



## President Update

**Update number:**

**Date:**

**Email:**

**Phone number:**

**To:**

P02/19

8 March 2019

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Board of Directors, Honorary Secretaries, District Councils, Members

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Fellow members of the League,

Thank you for your positive feedback on last week's update and the way ahead for RSL NSW this year. To clarify, there will not be an extraordinary congress in May – the Board appreciate this causes some inconvenience for those of you who have pre-booked travel in advance. The State Secretary is confirming venue availability for Albury later in the year and will confirm details ASAP in order to allow you to plan your logistics.

### **Costs for ANZAC Day traffic management**

You would have seen media reporting earlier this week about some of our sub-Branches being hit with expensive bills for traffic management related to ANZAC Day ceremonies. Our position is that local councils should seek to support costs related to civic ceremonies, of which ANZAC Day is clearly the most important in the calendar. We are concerned about an increasing tendency for governments and councils to seek to shift costs to sub-Branches. Of course, we have a large part to play in running ceremonies and marches on the day and are sensitive to council requirements for security and safety. But our smaller sub-Branches cannot afford extravagant traffic management bills. I am in contact with the Transport for NSW to resolve this issue and welcome their announcement that the RSL will not be charged for ANZAC Day related services. Please keep us informed if you are experiencing issues in your area with ANZAC Day traffic management or security costs.

### **New partnership with the National Rugby League**

General Manager of Veteran Sport Australia (VSA) Michael Hartung and I met with the NRL last year to discuss how to connect our veterans and their families with local football communities. This week VSA, our new national veterans' sport program launched after the Sydney Invictus Games, announced a partnership with the NRL to get more veterans of all ages into refereeing. You can read about it [here](#). Nothing prepares you more for refereeing a weekend match for the under 14s than an operational deployment, and nothing makes a player respect a ref more than knowing they have skills in armed and unarmed combat! More seriously, this is a great program that gives transitioning veterans new skills, paid casual employment, and a connection to their local sporting community. Make sure you follow the work of VSA via their website [veteran.org.au](http://veteran.org.au), where I recommend you sign up to receive their monthly updates. This week, the team had a call from its oldest veteran yet: a 95-year-old RSL NSW member enquiring about local sporting opportunities.

## **RSL National**

You will have seen that I resigned from the Board of RSL National last week. Rest assured, RSL NSW still maintains our role as a *state member* of RSL National with responsibility for shaping the National constitution and voting alongside other states at the RSL National annual general meeting. However, we will not be appointing a director to the National Board for the time being.

You will remember that the ACNC issued a finding last year that the RSL National Board had failed to comply with governance standards. I re-joined RSL National's Board in August 2018 hoping to see an improvement in governance and a stronger national voice for veterans. In November, RSL NSW hosted a productive meeting in Sydney with all the RSL State Presidents to set the strategy and structure for the national office, as well as the work to be done to reform governance issues. After six months, I have not seen sufficient progress in resolving governance issues or financial transparency at RSL National. Indicative of this lack of progress, state delegates rejected the financial statements presented by the national office at the last AGM.

It is tragic that at the very time we need a strong and unified RSL National voice in Canberra, we do not have one. I cannot see value in continuing to spend time and money on National Board meetings when we have so much work to do here in NSW. RSL NSW will look to coordinate and cooperate directly with other RSL states until such time as the national office is reformed, and good governance restored.

## **Resignation of Mick Bainbridge**

Mick Bainbridge has resigned from the Board in order to pursue a new business opportunity. On behalf of the Board I want to thank Mick for his service to RSL NSW over the past two years. Balancing significant Board duties alongside a professional career and young family is not easy, and I am grateful to Mick for the contribution he has made to getting RSL NSW back on its feet. Mick will continue to work for veterans in his local sub-Branch and in his new venture, and we wish him the best of luck. Thanks also to his wife for her support. The Board will fill Mick's position in accordance with the casual vacancy process currently underway.



**James Brown**  
President