

RSL QUEENSLAND Annual Report 2024



RSL
Queensland

Supporting veterans and their families is why we exist. It's why we started, why we've grown and why we innovate.

We deliver services and build connections that enable the veteran and Defence community to thrive beyond service.

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**“It’s clear that what we are doing as a team
– Sub Branches, volunteers, Districts and
State Branch – is resonating with the broader
veteran community. Veterans are finding value
here, and that’s immensely gratifying.”**

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN DAY *DSC AM*
State President, RSL Queensland



YEAR IN REVIEW

State President report

Our overarching goal for 2024 was to continue advocating for veterans and their families across Queensland while providing them with a range of practical support. I am proud to reflect on the year and reaffirm that our commitment to veterans and their families is strong across the pillars of care, commemoration and camaraderie.

One of our developing initiatives of the care pillar is the Incarcerated Veterans Program. Our aim with this program is to remind incarcerated veterans, who are often at their lowest point, that they were once capable, competent members of the Australian Defence Force, with a view to them leading more productive lives after release. In partnership with Eighth Mile, we completed the pilot and expanded the program this year. We intend to roll out a more developed program in 2025.

This year, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide released its final report and the Federal Government responded. It is clear from the report that the group most at risk is those who are struggling with transition. We will focus our advocacy on the recommendations that are relevant to that group.

Turning to commemoration, 2024 saw a record number of ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services organised by Sub Branches and, according to observer estimates, a record turnout for those services. It's a powerful reminder that commemorations continue to resonate deeply with Australians. We have a special responsibility to honourably steward these days, which are as important for our country as they are for veterans.

"It's a powerful reminder that commemorations continue to resonate deeply with Australians. We have a special responsibility to honourably steward these days, which are as important for our country as they are for veterans."

I have always believed that if we get camaraderie in the League right, then more people will join us than leave us. Membership in RSL Queensland continued to grow for the third consecutive year. I would like to commend the work of the Districts and Sub Branches in this regard; while I can set the general path, it is those who are on the ground that decide whether to move down that path. This year's increase in membership again reflects their collective efforts.

2024 was another challenging year for the commercial side of our business. The discretionary funding of Australians – upon whom our rebranded Dream Home Art Union relies – was impacted by economic conditions, particularly interest rates, which resulted in a decline in our income. We had, sensibly, prepared for a budget deficit to ensure we could meet the increased needs of veterans during these financially challenging times.

Our CEO Robert Skoda and very skilled Executive Leadership Committee diligently navigated the challenges, keeping us out of deficit. I am also pleased to report that 92% of RSL Queensland's available funding was spent on veterans and their families in 2024, which reflects the extent of the efficiencies Robert and his team employed.

Major General Stephen Day DSC AM
State President



CEO report

I would like to congratulate RSL Queensland on a year of growth in both membership and support for the veteran community. This growth has been driven by dedicated individuals within the League and those supporting it across Queensland.

2024 was a significant year for both the veteran community and RSL Queensland. We operate within an evolving veteran ecosystem, where the current and future needs of veterans and their families remain a growing and critical focus.

Queensland already has the largest veteran population in Australia, and with more Defence units relocating to Queensland, these numbers will likely continue to rise. This growth reinforces the need for proactive, adaptable support structures.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide concluded this year, with its Final Report highlighting key areas of focus for the sector and RSL Queensland. We will continue to monitor and advocate our offerings in those areas where we can make the greatest impact.

In 2024, our work focused on enhancing services, expanding support and adapting to veterans' evolving needs. Key initiatives included:

- ensuring our core services evolved and, where possible, were accredited – a process beginning with our DVA advocacy and employment services, which are now accredited
- evolving support on Australian Defence Force bases, working alongside Defence to enhance performance initiatives and provide practical assistance
- opening an additional Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre and enhancing existing facilities
- increasing financial support to Sub Branches and the boarder network in Queensland

"Like all of us, veterans and their families will face both challenges and opportunities. We must address both, ensuring they can find purpose and contribute to something bigger than themselves beyond their service."

- rebranding our lottery to the Dream Home Art Union to reflect our original brand and make our value proposition clear for customers
- strengthening planning and delivery with a long-term model, increasing total expenditure to 92% of available funds aligned with our purpose.

The journey ahead must focus on wellness. Recognising that some within our veteran community will never be fully able post-service, and that we will all need some help at times, we will continue to improve services providing this support. While doing so, we have a larger responsibility to proactively and responsibly enable the 'proud and independent' component in our mission statement.

Like all of us, veterans and their families will face both challenges and opportunities. We must address both, ensuring they can find purpose and contribute to something bigger than themselves beyond

their service. Purpose, camaraderie and contribution were the reasons many of us joined Defence, but they can be easily lost. Maintaining that balanced approach remains our priority.

The members of the League, along with the staff at RSL Queensland State Branch, have created something special in support of an iconic institution and those it serves. We are well supported by our Board, chaired by State President Stephen Day, and several committees whose combined wisdom has been essential to our success in 2024.

The conditions are set for even greater impact as we move forward, and I am excited for the future of RSL Queensland, and the League in Queensland and across Australia.

Robert Skoda
Chief Executive Officer



State Deputy President report

It was an honour to once again serve as your State Deputy President, with this year providing many opportunities to contribute to the League through care, commemoration and camaraderie.

It's clear to me that care comes in many forms. One that stood out to me this year was celebrating Adrian Nall's 103rd birthday, hosted by Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch and attended by both his family and RSL family. Another was honouring several RSL Queensland Life Members at their funerals, recognising their significant contributions to our organisation and the veteran community.

I represented RSL Queensland at many events, with highlights being commemorations for Defence nurses; a service for East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans; the re-dedication of the Vietnam Memorial at Kokoda Barracks; and the annual service in memory of the nurses killed in the Bangka Island massacre.

It was inspiring to see camaraderie in action at Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch, which does an excellent job of fostering inclusivity within its multicultural community. I also enjoyed taking part in an RSL Rec Connect event at the Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre Brisbane, where we made a terrarium while connecting with veterans who may not yet be part of the RSL.

I am proud to have served on the Board this year and to have contributed to our strategic planning efforts. It was my pleasure to work with our State President Stephen Day, whose inclusive leadership was truly encouraging. I also valued the guidance of our State Vice President Bill Whitburn.



Wendy Taylor
State Deputy President

State Vice President report

As 2024 rounds out my second term as State Vice President, I appreciate the support I have received over this time as I have remained committed to the ongoing improvement of RSL Queensland.

Much of my time and effort this year has been dedicated to updating and rewriting the RSL Queensland By-Laws as part of the By-Law Review Working Group. This has been a project spanning more than 12 months and is an important process to get right.

As I travel the state and work with Sub Branches and District offices, it is apparent that there is still a lot of misunderstanding around the Constitution and By-Laws, and how these documents govern the way our League is run.

The By-Laws rewrite aims to ensure a clear understanding of the roles of Sub Branches and Districts across the League. There is a hierarchy in place within the organisation to support all levels at all stages and through all processes. It is my hope that the new By-Laws will provide clarity and transparency on this issue.

I have enjoyed serving on RSL Queensland's Board and working alongside those who provide strong leadership across all levels. I thank you all sincerely for the continued work our members and volunteers contribute to assisting our veterans and their families.

I look forward to continuing to be part of the veteran community.



Bill Whitburn OAM
State Vice President

State Secretary report

In line with our mission, the pillars of care, commemoration and camaraderie were significant themes throughout my work with the League this year. At our 2024 State Congress, we focused on camaraderie and the vital role Sub Branches play in enabling and delivering a safe and welcoming environment for veterans, members and their families.

Delegates at the State Congress heard from Sub Branch representatives from across the Districts about the many ways a Sub Branch can demonstrate and provide camaraderie. The stories shared were inspiring, and the discussions had a positive outcome.

These conversations continued as I travelled around the state, sharing these messages during my visits to Sub Branches. It was a privilege to meet so many members and gain a deeper understanding of the environments in which individual Sub Branches operate – their strengths, challenges, constraints and successes.

For many Sub Branches, it was reassuring to hear that their focus should be on compassion and empathy – checking in with phone calls and hospital visits – while I reinforced State Branch's veteran services capability for advocacy and wellbeing across the League, where these services aren't present at a Sub Branch.

This year, I was honoured to attend the Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony in Cairns. This significant service, coinciding with National Reconciliation Week, is about acknowledging the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I also attended the ANZAC Day Dawn Service and marched with a group of RAAF veterans in Brisbane. I was buoyed by the number of people who attended the commemoration.

Operationally, I worked within the By-Law Review Working Group to help modernise the League's By-Laws, introducing a more values-based approach and increasing District Offices' involvement in key processes. This review complements the governance review I am also actively working through, which will enable and empower Sub Branches with the necessary skills and support needed for appropriate governance. These reviews will continue into 2025.

Overall, 2024 was a rewarding year for me as State Secretary. I had the privilege of seeing so many great initiatives happening across our League, hearing inspiring stories and celebrating many successes.



