

Sub-Branch Signal

October 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,

Setting aside the regular updates, I will make some observations about current matters that impact us all in some way. Current political discourse is polarising. Furthermore, the language used often lacks nuance and is designed to 'cut through' rather than encourage thoughtful discussion. Finally, social media adds fuel to the embers of discontent, fanning them into flames with enthusiasm.

How does this impact the RSL? How does this impact Sub-Branches, members, veterans and their families?

These observations do not impact the purpose of the RSL. The RSL's 'north star' remains clear. We exist for veterans and their families! How we collectively achieve this has and will continue to evolve.

Recent examples of this clear purpose in action have included clear advocacy and influence on the allied health cap and continued efforts on defence estate divestment by RSL Australia. Growing support for partnerships with RSL WA by Defence Industry such as the Australian Shipbuilding Company as part of AUKUS. Sub-Branch collaboration to bring the veteran community together; Joondalup and North Beach Sub-Branches and their Ball. Veterans and their families continue to engage in ever-increasing numbers in

RSL Active, gaining purpose and connection through activities. Finally, our service membership in WA is growing. This growth is consistent and recognises that veterans see benefit in joining the RSL and that our systems can support this. Of note, Central Sub-Branch (our online Sub-Branch) is showing the fastest growth.

Deliberately I have led with positive examples. The RSL across Australia is continuing to deliver positive outcomes for our community. This is despite deliberate attempts by those in the veteran community to undermine. The motivation for this deliberate behaviour has always bemused me. The question must always be 'what will this (action) do to support veterans and their families?'. If this lens was overlayed, many of the disgraceful acts undertaken would be different; one would hope the values we have all been imbued with through service would alter the approach.

Linking to my opening remarks about division in our community. We are in a fortunate position to participate, lead and support considered, sensible and respectful debate. The apolitical nature of the RSL, our longstanding service to the nation and scale are unique. We have a collective responsibility to veterans and their families and with this comes great responsibility. The risks associated with this are varied and present themselves daily. Behaviour of members towards staff and each other erode trust in the organisation and have a negative impact on our culture. Sub-Branches and members making political statements (deliberate or inadvertent) erode our apolitical position, thus trust in the institution.

My observations and comments are not designed to lecture. They strive to call out behaviour and actions in the League that directly undermine our purpose, to support veterans and their families. We each have a responsibility and I remain incredibly proud to play my part in our great organisation.

All the best.

From the CEO

Mr Stephen Barton



25th Anniversary of Afghanistan

On the eve of the 25th anniversary of Australia's service in Afghanistan, RSL WA held a service at the State War Memorial. It was unquestionably the most powerful and moving service I have been involved with. The service and the reception at Anzac House were truly special and a living embodiment of our values of commemoration and comradery.

I'd like to thank Brigadier Brett Chaloner CSC for his powerful keynote address, Nigel Earnshaw and Emma Sutton for their expert readings, and LTCOL Alex Davidson and Regimental Sergeant Majors Simon Ion OAM and Ross Peck for reading the Roll of Honour.

The service will be covered in detail in the upcoming Listening Post. Watching the National Service the following morning, I realised we do not need to look to the east for inspiration when it comes to the delivery of first-class commemorative services.

Defence Estate

In the event of a serious incident in the South China Sea and a major conflict in our region, it is an open question whether we would be ready.

Defence spending is just 2.02 per cent of GDP. And yet according to the Government, we are in the worst strategic environment since the Second World War. We understand the competing demands on public finances and the need for Government to spend wisely and carefully. But, when Government spending is at its highest level in four decades (excluding the pandemic), one can reasonably question their priorities.

It is not lost on us that while the Defence Minister says that Western Australia is Australia's geostrategic ground zero, they are committed to selling off Irwin Barracks, which will kill the Army Reserve at a formation level.

If you feel strongly about the Defence estate divestment, I'd encourage you to respectfully register your concerns with your local member of parliament.

Welfare Funds

We all remember the apocryphal tale of the soldier who, when requesting some kit from the Q-store, is told by the Quartermaster that they can't have it, because someone else might need it.

This tale sometimes comes to mind when it comes to Sub-Branch welfare funds. The people of Western Australia have donated money through the Poppy Appeal for the welfare of veterans. While it is a very good thing that Sub-Branches are careful and considered in the allocation of these funds, we must remember that they are there to be used.

RSL WA Veterans Services Manager Damien Roper in this edition has given some guidance over the use of those funds, and this is something we will discuss at the upcoming Committee Conference.

