there suitable memorabilia to place in front of Sub-Branch buildings. If Sub-Branches have large memorabilia that is falling into disrepair or not appropriate due to changes in towns, I request that an email is sent to [admin@rslwa.org.au](mailto:admin@rslwa.org.au). It would be wonderful if we can utilise the significant memorabilia across the State for the best purpose possible.

## **Final thoughts**

Anzac Day filled me with immense pride. The wonderful work done by the RSL in Western Australia in commemorating this solemn day is so important for our national fabric. What a truly incredible organisation we are all a part of.

All the best.

# Message from the CEO: We will not be bullied

Mr Stephen Barton



As many of you will have heard, the Kings Park Dawn Service was interrupted by hecklers. In a planned stunt, they booed when an Army veteran and Noongar Elder, Ms Di Ryder OAM, gave a Welcome to Country.

Ms Ryder has previously chosen on Anzac Day to give an Acknowledgment rather than Welcome to Country, which she can do as an Elder. However, we defer to her judgement.

Anzac Day is a day when we commemorate over 100,000 war dead and the service of over a million Australians in the defence of our liberal democratic values. It is a day when we recognise that in the darkest days of our history, in moments of great peril, our men and women committed acts of great courage, stoicism and endurance. It is a day when we recognise the tragedy, grief and pity of war.

That people would see fit to defile that commemoration because they do not like Welcome or Acknowledgements to Country is despicable.

Let's be clear, they didn't care about the service or what it means. They did not care about the crowd, and they certainly did not care about the effect of the jeers on Ms Ryder and Aboriginal people in the crowd. The shame of what they did should haunt them to the end of their days.

There are media reports that some of the disruptions across the country were organised by groups or people with neo-Nazi links. It goes without saying, our membership in decades past, spent their youth in the fight against Nazism.

It is RSL WA policy to include an Acknowledgement or Welcome to Country at commemorative services. This is not a new policy; it has been in place for some time now.

To be sure, reasonable people can disagree about when and how they are done. Time, place and occasion must be carefully considered.

But, let's be clear what the Acknowledgement of Country at Kings Park is: it is a statement that we are gathered on the ancestral lands of the Noongar people who have walked that ground for uncounted generations. It is, at its essence, a statement of fact.

It is a statement that before Australia, there was something else here. And in the case of a Welcome to Country, it is also a statement of spiritual connection to land.

It does not lessen what Australia is, it does not delegitimise our nation, it does not diminish us. One can be proud of Australia, recognising its triumph and achievements as one of the world's oldest liberal democracies, and still acknowledge that there were people here before.

(History is complicated, and while we must always be wary of what C. S. Lewis called 'chronological snobbery', we can recognise that which is good and great in our history and also acknowledge the chapters where great wrongs, both intentionally and unintentionally, were done to Aboriginal people.)

The Dawn Service is a ceremonial occasion, perhaps the most important in our civic life. It has evolved and fuses various traditions and practices from deep within our cultural heritage in a mixture of the sacred and secular.

It includes words from a poem written by an English poet, composed on a cliff in Cornwall, responding to the first casualties of 1914. It also includes a hymn from 1847, composed by an Anglican cleric dying of tuberculosis. It includes a bugler playing a tune that has its origins in the British Army of the 17th century. The wreath laying, accompanied by a piper's lament, dates back to the Ancient Greeks, and reinvented in Victorian Britain. The Reville heralds the dawning of a new day, which is, whether people realise it or not, saturated in Christian symbolism. It includes stories from over a century of war and conflict and the national anthems of Australia and New Zealand. An Acknowledgement of Country is an addition to the evolution of this civic rite.

It is important to note too, the Acknowledgement or Welcome to Country, *done right*, does not disturb the principle that our commemorative activities recognise the universal nature of service and sacrifice. The class, religion, ethnicity of the sailors, soldiers and aviators is irrelevant, what unites and binds them are the

common bonds of both service and sacrifice. I defy anyone to examine the content of our service at Kings Park and find anything other than homage to Australian service personnel in war.

By including the Acknowledgement to Country at the commencement of the service, we are merely saying to Aboriginal people, we understand your pride and deep connection to ground we stand on, and now together we will commemorate one of the most profound and important Australian stories.

