



THE SUB-BRANCH SIGNAL

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

ANZAC HOUSE

28 St George's Tce, Perth
PO Box 3023,
Perth Adelaide Terrace, WA 6832
Website: www.rslwahq.org.au
Email: rslwahq@iinet.net.au
Tel: 9287 3799
Fax: 9287 3732

RECEPTION

Monday to Friday - general enquiries
Email: adminassist@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3799

OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR

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

MEMBERSHIP

Monday to Thursday - membership
enquiries, Sub-Branch enquiries
Email: membership@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3705

WELFARE

Monday to Thursday - welfare appli-
cations, emergency housing, food &
lodging grants, SS&A Relief Trust
Fund applications. Overseas pen-
sions
Email: welfare@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3707

ADVOCACY

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

FINANCE

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

PENSIONS

Monday to Friday - pension entitle-
ments, claims preparation
Email: pensions1@rslwahq.org.au
pensions2@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3709
9287 3710, 9287 3711

ANZAC CLUB

Monday to Friday - facilities book-
ings, catering/hospitality
Email: anzacclub@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3714

From the President's Pen

Welcome to 2009! I trust you were able to enjoy the break from Sub Branch duties and are prepared for what will certainly be a challenging year.

It was a great start with Western Australian based SAS Trooper Mark Donaldson VC being the first recipient of an Australian Victoria Cross for distinguishing himself on the battlefield in Afghanistan. The RSL has offered him congratulations and will extend to him an invitation to lead the 2009 ANZAC Day March in Perth. We believe this is an appropriate honour and will enable the citizens of Perth to express their appreciation and congratulations. The NSW State Branch is also please to advise that Trooper Donaldson is a member of the RSL at the Dorrigo Sub Branch.

On the home front it would certainly appear as though Australia is heading for tough economic times. With the global financial situation we will not be able to escape the fall-out that will impose much hardship on the population. As a veteran community we need to be alert to the needs of others and be prepared to support those who require assistance or are in necessitous circumstances. Sub Branches are generally well resourced through their Amelioration Funds and State Branch is able to offer support through *The Aged Fund*. There is no need for those needing assistance to 'do it tough'. We are suggesting that we be proactive, rather than reactive.

Already we have our Welfare Officer making contact with veterans in the areas affected by bushfire to see if we can be of assistance. This has produced a positive response and together with other ESO's we are able to support a veteran who has suffered terrible losses through misadventure.

The Annual Poppy Day Appeal is the major funding source to support veterans in need. This year the Gross Proceeds of the Collection was \$335,119.68. Expenses involved in the collection totaled \$31,532.15 leaving a Nett Collection of \$303,667.53. Of this amount \$128,615.87 was paid to the Trust Fund with the remainder being retained in Sub Branch Amelioration Accounts.

Would Sub Branches please announce this information at their next meeting and ensure the membership are congratulated on the effort made in this year's collection.

Important Dates

Wed	18 February 2009	Sub Branch Executives Forum (ANZAC House)
Thurs	19 February 2009	Pensions, Advocates & Welfare Forum (ANZAC House)
Fri	6 March 2009	Gunfire Breakfast Funding Applications Close
Thurs	30 April 2009	Life Membership Applications Close





ANZAC Street Appeal

The ANZAC Day Token Street Appeal has been approved for Friday, 24 April 2009. 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 have been issued.

Insurance Matters

It has been drawn to our attention that our Volunteer Workers Insurance only covered members undertaking voluntary work for the RSL up to the age of 80 Years. We are pleased to let you know that following negotiations with our insurers we have been able to put into effect an increase to the age limitation to 85 years at no extra cost. There are, however, Sub Branches that may require an extension of that 85 year limitation to a further period of perhaps up to 100 years. We are currently in discussions with our insurers to provide us with a range of options for Sub Branches who may require this facility. As soon as we have some details we will advise the membership and of the terms and additional costs that may apply.

