



THE SUB BRANCH SIGNAL

DOING BUSINESS WITH RSL
8.30 AM — 4.30 PM

ANZAC HOUSE

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Website: www.rslwahq.org.au
Email: rslwahq@iinet.net.au
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Country Callers : 1800 259 799

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
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 Friday - welfare applica-
tions, 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 Friday - all account
enquiries, Sub-Branch credits
Sub-Branch Insurance, information,
claims, grant application assistance,
DVA, Lotterywest (ABN, tax)
Email: stateacct@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

LISTENING POST

Monday to Friday - editorial staff
Email: listeningpost@rslwahq.org.au
Tel: 9287 3716

Combining the MSBS & DFRDB Boards with the Comsuper Board

The Minister of Veterans' Affairs advised during a meeting held on Wednesday 23 February 2011 that the Government intended to proceed with combining the MSBS & DFRDB Boards with the Comsuper Board and that legislation to give effect to this, is likely to be introduced to Parliament about 21 March 2011.

The position the RSL negotiated with former Minister Griffin and with Minister Combet was that the ex-service organisations would be consulted about the names the Chief of the Defence Force submits as the two "employee" representatives on the merged Comsuper Board of 11 (Chairman plus 5 employer representatives and 5 employee representatives). This consultation took place last year and the RSL expressed satisfaction with those nominated General Peter Cosgrove and Mr John McCullagh.

The RSL accepts the Government assurance that such consultation will continue for future nominations by the CDF for the merged Board - but acknowledges that others have reservations including the meaning of the word "consultation". It will be for Parliament to decide what eventuates and the RSL will accept any invitation to appear before Senate, House or Joint House Inquiries that might be established as the legislation is being considered.

The Minister was advised that the RSL would not resile from its previous stance on this matter.

The Minister also provided extensive statistical information on the costing of alternative indexation arrangements for Commonwealth Superannuation Pensions. The details have been posted online at www.finance.gov.au

The Government does not accept the RSL stance that Military Superannuants should be treated separately from other Commonwealth Superannuants albeit that the cost estimates for alternative indexation arrangements were prepared by two separate actuaries and that the estimates are separately provided.

This is a disappointment and the RSL will continue to put the case for Military Superannuants to be considered as a separate entity for the purposes of indexation of superannuation payments. The fact that the Opposition has accepted the RSL point of view on this matter is encouraging. The matter now needs to be addressed with the government

The RSL's intention is to thoroughly examine the statistical and other information at www.finance.gov.au before providing a more comprehensive report on these developments on the RSL national web site.

Minister Snowdon has advised that:

1. The financial position of the Commonwealth is such that any move away from indexing by CPI is impossible at present.
2. The Department of Finance is working on the Government's election commitment to examine the feasibility of establishing a new method of indexation which might be more appropriate than CPI.
3. The Government accepts that there is "unfinished business" on this issue; that the door is still open for improvement but that the quest for a more equitable form of indexation cannot be satisfied in the short term.



[Natural disaster assistance](#)

Has your home or workplace been damaged? Are you having trouble complying with requirements in any recent correspondence from DVA? Do you need assistance or someone to talk to?

If your circumstances have recently changed, please don't hesitate to contact DVA to discuss your personal situation or seek help.

Property insurance – Veterans who have their property insured with Defence Service Homes Insurance and have property affected by natural disasters are encouraged to contact their local customer service officer on **1300 552 662**.

Natural disaster assistance payments – call Centrelink on **1802266** seven days a week, 8am to 8pm local time.

DVA payments (including lump sum advance and crisis payments) – call DVA to discuss your circumstances. Regional callers can ring **1800 555 254**.

Veterans' Affairs Network (VAN) offices – to contact your local office about any queries or concerns you may have regarding DVA services and support, or if you need help connecting with local support networks in your area call **1300 55 1918**.

The VVCS - Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service – provides supportive, confidential counselling to veterans and their families. The VVCS can be contacted on **1800 011 046**, 24 hours a day.

