

Sub-Branch Signal

August 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

RSL Australia has taken a formal position against the \$5000 Cap to Allied Health Services. Of significance, 10 other veteran organisations co-signed this position presenting a united front on this significant challenge. This has been communicated to all stakeholders, including the Federal Government.

The combined position demonstrates a sector that is responding to a challenge posed by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide. The Royal Commission noted the disaggregated nature of the sector with multiple competing priorities. Led by RSL Australia, the combined position is clear evidence of alignment on major issues. Along with many others, I remain optimistic about the future of the sector in continuing to advocate for veterans and their families.

State

The Board of RSL WA met on 6 August. The Board welcomed the newest co-opted member Matt Munro, who replaced Tim Curtis. Matt brings deep leadership experience to the Board and provides critical stability over the coming 12 months with upcoming Director and State President elections. Matt has served on WAVAC as a member and recently assumed the role of Chair.

Women in the Armed Forces. I was privileged to attend a commemorative service recognising the role of women in service. Attendees at the State War Memorial heard of the involvement of women in service from the Boer War to current service. Coordinated by the Servicewomen's Sub-Branch the service was very well attended, with spirits not dampened by the very challenging climatic conditions. The service was wonderfully bookended by a formal lunch at Frasers Restaurant attended by veterans from World War Two through to current servicewomen.

Vietnam Veterans Day. This year marks 60 years since the Battle of Long Tan. The service held at Kings Park on 16 August was a fitting tribute to a particularly challenging period in Australia's history. The age of those killed in action was foremost in those that attended mind with the role of honour accompanied by photographs of those killed. It was a timely reminder that those who bear the brunt of decisions taken far away are most of the time at the start of their lives. For me this was a timely reminder of our motto 'The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance'. The RSL must continue to be the voice of reason to our leaders to take every step possible to de-escalate tensions, to avoid conflict. If not, we are destined to farewell young men and women as they enter into harm's way.

Sub-Branch Governance. The Board endorsed a considered, sensible and tiered approach to Sub-Branch governance. A key consideration of this was striking a balance between the workload of our volunteers and meeting various obligations to regulators. Moreover, it was felt that Sub-Branches that met their governance requirements enjoyed the confidence of the Board and Trustees to vote on key matters at State Congress. By way of example, there are large, well-resourced Sub-Branches in Western Australia that have not yet submitted their financial statements from 2025!

This system will have different requirements based on size. There will always be grace provided for submissions when circumstances are challenging. RSL WA will openly communicate progress including non-compliance. Should a Sub-Branch not meet the requirements of this approach, they can attend and speak at State Congress, however they will not be entitled to cast a vote. This is a necessary step as we progressively improve the standards across the League.

Concluding thoughts. We are racing towards the end of the year. Many Sub-Branches are entering into periods of change with general meetings. As tensions invariably rise, I ask everyone to consider what they can control. Let us collectively improve how we relate to each other and set the standard for behaviour in our community.

From the CEO

Mr Stephen Barton



As the State President noted, the Board has approved a new approach to Sub-Branch governance. We will go through the changes at the Committee Conference in October. But, it's important to note, we're not trying to increase the governance burden, but make it easier to comply. Stand by for further details.

Advocacy

Over the last couple of years, in conversations with fellow veterans, I have been struck by the number who use fee-paying advocacy services, often because they think that's what they need to do.

Everyone is different and will choose what works for them, but what is apparent to me is that most don't know that the RSL provides free advocacy services.

When I tell them, they often respond that they didn't want a volunteer, not knowing that the RSL has professional advocates (as well as our fantastic volunteers).

For a few weeks a clip has been circulating of Mr Tom Kliese from Veterans First Consulting at a business development conference with US entrepreneur Alex Hormozi. The clip was on YouTube but has since been taken down. If you've seen it, you'd know why.

Mr Kliese is asking Mr Hormozi how he can grow his business. By way of explanation, Mr Kliese says:

'I do compensation claims for injured military veterans in Australia. We do \$50m revenue now. Based on contracts signed today we will do \$100m in two years from now.... I want a billion-dollar enterprise value essentially... whether that's \$300m, \$250m revenue whatever is required. Right now we captured 40 per cent of the market in Australia... We sell to one avatar, one product, one time...'

That's Australian taxpayer's money, allocated to provide compensation to veterans. Mr Kliese gives his motivation, it is unambiguous.

It makes for confronting view: a veteran is an avatar; the compensation is a product.

I recognise that, to a certain extent, fee-paying advocacy services are a response to the perceived complexity of the system and dated perceptions of advocates in the not-for-profit sector. That doesn't make it right.

If you need to speak to someone about compensation and advocacy services, please remember the RSL has professional, ethical and committed experts. Importantly, please share with your networks.

For 110 years we have been supporting veterans and their families. We don't charge a fee for you to access what is yours.