It must be said, some Sub-Branches are excellent in how they engage with veterans in need and how they deploy their welfare accounts. They are exemplars of living our charitable Objects.

It is very important to note, our welfare is for *all veterans* in need, not just our members. And, Sub-Branches can get that money out the door far quicker than the Western Australian Aged Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen Relief Fund (WAASSARF). This is not in any way a criticism, it is just a different model of support. Moreover, WAASSARF is not RSL WA, it is a statutory trust that we make recommendations to, but they are the decision makers.

Veteran Services update

Damien Roper – Veteran Services Manager

Across RSL WA, Sub-Branches hold welfare funds for one important reason: to support veterans, serving members and their families when they need it most.

These funds were never intended simply to sit in an account. Their real value is realised when they are used thoughtfully and responsibly to make a practical difference in someone's life.

Sub-Branches are often closest to the people who may need support. They understand their local communities, know their members (although it's not a requirement for a veteran to be a RSL member to access welfare support) and are well placed to identify when someone might be struggling. That means welfare should not always depend on a veteran having to come forward and ask for help. Sometimes the most effective support begins with noticing, reaching out and asking the right questions.

Welfare assistance can take many forms. It may help with food, essential household expenses, transport, mobility needs, temporary accommodation or other immediate pressures. It can also support activities that reduce social isolation, strengthen connection and help veterans remain engaged with their community.

Of course, welfare funds must be managed carefully, fairly and transparently. But careful management should not mean avoiding expenditure. A high welfare fund balance is not, in itself, evidence of successful welfare activity.

The real measure of success is impact.

How many veterans have been supported? How many families have been helped through a difficult period? How many people have remained connected, safe and supported because their local Sub-Branch was willing to act?

At times RSL WA Welfare might reach out to a Sub-Branch to request support via the welfare fund. The reasons for this are multiple and include:

- Timeliness
- Attempt to engage a veteran with the Sub-Branch community
- Sub-Branch welfare funds have a higher degree of flexibility or
- Cost of need is higher than usual, and we want to spread that cost to minimise impact.

Every RSL WA Sub-Branch has an opportunity to ensure its welfare funds are doing what they were established to do.

Review the funds available. Look at the needs within the local veteran community. Promote the assistance that is available. Most importantly, do not be afraid to use welfare funds where genuine needs exist.

Money sitting in an account has potential. Money used well can change a life.

If you are or know of a veteran who needs some support, 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

The soft launch of the Goldsworthy Veterans and Families Centre took place in October, ahead of its official launch later this month.

Behind the scenes, a huge amount of work has gone into transforming an old building, and it was no small task.

The centre is a calm, comfortable space designed for you to access support, connect with others, and feel at home. While it will take a little time to settle into our routines, we look forward to welcoming you and enjoying this wonderful space together.

Stay tuned for more information following the official Goldsworthy Centre launch soon.

Land Forces International Land Defence Exposition 2026

A huge year for the WA defence industry continued recently as Perth hosted the Land Forces International Land Defence Exposition 2026. One of the largest defence industry expos in the southern hemisphere, Land Forces brought together over 1,000 exhibitors and 22,000 trade and defence attendees. This was the first time that Land Forces has been hosted in Perth, reflecting WA's increasing importance as a hub for national defence programs and investment.

RSL WA combined with RSL Australia to build on our earlier trade show presence at the Indian Ocean Defence and Security Conference (IODS) in May. Sharing a busy trade stand with Legacy, we represented the ex-service organisation community in WA. Our combined trade stand experienced a strong level of engagement, with plenty of trade and defence visitors stopping by to learn more about RSL's national and state level activities. These conversations will drive participation and partnerships between RSL WA and corporate partners, as well as engaging the current generation of serving personnel.

Our national president, Peter Tinley AM, led an insightful and well-attended panel discussion exploring the human element to Australia's national security. Meanwhile, RSL WA State President Duncan Anderson participated in a panel discussing veteran contributions to the defence industry workforce. RSL WA Workforce Connect experienced a busy week, hosting veteran job seekers at partner trade stands and building a broad range of new connections for future business.

The team at Anzac House had an equally productive week hosting a number of Land Forces satellite events. These events included RSL WA's Welcome to WA networking breakfast. During this event Parabellum and Saunders International both announced partnerships with Workforce Connect to a room of 140 guests.

RSL WA rounded off the week by announcing our Memorandum of Understanding with ECU. This MoU will see RSL WA providing holistic support, including RSL Active programs, pastoral care and employment support, to veterans on ECU's new Veteran Education Pathway.