[Coordinated Veterans' Care Program](#)

The Australian Government has allocated \$152.7 million over four years for the new Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program.

The innovative health program for Gold Card holders will start from 1 May 2011 and was previously known as the Preventable Admissions and Improved Community Care Program.

The program aims to improve community-based health care for eligible Gold Card holders living in the community who have chronic and complex illnesses.

For more information send an email to cvcprogram@dva.gov.au.

[Hellfire Pass Podcast](#)

For the first time, the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum audio guide is now available on the [DVA website](#). The guide was previously only available at the museum itself in Thailand.

[Overseas ANZAC Day Services](#)

Australians planning to travel to Gallipoli, Turkey, or Villers-Bretonneux, France, for ANZAC Day commemorations in 2011 should register online to receive important updates.

The Gallipoli registration service provides tips on what to bring and what to expect. The France registration service provides updates to arrangements including changes to commemorations or in the event of an emergency.

Registration is optional and entry to commemorations is still available to those who have not registered. This is not a ticketing system, but a way to better plan for future events in the lead up to commemorations for the centenary of the landing at Gallipoli.

To register for Gallipoli visit

www.gallipoliregistration.com or

for France visit www.franceregistration.com.

For more information on ANZAC Day services in Gallipoli or France visit www.dva.gov.au/anzac.

[BEST Grant Round 13 Open](#)

To ensure advocacy and welfare support meets the needs of current and future members of the veteran community, the Department committed to the *Review of DVA-funded Ex Service Organisation Advocacy and Welfare Services*.

The review is now complete and the Government has agreed to implement all of the 45 recommendations made. These recommendations will offer many positive outcomes for Australia's veterans and defence communities and prescribe a framework for future funding arrangements.

To mark the completion of the review, funding applications are now open for Round 13 of the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program. Applications close on Friday 11 March 2011.

For more information on BEST visit www.dva.gov.au/grants.

[Can you help?](#)

Our Archives Department is looking for issues of *The Listening Post* from the below dates. If you or your Sub Branch have these issues, please contact Naomi on 9287 3713.

2005

February

June/July

August/September

2006

April/May

June/July

August/September

December





[Advocacy & Welfare Service Report](#)

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, welcomed the release of the Review of Department of Veterans' Affairs Funded Ex-Service Organisation Advocacy and Welfare Services Report.

Minister Snowdon has said the Government would implement all 45 recommendations from the Review, which offered many positive outcomes for Australia's Ex-Service Community and prescribed a framework to ensure veterans, war widow/ers and their families have access to quality advocacy, welfare and support services.

The Review covered the Building Excellence in Support and Training Program (BEST), Training Information Program (TIP) and the Veteran Community Grants (V&C) Program.

[Breakfast at ANZAC Club](#)

ANZAC Club is now serving Friday Breakfast, and the new service has started off well with group bookings from some of the surrounding offices, starting their weekend with a Breakfast get together on the last day of work in the week.

Many members may choose to take advantage of this new service before Friday shopping in the city - or before going on to other meetings in town.

The club is easily accessed by public transport links and, the fantastic price of just \$12.00 is great value for a full cooked breakfast - where you choose the items you like from the servery including two types of eggs, giant bacon rashers, chipolatas, mushrooms, tomatoes and hash browns - all with plenty of toast and preserves and a selection of fresh sliced fruits.

This is even better value when considering the deal includes a glass of orange juice and bottomless tea or freshly percolated ground coffee. Group bookings are welcome - and as ever, the friendly staff at ANZAC Club look forward to welcoming you to [YOUR CLUB](#) soon.

[Simpson Prize Winners Announced](#)

The eight winners of the Simpson Prize were announced on 28 February. The school students will be travelling to Gallipoli for the 2011 ANZAC Day Services as part of their prize.

Of the eight National winners, the Western Australian winner is Chelsea Moran of Ballajura Community College. The WA runner up is Jern Cabral from St Norberts College.

[RAC Community Education](#)

The RAC Community Education Team is committed to educating Western Australian seniors' on road safety/ Last year they presented to more than 3,000 seniors on road safety across the state.