At the close of the Dawn Service, I said 'To the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we will continue to acknowledge country, we will not be bullied.'

And this is where we stand.

# Veteran Services update

Damien Roper – Veteran Services Manager

The Welfare and Wellbeing department of RSL WA continues to be busy supporting both veterans who contact us directly, and veterans referred to us by Sub-Branch Welfare Officers.

And this can serve as a reminder to Sub-Branch Welfare Officers that you can refer any veterans or their dependents to us if their case is seen as too complex or difficult to manage at a Sub-Branch level. This might simply be some advice, a debrief for yourself or a full referral to us for full case management.

Something that is unique to working with veterans in the Wellbeing or Welfare space is that most mainstream services focus on one issue or concern. We work with veterans where they are at, and that can cover a wide spectrum, ranging from supporting a younger veteran recently separated from service to a veteran experiencing cognitive decline and waiting for aged care assessment. This means we need to be a jack of all trades. We are focused on solutions and will provide the best support we can to get your support needs met. We will work collaboratively with the veterans and their Sub-Branch and other networks of support.

Some of the other things we have planned in the next few weeks include hosting a mental health peer support workshop in partnership with GROW. If you know a veteran who needs some support that includes exploring some recovery options from those that understand the unique experience of military service, please reach out to us at [welfare@rslwa.org.au](mailto:welfare@rslwa.org.au). Please note, this workshop is not suitable for people in high distress or acutely unwell with their mental health.

# Goldsworthy Centre update

Janine Gardner – Goldsworthy Centre Manager



There's a moment in any big project when you stop, look around, and think – this is actually happening. For me, that moment is right now.

To walk inside this building and see it progressing is something I genuinely struggle to put into words. The roof is being transformed, walls are rising, and plumbers and electricians are hard at work on site. The building that has lived in my mind and existed only on paper for so long is becoming something real – something you can drive past, point to, and say that's it, that's the Goldsworthy Centre.

And while the physical build is what catches the eye, so much more is falling into place behind the scenes. Our furniture has been purchased – every single piece chosen with genuine thought for the people who will use it. And yes, I can confirm that personally selecting furniture for a whole centre means I have now sat in more chairs than I ever thought possible! Every piece matters, because every person who walks through our doors matters.

Our service providers are locking in, bringing with them a depth of expertise and genuine care that I know will make the Goldsworthy Centre a life-changing resource for veterans and their families. And our own Goldsworthy team is beginning to form – new faces will be joining the RSL WA Goldsworthy Team that will bring this space to life every day.



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To our defence veterans, families and members – thank you. Your patience, your encouragement and your belief in what we are building here has meant the world to us. We are doing this for you. We have always been doing this for you. The road has been long, but we are nearly there.

Stay tuned, the best is absolutely yet to come.

## Anzac Day 2026



Approximately 28,000 people gathered on Saturday 25 April 2026 for the Anzac Day Dawn Service.

It was heart-warming to see the community come together to recognise the service of our WA veterans and their families.

From the early hours in the Dawn Service, through to the Gunfire Breakfast, the March and beyond, the Anzac Spirit was felt strongly across our community. Thousands attended local events or tuned in to the live broadcasts of the Dawn Service and March.

To everyone who attended, volunteered, or simply took a moment to reflect, thank you. Your presence ensures that the ANZAC legacy is never forgotten.

Lest we forget.

# Veteran Peer Support Workshop: Growing Resilience in WA

Join us for a hands-on, in-person workshop designed just for veterans. This session focuses on building resilience and connecting with peers who truly get it. It's a relaxed space to share stories, pick up useful strategies, and boost your support network. Don't miss out on this great chance to grow stronger together in WA!

## Workshop Details:

- **Date:** Wednesday 27 May
- **Time:** 9:00 am – 2:30 pm
- **Location:** Level 7, 28 St Georges Terrace, Perth
- **Cost:** Free

## The workshop will cover practical topics including:

- Living in the Now and Hope for the Future
- Feeling Overwhelmed
- Exercise as Mental Health
- Managing Feelings During Stressful Times

The sessions are peer-led, practical, and focused on resilience, emotional wellbeing and connection through lived experience.