Iain Carty csm
State Secretary



Board of Directors

The Board provides strategic direction for RSL Queensland to meet its mission – to provide care, commemoration and camaraderie to enable veterans and their families to live with dignity and respect.

Drawn from our membership, our Board provides RSL Queensland with the right mix of experience and representation to serve the needs of our members and the veteran community.

As veterans themselves, the Board of Directors bring a unique and critical understanding of the lived experiences of our Australian Defence Force personnel.



Major General Stephen Day DSC AM
State President

Stephen served in the Army for 40 years, including conflicts in Africa, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2015, he left the full-time Army to work in business, before returning to full-time duty to lead the national drought response. Stephen now serves part-time as a mentor to Army Brigade commanders.



Wendy Taylor
State Deputy President

Wendy trained as a Registered Nurse before joining the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps as a Nursing Officer. She served nine years in the Army Reserve and then 16 years in the regular Army, including senior nursing and command roles in both the Gulf War and East Timor. Wendy was previously President of South Eastern District.



Bill Whitburn OAM
State Vice President

Bill is a 40-year veteran who is passionate about his involvement with RSL Queensland. He is actively engaged with rural and remote Sub Branches and understands the pressures they face due to governance complexities. He has a wealth of experience in HR, logistics, business processes, audit and risk, and workplace health and safety.



Garry Player
State Council Chair

Garry served in the Australian Army for 24 years before discharging in 2012 and running a small business. Having been involved in RSL Queensland committees since 2014, Garry continues to work tirelessly to serve the veteran community in Townsville and beyond.

Nicholas Gould
Director

As Managing Director and solicitor at Colwell Conveyancing Group, Nicholas has extensive experience in law, business strategy, risk management and governance working across the public and private sectors. He served in the Army and the Army Reserve, including two postings to Afghanistan and in an advisory role at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta.



Chris Hamilton
Director

Chris is the current CEO of RESQ Plus and has significant board experience, including as director of Legacy Australia, director of Jobs Australia Ltd, and as a member of the South West Queensland Hospital. Chris served for more than 40 years in the Army and Army Reserve, and is a member of Longreach RSL Sub Branch.



Ashley Naughton
Director

Ashley is the Executive General Manager of Infront Security Services Group, owner of Apex Pioneer Group Pty Ltd, and Officer Commanding of B Squadron, 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers. He spent 10 years in the Army before transitioning to the Reserves, where he has served for five years. Ashley holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Master of Business, and is an active member of Yeronga-Dutton Park RSL Sub Branch.



Tony Orchard
Director

Tony brings a blend of military, financial and educational acumen, including more than 20 years of experience in the finance industry. He served for seven years in the Army and eight years as a Reservist. Tony is an active member of Ipswich RSL Sub Branch and holds a Bachelor of Business, Advanced Diploma of Financial Services and a Diploma of Financial Planning.



Fiona Southwood
Director

Fiona has served in the Royal Australian Navy since 1997, including roles embedded with the US Navy, as Commanding Officer of HMAS *Moreton*, and as Senior Naval Officer South East Queensland. Fiona holds a master's in business administration and management and is now the lead Logistics Officer for the Mine Warfare, Clearance Diving, Hydrographic, Meteorological, Oceanographic and Patrol Force.



State Council of District Presidents

Established in late 2022, the State Council of District Presidents (SCDP) has worked hard over the last two years to enhance response times for matters important to the membership and increase Sub Branches' confidence to submit matters for consideration. As the year progressed, SCDP processes continued to be streamlined, with the Board approving an expansion of the SCDP's delegations. For the first time, 2024 saw the distribution of regular SCDP talking points to Districts and Sub Branches, a further step in enhancing transparency around decisions made during SCDP meetings.



Garry Player

*District President, North Queensland
Chair, State Council of District Presidents*

Garry served in the Australian Army for 24 years before discharging in 2012 and running a small business. Having been involved in RSL Queensland committees since 2014, Garry continues to work tirelessly to serve the veteran community in Townsville and beyond.



Mark Orreal

District President, Brisbane North

Mark served 21 years in the Australian Army, reaching the rank of WO1 and Regimental Sergeant Major 1 Combat Engineer Regiment. He is a leader experienced in building strategic associations and motivating passionate people. Mark is an active member of Samford RSL Sub Branch.



Phillip Luzzi

District President, Central Queensland

Phillip served six years as a Reservist with 1 Field Ambulance NSW. He also worked as a registered nurse, achieving certification in four disciplines of nursing over 35 years of service. Phillip has run children's tutoring businesses in Rockhampton, where he is a member of Emu Park RSL Sub Branch.



Kenneth Willoughby

District President, Far Northern

Kenneth served in the RAAF for 22 years, including as an RAAF Police Investigator specialising in criminal investigations and counter-intelligence. He then worked in the mining industry in Papua New Guinea. Kenneth is a member of Herberton RSL Sub Branch.

Pat Fairon

District President, Gold Coast

Pat served in the Australian Army for two years, including a tour of duty in Vietnam, before working in a variety of technical and industrial product roles. Pat has volunteered in many community organisations, including more than 16 years in committee and executive roles at RSL Queensland.



Paul Rogers

District President, Moreton

Paul served in the Royal Australian Navy for eight years, and has since worked in occupational health and safety roles in the dredging, hydrocarbon, mining and manufacturing industries. Paul is also President of Ipswich RSL Sub Branch and curator of the Sub Branch's military museum.



Kerry Gallagher AM

District President, South Eastern

Kerry served in the ADF for 29 years, during which time he was appointed as Chief of Staff of 1st Division. He then held executive roles in the medical services field. Kerry also chairs the Brisbane ANZAC Day Parade Committee and was President of Toowong RSL Sub Branch.



Grendell 'Skip' Antony

District President, Sunshine Coast and Regional

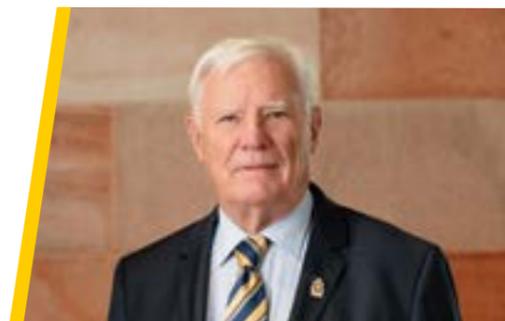
Grendell ('Skip') served in the Royal Australian Air Force for 20 years, followed by the Ready Reserve for five years. He then worked as a qualified Occupational Health and Safety Officer, before retiring in 2008. Skip has been an active member of Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch since 2010.



Dennis Pollard

District President, Western

Dennis served two terms in the ADF, totalling more than 25 years' service. He then worked as a Corrective Services Officer. Dennis has been a member of RSL Queensland since 2000, and President of Wallangarra RSL Sub Branch since 2011.



Neville Tarry

District President, Wide Bay and Burnett

Neville joined the ADF in 1976 and served for 12 years as an engineer in the Army Reserves. Neville then worked at Moura Mines for 33 years. He became a member of RSL Queensland in 1986 through Moura RSL Sub Branch and was elected its President in 2004.



“Our 2030 Strategy, focused on the pillars of care, commemoration and camaraderie, guides our message that the League exists to help provide assistance, recognition and connection. By staying true to our core values, we can continue to tell our story to those who may benefit from what we offer.”

ROBERT SKODA
CEO, RSL Queensland



2030 STRATEGY



Our mission

RSL Queensland's mission is to provide care, commemoration and camaraderie to enable veterans and their families to live with dignity and respect.

RSL Queensland's 2030 Strategy continues to guide our organisation in its commitment to expand support to more veterans and their families, promote wider recognition of our service people's legacy, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose within the veteran community.

We enabled the outcomes of our three strategic pillars – care, commemoration and camaraderie – by providing support and enablement through:

- **communication:** clearly communicating our mission and endeavours to the veteran community and society at large
- **commercial resource:** providing financial capacity and fit-for-purpose commercial structure to ensure RSL Queensland meets its mission
- **capability:** ensuring we have the necessary skills, processes and technology to set RSL Queensland up for success.

Strategy progress

Our strategic endeavours are outlined below.

Care



Caring for the welfare and interests of veterans

- Opened the RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre Sunshine Coast to expand our network of centralised support to veterans and their families.
- Achieved accreditation of RSL Queensland's employment and DVA advocacy services.
- Launched a pilot of the Veteran & Family Wellbeing Network Portal to aid in connecting service providers and clients.
- Contributed to, and supported veterans and their families through, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.
- Continued to develop and foster partnerships with organisations that expand proactive health initiatives to improve health, wellbeing and education opportunities for veterans.
- Through RSL Be:Well, launched new evidence-informed modules on veteran wellbeing every three months.
- Continued to develop our relationship with Defence through expanded reporting and provision of workshops and professional development.
- Expanded the reach and impact of RSL Queensland partnerships and RSL Rec Connect programs, including partnerships with other RSL State Branches.
- Launched the Education and Skills Program Pilot to provide personalised study and career guidance for ex-serving Defence members and current or ex-serving Defence members' partners.
- Established a support program for incarcerated veterans.
- Continued investment and collaboration with Gallipoli Medical Research to undertake research to better support veterans and their families.

