



SUB-BRANCH SIGNAL

June 2021



Australian Army officer mentors Afghan instructors (2019)
Defence Australia Image

RSL Urges Fast-Tracking of Visas of Afghan Support Staff

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) has called on the Federal Government to fast-track Australian visa support for Afghan support staff who have assisted Australian Defence forces and officials during the deployment in Afghanistan.

RSL National President Major General Greg Melick has urged the Federal Government, through the Department of Home Affairs, to rapidly process visa applications for the safe relocation to Australia of interpreters and locally employed staff who provided assistance to Australian military forces and Embassy officials in Afghanistan.

General Melick said his request to the Government was based on the likelihood of Taliban reprisals, following the news of the closure of the Australian Embassy in Kabul last week and the imminent withdrawal of Coalition Forces.

“These people have provided invaluable service to Australians posted to Afghanistan and we have an obligation to help them,” he said. “The RSL particularly notes that reprisals are likely on Afghan locals who assisted Australian forces and officials, with Taliban threats already emerging to such personnel who worked with Coalition forces. “Safe passage to Australia is the right thing to do for those who have directly assisted Australians.”

General Melick highlighted the ‘humanitarian assistance scheme’ with Department of Home Affairs staff asked to make contact with known support staff, such as interpreters, and to offer all available assistance to fast-track those procedures.

“The United States has been quick to offer assistance to Afghanistan locals wanting to be relocated if they have worked for the Coalition forces, with unconfirmed reports of thousands of Afghans already identified for relocation to the US. Australia needs to do its part as well,” he said.



Medal of the Order of Australia Recognition

Congratulations are extended to three outstanding RSLWA members who were recognised with the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours announced 14th June 2021.

Veterans, Stephen Chamarette from the Highgate Sub-Branch and Allan West from the Port Kennedy Sub-Branch, both received the award in recognition for service to veterans. Jacqueline Liddiard from the Pinjarra Sub-Branch was acknowledged for her service to veterans and their families.

RSLWA State President, Peter Aspinall AM said it was an honour to have the tireless work of members recognised with such a prestigious award.

"The recognition of them volunteering their time to support other veterans and their families and also working in the broader community is very well deserved," he said.

(Read more in the July edition of Listening Post)

2021 State Congress

State Congress was conducted last Saturday, 12 June, with excellent attendance and well received addresses from the dignitaries.

Valuable feedback was received from Sub-Branches during the Open Forum segment, including web casting of Congress for those unable to attend, especially those in regional areas.

A special feature of this year's Congress will appear in the July edition of the Listening Post.



Sub Branch Feedback

RSLWA State Branch sent a survey to the Sub-Branches in May this year which was similar to the survey conducted in 2020.

Of the 70 Sub-Branches that responded, the overall outcomes were as follows:

Strategic Direction / Sub-Branch & Veterans Support: 65 % agreed, 20% neither agreed or disagreed and 15% disagreed.

Governance Support: 70% agreed, 21% neither agreed or disagreed and 9% disagreed.

Communications Support: 78% agreed, 16 % neither agreed or disagreed and 6% disagreed.

Overall, the responses were positive and many made comments that there should be more visits to Sub-Branches.

RSLWA is Getting More Social

The Manjimup RSL Sub-Branch recently joined forces with the local Country Women's Association and Family Centre to host an Australia's Biggest Morning Tea last week. Held in the Sub-Branch hall, the event raised more than \$1140 for the Cancer Council.



These are the types of activities State Branch wants all Sub-Branches to share so that we can push them out on social media channels and raise the profile for RSLWA and the great work of Sub-Branches.

Just take some photos and send them with a few details of what is happening to marketing@rslwa.org.au.

RSLWA is on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter. If you are on these platforms make sure you like or follow our pages to help build our audiences.

We are also following RSL National who are on the same platforms as us so if you also like or follow their pages we can generally promote further what RSL is doing for veterans and their families.

If you notify us a few weeks ahead of your event or activity, we can also advertise it on the website events page and promote it through social media before it happens.