The 2011 Seniors' Education Program consists of three educational and informative presentations on road safety, assessing your driving ability and history of the RAC. All presentations are free of charge and available to groups of 15 or more within the metropolitan area. The presenters are happy to visit your Sub Branch, or they can arrange for the workshop to be held at RAC Head Office in West Perth.

To book an RAC Community Education presentation or to find out more about the seniors' program, the office can be contacted on 9436 4471 or you can visit www.rac.com.au/community

[Australian War Memorial Director Reappointed](#)

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, announced on 24 February 2011 the re-appointment of the Director of the Australian War Memorial for an 18 month term.

Major General Steve Gower AO (Mil), whose current appointment expires at the end of this month, will continue in the role.

During his tenure as Director, we have seen the construction and development of Anzac Hall, the CEW Bean Building and the post-1945 galleries and more recently the Hall of Valour. An education program for more than 120,000 Australian school children has been established.

WA AGED RETURNED SAILORS, SOLDIERS & AIRMEN'S RELIEF TRUST FUND

**Ready to Assist
Veterans and Dependents in
Need or Necessitous
Circumstances**

**Apply: Welfare Officer
(08) 9287 3707**



Military Court of Australia Bill 2010

The RSL continues to remonstrate with Government over the contents of this legislation. Thus far there has been no response from the Attorney General to our letter to him in January responding to his earlier rejection of our lengthy submission. Nor has there been any acknowledgement. The National President met with Minister Snowdon at his office at Parliament House on Tuesday 8 February and raised this issue. The Minister undertook to take the matter formally to the Defence Minister provided RSL formally wrote to him seeking such action. Such a formal letter was immediately sent after this meeting and was assured by Minister Snowdon's Chief of Staff that this has been received. Meantime RSL continues to raise concerns about the legislation with anyone in authority. The Bill has yet to make its way back into the Parliament (and this may be an indication the Government is having second thoughts). Mention of this matter has been made several times to members of the Opposition – but RSL has not sought a formal meeting. Events seem to be moving towards the Opposition inviting RSL to talk to the Shadow Defence Minister and others.

Trials of Soldiers

As yet there is no formal news as to when, where, or by whom the soldiers will be brought to trial. We continue to monitor the situation very closely. The RSL told Minister Snowdon on Tuesday 8 February that the Government should not underestimate the angst felt by many about these trials; that although the RSL accepts that the law must be allowed to take its course, that did not mean that RSL members' feelings (or the feelings of the Australian public) should be in any way underestimated; and that it was vital the trial be open, fair and transparent to all. It would be a travesty of justice with political implications if the trials were to be held in Afghanistan or behind closed doors – and reiterated the very important mantra that justice must be seen to be done.

It will be important that the RSL takes particular care with any further public comment on this most sensitive issue. The requirement that we allow the law to take its course without interference has to be met – but we must also robustly represent the views of RSL members. This will need dextrous handling when the news media get hold of details of the trials.

From the National President

Meeting with Minister Snowdon Tuesday 8 February.

This was arranged at my request. Issues discussed (in no order of priority) were:

- *My recent report as Chairman of the Forces Entertainment Board*

The Minister remains firmly committed to fully supporting this activity and accepted my invitation to meet with the full Board in the coming months. The only vexed issue was the provision of funding for the experienced experts needed to conduct the Forces Entertainment Tours and it seems this has now been resolved.

- *RSL National Congress Melbourne*

I raised with the Minister our desire that the PM should be the keynote speaker on the forenoon of Tuesday 20 September – and as a consequence of our discussions there is the prospect of my meeting with the PM to personally issue this invitation. Parliament is sitting that day – but indications are the PM might be available.

- *Indexation of Military Superannuation*

The Government's position will not change – and they intend opposing Senator Ronaldson's Private Members Bill.

- *Combining the MSBS & DFRDB Boards with Comsuper*

The Minister gave me to understand the Government intends proceeding with this – but, during discussion, the Minister and his senior advisor were at odds about what is planned. I await clarification.