Commemoration



Enabling and supporting commemoration in honour of the service and sacrifices of veterans

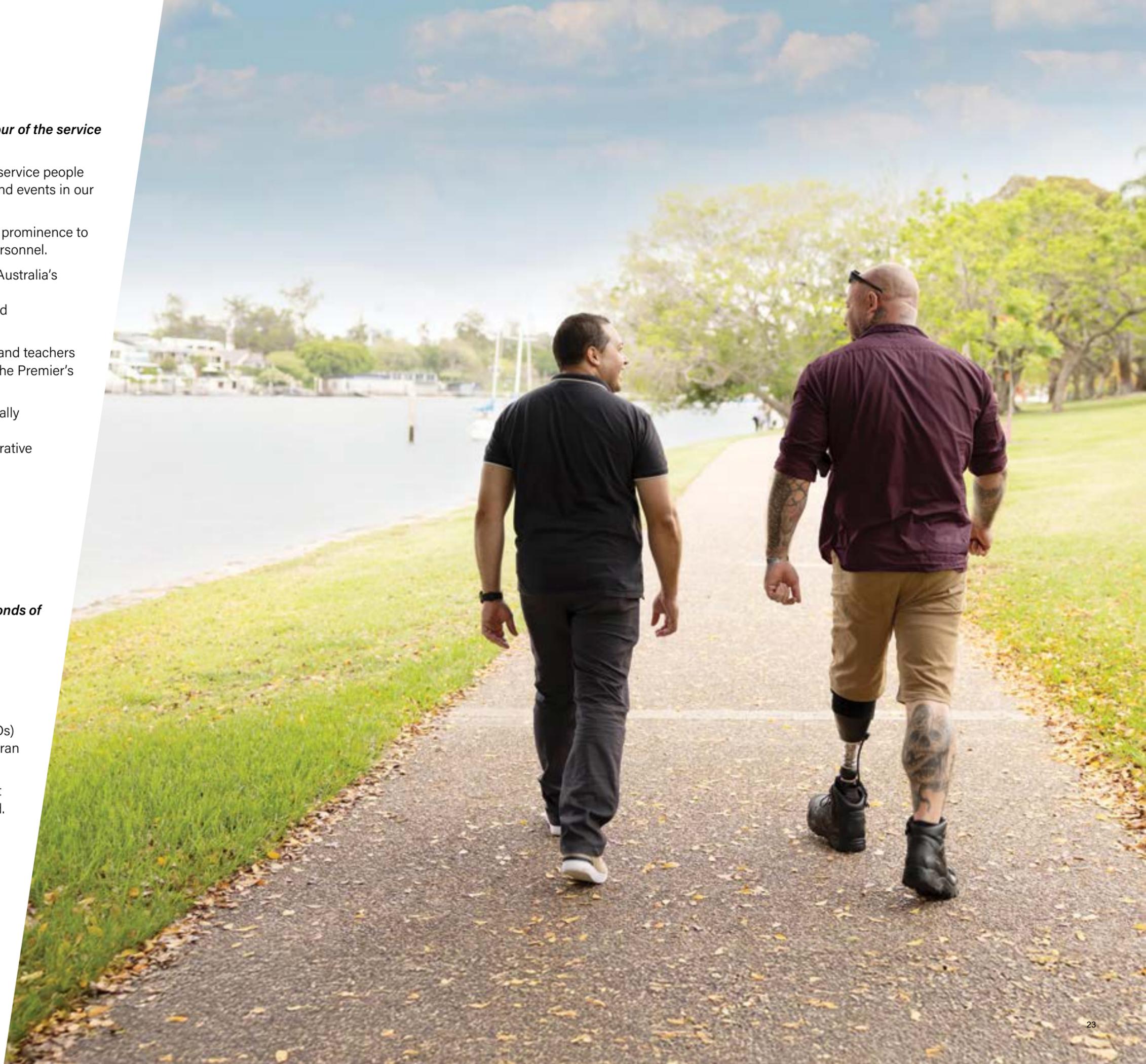
- Promoted commemorative events to honour our service people and engage the community in significant dates and events in our military history.
- Shared stories of service that educated and gave prominence to the service and sacrifice of current and former personnel.
- Provided resources to educate young people on Australia's involvement in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations, including the Postcards of Honour and Draw to Remember initiatives.
- Provided opportunities for Queensland students and teachers to explore the ANZAC story and legacy through the Premier's Anzac Prize.
- Expanded awareness of commemorations nationally by assisting other RSL State Branches to deliver commemorative campaigns, ensuring commemorative opportunities are available to more Australians.

Camaraderie



Providing avenues for veterans to rekindle their bonds of service and mateship

- Supported the RSL Queensland League and its members to provide opportunities to foster camaraderie within our communities.
- Developed new relationships and continued collaborations with ex-service organisations (ESOs) and Defence that supported the League and veteran community across Queensland.
- Facilitated State Congress and supported District AGMs to ensure the voice of members was heard.
- Built positive partnerships with other RSL State Branches that delivered better outcomes for veterans and their families through collaboration and working groups.
- Established of a fit-for-purpose and centralised support approach for the League, including improved processes, tools and training.



OUR IMPACT

2024 at a glance

RSL Queensland is here to support veterans and their families every step of the way by providing **care, commemoration and camaraderie**. In 2024, we provided care and support to veterans and their families through a range of impactful services and programs to help in real and meaningful ways.

Care



7,304 veterans and their families

supported by our services to improve their health and wellbeing



7,465 enquiries handled

referring veterans and their families to services that suit their needs



2,386 individuals welcomed and supported

across our Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres in Brisbane, Cairns, the Sunshine Coast and Townsville



1,043 nights in short-term accommodation

provided for veterans and their families travelling from regional areas for medical treatment



358 jobs

in meaningful employment secured for veterans and their partners



6,152 claims and appeals

submitted to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)



238 veterans and families housed

in safe, permanent accommodation they can call home



700 Christmas hampers delivered

to veterans and their families across Queensland, Northern Territory and Tasmania

Commemoration



15 commemorative days marked

including ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day



1,033 Sub Branch commemorative services and events

listed on the RSL Queensland website



21,000 students involved

in the Postcards of Honour initiative, which Sub Branches facilitated at 269 schools



14,205 students involved

in the Draw to Remember initiative, which Sub Branches facilitated at 177 schools



\$1.1 million in commemorative merchandise sales reimbursed

supporting Sub Branches' fundraising

Camaraderie



562,758 volunteer hours

contributed by members



1,012 veterans and family members

participated in RSL Peer-Led Programs



365 people participated

in 15 RSL Rec Connect events



160 Sub Branches

received assistance to secure funding for asset purchases, upgrades and building repairs



451 Sub Branch volunteers

across 10 Districts participated in group training sessions

RSL Queensland's financial highlights

RSL Queensland continues to navigate the challenges of changing consumer spending, which impacts revenue generated from the Dream Home Art Union. However, because of increases in return from investment activities, and improvements in operating costs, declines in overall funds available for our charitable purpose have been mitigated to ensure we can still meet the growing demand for services.

Despite the slight decline in available funds, demand for services continues to remain strong. One of the ways we have strengthened support for veterans and their families has been through the expansion of our network of Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres, as well as the enhancement and evolution of existing Centres.

Alongside the ongoing development of our existing services, there has been a strong emphasis on strengthening relationships across the RSL, both in Queensland and around Australia. The focus remains on expanding reach and enhancing service synergy to better support veterans and their families nationally.

Through this veteran-centric approach, our charitable output year-on-year has increased, with 92.3% of charitable funds being utilised in 2024.



92.3% of available funding, supporting our charitable Objects, was directed towards investment in leading health and wellbeing support, advocacy, partner programs, education, research, ongoing support for the League, and social and community services for veterans and their families.



RSL Queensland delivered \$23.8 million in social and community services that directly engaged with veterans and their families in Queensland, with many accessible to interstate veterans.



RSL Queensland expended \$15.9 million in donations and sponsorships, appropriate to our charitable Objects, that provided support and direct relief to veterans and their families.



“RSL Queensland is rich in stories about those who have turned to volunteering, while also using their unique skills to support others. Together we are better, and together our volunteers make communities across Queensland that much brighter.”

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN DAY *DSC AM*
State President, RSL Queensland



ABOUT US



Who we are

RSL Queensland has supported the veteran and Defence community since our beginnings in 1916, proudly upholding the legacy of our Objects.

Supporting veterans and their families is why we exist. It's why we started, why we've grown and why we innovate. Our mission – to provide **care, commemoration and camaraderie** to enable veterans and their families to live with dignity and respect – is our guiding light and underpins all that we do.

Through a state-wide network of Sub Branches – and a broad range of welfare and wellbeing services, programs and events – we deliver services and build connections that enable the veteran and Defence community to thrive beyond service. We're here to make all veteran families in Queensland feel supported and connected.