AI

From time to time, I receive emails or proposals that are clearly generated by AI. I understand the ease and convenience of AI can make it attractive.

The American commentator Bret Stephens recently wrote in *The New York Times*, 'Never let AI do your writing for you.' He continued, 'The problem with writing with AI is that it's mentally enfeebling – an escalator towards a result when you really need to make a daily habit of taking the stairs. As it becomes ubiquitous, it undermines not only our individual ability to write but also a society's collective ability to reason, a culture's inner capacity to create and everyone's reason to care.'

AI has its place – we are exploring ways of using it to improve advocacy and there are a myriad of back of house uses we are looking at. However, I generally follow Bret Stephens' approach. If you receive a communication from me, it won't be written by AI.

I can generally tell when communication to me is written by AI – because it's usually quite long. The sender (we can't call them the author) is happy to save their time by sending me something generated by AI that is significantly longer than it would be if they took the time to write it themselves. It's an implicit statement that their time is more important than anyone else's.

If I want you to take the time to read something I've written, I want you to know I've dedicated the time to think about and draft what I put before you.

Engagement with political parties

We have received a few complaints regarding a political party using RSL Sub-Branches for launches or political events.

It is a timely reminder that we are a non-partisan organisation. We need to be very careful protecting the League's standing in the community – with all veterans.

While engagement with political candidates, Members of Parliament and Ministers is a normal part of the League, we have to ensure that we are not being seen to endorse a political party.

Hosting a political launch at a Sub-Branch might mean the RSL is seen to endorse that political party. The political party, whoever they are, also gets the reflected glow from the League's respected position in the community.

If in doubt, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Protocol

Finally, as you could imagine, we often receive requests for advice on protocol. I thought this simple point on funerals worth sharing with a broader audience.

Gentlemen are to remove their headdress in churches or chapels – this includes slouch hats, berets and bonnets. Pallbearers and those folding the flag do not wear headdress.

Veteran Services update

Damien Roper – Veteran Services Manager

Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a useful way of understanding the challenges some veterans face when transitioning from military service to civilian life. The model suggests that people are better able to focus on personal growth, relationships and achievement when their more fundamental needs are first met.

At the foundation are physical needs such as food, shelter and sleep. For veterans experiencing homelessness, financial hardship or unstable accommodation, these needs can quickly become the most immediate priority.

The next level is safety and security. For veterans, this may include secure housing, stable income, access to healthcare and a sense of personal and psychological safety. Without these foundations, it can be difficult to focus on longer-term goals such as employment, study or rebuilding social networks.

Belonging and connection are also particularly important. Military service often creates strong bonds, a shared purpose and a sense of identity. Leaving Defence can result in the loss of these connections, and some veterans may experience isolation or feel disconnected from civilian communities. Ex-service organisations, family networks and social groups can play an important role in rebuilding a sense of belonging.

The higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy relate to esteem, purpose and self-fulfillment. Veterans bring significant skills, leadership experience, resilience and knowledge to their communities. Meaningful employment, volunteering, mentoring and community participation can help restore confidence, identity and purpose after service.

For organisations supporting veterans, Maslow's hierarchy is a reminder that effective support often starts with the basics. A person struggling to find somewhere safe to sleep may not yet be ready to focus on employment, education or long-term planning.

By addressing immediate needs while also supporting connection, purpose and independence, veteran services can help create the foundations for sustainable wellbeing and successful transition into civilian life.

Goldsworthy Centre update

Janine Gardner – Goldsworthy Centre Manager

We are delighted to share that we are now approaching the final weeks of construction at the Goldsworthy Centre – we're so close now, we can practically smell the coffee!

It has been an incredible journey to reach this point, with all major construction now complete. This week marks another special milestone, as we watch our front signage being installed.

A few weeks ago, we were fortunate to have a wonderful group of volunteers join us to help with furniture assembly, and we are so grateful for their time, energy and generosity. It has undoubtedly been a long and, at times, challenging road, and while the team is feeling the effects of that effort, it has all been worth it.

Our next steps are to set up furniture and add finishing touches so that it gives the centre that warm, homely feel that we've always envisioned. Alongside this, service delivery planning will swing into full action, as we work closely with our amazing service providers to ensure everything is ready to support our veterans and families from day one.

We are so excited to bring this beautiful centre to life for our community, and we truly cannot wait to welcome you through our doors once we open very soon.

State President EOI

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 Anniversary of the League Gala



Join us for an extraordinary evening as we celebrate the 110th Anniversary of the Returned & Services League of Australia on Saturday 19 September 2026 with an elegant Gala celebration at the iconic Anzac House.

Set across two levels, this once-in-a-generation event will bring together veterans, members, dignitaries, supporters and the wider community for a night of celebration, remembrance and connection.

Throughout the cocktail style evening, guests will enjoy a premium canapé menu accompanied by a selection of complimentary beer and wine.

