

Sub-Branch Signal

July 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



National

The veterans' landscape in Australia has shifted. Only time will fully realise the impact of these changes. However, a significant positive outcome is that change is being made. For too long there has been no progress for a variety of reasons.

Veterans have observed significant challenges with the multiple acts relating to compensation for conditions relating to service. While a new act would be the 'gold-plated' solution, combining all acts under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA) is a significant step in reducing complexity. A vast majority of those that currently serve will fall under MRCA. This, combined with the simplification of training requirements for advocates, I feel, will see gradual, positive improvement.

The recent Federal Budget demands comment. The macro conditions suggest that all areas of the budget require attention, that is, money needs to be saved. However, the cap placed on a small number of veterans requiring allied health support above \$5,000 seems an insignificant saving when looking at the bigger picture. It is acknowledged that mechanisms exist to not limit expenditure above \$5,000 where there is a clear medical need. The RSL will continue to engage government on this issue.

The divestment of Defence assets is continuing at pace around the country. While many decisions are supported, the current position to divest Irwin Barracks in Western Australia is not. There is a clear, logical capability-based argument. At the heart of capability are people. The vast majority of those serving in reserves in WA do so because of the ease of which service can be rendered. While investment in a new site is welcomed, the additional travel time for those currently serving is not. The RSL supports the divestment of Leeuwin Barracks **if** all proceeds are directed to updating facilities at Irwin Barracks.

State

The 110th State Congress of RSL WA was held on 26 and 27 June 2026. The Friday evening was an excellent opportunity for Sub-Branchees to connect and hear first-hand from the National President. Congratulations to both Sub-Branchees and individuals who received awards.

Saturday 26 June included both formal presentations and the Annual General Meeting. Delegates were fortunate to hear directly from Federal and State Ministers for Veterans, the CEO of RSL WA and key subcommittee Chairs. Also presented was an independent review of the Board of RSL WA. I would like to thank Sub-Branchees that put forward items for discussion. A highlight was presentations by individual Sub-Branchees on initiatives being undertaken across WA. Efforts in the community by our Sub-Branchees are inspiring. This session left all delegates recharged and ready for the year ahead.

State Congress for 2027 will be held on 25 and 26 June 2027. At this congress, there will be elections of three directors and the State President. I encourage all Sub-Branchees to consider matters that could be raised for the benefit of the League.

All the best.

From the CEO

Mr Stephen Barton



We're halfway through what has proved to be a very busy year. It is worth taking a moment to reflect on the past six months and this doesn't include all the major and important work undertaken by our nearly 6,000 members in Sub-Branches across the state.

Firstly, to welfare – we have managed over 150 complex welfare cases, year to date. These are the most vulnerable of our cohort, experiencing anything from homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse and addiction, and cognitive decline. I'd like to thank those Sub-Branches who've rolled up their sleeves to assist managing some of these cases.

Our compensation advocates, who engaged over 1,500 veterans last year in some form or another, are taking on 30 to 40 new clients each month. It is worth noting the span and complexity of some of these matters – and how life changing they can be for those involved. In June alone, with just six staff members, there were 56 appointments, 216 initial liability claims, 55 initial liability conditions determined and 1,306 emails. And over \$1.7m in compensation payments determined.

This year, we have had 2,585 veterans participate in our RSL Active program. These activities are as diverse as learning to scuba dive, a fun run, yoga, water colour painting and training to do stand-up comedy.

This month, we officially launched RSL WA Workforce Connect – our new veteran employment and transition program. We have already engaged 46 companies, 13 training providers and 11 other referral sources. We're building a pipeline of veterans and employers and are open to referrals. We are very clear too that we are positioning the RSL as part of the AUKUS workforce solution.

Meanwhile, from January to June, Anzac House welcomed over 14,000 guests in 331 events. Our unique selling point is not just the view or the sensational service – but that the profits go directly to supporting our charitable purpose. We have also delivered first class commemorative events – our Anzac Day Campaign reached over 1.7 million West Australians.

The importance of this cannot be understated. The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously defined culture as 'the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves.' We are story tellers – through our commemoration we share the incomparable stories of our countrymen and women at war. We tell them to, and, for the nation. These define both our national story and our nation's character.

To that end, on 8 August we will be holding a service at the State War Memorial to commemorate the service of women in the Armed Forces of Australia. And on Saturday 10 October at the State War Memorial, on the eve of the anniversary, we will be marking 25 years since the start of our long war in Afghanistan.

In the lead up to the 25th anniversary, we hosted an exhibition of award-winning photographer Gary Ramage's pictures from the war. Over 100 people attended the event, with a Q&A with Gary and Mr Daniel Moss from the Office of Defence Industry Support.