Membership Renewals

We are delighted at the prompt response by members to the renewal of their membership for 2009. We are also pleased at the positive response to the Discount Booklet and assure you that we are currently sourcing new sponsors for the 2010 renewal cycle. Country Sub Branches are particularly encouraged to provide this headquarters with the names of business people in their location who may be interested in supporting the RSL. Tell us who they are and we will do the rest.

Reminder: Please ask your members to renew through State Headquarters. It's faster and relieves the Secretary of another administrative task!!!

Deeming Rates Lowered

Many veterans with investment income will benefit from a lower income test deeming rate to apply from 27 January 2009. The reduction in the rate reflects the ongoing reductions in interest rates and the impact of the global financial crisis on investments. It is anticipated around 40,000 DVA pensioners will benefit when the deeming rate is reduced from five to four per cent for financial investments over \$41,000 for a single pensioner and \$68,200 for a couple.

The deeming rate for the first \$41,000 of a single pensioner's financial investments (\$68,200 for a couple) will remain unchanged at three per cent - this rate was lowered in November 2008. The higher deeming rate will be four per cent for the balance of financial investments over these amounts. These changes are effective from 27 January 2009 and will be included in payments made from 12 February, 2009.

Department of Veterans' Affairs service pensions, income support supplements and social security age pensions paid by DVA will be affected by this change.

Lowering the deeming rate means that those part-rate pensioners paid under the income test who have financial investments such as term deposits, shares or managed investments may receive an increase in their pension payments to reflect the reduction in their assessable income.

Income support pensioners who are already paid at the maximum rate and those with financial investments below \$41,000 (if single) or \$68,200 (if a member of a couple) will have no change to their pension payments. Pensions paid under the assets test will also not be affected.

This move acknowledges that many pensioners who partially rely on own-source income have been adversely affected by the global financial crisis, leading to lower returns on financial assets. DVA pensioners who would like to discuss their rate of payment should contact the Department on 133 254.

State Vice President

It is with regret we announce the resignation of Mr Graeme Sherriff from the position of State Vice President. During his term of office he has guided the development of RSL's Aged Care facility and progressed it to the stage where it is financially sound and fulfilling its role as defined in our Charter. Graeme leaves us to pursue other interests but will still be around to support future RSL projects.

The vacant position will be filled in accordance with State Rule 34.



Australia Day Awards

RSL is pleased to announce the following Organisations and individuals as recipients of Australia Day Medallions.

Purslowe Funerals

Invocare Pty Ltd trading as Purslowe Funerals has provided funeral services to families of RSL members for many years. In recent times they have become a major supporter of the League and offer a dignified and quality service that takes into account the special nature of the requirements of the ex-service community.

Bicton-Palmyra Sub Branch.

The Sub-Branch has, through its dedicated pension officers, consistently offered a prompt and efficient pension and advocacy service to veterans lodging claims with DVA. The quality of the service is reflected in the success of the primary claims and the satisfaction of the clients.

Mr Ross O'Conner JP.

Ross O'Conner has been State Co-ordinator of the Pension and Advocacy Service offered to veterans lodging their claims through the RSL Headquarters. He has been instrumental in dealing with difficult and complicated claims and personally following them through to their conclusion. He has led the way in pension officer training and willingly acts as a mentor to new and aspiring pension officers not only from the RSL but also from other ESO's.

New Sub Branch

We are pleased to announce the presentation of a Sub Branch Charter to the Turkish Sub Branch. Having finished its probationary period the group has demonstrated strong growth with a potential to expand its operations. The Sub Branch will meet in the East Victoria Park RSL Hall after completion of satisfactory tenancy arrangements.

New Web Site

At last our new web site is up and running. Much of the information on the former site has been migrated to the new one but we are still in the construction phase with many of the new items we want to include. Why not visit the site and if you feel there are items that would enhance the site, please let us know.

www.rslwahq.org.au

Cadet Efficiency Trophy

The 2008 Awards have been finalized and the following groups have been awarded the Annual and Perpetual Trophy and a cash prize of \$1000 jointly donated by RSL and Australian Defence Credit.

