



### Provisions for Widow

Prior to 1977, widows and widowers of Defence Force Retirement Benefit Scheme pensioners or Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme pensioners lost their benefit entitlements when they remarried. A change to the Legislation in 1977 permitted widows and widowers to retain a benefit in respect of their deceased's spouse's service even if they remarried. However, widows and widowers who had remarried prior to 1977 did not have their entitlement reinstated at that time although provision was made for full or partial restoration in necessitous circumstances.

In the 2007/2008 Budget, the Government announced that from 1 January 2008 widows or widowers who had remarried prior to 1977 would have their Defence Force Retirement Benefit Scheme or the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme benefit reinstated prospectively. Legislation is now in place to allow that to happen. RSL members are encouraged to identify any widows or widowers who may be in this situation and encourage them further to apply should they so wish.

### Military Superannuation – Reversionary Benefits

Under current arrangements, a spouse pension is generally not payable under Military Superannuation Schemes if the pensioner who commences a marital relationship after the age of 60 dies within 5 years of the relationship commencing. From 1 January 2008, this eligibility period will be reduced from 5 years to 3 years. Additionally, a pro rata rate of a spouse's pension will be payable where the relationship existed for less than 3 years immediately before the pensioner's death. This change affects entitlements paid under the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme and the Military Superannuation Benefit Scheme.

Pension payments for approved applicants will commence from 1 January 2008 or from the date the application is received at Comsuper, whichever is the later.

Those who wish to follow up on this or related issues may contact Comsuper on Telephone 1300 001 877 or visit the websites [www.dfrdb.gov.au](http://www.dfrdb.gov.au) or [www.militartysuper.gov.au](http://www.militartysuper.gov.au)

### **FINAL COUNT 2007**

**Service Members 9777**  
**Unfinancial 852**  
**Life Members 173**  
**Life Subscribers 128**  
**Honorary 7**  
**Affiliates 1776**

**TOTAL 12713**

### Review of Military Superannuation

Minister for Defence Science and Personnel Warren Snowdon today released the Report of the *Review into Military Superannuation Arrangements*, commissioned by the Howard Government and presented to them in July 2007.

Although the report was commissioned by the previous government who refused to release it, Labor had committed to publicly releasing the document within four weeks of forming government. Today's release meets that commitment.

"The Rudd Government will provide further opportunity for public comment about the review's findings and recommendations and will consider its attitude to the report after the consultation period, which concludes on 31 March," Mr Snowdon said.

The review report may be viewed on the Defence website: [www.defence.gov.au/militarysuperreview](http://www.defence.gov.au/militarysuperreview).

### New Minister for Veteran Affairs

**Alan Griffin** is the new Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Before the election he had been Opposition spokesman on Veterans' Affairs since 2005. Other shadow portfolios in which he has had experience include sport and recreation; and consumer affairs, consumer protection and consumer health.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs oversees income support, compensation, care and commemoration programs for more than 400,000 veterans and their widows, widowers and dependants.

He is responsible for the Veterans' Affairs portfolio, including the:

- Department of Veterans' Affairs;
- Repatriation Commission;
- Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission;
- Office of Australian War Graves;
- Australian War Memorial;
- Veterans' Review Board;
- Repatriation Medical Authority; and
- Specialist Medical Review Council.

Born in Melbourne, Mr Griffin was educated in Victoria before moving to Canberra to study at the Australian National University.

After acquiring an Arts degree he returned to Melbourne, working in the public service, the union movement, and for members of parliament and several government ministers.