In conversations with Gary, he was clear that he wanted his photographs to tell Australia's story of the campaign. Through his generosity, we have managed to acquire the collection of 30 photographs and want to tour it around the state. If any Sub-Branch is interested in hosting an exhibition in their suburb, town or city, please let us know. We want these photographs and stories to be shared as widely as possible.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the departure of Mr Phil Orchard AM as Chair of the Trustees and former Board Member Mr Tim Curtis.

I first came across Phil over a decade ago when he was CEO/State Secretary. His work ethic is formidable, his knowledge of the League unparalleled and his judgement is impeccable.

Tim Curtis's departure also marks the end of an era. Wise, insightful and always articulate – Tim has the annoying knack of asking the question you wish you thought of.

Both leave the League far better than when they found it.

Veteran Services update

Damien Roper – Veteran Services Manager

Veteran housing in Western Australia: building homes and hope

Safe and secure housing is one of the most important foundations for a successful transition from military service to civilian life. Yet, veteran homelessness and housing insecurity remain significant challenges across Australia, including in Western Australia.

Without a secure place to live, it can be difficult for individuals to focus on employment, health, family relationships and personal wellbeing. For veterans, stable housing often provides the platform from which recovery, reintegration and long-term success can be achieved.

Organisations such as Veteran Housing Australia (VHA) are working to address this issue by developing housing solutions that provide veterans with stability, dignity and access to the support services they need to rebuild their lives. Through partnerships with government, community organisations and the private sector, VHA is helping create pathways to long-term housing security for former service personnel and is expanding its services in Western Australia. RSL WA has recently supported five veterans and their families into secure, affordable and sustainable housing provided by Veteran Housing Australia and Hancock Prospecting, led by Mrs Gina Rinehart AO.

In 2026, Hancock Prospecting further strengthened its commitment by announcing a \$200 million national initiative to acquire and convert properties into accommodation for homeless veterans, representing one of the largest private investments ever made in veteran housing in Australia. More on this will be released shortly.

These initiatives demonstrate the power of collaboration between veteran-focused organisations, community groups and industry partners. As Western Australia continues to support those who have served our nation, investment in veteran housing remains essential to ensuring that no veteran is left without a place to call home and the opportunity to thrive.

If you are or know of a veteran who needs some support that includes exploring some housing options from those that understand the unique experience of military service, please reach out to us at

welfare@rslwa.org.au.

Goldsworthy Centre update

Janine Gardner – Goldsworthy Centre Manager



We are officially in the home stretch now, with just weeks to go until the doors swing open on of WA's first dedicated veterans and families hub!

On-site, the transformation has been nothing short of remarkable. Our builders, Orixon, continue to deliver outstanding work, and the pace is picking up every day:

- Walls are up with the internal layout of the centre now fully visible for the first time
- Bathrooms are complete and ready to go
- Carpet is going in and the space is starting to feel warm and welcoming
- Kitchen installation is ready to proceed, which is a huge milestone for a space that will host so many shared meals and conversations
- Furniture assembly and set-up kicks off in just a couple of weeks, as we start bringing the centre to life room by room

And here's the moment we've all been waiting for: any day now, work will begin on the front facade, and the building will finally stop looking like a car rental outlet and start looking like the veterans and families hub it was always meant to be!

On the services front, momentum is building too. We're excited to be hosting an information session for ex-service organisations and service providers, giving our growing network of partners a chance to:

- Get the latest updates on our progress and opening timeline
- Learn more about how the hub-and-spoke model will work in practice
- Explore opportunities to get involved and support the veterans and families who'll walk through our doors

It's a fantastic chance to strengthen the relationships that will make the Goldsworthy Centre the true "front door" to support services across the region.

After years of planning, partnership-building and hard work, this long journey is nearly at its destination. Every wall, every tile, every conversation with a new provider is bringing us closer to opening our doors to the veteran community in Rockingham and beyond.

State President – Expression of Interest

The Board of RSL WA is calling for expressions of interest for the role of State President.

“It has been an immense privilege to lead the Returned and Services League of Western Australia. The role of State President is one that is dynamic, challenging and incredibly rewarding. As the organisation pursues its objectives, considered strategic leadership will be essential.”

Duncan Anderson, State President, RSL WA

Background

RSL WA has successfully elected the State President from within its current membership for 110 years. This system has ensured stable and considered leadership with unwavering focus on the objects of the League. However, RSL WA and the environment it operates within has evolved, with ever-greater complexity a feature.

The role of State President has maintained the challenges associated with leadership of a large, member-centric organisation. Complexity has increased in recent times due to regulatory pressures, rate of societal change (social media, artificial intelligence etc.) and demands emerging from generational change in the veteran sector.

