



THE SUB-BRANCH SIGNAL

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

ANZAC HOUSE

28 St Georges Terrace, 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

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

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: advocate@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: helenb@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

This issue of The Sub Branch Signal will provide a synopsis of information presented at the recent Sub Branch Executives Forum held on Wednesday 18 February 2009.

Affiliates

There appears to be a misinterpretation of By Law 5 of the State Constitution and By-Laws which relate to Affiliates of Sub-Branches. Those seeking clarification of issues should refer to the RSLWA Website where the current version of the By-Law is to be found. Points often raised refer to the eligibility of an Affiliate to serve on a Sub-Branch Committee.

The following is a summary of the situation:

- An Affiliate can not be a Sub-Branch President (*By-Law 5.8 a (i)*)
- An Affiliate is able to be elected to the position of Secretary, Treasurer (or where the positions are combined – Secretary/Treasurer) if no Service or Life Members are available to fill those positions. (*By-Law 5.21*)
- An Affiliate shall not hold any other office in the League (*By-Law 5.9*)
- Only 40% of a Sub-Branch Committee may be Affiliates (*By Law 5.8 e*)
- An Affiliate on the committee of a Sub-Branch may only vote on matters relating to Sub-Branch member facilities (*By Law 5.23*)

Insurance

The following advice has been provided by our insurers and it is important all Sub Branches are aware of the cover that is offered.

Voluntary Workers

We have spoken to a number of insurers and they may offer the increased age limit to 100, but we may have trouble obtaining this prior to the renewal which is in June. I am still awaiting a response from a couple of insurers, in particular QBE as advised.

Ansvar again have offered to increase the age limit to 90 years of age at no charge which is great news, but can definitely not go any higher than this age. I am also trying to see if another insurer would agree to insure the excess amount (ie 90-100 years) but this is not normal and may take some time as this would need to be referred by the underwriter.

Separate Entities

There are a number of other Incorporated Entities that are interested in being part of The Returned & Services Insurance Policy. If there is a handful of these additional Incorporated Groups, then we can definitely assist as we have done in the past. We would, however need some further information about their activities. The ones that we are aware of are still fine to insure.

Workers Compensation

The purpose of Workers Compensation is to cover any 'workers' against the company's (or Sub-Branches) responsibility for injury. **If the Sub-Branches are paying an employee a wage, salary or even cash, then they are liable for the injury to these people under the WA Workers Compensation Act.** Each employer (or Sub-Branch) is registered with Workcover WA.

Sub Branch Executives need to be aware of the consequences of non-compliance with this requirement to cover their workers on others, including volunteers, paid for their services.

The Branches that we are currently covering for Workers Compensation include:

- ANZAC House Perth
- Nollamara Sub-Branch
- Bicton Sub-Branch
- Port Kennedy Returned & Services League and Services Club Inc
- Armadale Sub-Branch
- Mandurah Sub-Branch
- Bellevue RSL Club



State Congress

The Annual State Congress is to be held at the Mercure Hotel, Irwin Street Perth on Saturday/Sunday 27-28 June 2009. A planning document is currently being prepared and will be issued under separate cover. Sub-Branches are reminded that Agenda items for Congress close on 30 April, 2009 as do nominations for Life Membership and Meritorious Medal. Congress Motions submitted after the closing date can not be considered for the Agenda.

Future State Congress

With the change of the financial reporting period from the Calendar to the Financial Year we are placed in a position where we need to change the dates of Congress to enable the Branch to meet a statutory compliance through the presentation of an Audited Statement of Affairs and Annual Balance Sheet within four months of the close of the financial year. Currently, as Congress is in June/July this is an impossible position. We therefore have a window of four months (June - October) to hold a meeting to meet reporting requirements. The proposal that will be presented to Congress will be to hold Congress (AGM) in mid-late October to enable us to achieve statutory compliance.