*Enrol a Mate in '08*

Issue 1/08 January 2008

#### ANZAC HOUSE

28 St George's Terrace, Perth  
 PO Box 3023  
 Perth Adelaide Terrace WA 6832  
 Website: [www.rslwahq.org.au](http://www.rslwahq.org.au)

#### RECEPTION

Monday to Friday - general enquiries

#### OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR

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

#### MEMBERSHIP

Monday to Thursday - membership enquiries, Sub-Branch enquiries  
 Email: [membership@rslwahq.org.au](mailto:membership@rslwahq.org.au)

#### WELFARE

Monday to Thursday - welfare applications, emergency housing, food & lodging grants, SS&A Relief Trust Fund applications, Overseas pensions  
 Email: [welfare@rslwahq.org.au](mailto:welfare@rslwahq.org.au)

#### ADVOCACY

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

#### FINANCE

Monday to Wednesday - all account enquiries, Sub-Branch credits  
 Email: [accounts@rslwahq.org.au](mailto:accounts@rslwahq.org.au)  
 Tel: 9287 3703  
 Sub-Branch Insurance, information, claims, grant application assistance, DVA, Lotterywest

#### PENSIONS

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

#### ANZAC CLUB

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

## MEMBERSHIP

*Enrol a Mate in '08*

### State Branch Elections 2008 - 2011

Included in this issue of *The Sub Branch Signal* is an 'Election Pack' that details Nomination and Voting procedures for the forthcoming State Branch and The RSL Retirement and Aged Care Association (Inc) elections..

Sub Branches are particularly directed to the eligibility to nominate and the requirement that Nominations must be endorsed by the nominating Sub Branch before be submitted by the closing date – **17<sup>th</sup> March 2008**. Late nominations will not be accepted.

#### Election Pack Contents:

##### *Country Sub Branches:*

- Nomination Forms for Country Regional Representatives applicable to your region
- Nomination Forms for State Officers

##### *Metropolitan Sub Branches*

- Nomination Forms for State Officers

Members considering nominating for the various positions should carefully note the position description statements and understand that being elected to the position involves a three year commitment to the League.

If, at the close of Nominations there are more candidates for the vacancies in the specified positions a postal ballot, in accordance with State Rule 33 will be held.

**G.J. Sutherland OAM**  
**Returning Officer**

#### IMPORTANT DATES

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 19 February, 2008 | Seminar for Pension Officers, Advocates & Welfare Officers |
| 20 February, 2008 | Briefing for Sub Branch Executives                         |
| 7 March 2008      | Closing date Gunfire Breakfast Grant                       |
| 17 March 2008     | Closing Date Nominations for Office (WA)                   |
| 31 March 2008     | Closing date ANZAC Small Grants                            |

The Returned & Services League of Australia Limited

## Nomination for Life Membership & Meritorious Service Award

In accordance with State Rule 10 and By-Law 2 nominations are invited from Sub Branches for the above Awards for 2008. Nominations are to be endorsed by the members' Sub Branch then submitted to the State Branch by

**WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL 2008**

Application Forms and guidelines for nomination are available from Kathy Clarke at ANZAC House

*Late Nominations cannot be accepted!*

### ANZAC Day Street Appeal 2008

The ANZAC Day Token Street Appeal has been approved for Wednesday, 23 April 2008. Proceeds aid in the promotion, conduct and the administration of major commemorative events for which the RSL WA Branch are custodians. The conduct of the Street Appeal and the regulations governing the Appeal are the same as those for the Poppy Day Appeal. Collections can only be undertaken in public area during the designated hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on the Appeal day. Collections can be conducted on private venues, i.e. shopping centres prior to this date, with management approval.

**Nett Funds are divided 50/50 between the Sub-Branch and State Branch.** Members should be briefed on the regulations provided by DOCEP prior to collecting. Please note that collections may be made in public locations such as streets/roads, railways/bus stops and taxi ranks. Shopping Centres, pubs, clubs, markets and the like are NOT classed as public places and therefore prior approval of management of these premises is required if pre-collection day collections are required. Further details and order forms are included in this issue of the Sub-Branch Signal.

### Congress 2008—Motions

Sub Branches are advised that motions for consideration at 2008 State Congress are required to be lodged with State Branch by **30 April, 2008**. The next edition of the Sub-Branch Signal will provide guidance on framing motions and the various classifications of motions.

