



State Secretary Newsletter

Date:

Email:

Phone number:

Newsletter number:

To:

22 August 2019

support@rslnsw.org.au

1300 679 775

24/19

Board of Directors, Honorary Secretaries, District Councils, Members

Dear Members,

Vale Wally Scott-Smith OAM

I am sad to inform you that Wally Scott-Smith passed away on Saturday, 17 August 2019, aged 96. After surgery barred him from military service, Wal dedicated his life to the memory of those who had been able to make that sacrifice. His first service standing guard at the Cenotaph in Martin Place was in 1940. By 1947 he was its chief attendant, and he did not retire until 2018. He was twice named ANZAC of the Year and, for his simultaneous dedication to Scouts Australia and Riding for the Disabled, he was recognised with an OAM.

Wal showed us by example what the words 'lest we forget' mean in practice rather than mere sentiment. During his tenure he felt as permanent and essential as the two bronze figures themselves. He will be remembered for the comfort he brought to the millions of us who have visited over the decades to pay respect. My thoughts and, I am sure, those of members across the League are with his family and close friends.

Vietnam Veterans Day & VP Day

Perhaps fittingly, it was a busy week of commemorations at the Cenotaph. Last Thursday, 15 August was Victory in the Pacific Day, marking the 74th anniversary of the Japanese surrender which closed a chapter of unspeakable violence and suffering across eastern Asia and the western Pacific. Dick Payten OAM, a 98-year-old veteran of the Middle East, New Guinea and Borneo, was in attendance along with dignitaries, RSL members, and passers-by who paused for the service, reflecting on the tens of thousands of Australian lives lost in that conflict.

Then on Sunday, 18 August fell the 53rd anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, the deadliest day for Australians in the Vietnam War – now honoured as Vietnam Veterans Day. Crowds at the Cenotaph remembered all 521 Australians killed in that war, the wounds their comrades brought home, and the ugly receptions many received from those who didn't understand or appreciate

their sacrifice at the time. In 2019, the turnout was strong, and news teams from all five major television channels were present. This was the first year that RSL NSW ran the ceremony in Sydney, taking over from the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, and I look forward to Vietnam Veterans Day taking its deserved place as a centrepiece of our commemorative efforts.

New Constitution – Final Draft

The Board of RSL NSW is this week reviewing amendments to the new constitution based on member feedback to the first draft. A final version will be published online and posted to all sub-Branches on Friday, 30 August ahead of the Annual State Congress beginning 27 October.

Congress Registrations Open

A circular sent to all sub-Branches and District Councils last week (C07/19) announced that online registrations for the Annual State Congress 2019 are now open. Registrations will stay open for sub-Branches, District Councils and individual observers until Thursday, 17 October 2019 at 4pm. The form can be found by clicking [here](#), or by visiting the Members' Suite on the RSL NSW website and clicking *Congress*.

Congress itself will be taking place at the Albury Entertainment Centre (AEC) from Sunday, 27 to Wednesday, 30 October 2019. The voting day for all motions including the new constitution will be the Tuesday, 29 October.

Support & Assistance Fund

Congress serves the League best when more sub-Branches are represented. If your sub-Branch or District Council requires financial assistance to attend congress please email the Support Unit at support@rslnsw.org.au. You will need to have submitted your 2019 budget and 2018 annual return, and your request to the Support Unit must include an estimated breakdown of expenses.

In the first half of 2019, the Support and Assistance Fund distributed funds as follows:

- \$3,126.11 for ANZAC Day services
- \$1,300.00 for other commemorations
- \$4,075.00 for insurance
- \$4,745.00 for other sub-Branch running costs
- \$4,123.92 to District Councils
- \$6,940.00 for congress attendance

This adds to a total of \$24,310.03 in support for this period. Thanks to those that have contributed to the fund in support of smaller sub-Branches across the state. On Tuesday I received the following note from a sub-Branch that had just received assistance: "I would like to thank RSL NSW, and the donor sub-branches, for the assistance given to our sub-branch to attend this year's Annual State Congress in Albury. Without this help we would certainly not be able to send a delegate so we very much appreciate this assistance."

Agenda Committee

My thanks also to those sub-Branches and District Councils that submitted motions for this year's congress. The period for acceptance of motions closed Tuesday, 20 August. In line with the normal process, the agenda committee will meet next week to develop the agenda for circulation as per the By-Laws.

Constitution Corner

I was in Deniliquin yesterday meeting with sub-Branch members from Riverina District Council to discuss the new constitution. We will soon finish formatting and uploading to the RSL NSW website all written submissions on the first draft of the new constitution. At the same time, we will also begin providing responses to the feedback on each section of the draft. Unfortunately it will not be possible to address each comment individually due to sheer volume, however, I hope that these responses will prove very useful to members reviewing the final version of the document.

This section of the newsletter will resume offering more detailed information on specific aspects of the new constitution next week.

Website Feedback Survey

The new RSL NSW website has now been online for nearly a month. Thank you for your feedback and suggestions so far – we've since ironed out a few minor issues and are continuing to make improvements. I would greatly appreciate if you could take a couple of minutes to fill in the following survey so we can assess how members feel about the new website and whether there is still work to be done. You can access the survey by clicking [here](#).

Thank you for reading,

Jeff O'Brien
State Secretary