Future Congress Motions

In the past State Congress has been the arena to debate issues for transmission to National Congress for further debate and appropriate action. By moving Congress to October there could be a delay of many months before a WA matter was raised at a National Level. Clearly this would not be acceptable. In discussion with National Veterans Affairs Committee and National Executive agreement has been reached that motions from Sub-Branches that have State Branch endorsement would be dealt with at National level on a quarterly basis. This would ensure a speedy resolution to issues. The only matters that would reach National Congress would be Standing Policy variations and Constitutional amendments. The advantage to us would be a quicker resolution to matters but the disadvantage could be that some issues raised by Sub-Branches may be 'filtered' by WA Veterans Affairs Committee or State Executive.

Reminder

A reminder to Secretary/Treasurers:

If there is a change in office bearers, please advise ANZAC House as soon as possible. It is essential we keep our contact list and membership data base up to date.

Some Sub-Branches have not yet submitted their 2007/2008 Annual Financial Statements. If you have not sent it in, please do so without delay.

Capitation Fees 2010

National Executive has agreed to raise members capitation fees. The current scale has been in place for well over a decade and costs can not continue to be absorbed. This is despite substantial donations from large State Branches and other grants. The proposal is to raise the capitation charge from \$2.50 to \$5.00. As WA State Branch pays this amount on your behalf it is proposed to revise the distribution formula to pay the National Capitation Fee first then divide the remainder in accordance with the established formula, namely 75% to State Branch and 25% to Sub-Branch. With the residual amount being \$35.00 the split would be \$26.25/\$8.75. This, of course will need to be debated at Congress before possible implementation for 2010.

Membership

Many thanks to those members who promptly renewed their membership. We have been able to process renewals in a timely manner of both individual and capitation returns. The strategy of making payment to ANZAC House has streamlined the renewal process and has taken a great work load from Sub-Branch Secretary/Treasurer. Next year, through increased sponsorship we hope to issue renewal notices with Reply Paid Envelopes and we are also investigating the possibility of having on-line payments via our website.

As at 25 February 2009 we have the following:

Service Members:	7202
Life Members	165
Life Subscribers	104
Affiliates	759
Honorary	7
TOTAL	8237

We will be sending out reminder notices to individuals in the second week in May. Hopefully we will not have to send out many as this is a time consuming, and costly, exercise.

Please ensure all monies owing are remitted to ANZAC House by Thursday May 7th.

Radio Program

We have been invited to host a weekly radio program each Thursday from 12 noon to 3.00 pm on Capitol Radio 90.5FM. The program will be titled *The Listening Post* and will be used by the RSL to promote its activities and disseminate information to the membership and wider community. We hope that there will be Sub-Branch participation as well as contributions from the Service and ex-service community. We hope to have our first broadcast just prior to ANZAC Day.



DVA has issued the following statement in connection with DVA Pension recipients undertaking voluntary work. It should clarify the position relative to concerns expressed by members undertaking certain voluntary duties at Sub Branches

Voluntary Work Policy

DVA regards voluntary work in the same way for all three Acts it administers, the VEA, the SRCA and the MRCA.

There is no legislated definition of voluntary work in any of these Acts. However, in policy terms, voluntary work is defined as unpaid work for a recognised community or welfare organisation.

DVA encourages veterans and members of the ex-service community to volunteer to assist community or welfare groups. Many thousands of veterans provide immeasurable support to ex-service organisations and other charities. Studies have also shown that volunteering has physical, psychological and social benefits.

Undertaking voluntary work of this nature does not trigger a reassessment of incapacity payments under either the SRCA or the MRCA. It is accepted that the conditions of engagement in volunteering cannot necessarily be equated to remunerative work given the person generally works at their own pace and time and is not subject to the conditions normally applied to paid employment.

Recipients of incapacity payments should be aware of how some other unpaid work may affect their benefits. Unpaid work for family, friends or a business enterprise formed for the purposes of making a profit is not classified as voluntary work.