RSL WA partners with veteran-owned Passing Paws to support veterans and their families



RSL WA has signed a 12-month partnership with Passing Paws Pet Cremations to support veterans and their families across the state.

A veteran-owned Western Australian business and long-standing supporter of RSL WA, Passing Paws is led by CEO Lee Cassell, a British Army veteran who served with the Corps of Royal Engineers and who has run the business with his family from Neerabup since 2014.

Passing Paws has long worked with defence animals and has been a committed supporter of military working dogs and their end-of-life arrangements, recognising the service these animals give alongside ADF members and ensuring they are farewelled with the dignity that service deserves.

Lee Cassell, Passing Paws CEO, said “As a veteran myself, I am proud that Passing Paws is partnering with RSL WA. The veteran community means a great deal to me, and it is a privilege to give something back to RSL WA members and their families.”

“For a lot of people who have served, a dog is not simply a pet. Some are working dogs, some are assistance dogs, and for many they are the steadiest thing in the house. Our role is to support families

through one of the hardest moments they will face, and to make sure their pet is farewelled with the care, dignity and respect they deserve. The way we say goodbye matters.”

Jamie Thomas, RSL WA Partnerships Manager, said “Passing Paws has shown a long-standing commitment to the defence community, from military working dogs through to the families who love their pets. Partnering with a veteran-owned WA business that shares our values was an easy decision, and we’re pleased to bring this benefit to our members.”

Over more than a decade, Passing Paws has built its reputation on personal and compassionate service. Every pet is cared for by name and tracked at each stage of the process, and grief support is available to every family, well beyond the day itself.

As part of this partnership, RSL WA members will receive 15% off Passing Paws services, available via the membership benefits portal or by visiting passingpaws.com.au/rsl-wa/.

Commemorative Service: Remembrance Day 2026



On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Australians pause to honour the courage and sacrifice of those who served in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Remembrance Day marks the end of the First World War on the Western Front and has become a national moment of reflection and remembrance.

Date: Wednesday 11 November 2026

Time: 10:30 am to 11:15 am

Location: State War Memorial, Kings Park, Perth

RSL WA encourages all Australians on this day to observe one minute's silence and attend our official State Commemorative Service at Kings Park.

Visit [RSL WA - Remembrance Day 2026](#) to register or for more information.

RSL WA 2026 Poppy Appeal



The Poppy Appeal is back!

Held annually in November, donations are collected in exchange for poppies or merchandise, which are proudly worn to honour those who have served.

Every donation helps RSL WA continue delivering life-changing support to current and former serving ADF members and their families. Your donation means veterans and their families can be supported by qualified and professional RSL WA advocates who guide them through the entire complex compensation claim process, at no cost.

To show your support, please donate via the following link or share it with your friends and family: [Poppy Appeal 2026 | Make a Donation](#).

Dating back to 1923, the Poppy Appeal is RSL WA's largest and longest-running fundraising campaign. On Remembrance Day, we wear the poppy as a tribute to the courage and resilience of our veterans, ensuring that their memory lives on.

Together, we can ensure this Remembrance Day is marked with respect and gratitude for all who wear or have worn the uniform.

Event: RSL Sub-Branch Ball

The Joondalup City RSL Sub-Branch and North-Beach RSL Sub-Branch are hosting a joint ball on Saturday 21 November 2026, and welcome RSL WA members to attend for an evening honouring service and celebrating community!

Date: Saturday 21 November 2026

Time: 6:30pm for a 7:00pm sit-down, 11:59pm finish.

Location: Ocean Reef Sea Sports Club, 3 Boat Harbour Quay, Ocean Reef

Dress code: Formal – black tie, ball gowns with mini medals

Cost: \$120 per person (tables up to 10 can be booked)

Register: email social@joondalupcityrsl.com.au for more information and to purchase a ticket.

The evening will feature entertainment from the Army Band, an entry drink on arrival and a silent auction.

Expressions of interest – Anzac House co-working space



RSL WA is exploring the development of a dedicated co-working space at Anzac House in the Perth CBD, featuring hot desks, offices, meeting rooms, event space and more.

Help shape Perth's newest co-working hub for veteran-owned and defence-related businesses – complete our 4-minute expression of interest survey below by Friday 30 October 2026 and tell us what your organisation needs from a modern workspace.

Participants will go in the draw to win a \$200 luncheon voucher for the Anzac House Bar & Restaurant.

Survey: [RSL WA's Anzac House Co-working Space](#).

