



From the National President—Bill Crews

Taxation Treatment of DFRDB Lump Sum

There has been considerable commentary in recent days on the prospect that the taxation of post '83 components of lump sum superannuation payouts under DFRDB would rise from 15% to 30% as part of the Government's Simpler Superannuation arrangements being introduced on 1 July 2007.

I should like to quote from a media release issued by the Minister for Revenue, and Assistant Treasurer, The Honourable Peter Dutton MP on 10 April 2007.

In the media release he talks about the unsubstantiated rumours:

"that some Australian Defence Force personnel may be forced to pay more tax under regulations being drafted by Treasury to accompany the new simplified super reforms commencing on 1 July 2007.

*These rumours are absolutely **not** true."*

Mr Dutton goes on later in his press release to state the following:

*"These regulations will **not** change existing benefit options currently available to DFRDB members or the tax treatment of any commuted lump sum benefit from 1 July 2007. From age 60, members will also benefit from lower tax rates on their lump sum benefits and a 10% tax offset on their pensions from an untaxed source."*

I read this as assurance that in spite of some proposals being developed within the Government, the Government is mindful of ensuring that there is no detriment to those leaving the Defence Force with DFRDB superannuation, and is particularly conscious of the impact that would be caused on those who might choose to leave in anticipation that any adverse taxation arrangement would apply.

We will be monitoring these undertakings.

The Federal Election

The recent Budget was most positive for the Veteran Community, noting that veterans stand to gain from the wider budget measures beyond the additional allocations in the Veterans' Affairs Budget.

The RSL Press Release covers the highlights, and it can be viewed on the National Website.

It is expected that the next Federal Election will be held towards the end of 2007.

As an apolitical organisation, the RSL does not provide its support to any party or candidates. As a general rule, RSL facilities should not be used for political campaigning purposes.

The Australian electors will decide who will form the next government, and we will work closely and cooperatively with whomever is elected.

In the lead up to the election, the RSL will develop and present to all parties, a comprehensive statement to be called 'Issues Affecting the Veteran Community'. It will draw on our 2007/2008 Budget Submission. However, unlike that submission, it will seek from all parties a public response to the key issues raised. In this way, veterans can be made aware of how each of the parties will approach both general and specific veteran issues. We will be particularly interested in any veterans affairs policy statements from the parties, whether in response to our request or otherwise. Our Statement will be placed on the National RSL web page.

There may be a desire, as there was in 2004, for all major ESOs to meet and present a collective view to all parties of concerns across the wider veteran community. We will contribute to such an activity, but it will not replace our own proposal outlined above.

Over the next few months, all RSL spokespersons – at local, state and national level – will be more cautious than usual about being drawn into the party political debate. We will focus on the issues affecting veterans, and the nature of party responses to those issues.

Stand Down

Some may lament the cessation of this publication. However, it has been shown not to be as effective as was initially expected in informing our members and key stakeholders. And it is expensive.

There are better ways to communicate. State publications will pick up on some of the content (including my periodic writings), and we have already begun to use the web page more extensively and to redesign it. Selected Federal Parliamentarians will be sent my periodic writings, and I have already put considerably more topical commentary on the web page.



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA WA BRANCH INCORPORATED

The Sub-Branch Signal

May 2007

THE SUB-BRANCH SIGNAL

PRESIDENT'S PEN

The Federal Budget

The recently released Federal Budget addressed many of the 'RSL Priorities for Funding Veteran Issues' that have been on our agenda for a number of years. In addition to the \$625m already allocated last September to enhance the services to Gold Card Holders, the boost of the fortnightly payments to veterans with disabilities on the special and intermediate rates was a welcome step in the progress towards appropriate indexation of these pensions. It was also pleasing to note the recognition of the European PoW's incarceration during the Second World War through the allocation of a \$25000 ex-gratia payment and the welcome increase in funeral benefits paid under the Veterans' Entitlement Act.

There were also many other benefits for Veterans and War Widows embracing welfare, pensions, commemoration activities and aged care provisions that point to the Budget being one which will go a long way to enhancing the quality of life for members of the veteran community.

We must acknowledge the role of our Minister for Veteran Affairs, the Hon Bruce Billson in influencing the government to address veteran issues. For far to long our previous Ministers have not had success in obtaining funding and it is refreshing to see a break through by a determined Minister in fighting for recognition of veterans through the Repatriation system

There are, of course, many other items yet to be addressed and it is hoped that with the federal election looming many of these may attract funding.

State Congress 2007.

All Sub Branches should now be in possession of the documentation for State Congress. We ask that members study the paperwork and discuss the Congress Motions at your May/June meeting.