For example, a recipient of incapacity payments and/or certain disability pensions who works several hours in a job that aims to make a profit may be found to be able to undertake paid work, and therefore ineligible for their current rate of payment. The same person volunteering as an advocate, pension or welfare officer would not be deemed capable of paid work purely on the basis of that voluntary work alone.

Under the MRCA and the SRCA, incapacity payments are regularly reviewed. The review assesses a person's ability to earn during the period and is based on rehabilitation and specialist medical assessments. The assessments take into account physical and mental capacities, skills and training, work history, age and so on. Voluntary work is not a trigger for the review and does not of itself imply that someone is able to undertake remunerative work. In fact, voluntary work with a community or welfare group is most often beneficial to a person's wellbeing. References in SRCA and MRCA legislation to "capacity for rehabilitation" or "capacity for work" do not automatically translate to mean that a person who is undertaking voluntary work has a capacity to do paid work.

If a person is concerned about their voluntary work, or their plans to undertake voluntary work, they can contact DVA for advice on 133 254.

**Department of Veterans' Affairs
February 2009**

THE RSL - WORKING FOR YOU

RSL Submission on Clarke Review Report Outstanding Items

The RSL forwarded a submission to Government outlining the views of the League of Australia to the reconsideration of the Clarke Review Recommendations not acted on by the previous Government.

RSL Submission to Government 2009-2010 Budget

The RSL forwarded a submission to Government setting out the proposals which the RSL sees as necessary to address critical shortfalls in the care and support of Australian's Veterans.

Parliamentary Inquiry into F111 Desal/ Reseal workers and their families

The RSL appeared before the Joint Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Sub Committee on Royal Australian Air Force F111 workers and their families.

The Pensions Review

The RSL forwarded a submission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on the Pensions Review.



UPDATE ON VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES AND THE RSL VICTORIAN BRANCH RESPONSE AND RELIEF FUND

In providing an update on the Victorian Branch Bushfire Relief Fund, I firstly wish to thank all the State Branches and many Sub-Branches across the country who have made donations. It has been greatly appreciated by all Victorian members. As you know many fires are still burning and of course there is still the potential for further losses to life and property before the danger is past.

Currently our members and Sub-Branches continue to support the fire fighting and relief effort in some areas and our Sub-Branch network has been active and effective in bringing individual cases of need forward. We know of four RSL members/families who have perished in the fires and one badly burnt Veteran who lost his wife and young children. Many other RSL members and other ex-service personnel have been affected and there are also RSL employees who have lost homes and other property. The Fund has been critical in providing direct relief to all these people and also off-setting some of the expenses incurred by those Sub-Branches directly involved in the front line fire fighting and relief effort. Our Healesville Sub-Branch, for example, has done tremendous work in this regard. The grants made from the Fund have ranged from \$1500 for immediate relief, to \$5000 for larger families or greater need. We have also made a substantial contribution to a trust fund already established for the Iraq veteran who has lost his home, wife and young daughters and is badly burnt. We currently have sufficient funds to meet the demand but many people are probably yet to come forward or are still assessing their need.

To date approximately twenty cases of need have been addressed with more coming forward each day. Let me assure all who have supported us that applicant's bona fides are being checked and full records kept of grant details, but equally the assistance needed is assessed and given on a same day basis with a minimum of bureaucracy. To be truly effective help must be timely and compassionate.

We believe we are meeting the short term need in the best traditions of the League but are committed to sustaining this help in the weeks and months ahead. We would not have been able to achieve as much to date without your generous support. Regular updates like this will be provided to inform you of our progress and challenges. When we believe that the Fund has fulfilled its purpose, donors of significant funds remaining will be consulted as to their wishes for the unexpended monies. These will be carried out to the extent that we are able.

With Thanks,
Mike Annetts CSC
CEO Victorian State Branch RSL

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.