Spots are limited (approximately 8–10 participants). Reserve your spot today: [Veteran Peer Support Workshop](#)

# Expressions of Interest – RSL WA Committee positions

RSL WA has several Committee positions open. Please see below.

Applications require a CV and cover letter (400 words max) emailed to [admin@rslwa.org.au](mailto:admin@rslwa.org.au).

[Nominations Committee Terms of Reference](#)

[RSL WA Trustee](#)

[Commemorations Committee](#)

[Finance Advisory Committee \(FAC\)](#)

[Constitution Committee](#)

[Board of Directors](#)

[Cadet Awards Committee](#)

[State Tribunal](#)

[West Australian Veterans Advisory Committee \(WAVAC\)](#)

[List of RSL WA Committee Chairs/Members](#)

## German Day: Brats, Brews & Prost



**When:** Friday 31 July 2026

**Time:** 11:00 am to close

**Where:** Anzac Club, Level 1 Club Bar & Restaurant

We're bringing a taste of Germany to the Anzac Club Restaurant and Bar for a full day of beer, bratwurst and good times.

Enjoy a special lineup of German beers paired with hearty food specials, warm lighting, great music and a lively atmosphere. Gather your friends, book a long table and settle in for the day – why not make it a proper celebration?

More details on the menu and bookings coming soon. Keep an eye on the Anzac Club's socials for updates... and get ready to say Prost!

Reserve a table today by calling our Club Restaurant on (08) 9287 3777 or emailing [functions@anzacclub.org.au](mailto:functions@anzacclub.org.au)

# 110th State Congress



State Congress and the Annual General Meeting will be held over two days again. On Friday 26 June 2026 we invite Sub-Branched to Anzac House to celebrate our Award Presentations, and on Saturday 27 June RSL WA's State Congress and Annual General Meeting will take place on Level 5 at Anzac House.

Sub-Branch committees will be advised of the 110th State Congress program guide, including Agenda Item Submissions and Delegate Proxy nomination forms shortly. If you do not receive the email, please contact [admin@rslwa.org.au](mailto:admin@rslwa.org.au).

Motions will be reviewed by the Constitution Committee prior to submission to the Board of Directors. Handwritten or unclear motions/submissions will not be accepted and the sender so advised.

1. Delegate/Proxy Observer Nomination Form – due by 29 May 2026

## RSL WA merchandise

The RSL WA merchandise store is stocked with shirts, jackets, activewear and winter favourites!

To purchase merchandise and help support RSL WA, visit [RSLWA Online Store – RSL WA](#) and place your order today.

Visitors to Anzac House will have noticed some of the staff, CEO included, wearing an RSL WA rugby jumper. This was trial and the jumpers will be coming soon to the RSL WA Online Store.

Our experience with the merchandise is that people will see the logo and ask a question or start a conversation.

# Job Ready: Veterans' Employment Support



Unlock new opportunities with Job Ready Support.

RSL WA and Working Spirit are committed to supporting veterans and their family members on their career journey. If you are looking at transitioning out of the ADF or are a veteran seeking assistance with your career journey, our employment consultants can support veterans with the following:

- Career advice and navigation
- Translating military experience
- Crafting effective CVs and cover letters
- Accessing training programs

There is no cost for ADF veterans and their families.

To access these services, please fill in the form on our website: [rslwa.org.au/services/employment](https://rslwa.org.au/services/employment)

## Upcoming events

### Nashos half reunion event

On the first Saturday of June and December each year the National servicemen in the Nashos WA Group will be having their half reunion group.

The group formed as only 5 members in 2008 and now they have a growing membership, with some members in all the states around Australia.

The Nashos help to bring ex-servicemen together and form a long-lasting mateship. The group will be meeting in the Dining area in the Gosnells Hotel at 11:30 am on the first Saturday in June.

Any former Nashos and their partners are welcome to join the group. It's free to attend.

Any ex-Nasho wishing to get in contact, please phone 9497 9879 or email [nashoswa71@gmail.com](mailto:nashoswa71@gmail.com).

## Lost & Found

A number of lost items – including a belt buckle and medals – have been handed in to the concierge at Anzac House. If you think some of these items might be yours, please visit the Concierge Desk.