As one of the leading ex-service organisations in Queensland, we continue to provide practical support, assistance, advice and camaraderie across the state. We also work to amplify the voices of veterans and their families to ensure they are heard by those who can effect change and act to improve their wellbeing.

Our Objects

Since its beginning in 1916, RSL Queensland has proudly upheld our Objects, which consistently guide us in our pursuit of helping veterans and their families.

RSL Queensland Objects:

2.1 The main objects for which the RSL (Queensland Branch) is established is to relieve the distress and poverty suffered by the sick, helpless, wounded, aged, vulnerable, destitute and needy among those who are serving or who have served in the Australian Defence Forces and their dependants.

2.2 RSL (Queensland Branch) achieves this object by implementing and connecting those in need with programs and services to assist in the relief of their distress and suffering and these programs, services and activities may include the following, provided that they are conducted in aid and furtherance of its main object in clause 2.1:

2.2.1 relieve mental health issues and isolation experienced by past and present members of the Defence Forces and encourage their transition to civilian life by:

(a) facilitating the close and kindly ties of friendship created by a mutual service in the Australian Defence Force or in the forces of nations traditionally allied with Australia and the recollections associated with that experience;

(b) maintaining a proper standard of dignity and honour among all past and present members of the Defence Forces of the nation and to set an example of public spirit and noble hearted endeavour;

(c) protecting the good name and preserve the interests and standing of members of the Australian Defence Force;

(d) encouraging Members, as citizens, to serve Australia with that spirit of self-sacrifice and loyalty with which they served as members of the Australian Defence Forces; and

(e) encouraging continued loyalty to Australia and secure patriotic service in the interests of Australia;

2.2.2 assist in the preservation of the memory and the records of those who suffered and died for Australia, erect monuments to their valour, provide them with suitable burial places, and establish and preserve, in their honour, the annual commemoration days known as ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and other commemorative days;

2.2.3 provide welfare to the sick, helpless, wounded, vulnerable, aged, destitute and needy

2.2.4 support serving Australian Defence Force members at home and abroad and actively assist them in their transition to civilian life, especially if they are detrimentally affected by their defence service;

This is an extract of the RSL Queensland Objects. For the full details of RSL Queensland's Objects please see RSL Queensland's Constitution.



Districts and Sub Branches

Our 10 Districts and around 230 Sub Branches are at the core of what RSL Queensland does every day. Our dedicated network of volunteers work within their regions to provide care, commemoration and camaraderie to veterans and their families in their local communities.

RSL Sub Branches make a big impact by connecting and supporting the veteran and wider communities. Within their local area, they are often the first point of contact for veterans and their families who want to get involved with the RSL or need support.

Keeping history alive and creating connections between communities, the spirit of camaraderie can be seen in action throughout our Sub Branch network.



Brisbane North District

Banyo
Beachmere
Bray Park-Strathpine
Bribie Island
Caboolture-Morayfield and District
Centenary Suburbs
Clayfield-Toombul
Dayboro
Deception Bay
Gaythorne
Geebung Zillmere
Bald Hills Aspley
Kedron-Wavell
Kenmore/Moggill
Nundah-Northgate
Pine Rivers District
Redcliffe
Samford
Sandgate
Sherwood-Indooroopilly
The Gap

Central Queensland District

Blackwater/Bluff
Carmila
Clermont
Emerald
Emu Park
Farleigh and Northern Beaches
Finch Hatton
Gemfields
Gracemere and District
Kuttabul
Mackay
Marian
Mirani
Moranbah
Rockhampton
Seaforth
Springsure
St Helens
Walkerston-Pleystowe
Yeppoon

Far Northern District

Atherton
Babinda
Cairns and District
Ex-Servicewomen
Cairns
Cardwell
Cooktown
Edge Hill/Cairns West
Edmonton
Gordonvale
Herberton
Innisfail
Kuranda
Malanda
Mareeba
Mossman
Mount Molloy
Ravenshoe
Torres Strait Chapter
Tully
Weipa
Yarrabah

Gold Coast District

Beenleigh and District
Burleigh Heads
Canungra
Currumbin/Palm Beach
Mudgeeraba-Robina
Nerang
North Gold Coast
Runaway Bay
Southport
Surfers Paradise
Tamborine Mountain
Tweed Heads and Coolangatta

Moreton District

Blackbutt
Boonah
Esk
Gatton
Goodna
Grantham-Ma Ma Creek
Helidon
Ipswich Railway
Ipswich
Kalbar
Laidley
Lowood
Redbank Plains
Redbank
Rosewood
Toogoolawah
Yarraman

North Queensland District

Airlie Beach-Whitsunday
Ayr
Barcaldine
Blackall
Bowen
Charters Towers
Cloncurry
Herbert River
Home Hill
Hughenden
Julia Creek
Longreach
Magnetic Island
Mount Isa
Proserpine
Rollingstone
Thuringowa
Townsville
Winton

South Eastern District

Ashgrove Bardon
Bayside South
Beaudesert
Beerwah and District
Bulimba District
City-New Farm
Coorparoo and Districts
Darra and District
Defence Service Nurses
Defence Servicewomen's Chapter
Forest Lake and Districts
Glasshouse Country
Greater Springfield
Greenbank
Hellenic
Holland Park-Mt Gravatt
Jimboomba
Kenilworth
Kilcoy
Kooralbyn Valley
Logan Village
Macleay Island
Manly-Lota
Redlands
Russell Island
Salisbury
Springwood Tri Services
Stephens
Sunnybank
Toowong
Wynnum
Yeronga-Dutton Park

Sunshine Coast and Regional District

Caloundra
Coolum-Peregian
Cooroy-Pomona
Kawana Waters
Maleny
Mapleton
Maroochydore
Mudjimba
Nambour
Palmwoods Chapter
Tewantin/Noosa
Woodford
Yandina-Eumundi

Western District

Allora
Bell
Charleville
Chinchilla
Clifton
Crows Nest
Cunnamulla
Dalby
Djuan and District
Goombungee
Goondiwindi
Harlaxton
Highfields
Injune
Jandowae
Killarney
Leyburn
Meandarra/Glenmorgan
Miles
Millmerran
Mitchell
Morven
Oakey
Pittsworth
Quilpie
Roma
St George
Stanthorpe
Surat
Tara
Taroom
Texas Chapter
Toowoomba
Wallangarra
Wandoan
Warwick
Yangan-Emu Vale Chapter

Wide Bay and Burnett District

Agnes Water/1770
Biggenden Chapter
Biloela
Boyne-Tannum
Bundaberg
Calliope
Eidsvold Chapter
Gayndah
Gin Gin
Gladstone
Goomeri Chapter
Gympie
Hervey Bay
Howard District
Isis
Kilkivan Chapter
Kingaroy/Memerambi
Mary Valley
Maryborough
Monto
Mount Larcom
Mount Morgan
Mount Perry
Moura
Mundubbera
Murgon
Nanango
Orchid Beach/Fraser Island
Proston
Rainbow Beach
Rosedale Chapter
Theodore Chapter
Tiaro
Tin Can Bay
Toogoom and District
Wondai
Woodgate
Wowan

DELIVERING **IMPACTFUL** VETERAN **OUTCOMES**



“The work being done across the League in Queensland is already moving us collectively to be in a better place to provide support with improved governance. We are well positioned to continue rising to the needs of veterans and their families.”

ROBERT SKODA
CEO, RSL Queensland

Care



RSL Queensland supports veterans and their families with impactful services, programs and advocacy, and helps them engage with the right services at the right time.

We work with veterans and their families to identify proactive wellbeing goals, provide assistance in addressing more complex needs, and connect veterans and their families to relevant support services in a broader veteran ecosystem.

In 2024, we supported 7,304 veterans and their families through our services to improve their health and wellbeing.

RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres

RSL Queensland's Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres (VFWCs) are dedicated to improving the lives of veterans, current serving Defence members, and their families by offering specialist support and expert advice from a variety of organisations, as well as social opportunities, all under one roof.

In 2024, the VFWC Sunshine Coast opened in Maroochydore, joining our Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville Centres in providing support across the state.

This year also marked the first anniversary of the opening of the VFWC Brisbane – our flagship Centre in Queensland. Fully funded by RSL Queensland, this Centre symbolises our commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the veteran and Defence community and addressing the call to help veterans navigate the service system.

“The Brisbane-based Centre has become popular within the local veteran community. Over the past year, we’ve seen more than 1,228 veterans and their families walk through the doors to access services or engage in social activities.”

TROY WATSON
Deputy CEO – Veteran Services

Since opening, we have welcomed representatives from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA); local, state and federal government; and Defence to highlight the range of services available to veterans and their families at the Centre.

In addition, the Centre has opened its doors for local community groups, ex-service organisations and Defence to host their own social events, information sessions and training days, to name just a few examples.