In response to these changes, the Board of RSL WA has identified a need to source suitable candidates for the role of State President from across Western Australia, and from within the existing membership. These nominations will be considered by members at State Congress in 2027.

The role

The successful candidate for State President will ideally possess an authentic leadership style and be comfortable working with and alongside members across Western Australia. Operating in dynamic strategic environments, the successful candidate for State President will understand current matters before the Board and awareness of the key stakeholders in the community. The successful candidate will be comfortable working with all forms of media. Critically, the successful candidate will hold the skills and qualifications to undertake their role as Board Chair.

The role has three distinct areas of focus: external, internal and governance.

External. The State President is expected to represent RSL WA at numerous commemorative events throughout the year. This includes leading Anzac Day and Remembrance Day at Kings Park. Additionally, the role will likely include all forms of media, from television interviews, live radio and pre-recorded material. Finally, the State President will be expected to speak publicly (planned or very short notice) on a wide range of topics.

Internal. The State President has an essential leadership role within RSL WA. Regular engagement with members, Sub-Branches and the staff at Anzac House is essential. This aspect of the role is incredibly rewarding yet demanding of time. The variety of issues faced demands a balanced response that considers the multitude of stakeholders. Finally, regular communications to members are required through routine submissions to both the Sub-Branch Signal and *The Listening Post*.

Governance. The State President is also the Chair of the Board of RSL WA. The Board consists of eight elected members (including the State President) and two skills-based appointed directors. Trustees also attend the monthly Board meetings, although hold no voting rights. Additionally, the State President is also the Chair of the members Annual General Meeting (State Congress) and Extraordinary General meetings (when required). Finally, the State President should be prepared to fulfill a role as a Director of the Board of RSL Australia.

The process

Veterans from across Western Australia are invited to express interest to admin@rslwa.org.au. This expression of interest should include contact details and military service history. Importantly, this includes both members and non-members.

The process will culminate at State Congress 2027, where the successful candidate will be elected for a term of four years by the members of RSL WA.

110th State Congress



RSL WA members and Sub-Branch representatives gathered for the 110th State Congress at Anzac House on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 June 2026.

Friday evening welcomed 129 guests and featured the awards ceremony, during which service certificates, life memberships and Sub-Branch awards were presented. Congratulations to all the award winners.

Attendees included the Honourable Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, and the Honourable Paul Papalia CSC MLA, Minister for Police; Corrective Services; Racing and Gaming; Defence Industry; and Veterans Issues.

We had the honour of presenting Mr Papalia with Honorary Life Membership of the League in recognition of his service to the veteran community and defence industry. We were fortunate that we were able to make this presentation before his retirement from public life.

Saturday's program included the presentation of Anzac of the Year and the Meritorious Service Medal, along with the AGM and Matters for Decision, with 162 guests in attendance.

State Congress 2026 was live streamed via YouTube. The link is available to watch here: [State Congress 2026](#).

We thank all who attended and look forward to another successful Congress in 2027.

RSL WA Annual Report



The RSL WA Annual Report 2025 is now available.

The Annual Report provides a high-level overview of RSL WA's progress across our mission, strategic objectives, governance and key initiatives.

Read updates from our dedicated Board and committees as they continue to support veterans and their families through sustainable, relevant services that uphold the confidence of our community and stakeholders.

The Annual Report 2025 is available to read here: [RSL Western Australia | Annual Reports](#).

Workforce Connect: employment service for veterans



RSL WA is proud to launch Workforce Connect – a new, dedicated business unit designed to deliver comprehensive employment support to veterans and their families across Western Australia.

Workforce Connect has been developed to bring employment services back in-house, delivering a more streamlined, veteran-centric model that supports individuals from initial engagement through to long-term employment outcomes.

Workforce Connect will offer a comprehensive suite of services tailored to both jobseekers and employers.

For veterans and families:

- Career guidance and pathway planning
- Resume and job application support
- Interview preparation and coaching
- Translation of military skills into civilian language
- Individualised case management and referrals
- Direct connection to employment opportunities
- Ongoing support following placement

For employers:

- Access to a skilled and diverse talent pool
- Candidate sourcing and shortlisting
- Reverse marketing of veteran candidates
- Recruitment and workforce solutions
- Support in understanding the value of veteran employment
- Guidance on onboarding and retention of veteran employees

For further information, please contact workforceconnect@rslwa.org.au. You can also keep an eye on the RSL WA website and social media channels for updates as Workforce Connect continues to grow.

Visit the website – rslwaworkforceconnect.org.au.