You will note that there is no financial report included in the issue. As the League now operates on the Financial Year the Audit will not be completed until early September. When available, the Report will be circulated to all Sub Branches for their consideration and a postal vote will be taken to confirm its adoption.

You will also note that there will be no election of Office Bearers. As the present State Executive was elected for a three year term they will be in office until the end of Congress 2008.

Congress Highlights.

Congress will be opened on Saturday 30 June, 2007 by our National President Maj-Gen Bill Crews AO. Following the State Presidents Annual Report RSL Awards and Life Memberships will be presented. This will be followed by presentations from the Minister, Shadow Minister and State Politicians. In the afternoon there will be the Business sessions and a presentation by Drug Free Australia. The Wreath Laying Service at State War Memorial will conclude the Saturday Sessions.

Saturday Evening will be the Congress Dinner at ANZAC House. We hope for a good attendance of Congress Delegates and their guests at this important occasion.

Sunday will be dedicated to Congress Motions and addresses from Veteran Affairs Staff.

DOING BUSINESS
WITH RSL
8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

ANZAC HOUSE

28 St George's Terrace, Perth
PO Box 3023
Perth Adelaide Terrace WA 6832
Website: www.rslwahq.org.au
Email: rslwahq@iinet.net.au

RECEPTION

Monday to Friday - general enquiries

OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR

Monday to Friday - PA to
State President & State Secretary,
Email: rslwahq@iinet.net.au
Tel: 9287 3799

MEMBERSHIP

Monday to Thursday - membership enquiries, Sub-Branch enquiries
Email: membership@rslwahq.org.au

WELFARE

Monday to Friday - welfare applications, emergency housing, food & lodging grants, SS&A Relief Trust Fund applications. Overseas pensions
Email: welfare@rslwahq.org.au

ADVOCACY

Monday to Friday - S31 reviews, Veteran Review Board, Admin Appeals Tribunal
Email: rslwahq@iinet.net.au
Tel: 9287 3708

FINANCE

Monday to Friday - all account enquiries, Sub-Branch credits
Email: accounts@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9370 0200
Sub-Branch Insurance, information, claims, grant application assistance, DVA, Lotterywest (ABN, tax)

PENSIONS

Monday to Friday - pension entitlements, claims preparation
Email: pensions3@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3709, 9287 3710

ANZAC CLUB

Monday to Friday - facilities bookings, catering/hospitality
Email: anzac-club@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: (08) 9287 3714

Retired Aged Care**Geraldton**

With its current focus on growth in rural areas, RSL Care WA have made provision to provide out of home respite care for carers, meaning carers will be offered respite, giving them a much deserved break from the tireless work that they do for the elderly.

RSL Care WA possess a 4 bed facility in Geraldton for this purpose.

For information regarding this service please contact Bonnie Dreyden on 9964 1863.

Dongara – Shire of Irwin

RSL Care WA recently engaged in their first formal meeting with the Shire of Irwin and local Health Department authority personnel, regarding the proposal of a 55 bed Aged Care Facility in the local area.

A partnership has been formed between RSL Care WA and Shire in which the local authority will construct the facility whilst RSL Care WA will manage it.

The meeting was a forum used to inform the Health Department of the terms of the partnership and the services that will be made available to the local residents of Dongara.

The agreement between the two parties has been completed and formalized.

Perth based architect company Alexander Planning Consultants, who are currently completing work on the Dongara Community Centre, have been chosen to provide plans for the Aged Care Facility.

At his stage a number of meetings have been held with the architects to begin the planning process.

The proposal outlines that these beds will be made available by the end of 2008.

Menora Gardens

Plans have recently been completed and the builders have been given the green light for extra services to be added to the Aging in Place Facility of which construction is currently underway – these services will include a doctor's surgery, podiatrist, dentist and a treatment room.

These services will be available for the convenience of all on site residents of Menora Gardens and will operate during normal business hours. The construction of these amenities is scheduled for completion in time with the rest of the complex, which is October this year.

Much interest has been generated regarding the construction of a further 24 Independent Living Units on the site of the old cluster homes in the north east corner of Menora Gardens.

Construction of the units is scheduled to commence early in 2008 and plans are now available regarding this latest development.

RSL Care WA has been successful in receiving a grant from the Lotteries Commission for the provision of a new bus. RSL Care WA is currently in the process of ordering the bus which will be available for the use of residents of the Care Facility and village for social outings and the like.

Mandurah

RSL Care WA recently received an indicative plan for the extension of the Mandurah Hostel, which will add a further 30 beds to the existing 55 beds.

RSL Care WA will apply to the Commonwealth for the extra bed licenses in the next funding round which is due to take place in June/July this year.