External organisations that utilised the VFWCs to deliver services in 2024 include DVA, Legacy Brisbane, EASEC Occupational Health, APM (health and human services), IPAR (health and work solutions), Salvation Army, Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program and Gallipoli Medical Research.

In 2024, we also commenced expansion of a collaborative network of service providers through the development of the Veteran & Family Wellbeing Network Portal. The portal, piloted in 2024, aims to aid the connection of clients to non-clinical services.

“The Centre provides a very welcoming space with dedicated and caring staff members who provide a wide range of complimentary services for the care of veterans and their families.”

RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre Brisbane client

Health

RSL Peer-Led Programs

RSL Queensland continued to offer a range of mental health and wellbeing support initiatives and events for veterans and their families, guided by others with similar experiences, through RSL Peer-Led Programs (formerly Wellness Programs).

1,012 veterans and their family members participated in programs to improve their physical, mental and social wellbeing in 2024.

Throughout the year, RSL Queensland partnered with 10 organisations delivering peer-led programs for veterans and their families: 4 Aussie Heroes, Diggers Rest, Dig In Health, Happy Paws Happy Hearts, Legacy Brisbane, Operation PTSD Support, PTSD Resurrected – Reboot Recovery, Raemus Rover Off-Road Racing, Veterans Care Association – Timor Awakening, and Waves of Wellness.

“I had difficulty with my transition from Defence. Getting medically discharged was not the way I wanted to go, so I had a lot of misplaced anger. I isolated myself a bit and found it hard to reconnect. This is the first time I reconnected with people I didn’t know but who had a similar history to me. It’s really helped build mateship and get me outdoors and seeing people again.”

NICK GUROWSKI

RAAF veteran and Waves of Wellness participant

RSL Be:Well

RSL Queensland expanded RSL Be:Well, an online learning platform providing free resources to support veterans during and after Defence service. Developed in partnership with Gallipoli Medical Research, RSL Be:Well offers research-based, practical information and tools to proactively improve health and wellbeing.

Self-guided and interactive courses launched in 2024 include Be:Mood Wise, Be:Pain Mindful, Be:Habit Aware and Be:Across Anxiety.

Run Army

Showing our support for the Army and ADF’s commitment to resilience, health and wellbeing, RSL Queensland was again proud to be a major sponsor of Run Army. Held ahead of ANZAC Day, on 21 April, Run Army featured 10km and 5km walk/run events in Brisbane and Townsville, and a virtual event for participants anywhere around Australia and the world, raising funds for Legacy and other first responder charities.

In 2024, the event joined forces with Queensland’s police, fire and ambulance services to expand the community event.

Social support

RSL Rec Connect

RSL Rec Connect (formerly Active Lifestyles) helps veterans and their families connect through a diverse calendar of recreational events. RSL Rec Connect events include active and creative activities across both indoor and outdoor settings. Each event is designed to help participants feel happier and more connected with others.

In 2024, 365 people participated in 15 RSL Rec Connect events across the state.

Activities in our 2024 program included kayaking, blacksmithing, woodcarving, cooking, mosaic lamp-making, a Cairns Skyrail tour, family music morning, Mary Valley Rattler train tour, painting, sailing, and a clay animation day. Events were held in Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg, Gympie, Mackay, the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Ipswich and the Gold Coast.

“I really enjoy the diversity of activities on offer. I also enjoy the conversations, and the happiness it creates for my Dad. Rec Connect gives all of us a relaxed, enjoyable way to socialise and try new activities that we mightn’t otherwise try.”

MELISSA SULLIVAN

RSL Rec Connect participant with veteran dad, Steve

Incarcerated Veterans Program

This year, RSL Queensland expanded the Incarcerated Veterans Program, which began as a pilot in 2023. The program helps incarcerated veterans transition successfully back into society by reconnecting them with the values instilled during their service in the ADF, and providing the necessary post-release support.

The program aims to reduce re-offending behaviour and is delivered in a multi-dimensional format, including an in-custody component aimed at motivating participants to change their behaviour during incarceration. This is supplemented by a pragmatic social service intervention that supports veterans as they transition from correctional facilities and establish themselves in civilian society.

In 2024, 45 veterans participated in the Incarcerated Veterans Program.

Four desistance programs were delivered in Townsville, Wolston Correctional, Lotus Glen and Maryborough, with program feedback highlighting consistent self-reporting of improved mindset among participants.



Waves of Wellness

RSL BE:Well

Run Army

RSL Rec Connect

Incarcerated Veterans Program

Justice and safety

Advocacy – DVA claims and appeals

RSL Queensland’s expert Compensation Advocates continued to guide veterans through the sometimes-complex DVA claims and appeals processes to help them get the most beneficial outcomes. Our advocacy assistance is provided free of charge and is available online, in person and over the phone.

In addition to the claims and appeals conducted by RSL Queensland Sub Branches in 2024, a total of 6,152 claims and appeals were submitted by RSL Queensland on behalf of veterans, their partners and their dependants.

As part of RSL Queensland’s focus on continuing to deliver quality, client-focused services to veterans and their families, our advocacy service was this year accredited by the QIC Health and Community Services Standards.

“I come under three Acts, which I didn’t know, and my Compensation Advocate was able to split up my service into the Acts and understand what information I needed to provide to make my claim, which really sped up my processes for my claims.”

VINCENT HALE
Veteran

Education and skills

Scholarships

The RSL Scholarships Program has provided funding support to ex-serving Defence members, their partners and dependants with the aim of increasing their employability through higher education. Following a review in 2024, the program’s intention evolved to increase RSL Queensland’s support of ex-serving Defence members and their partners pursuing higher education to aid their career aspirations.

Education and Skills Program Pilot

The Education and Skills Program Pilot was launched towards the end of 2024 to provide personalised study and career guidance for ex-serving Defence members and current or ex-serving Defence members’ partners, helping them create a sustainable career plan that aligns with their unique skills, experience and passions.

Offering vocational counselling and assessments, the program helps participants uncover new opportunities, explore study and career pathways, and gain clarity on future direction.

Employment

RSL Employment Program

The RSL Employment Program continued to expand in 2024, helping veterans and the partners of current and ex-serving Defence members in their search for meaningful employment.

In 2024, the RSL Employment Program expanded beyond Queensland and Tasmania and into New South Wales where the program is delivered by RSL LifeCare Veteran Services, the charity partner of RSL NSW. In these three states, staff are available locally to deliver the program to veterans and partners.

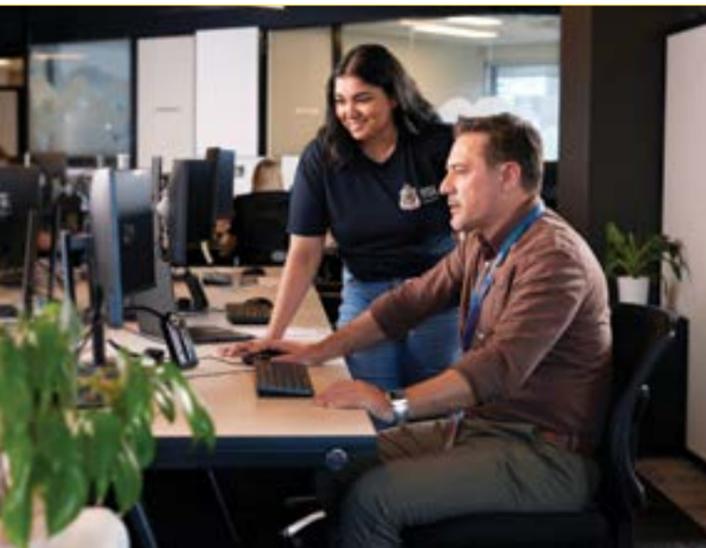
358 jobs were secured through the program in 2024, which was a 26% increase on the previous year. Veterans made up 72% of those who secured jobs, and partners of veterans or Defence members made up 28%.

As a way of connecting veterans with employers, we listed 894 unique roles on our online jobs board and hosted the first Career Connect Series event at the VFWC Brisbane. There, veterans and their partners met with leading employers and education providers to explore digital career opportunities, with future events set to highlight different industries. We also secured apprentice positions for six veterans, facilitated job opportunities across various industries, and worked with state and federal government departments to place 16 veterans and partners in employment.

As part of RSL Queensland’s focus on continuing to deliver quality, client-focused services to veterans and their families, the RSL Employment Program was this year accredited by the QIC Health and Community Services Standards.

“The program really opened my eyes and gave me the confidence to navigate the job search process effectively. The team analysed my skills and personality, aligning them seamlessly with career opportunities that not only met my expectations but also catered to my personal life and family needs.”

CLARE MASON
Army veteran and Administration and Support Officer, Electrotech Australia



DVA claims and appeals



Scholarships Program



Education and Skills Program Pilot



RSL Employment Program

Housing

Homelessness Program

RSL Queensland continued to effectively deliver the Homelessness Program, which helps veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness into immediate emergency accommodation. Once they're safe, we help them find permanent rental accommodation and link them to our holistic range of support services to address their living conditions, which are generally an outcome of complex underlying factors.