Commemoration of Women in the Armed Forces of Australia



Location: State War Memorial, Kings Park & Botanic Garden

Date: 8 August 2026

Time: 10:00 am to 11:15 am

RSVP: [Commemoration of Women in the Armed Forces of Australia](#)

Join us for a special commemorative service that honours the service, sacrifice and achievements of women who have served our nation across all branches of the Australian Defence Force. The event recognises their invaluable contributions during times of war and peace and celebrates their enduring legacy in Australia's military history.

Commemoration of Women in the Armed Forces of Australia: Luncheon



The Servicewomen's RSL Sub-Branch invites you to a luncheon, following RSL WA's commemorative service at Frasers. Get in quick to confirm your attendance!

Date: Saturday 8 August 2026

Location: Frasers Function Centre, Kings Park

Time: 11:30 am to 3:30 pm

Cost: \$100 per person

RSVP: email servicewomens.events@sb.rslwa.org.au

All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP by 20 July 2026. See further event details here: [Servicewomen's Luncheon](#).

RSL WA Tax-Time Appeal in Support of Claims Advocacy

RSL WA is once again conducting our mid-year fundraising campaign to help finance our fee-free Veterans Claims Advocacy Service.

RSL WA Claims Advocates provide high-quality support to WA veterans and families navigating the DVA claims and entitlements process with no commissions or out-of-pocket costs. We are an organisation that strongly believes people that have sustained service-related injuries or illnesses shouldn't have to pay to access compensation. RSL WA supports all WA veterans and families, regardless of whether they are a member.

To provide Claims Advocacy at no cost, RSL WA relies on government grants and fundraising to ensure that we can meet the demand for support today and in the future. Government grants help cover a significant portion of the operating costs, but it doesn't get us all the way.

In the last financial year, RSL WA has represented or assisted 1,150 veterans and lodged 1,360 claims to secure compensations payouts valued at \$13m. These numbers mean varying outcomes for individuals. For some, DVA compensation for a veteran can mean making mortgage repayments while unable to work from service-related injuries. Compensation could also supplement income and buy valuable time to get on top of health. The bottom line is that every successful claim enables veterans and their families to live a fuller life.

You can support this life-changing service by making a donation, sharing this fundraiser with others, or raising awareness for the RSL WA Claims Advocacy Service. Any support, big or small, helps us achieve our mission of enabling WA veterans and their families to thrive.

The game is changing. New legislation has been released to simplify the claims process, but for those that have a serious condition or poor mental health, an advocate is highly valuable. Together we can make a difference.

To donate, visit the RSL WA website: rslwa.org.au/get-involved/make-a-donation.

Please contact the RSL WA Appeals team to get involved in the fundraiser: appeals@rslwa.org.au.

To access RSL WA Claims Advocacy support, contact advocacy@rslwa.org.au.

RSL WA Workforce Connect: ASC careers seminar



Your next mission starts here.

Date: Thursday 23 July 2026

Time: 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Location: Level 1, Anzac House, 28 St Georges Tce, Perth

Register: rslwa.org.au/events-calendar/asc-careers-seminar

Ready for your next big career move? ASC is Australia's submarine company. They built Australia's Collins Class submarines, sustain the Collins Class fleet, and have been selected by the Australian Government to sustain and jointly build conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines in Australia.

Working at ASC means meaningful work that supports national security, interesting day-to-day challenges, and genuine opportunities for growth, all within a flexible and supportive environment. Whether you're an experienced professional or just starting out, ASC offers diverse pathways including apprenticeships, undergraduate and graduate engineering programs, degree-based apprenticeships, and corporate graduate opportunities.

Join us and ASC at Anzac House to explore what exciting roles are on offer, understand the ASC recruitment process, meet the team and ask questions.

For more information about RSL WA Workforce Connect, contact workforceconnect@rslwa.org.au.

Plateful Perth – Winter Warmers August Whipper Snapper Whiskey Tasting



When: All August, Monday to Friday

Time: 11:00 am to close

Where: Anzac House, Level 1 Club Bar & Restaurant

Anzac Club is excited to introduce a unique whiskey tasting experience in partnership with Whipper Snapper Distillery, celebrating premium craft Australian whiskey made from 100% WA grains.

Inspired by a wartime recipe shared between an American and Australian pilot during the Second World War, this experience goes beyond tasting – it tells a story of heritage, connection and craftsmanship. Guests will enjoy a curated selection of whiskeys while learning about the distillery's history and process.

Aligned with our shared values, this collaboration also highlights Whipper Snapper's Veterans Club initiative, which focuses on giving back and creating a supportive community for current and ex-serving men and women. A meaningful and engaging event designed to bring people together over great whiskey and even better conversation.

We recommend booking ahead to secure your spot. Call 9287 3777 or email acrestaurant@anzacclub.org.au.

RSL WA Committee positions – Expression of Interest

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.

[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 \(WAVAC\)](#)

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.