### Sub-Branch

#### Annual General Meetings

**Sub-Branches are reminded that Annual General Meetings need to be held between 1st July and 31st October each year. A requirement for AGM's to approve the Sub-Branches Annual Financial Statement within four months of the end of the financial year obligates us to conduct our AGM's within this time frame.**

**The AGM is also election of officer time and processes need to be in place to put this into effect.**

**Please make provisions to put these statutory requirements into place.**

## MEMBERSHIP CARDS

The 2008 Membership Cards have been dispatched to Sub-Branches for distribution to members when they renew their membership.

The card is issued for 2008 only.

Future cards will be issued on a three year cycle.

For this year only the card will have a Sub-Branch reference number as an identifier for our administrative purposes. Future members will have the member Regimental Number listed.

## MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

PLEASE SEND IN  
CAPITATION FORMS  
as soon as possible



## HQ POSTAL ADDRESS

RSL WA Branch  
PO Box 3023  
Perth Adelaide Terrace WA 6832

### HMAS PERTH Plaque Rededication

As previously advised the tree in Kings Park planted to commemorate the sinking of the HMAS PERTH & USS HOUSTON in the Sunda Straits in 1942 has unfortunately been removed due to safety reasons. Beneath this tree was a Plaque set in stone honouring those who perished in that tragic event. We are pleased to advise that the original Stone and Plaques together with an additional rededication Plaque will be relocated to a nearby location during a ceremony to be held at 0930 hrs on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2008 in Kings Park to the south of the Court of Contemplation at the State War Memorial.

Those who have a connection with HMAS PERTH or USS HOUSTON together with members of the veteran and wider community are invited to attend the ceremony

This will also mark the 66<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of that sea battle that has been honoured annually by the citizens of Perth.

### ANZAC Small Grants

Funding for the second round of Grants have been distributed to successful applicants. **Sub Branches are reminded that prompt attention must be given to the acquittal process.** If you have problems in this regard, please contact ANZAC House for guidance. The third – and final – round of allocations will commence early in 2008. **Guidelines and Application Forms** may be downloaded from [www.anzac.dpc.wa.gov.au](http://www.anzac.dpc.wa.gov.au) and the closing date for submissions will be 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008.

A final reminder will be issued in the next issue of Sub Branch Signal.

### Sub Branch Returns

Several Sub Branches have failed to furnish the State Headquarters with their

#### Annual Financial Statements

&

#### Poppy Day Returns.

**To avoid the necessity for individual follow up action, will those who have NOT done so please forward the documents without delay.**

**Presidents and Secretaries are reminded that compliance with State Rules is essential as State Headquarters is obliged to meet its obligations with government agencies**

### BEST GRANTS

BEST is part of the government's commitment to support the role of ex-service organisations' (ESO) pensions and welfare practitioners and advocates. The BEST program assists by providing monetary support and IT equipment to ESO practitioners. The aim of BEST is to provide support and resources to ESO practitioners for pensions and welfare work to assist veterans, past and present members of the Australian Defence Forces and their dependants. A major objective of BEST is to ensure high quality claims and appeals assistance by ESO practitioners, which in turn will assist the department in timely & appropriate processing.

#### Funding Assistance Available

BEST funding can provide assistance for:

- salary costs for full or part time practitioners by ESOs
- salary costs for full or part time administrative support staff
- computer equipment used to assist ESO practitioners and
- consumables, running costs and other general costs relating to the lodgement of claims and appeals

#### Application Procedures

Bona fide ESOs that provide welfare and pension assistance to veterans, past and present members of the Australian Defence Forces and their dependants can apply for funding under BEST. In regional areas, where it is economically viable, the department encourages ESOs to explore the option of a cooperative project/centre taking advantage of two or more ESOs to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

#### Important Dates

The lodgment dates for the 2008-09 round of BEST grants has changed. Applications will now be open from 1st to 15th February each year.

#### Celebrate WA Grant

We have been notified that the ANZAC Day Gunfire Breakfast Grant will again be available to Sub Branches and Communities wishing to provide those attending ANZAC Day Services with a traditional Gunfire Breakfast. RSL will issue direct to Sub Branches a statement on application procedures including the closing date of 7 March, 2008. The Grant will be up to a maximum of \$500.