In 2024, 238 individuals and families were helped into safe, permanent housing through our Homelessness Program, with a total expenditure of \$1.37 million.

While we saw a 17% increase in the number of people supported through the program compared to the previous year, a review and adjustment of our processes resulted in a decrease in total expenditure on the program for the year.

Short-term accommodation

RSL Queensland's short-term accommodation facility, Angus House in Brisbane, continued to provide subsidised accommodation and meals for veterans needing to access specialist medical treatment, convalesce after treatment, or take time out from a domestic situation.

In 2024, 1,043 nights were provided in short-term accommodation at Angus House.

Independent living

To support veterans and their families in securing affordable long-term housing, RSL Queensland continued to operate more than 80 self-contained housing units throughout Queensland. We currently have independent living units in Ayr, Cairns, Emu Park, Gayndah, Mareeba, Mount Perry, Proserpine and Yeppoon.

Income and finance

Emergency financial support

RSL Queensland provides some emergency funding on a one-off basis to help veterans who are having trouble meeting their financial obligations for groceries, electricity, rent or transport.

In 2024, we provided \$439,642 in emergency financial support.

Financial counselling

RSL Queensland continued its partnership with Bravery Trust to enable veterans to receive expert support from a dedicated Bravery Trust financial counsellor. This support helps veterans and their families who come through our Homelessness Program or are identified as needing ongoing financial assistance to better manage their budget, supporting them to move towards financial independence.

In 2024, 216 veterans were referred to Bravery Trust for financial counselling.

Recognition and respect

Funerals and poppy services

For veterans who have no known family, RSL Queensland continued to arrange – through the League – dignified funeral services attended by RSL representatives. We also actively sought out and gave recognition to unmarked graves in which veterans were interred, ensuring their relatives and friends can properly honour their memory.

RSL Queensland members also provided Poppy Services to complement the funerals of veterans who have passed. This moving tribute is available free of charge to any person who served in the ADF, whether a member of the RSL or not. It's one of the ways in which we can honour their memory and support their loved ones through a difficult time.

Bereavement and family support

RSL Queensland continued to support families who have lost a family member who served in the Defence Force by providing emergency financial assistance and advice on compensation and entitlements.



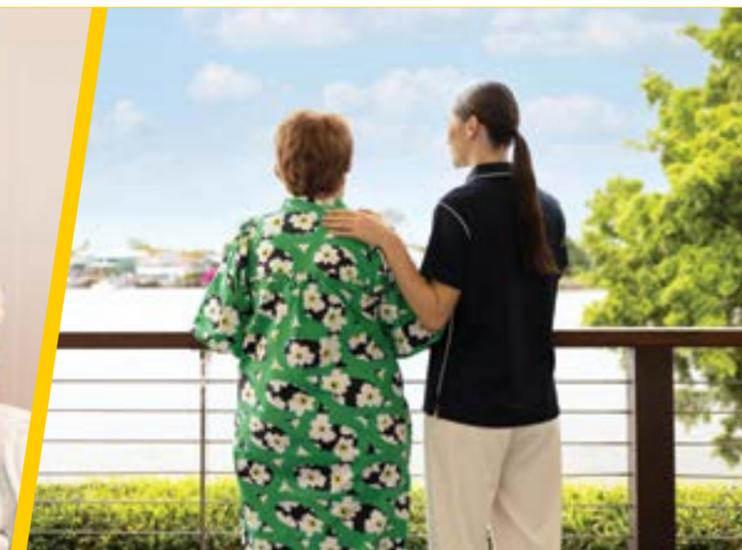
Homelessness Program



Accommodation



Financial counselling



Bereavement and family support



GALLIPOLI MEDICAL RESEARCH

Gallipoli Medical Research (GMR) is a leading independent research institute located in Brisbane, Queensland. We strive to enrich and restore lives through pioneering biomedical research that transcends the laboratory to deliver meaningful and tangible real-world outcomes.

Based at the former war and repatriation hospital, now Greenslopes Private Hospital, GMR has built a reputation in Australia and internationally for leading innovative medical research and creating world-first tools and programs that make a genuine difference in people's lives.

Our intrinsic military connection is at the heart of what we do. GMR's groundbreaking veteran research aims to understand the unique physical and mental health impacts of military service, to support current and ex-service personnel and their families.

Our long-standing partnership with RSL Queensland has been instrumental to delivering more than 40 published studies and 42 research projects, shaping better support services, treatment options and transition programs tailored to the veteran community.

Translating research into real-world solutions

GMR's Translational Research team, in partnership with RSL Queensland, aims to reduce the timeframe for research to be implemented into real-world practice by translating findings to ensure they have a positive impact on people's lives.

Since launching in 2024, RSL Be:Well has expanded to include new modules covering mood, pain management and habit formation, with more topics in development. This program empowers veterans to take control of their physical, mental and emotional health by offering practical, research-backed strategies in an accessible format.

Supporting veterans through transition

Our research has led to the development of pioneering tools to assist veterans in their transition from military to civilian life. The Mental Readiness for Military Transition Scale (MT-Ready) is a world-first psychometric assessment that helps identify current serving members at risk of experiencing transition challenges.

By providing early insights, MT-Ready enables tailored interventions to support smoother reintegration. Recognised as a finalist in the 2024 Brisbane Lord Mayor's Business Awards, this tool is shaping the way transition readiness is understood and addressed.

Additionally, the Military-Civilian Adjustment and Reintegration Measure (M-CARM) assesses a veteran's adjustment post-service, offering valuable insights into transitioning to civilian life.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has acknowledged both tools for their role in improving transition support services.

RSL Queensland and GMR have a shared commitment to ensure veterans and their families receive the care, support and resources they need to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Miriam Kent

CEO, Gallipoli Medical Research

gallipoliresearch.com.au





MATES 4 MATES

Here for those impacted by service.

In 2024, our Mates4Mates team demonstrated their unwavering dedication to supporting veterans and the Defence community on their journey to reconnect and recover, for those impacted by service.

I've had the pleasure of leading Mates4Mates through a growth period in 2024, with the expansion of our geographical reach and increase in clinical services available to the veteran and Defence community. Building on our 2030 Strategic Plan, we developed a three-year roadmap to help us execute our priorities, and ensure those who access our services benefit from meaningful outcomes to improve the quality of their lives.

Mates4Mates celebrated the opening of a new Centre on the Sunshine Coast in collaboration with RSL Queensland and the first birthday of the RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre (VFWC) in Brisbane. Being co-located in VFWCs provides veterans and their families with a collaborative approach to support, ensuring they have easier and more frequent access to a broader range of services.

We also introduced physiotherapy to our physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services and increased our mental health support, both in person and via telehealth.

Supporting our clients

In 2024, Mates4Mates supported more than 3,600 veterans and family members to reconnect and recover, with more than 35,600 occasions of services delivered across our key service areas. More than 14,000 individual veterans and family members have now directly benefited from Mates4Mates services since we were established by RSL Queensland in 2013.

In 2024, this translated to:

- 8,500+ occasions of physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services
- 4,900+ occasions of mental health and wellbeing services
- 900+ attendances at our Skills for Recovery Programs
- 21,100+ social connection attendances.

We also collected a range of feedback in 2024 to ensure our services and programs are meeting the needs of veterans, family members and the wider Defence community. Our clients indicated that 96.7% were 'very happy' or 'happy' with the services they received at Mates4Mates.

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

On behalf of Mates4Mates, I had the privilege of being a member of the stakeholder reference group for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, and Mates4Mates provided both witness testimony and written submissions to the Commission over its three-year inquiry.

Once the Australian Government handed down its response to the Royal Commission, it was heartening to see that 104 of the 122 recommendations were accepted, to help improve and better support the health and wellbeing of our Defence community.

I would like to express our deepest appreciation for all those who contributed to the nearly 6,000 submissions to this Royal Commission, and we hope to see change actioned moving forward.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, supporters and partners who played an instrumental role in supporting the clients who have been impacted by service throughout 2024. At Mates4Mates, we look forward to creating more opportunities to connect with and support veterans and their families across our locations.

Emma Whitehead

CEO, Mates4Mates

mates4mates.org
1300 4 MATES (62 837)



Commemoration



People of all ages paid their respects at the 2024 Brisbane ANZAC Day march, including children, from left, Florence, Jack, Lily and Felix.

RSL Queensland enables and supports the commemoration of the service and sacrifices of veterans. As we acknowledge the pivotal moments that have shaped our nation, we engage with the community, elevate commemoration days and services, and educate the public on their significance.

Together with Districts, Sub Branches, members and the wider community, we uphold the spirit of remembrance and ensure that all service people's legacies live on for generations to come.

ANZAC Day

Ahead of ANZAC Day on 25 April, RSL Queensland urged communities around the state to honour the contribution of all service personnel by participating in local ANZAC Day commemorations. 459 ANZAC Day services, marches and events were held around the state by RSL Sub Branches and promoted to the public via the anzacspirit.com.au website.