Navy: TS VANCOUVER

Army: Christ Church Grammar School

Air Force: 723 SQN Joondalup

Book Launch

In association with Curtin University we are pleased to announce the release of a reference book that addresses the Importance and Care of Western Australian War Memorials. The book was launched at the Annual Australia Day Function and was well received by all in attendance. Copies will be distributed to all Sub Branches and Shire Councils in the very near future.



ANZAC Day 2009

Sub Branches should be starting planning for 2009 ANZAC Services. In particular, RSL support for Schools needs to be set in place as soon as schools resume for the 2009 school year. As ANZAC Day is on the last weekend of the School holidays schools will generally seek to hold their Commemorative Services in the week commencing 6 April 2009 – just 8 weeks away. Perhaps contact could be made to ensure appropriate support is offered. This year, the Education Department will not be conducting the School Children's Service in Kings Park as a result of all schools being required to conduct their own services, and school support for the central service was on the decline. This matter was discussed at State Executive and as we pressed for on site services to be held we agreed that the Kings Park Service was not essential.

For Sub Branch members who have association with Unit and Kindred Organisations, we advise that arrangements for the ANZAC Day Dawn Service, March and Service on the Perth Esplanade will be issued in the first week of February.

Message from Welfare Officer

The WA AGED Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Relief Fund Trust

**can HELP veterans/ADF personnel on low incomes, or those
unable to pay essential bills.**

Ring 9287 3707 (ANZAC House Welfare) for an Application form to be posted out.



Changes to Eligibility for Partner Service Pension

Legislation regarding the changes to eligibility for the partner service pension (PSP) has now been passed by Parliament.

What Does This Mean?

- The changes will not be implemented until **1 July 2009**, NOT 1 January 2009 as previously advised.
- From 1 July 2009, eligibility for PSP for a separated spouse will be paid for a maximum of 12 months from the date of separation unless you have been assessed as a member of an illness separated couple or special domestic circumstances apply. In those cases, PSP will continue to be paid.
- Separated partners will have a full 12 month period from the date of their separation from the veteran to make alternative financial arrangements, unless they divorce or enter into a de facto relationship.
- Those who are Age Pension age at the end of the 12 month period will remain eligible for the partner service pension.
- As is the current situation, couples who are considered to be illness separated will continue to receive partner service pension.
- Partners in **special domestic circumstances** also retain the partner service pension. Special domestic circumstances are where the couple have separated and the veteran has a psychological or mental health condition recognised by the Department and there was an unsafe domestic environment for the partner and/or children prior to separation.
 - In order to establish whether special domestic circumstances apply, the partner (only) will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Where there is supporting information, this should be included and may include documents such as police reports or advice from medical practitioners.
 - Please note that if the partner and veteran divorce or the partner enters into a de facto relationship with another person, the partner will lose eligibility and their payment will be cancelled. If the partner is the de facto partner of the veteran and they separate, they will lose eligibility for the partner service pension immediately.

This is the current situation and has not been affected by this legislative change.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs wrote to all affected partners on 4 December 2008, advising of the new changes to partner service pension.

The Returned & Services League of Australia Limited

Nomination for Office

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

NATIONAL DEPUTY PRESIDENT

In accordance with Rule 36.3 and By-Law 10 of the National Constitution nominations are invited from Life and/or financial Service Members of the League for the above positions for the year 2009 – 2010. Nominations are to be submitted through the members' Sub Branch for transmission to the State Branch by

4 pm on Friday 13th March, 2009

Details of eligibility to nominate and a position description statement are available at the National RSL Website at

www.rsl.org.au

Late Nominations cannot be accepted!

Enclosed with this months Sub-Branch Signal

Trustees' Report
Sub-Branch Update Form
RSL National Shop Brochure
ANZAC Day Financial Statement
Two-Up Form