Experience an exceptional lineup of entertainment and exclusive experiences, including:

- Live performances by the acclaimed RAN Band
- Live DJ
- Whiskey tasting by Whipper Snapper Distillery
- Gin tasting by Billy Stitch Distillery
- Craft lager tasting by Deep Elite Brewing
- A live portrait artist creating a personalised keepsake
- Plus, more surprises throughout the evening

Together, we will honour 110 years of service, sacrifice and support while celebrating the enduring legacy of the League and those who have shaped its history.

Tickets are limited. Secure your place and be part of this historic celebration: [110th Anniversary of the League Gala Tickets](#).

Australia Day Medallions nominations open

Each year the RSL participates in the Australia Day Medallions program and presents Australia Day Medallions to organisations and individuals that have made a significant contribution to the veteran and ex-service community in Western Australia.

The Australia Day Medallions are reserved for the highest level of recognition and provide a unique way of inspiring and recognising individuals or teams when presented in the lead up to Australia Day, 26 January.

Criteria

The criteria for receiving the medallion are outstanding achievements, length of service and recognition in a particular field. While there is no nomination form as such, nominations are made in the form of an open letter from a Sub-Branch outlining the nominee's details, any referees and the way in which a nominee has met the criteria.

In an effort to achieve uniformity, RSL WA's Honours & Awards Committee advise that a simple template linked should be used when nominating for the medallion. This template can be found in the Sub-Branch Toolbox on our website, under the Certificates and Awards section or by clicking [here](#).

The award is sponsored by the Australia Day Council for presentation on Australia Day and has Australia wide recognition.

Nominations for the Australia Day Medallions are now open. Please submit nominations by **Wednesday 2 September 2026**.

Nominations for Japan-Australia Grassroots Program 2027

The Japan-Australia Grassroots Exchange Program aims to promote post-war reconciliation, understanding and goodwill between Japan and Australia by inviting descendants of Australian Second World War prisoners of the Japanese (POWs) to Japan through the RSL network.

The Japanese Government has offered two places for descendants of POWs to participate in the 2027 Grassroots Exchange Program. The program will take place in Japan in the first week of March 2027 (Dates TBC).

The program includes:

- 7 nights/8-days in Japan
- Flights, shared accommodation, local transport, meals and insurance
- Meetings with Japanese Government representatives and students
- Hosted dinner by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Sightseeing and cultural experiences

Eligible participants:

- Prisoners of War
- Spouses of POWs
- Children of POWs
- Grandchildren of POWs

Participants are responsible for their travel expenses to and from the nearest airport to their residence, passport costs, expenses incurred above room charges, and meals exceeding the allowance, souvenirs and personal incidentals.

Nominations:

If you, or someone you know, are interested in participating in the program, please complete a nomination form **no later than Monday 7 September 2026**: [Japan-Australia Grassroots Program](#).

RSL WA will assess the nominations and select two applicants to send to RSL Australia for consideration. RSL Australia will work with the Japanese Government to select the two successful participants for the 2027 Program.

Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) – tertiary scholarships

Applications for tertiary scholarships for children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans open on 18 August until 31 October 2026.

Sponsorships are for tertiary education and are \$4,000–\$6,000 a year, for up to three years.

Eligibility criteria for all scholarships:

- Australian residency or citizenship
- Child or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran
- Full-time tertiary student in 2027

Additional eligibility requirements for specific scholarships can be found on the AVCAT website.

Apply online at avcat.org.au.

Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency

If you're a veteran or the family member of a veteran, there's a new place you can go for support, information and guidance.

The Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency (the Agency) launched on 1 July, delivering on recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. Its focus is simple: to make it easier for you to find the support you need, when you need it.

The Agency takes a more person-centred approach to wellbeing, recognising that everyone's experience is different. Whether you're transitioning out of ADF service, supporting a loved one, or navigating a tough time, the Agency is there to help you feel more informed, supported and connected.

You can connect with the Agency online by visiting the newly launched website: veteranwellbeing.gov.au.

Anzac House Melbourne Cup event



When: Tuesday, 3 November 2026

Time: 10:30 am to 2:30 pm

Where: Anzac Club, 28 St Georges Tce Perth WA 6000

Back by popular demand, our 2026 Melbourne Cup Luncheon promises to be bigger and better than ever, featuring a delicious three-course meal, beverage package (10:30 am to 1:30 pm), and live screening of the race on three large screens.

Dress to impress and enjoy the fun with Fashions on the Field, sweepstakes, raffles and plenty of surprises throughout the day. It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate with friends or colleagues, enjoy great food and drinks, and soak up the excitement of one of the year's most iconic events.

If you have any questions before booking, please contact us at functions@anzacclub.org.au.

Click [here](#) for the purchasing link.

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, email workforceconnect@rslwa.org.au or visit rslwaworkforceconnect.org.au.

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.

[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 [RSL WA 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 a 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.