From poignant Dawn Services in outback towns to street marches in major cities, each commemoration paid due tribute to the ANZACs and all who have followed in their footsteps. It's through this tradition of shared pride and gratitude that the legacy of the ANZAC spirit is kept alive.

“ANZAC Day is a special, powerful, emotional day – to reflect on those that have made the ultimate sacrifice, fought, never returned the same, to allow us to have our freedom and live the way we do. I'm really proud to wear the uniform, to have the Rising Sun (Army badge) on my chest and thank those who continually make sacrifices for our country.”

JORDAN MEMBREY
Army Reservist and AFLW player

RSL Queensland partnered with Queensland-based national sporting teams the Dolphins (NRL), Gold Coast Suns (AFL) and Queensland Reds (Rugby Union) to support their commemorative initiatives in their respective ANZAC rounds.

Facilitated by more than 55 RSL Sub Branches, RSL Queensland's Postcards of Honour activity engaged an estimated 21,000 students at 269 primary schools in learning about and commemorating ANZAC Day. Thousands of postcards were written to honour and thank veterans for their service.

Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony

To coincide with National Reconciliation Week, RSL Queensland's annual Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony was held on 25 May and acknowledged the contributions of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have served.

This commemorative event is an important opportunity to remember the injustice that many Indigenous veterans experienced when they were denied the same entitlements as other Australians who fought for their country, at the same time, in the same wars.

After being hosted in South East Queensland for the past 17 years, in 2024, the Ceremony was held in Cairns, providing those in Far Northern Queensland the opportunity to participate.

“It's not a separate thing all on its own. We're acknowledging a small group as a collective – and the struggles they had – but also the courage, determination and victories that we've all shared as a nation.”

PAUL WALKER
Army veteran and keynote speaker at the 2024 Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony

Vietnam Veterans' Day

Vietnam Veterans' Day is commemorated annually on 18 August, the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan – one of the most significant conflicts for Australians who served in the Vietnam War. RSL Queensland recognised the invaluable contribution of those who served and sacrificed during Australia's 10-year involvement in the Vietnam War by sharing the stories of Vietnam veterans and promoting commemorations held by RSL Sub Branches.

“I could understand that nobody wants to see their son go to war and maybe not come back. But I was looking at the South Vietnamese side as well and said, ‘No, we have to be there’. I was glad that I'd been there.”

JOHN BURNS

Vietnam War veteran, who shared his story to commemorate Vietnam Veterans' Day

25th anniversary of Australian service in Timor-Leste

2024 marked the 25th anniversary of Australian service in Timor-Leste, which spanned from 1999 to 2013. Anniversary commemorations were held on 20 September – 25 years after the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) peace enforcement operation was deployed to restore peace and security, and facilitate humanitarian assistance operations, in response to attacks by pro-Indonesia militias on Timorese civilians.

RSL Queensland supported the commemoration of this significant anniversary by raising awareness of the invaluable contribution of Australian service personnel in this peacekeeping operation.

“While we hadn't served on the front line, witnessing the aftermath was still incredibly eye-opening for me. Some scenes have never left my memory. It was wonderful to be able to meet the local kids; they ran at us like we were celebrities and would always give us the biggest smiles. After everything they had gone through, everything they had lost, it was inspiring and heartwarming to see them so appreciative of us just being there.”

DANIELLE BREARLEY

Navy veteran, who shared her story to commemorate the 25th anniversary of service in Timor-Leste

Remembrance Day

Ahead of Remembrance Day on 11 November, RSL Queensland raised awareness of the significance of the commemoration by promoting Anzac Square in Brisbane as a place of reflection and tribute. Between 5 and 11 November, members of the public were invited to honour those who served by placing a poppy at Anzac Square. An evening light display of falling poppies on the walls of Anzac Square was another part of the RSL Queensland activation.

RSL Queensland also hosted the annual Remembrance Day Service at the Shrine of Remembrance in Brisbane, and promoted via the remembertoremember.com.au website the services held by Sub Branches for the public to attend.

RSL Queensland supported the District and Sub Branch network again to deliver 'Draw to Remember', enabling around 14,205 local students from 177 schools to sketch commemorative chalk murals in honour of service people past and present.

“It is important that we continue to observe Remembrance Day to safeguard their legacy and remember the ultimate price they paid was not in vain. The services held across the state by our many RSL Sub Branches help ensure the stories and sacrifices of our veterans are not forgotten.”

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN DAY DSC AM
State President, RSL Queensland

Premier's Anzac Prize

RSL Queensland partnered with the Queensland Department of Education to sponsor the annual Premier's Anzac Prize, providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Queensland students and teachers to explore the ANZAC story and legacy.

Prize recipients participate in research, fundraising, community engagement and a tour of Europe, visiting key historical sites including World War I battlefields. It is a unique opportunity for young Queenslanders to gain in-depth insight into the ANZAC legacy.

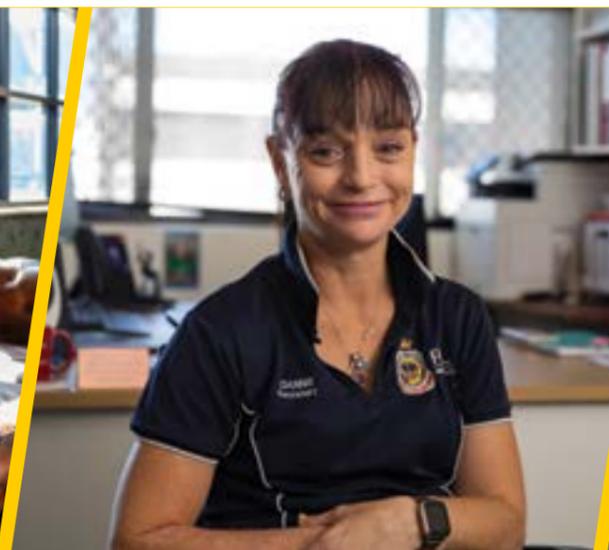
“When applying for the prize, I only knew about my great-grandfathers. With all the research tips I've been getting, I've found that I have quite a lot of great-great-uncles who were also in the World Wars. It's been really eye-opening, because the people who've come before me basically helped shape who I am today.”

SOPHIE ROBERTSON

2024 Premier's Anzac Prize student recipient



Vietnam Veterans' Day



25th anniversary of Australian service in Timor-Leste



Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony



Remembrance Day



Premier's Anzac Prize

Camaraderie



From the Air Force to artistry

*Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch
Brisbane North District*

Garry Dolan grew up painting the stunning landscapes of Port Stephens in NSW before joining the RAAF. When a motorbike accident ended his military career, Garry found it difficult to adjust to civilian life. But with his interest in oil painting rekindled, Garry pursued a career as a full-time artist.

Now a member of Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch, Garry has showcased his work in the Pentagon and the Australian War Memorial, and he runs classes to share his passion.

“I took up painting again mainly for my own mental health. I had no real thoughts of becoming professional. It is a form of meditation in that the rest of the world disappears and only the subject, the paint, brushes and canvas exist. This is what I try to pass on to my students.”

GARRY DOLAN

Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch member

Connecting with young FIFO members

*Moranbah RSL Sub Branch
Central Queensland District*

Moranbah RSL Sub Branch understands the challenges of fly in, fly out (FIFO) workers' lifestyles and how important it is to maintain a sense of community among veterans despite the constant travel. A real focus on care means communicating with members and veterans in the community through emails and text messages is an effective way to stay connected.

“While the FIFO lifestyle makes our timetables challenging, it’s important for us to stay connected. The moment we signed that dotted line and began our Defence journey, we became family. And it’s important for us to keep that camaraderie, especially as the FIFO lifestyle can become quite isolating.”

MARGARET STEPHENSON

*RAAF veteran, FIFO worker and
Moranbah RSL Sub Branch member*



Centenary Suburbs



Moranbah

Volunteer's 'rewarding' decade of dedication

Ravenshoe RSL Sub Branch
Far Northern District

When she's not at work, Jodie Bocking dedicates her time to volunteering with Ravenshoe RSL Sub Branch, which she has done for the past 10 years. After serving as the last President of the Ravenshoe Citizens' Auxiliary, Jodie transitioned to being a non-League Director on the Sub Branch Board, where she contributes to discussions around purchases and other important decisions.

Jodie joins in weekly coffee chats with veterans, helps the Sub Branch with catering for community events and wakes for members and non-members, and supports commemorative ceremonies by selling merchandise and raffle tickets.

"It feels effortless, and I enjoy it. Seeing how much individuals appreciate and benefit from the support is just very rewarding."

JODIE BOCKING
Ravenshoe RSL Sub Branch
non-League Director

Connecting over cakes at Christmas

Burleigh Heads RSL Sub Branch
Gold Coast District

Every year for the past decade, Burleigh Heads RSL Sub Branch has shared the Christmas spirit with veterans and widows through a festive delivery of Christmas cakes and fruit mince pies. At the beginning of December this year, 45 care packages were hand-delivered, providing an opportunity to check in and connect as well.