RSL Care WA has been successful in receiving a grant from the Lotteries Commission for the provision of a new bus for its Mandurah residents.

Lake Grace

The management of Lake Grace Nursing Home has engaged in negotiations with RSL Care WA to undertake and manage a 9 unit extension to the current village.

RSL Care WA representatives recently attended a meeting with the local Shire and Community Services Committee in which they presented the proposed plans and the village scheme.

The proposal was willingly embraced by the Community Services Committee who will now present the plans to the local council for approval to commence the project.

General

RSL Care WA is currently at work scouting various new pieces of land for expansion in Australind, Darch and Osborne Park.

WA Veterans' Affairs Committee**Cypress Cottage**

Arrangements for the transfer of Cypress Cottage from the RSL to the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club have been completed. This transfer was facilitated with the assistance of Homeswest, the RSL and the VVMCC so that the handover was able to be accomplished on the same day.

The RSL provided a small sum of money as a seeding grant and has also transferred the vehicle provided by LotteryWest for the use by the cottage.

TIP Consultative Committee

Recently the RSL was invited to nominate two people to serve on the TIP Consultative Committee convened by DVA. The two nominees are Mr Ross O'Connor and Mr Damian Dixon, two very experienced Advocates, who along with Mrs Margot Harness who is assisting in the delivery of TIP training mean that for the first time in many years the RSL in WA is able to have an input at all levels in the delivery of TIP training.

In view of the increased need to ensure that RSL Advocates are kept up to date in changes both legislatively and procedural, all current Advocates acting on behalf of the RSL will need to ensure they attend refresher courses on a regular basis, otherwise any coverage for insurance purposes will not be available to any Advocate who has not attended a refresher course in the last three years and accordingly will not be endorsed as an Advocate by the RSL.

Ray Ward, Chairman

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS**AS AT 22 MAY 2007**

Service Members	9,116
Affiliates	1,289

**HQ POSTAL ADDRESS**

RSL WA Branch
PO Box 3023

Perth Adelaide Terrace WA 6832

CONGRESS ACCOMMODATION

Mercure Hotel

Irwin Street, Perth

(Opposite ANZAC House)

Bookings are to be made direct to the
Mercure

Phone: 9326 7000 or 1300 65 65 65

Fax: 9221 3344

We have negotiated the following special
prices for RSL for the Congress weekend:

\$136.00 per night for

Single / Twin / Double

with \$44 for an extra bed

Breakfast extra:

Full buffet \$25

Continental \$21.00

Valet parking \$15

(only for staying guests)

Report from Corporate Affairs Committee**Matthew Holyday Takes on a New Role**

Matthew has decided to accept an offer to manage the Rose and Crown Hotel in Guildford commencing May 2007. The hotel, established in 1841, is Heritage listed and is one the oldest licensed hotels still operating in WA. We wish Matthew all the best in the future. If you visit the hotel just ask for the "Inn-Keeper".

There will be a profile of Nigel, our new Club Manager, in the next issue of the Listening Post.

WANTED**Chocolate Wheel**

If you have one you aren't using any more, or know of someone who has, can you please contact Scotty from the

Ballajura Sub-branch

on 9249 9365

It will be going to a good home and will be well used and cared for!



If you are interested in joining in the fun and the challenge, please fax your completed

Registration form to:

Doug Rasmussen at RSL on 0417 931 344 by 1st June 2007.

RSL PRESIDENT'S**AMBROSE CUP CHALLENGE**

Here's your chance to get out of the house and up of the couch and take part in some physical activity to help enhance your well being all the while enjoying the great outdoors by becoming a part of the RSL's Ambrose Presidents Cup Challenge.

Following on from the fun and success of last years Cup, this year offers players a chance to face the challenge once again either individually or by collaborating your skills as a team of four.

By becoming a part of the Cup, not only will you be helping yourself, by getting active for the day but you will also be supporting the welfare of our much valued Veteran Community with the money raised going towards helping them.

Registration prices are \$60 for individuals or \$240 for a team of four and includes your day of golf including buggy, refreshments on arrival, drinks throughout the day, and to cap off your day of play, presentations will be held at the Burswood Riverside Function Room and will include cocktail food and beverages.

Places are open to all branch and sub branch members and are strictly limited, so the sooner you get your team together, get your registration form filled out and sent in, the sooner your place will be guaranteed as will be a wonderful day out!

Come and enjoy the serenity of the Burswood Park Golf Course with the beauty of the Perth skyline as a backdrop, and a superb riverside setting. Come and take up the challenge, don't let this opportunity pass you by – are you up to it?