Purslowe & Chipper information sessions

As we previously announced, RSL WA recently entered a 12-month partnership with Purslowe and Chipper.

We have delivered training to Purslowe and Chipper funeral directors on veteran funeral arrangements and protocols. The team were already extremely knowledgeable and committed to giving veterans the right send off.

Purslowe and Chipper would now like the opportunity to hold information sessions at a Sub-Branch level.

The aim of these information sessions is to let the audience know who Purslowe and Chipper are, how they deliver their services, the discounts, and benefits which they have agreed with RSL WA, and to build connections with Sub-Branches.

Sub-Branches are encouraged to contact us at partnerships@rslwa.org.au for more information.

Trafalgar Touring Company – expressions of interest



RSL WA is pleased to launch a new partnership with Trafalgar Touring Company (TTC). TTC are specialists in group holidays and boast a strong pedigree in organising tours of historically significant areas and events. These group tours have included Gallipoli, South East Asia and the sites of the Western Front.

All holidays are fully tailorable with an emphasis on delivering the best possible experience for the group. Accommodation provided is generally 4 star, with local knowledge and guides unlocking the best places to visit, eat and experience those sites of historical significance.

If your Sub-Branch has considered running a great-value overseas tour, do consider contacting TTC. Importantly, TTC will contribute 5% of proceedings to RSL WA for support to our core mission – helping veterans and their families to thrive. If a Sub-Branch would like to arrange their own bespoke travel itinerary, please contact jack.hall@ttc.com.

Expressions of interest

RSL WA is also considering a centrally organised TTC holiday, with seats available to RSL WA members. This will likely take place during 2028.

We would like to test your appetite for destinations, timing and travel features in order to ensure the best and most popular travel experience. If you consider this of interest, please take the opportunity to make your voice heard by completing this short Expression of Interest: [Expression of Interest](#).

Expression of interest respondents who respond by 30 November 2026 will receive a \$200 discount on future bookings.

Event: Candles in the Rain

Performance in honour of the late Bill Grayden

This performance of 'Candles in the Rain' is a fundraiser for the 2/16th Battalion Association, in honour of the late Hon Bill Grayden AM.

Date: Wednesday 11 November 2026

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Victoria Park RSL Sub-Branch, 1 Fred Bell Parade, East Victoria Park

The play runs for approximately 2 hours, including an interval.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [Candles in the Rain | TryBooking Australia](#).

A new look for Anzac House



We've been working behind the scenes, and our new website is officially live!

Whether you're planning your next celebration, searching for a stunning wedding venue, organising a corporate event, or simply curious to discover more about Anzac House, there's plenty to explore.

Explore Anzac House: [Anzac House | Restaurant, Functions & Event Spaces Perth](#).

Take a look around, discover our spaces, check out the views and see what makes Anzac House one of Perth's best-kept secrets!

For all function enquiries, you can now reach our team at functions@anzachouse.com.au.

As part of this next chapter, our restaurant on Level 1 will now be known as Anzac House Restaurant & Bar.

You can now make your reservation directly through our online booking platform: <https://anzachouse.resos.com/booking>.

We look forward to welcoming you to Anzac House.

Anzac Day 2027 – Lotterywest Funding

Sub-Branch Applications

In preparation for Anzac Day 2027, below is some information regarding Lotterywest Funding and Sub-Branch applications.

- Monday 2 November 2026 – Application to Sub-Branches to apply for funding via Surepact.
- Monday 16 November 2026 – Application re-sent for those who may have missed initial email.
- Wednesday 18 November 2026 – Surepact to do a Webinar to take Sub-Branches through application process.
- Monday 30 November 2026 – Sub-Branches to have completed and submitted their application (no extensions).
- Friday 18 December 2026 – Approval of funds confirmed to Sub-Branches – this will be a preliminary approval of funds applied for, as change may occur due to what funds Lotterywest approve. Sub-Branches will receive a confirmation email via Surepact (you do not need to reply or do anything with this email – it is basically advising you of your approved funds).
- Wednesday 5 May 2027 (date TBC) – Webinar with Surepact and Sub-Branches to assist with their acquittal.
- Friday 21 May 2027 – Acquittals need to be submitted by Sub-Branches.
- Friday 25 June 2027 – Funds will be reimbursed to Sub-Branches by Head Office.

Please note: All correspondence will be sent via the RSL WA approved emails to the Secretary and Treasurer for each Sub-Branch (private emails will not be used).

Expressions of interest – State President

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.

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 \(WAVAC\)](#)