"It is a way of keeping in contact with our older members, letting them know we are thinking of them and that they are a part of the RSL family. They are always so grateful, but we believe it's such an important gesture at Christmas, especially for the ones who don't have family close by."

LIN GLASS
Burleigh Heads RSL Sub Branch Secretary

Growth needed for rural veterans

Yarraman RSL Sub Branch
Moreton District

With a presence that has spanned more than a century, Yarraman RSL Sub Branch is passionate about enhancing the Sub Branch's capacity to serve veterans and the community. Having moved from a single room in a local hall to a more expansive and accessible space in the community, the Sub Branch now has a fully equipped kitchen and a spacious shed that has been transformed into an entertainment and socialising space.

The Sub Branch is also working on relocating the local cenotaph, with hopes to have the move completed by ANZAC Day 2025.

"It has been great to see that our membership has grown from just a handful of people to more than 50 members over the past year, and we're committed to growing our membership even further."

WARWICK O'NEILL
Yarraman RSL Sub Branch President

Community spirit brings town together

Bowen RSL Sub Branch
North Queensland District

Camaraderie and community spirit are strong within the RSL Sub Branch in the North Queensland town of Bowen, where members engage with the Country Women's Association and local gym to promote and actively engage in veterans' health. Events were held during Veterans' Health Week this year, allowing veterans to hear from guest speakers and connect with each other.

The Sub Branch also supports its local community by raising funds through Cash for Cans and forwarding it on to other organisations that are active in their community.

"One organisation to receive a donation in 2024 was Bowen Neighbourhood Centre, which ran an emergency food program that has veterans among its recipients."

RHONDA DOYLE
Bowen RSL Sub Branch Treasurer



Ravenshoe



Burleigh Heads



Yarraman



Bowen

Mission to support homeless veterans

Springwood Tri Services RSL Sub Branch
South Eastern District

When James 'Jamie' McLellan received a phone call about some local veterans who were experiencing homelessness in his local area, he knew that something needed to be done. With the support of Springwood Tri Services RSL Sub Branch, President David Simmons, Secretary Gary Sargent and Jamie developed the Sub Branch's Homelessness Veterans' Program.

Connecting with local organisations and charities to help identify any veterans who were experiencing homelessness enabled the Sub Branch to reach out and offer them support.

“To find out that there were fellow veterans out there doing it tough was heartbreaking. Veterans all share a unique history, and it is important for all of us to support one another so that no one is left behind.”

JAMIE MCLELLAN

Springwood Tri Services RSL Sub Branch member

'Project Stairlift' transforms veteran's life

Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch
Sunshine Coast and Regional District

When Gary Penney, a Wellbeing Advocate for Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch, was visiting veteran John Earea at his house to provide support, he found out John was waiting for funding for a stairlift. John has dedicated his entire life to service, having served in the Army and the police force. With his health declining in recent years, John's mobility has been impaired, making it difficult to move around his two-storey home.

By chance, a stairlift had just been donated to Gary's Sub Branch, and he was able to arrange to have it installed at John's house within a week, significantly improving his home life.

“Australian service men are very fortunate to have people like Gary at the RSL Sub Branch. I'm sure there's no other country in the world that has anything close to this and I am most grateful.”

JOHN EAREA

Caloundra RSL Sub Branch member

Commitment to veterans celebrated

Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch
Western District

For over a century, Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch has been supporting local veterans and their families in its rural country town. Along with cultivating connections between veterans and the community, the Sub Branch places an emphasis on providing wellbeing support to its 45 members, and proudly operates its own military museum, which includes memorabilia from World War I through to more recent conflicts.

“I think we have the best community; the town is always there to help us with our initiatives or ideas, and we strive to help them in any way we can too. This anniversary represents a special milestone, and we hope the Sub Branch sees another 100 years supporting the community.”

BILL BRASSINGTON

Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch President

Lawn mowing group serving veterans

Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch
Wide Bay and Burnett District

Three dedicated volunteers from Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch are giving back to veterans, one lawn at a time, as they fill a crucial service gap for veterans by providing free yard maintenance services. Two years ago, the Sub Branch purchased mowing equipment and started mowing the lawns of veterans who were going through the DVA claims process waiting to quality for yard maintenance services, and those in hospital.

Since launching, the mowing program has grown to be as much loved by the veterans whose yards are transformed as those who are giving their time and energy to the cause.

“I look forward to assisting other veterans in maintaining their gardens. It gives me a sense of fulfilment and purpose.”

PAUL SULLIVAN

Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch member



Springwood Tri Services



Kawana Waters



Goondiwindi



Bundaberg

Camaraderie the theme of the day at State Congress

RSL Queensland State Congress

Camaraderie was the theme of the 2024 RSL Queensland State Congress, which saw Delegates from 10 Districts and 177 Sub Branches around Queensland come together at the Royal International Convention Centre, Brisbane, in June.

The event was an opportunity for Delegates to hear from a range of RSL Queensland leaders, share their views on camaraderie within their Sub Branches, contribute at the Annual General Meeting (where State President Stephen Day DSC AM was re-elected), and enjoy networking opportunities.

“Delegates at the State Congress heard from Sub Branch representatives from across the Districts about all the different ways that a Sub Branch can demonstrate and provide camaraderie; the stories were great and it was a really good outcome.”

IAIN CARTY *CSM*
RSL Queensland State Secretary

Christmas hampers spread joy to veterans

RSL Queensland State Branch

Now in its fifth year, RSL Queensland’s annual Christmas hamper project delivered 700 hampers in 2024, sending Christmas cheer to veterans and their families across Queensland, the Northern Territory and Tasmania.

Each hamper was packed full of tasty treats, homewares, gifts, and a supermarket gift card. This year, hampers also included a bespoke wooden key holder bowl by woodturner and Army veteran Kerry Corney, and a tea towel designed and machine embroidered by Navy veteran and small business owner, Sacha de Wit.

“When RSL Queensland reached out to me about the project and made the order, I was so excited to get involved. It’s the biggest order I’ve ever done and while it was a little daunting at first, to know my creations were going to be given to veterans and their families was all the motivation I needed.”

KERRY CORNEY
Army veteran and woodturner



State Congress

Christmas hampers



Awards

Congratulations to RSL Queensland members who were recognised through the Australia Day honours list, King's Birthday honours list and RSL awards in 2024 for their service to the community, veterans and their families. We thank them for their continued commitment to our community.

Australia Day honours list

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division:

Dr Ian Bruce Cameron RFD, Elanora, for service to medicine, and to community music

David John Chalk, Gordonvale, for service to veterans and their families, and to the community

Councillor Janet Louise Clifford, Whitsundays, for service to women in local government, and to the community of the Whitsundays

Alexander Garlin, Coorparoo, for service to veterans and their families

Jeffrey Grant Maurice, Jacobs Well, for service to veterans, and to business

Professor Michael David Reilly, Townsville, for service to the community through a range of organisations

Alan John Sparks AM (MIL) BEM, Albany Creek, for significant service to apprenticeship and vocational training, and to veterans

Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC):

Chief Petty Officer Gillian Bryant, for outstanding achievement as a member of the Royal Australian Navy Sea Training Group Defence Cooperation Program

King's Birthday honours list

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division:

Lance Richard Haslewood, Woodford RSL Sub Branch Life Subscriber was recognised for his service to veterans and their families, and to the community.

John Harold Honeycombe, Ayr RSL Sub Branch member was recognised for his service to the community of North Queensland through a range of organisations.

Kevin James Hughes BM, Macleay Island RSL Sub Branch member was recognised for his service to the community through a range of organisations.

RSL Awards

Meritorious Service Medal

The following members were awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the highest award given to a member of the RSL:

Thomas McGee OAM – Greenbank RSL Sub Branch Deputy President

Gordon Murray – Clermont RSL Sub Branch

The following members were awarded Life Membership in recognition of their dedication to RSL Queensland:

Service Life Members

Melanie Annand – North Gold Coast RSL Sub Branch

Sharon Baker – Woodford RSL Sub Branch

Peter Bates-Brownsword – Samford RSL Sub Branch

Stephen Boyle – Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch

Ronald Bulmer – Redcliffe RSL Sub Branch

Graham Cockerell – Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch

Estelle Dan – Cairns and District Ex-Servicewomen RSL Sub Branch

Colin Diachkoff – Stephens RSL Sub Branch

Grahame Fullerton – Tramways RSL Sub Branch

Karin Grainger – Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch

Sonja Hellier – Holland Park/Mt Gravatt RSL Sub Branch

Norman Henstridge – Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch

Brian Laing – Bulimba District RSL Sub Branch

Ann Martin – Defence Service Nurses RSL Sub Branch

Robert Murry – Marian RSL Sub Branch

Carol Orr JP (Qual) – Redcliffe RSL Sub Branch

Ron Robinson – Emu Park RSL Sub Branch

Graham Ross – Stephens RSL Sub Branch

George Royes – Greenbank RSL Sub Branch

Paul Scarborough – Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch

John Thompson OAM – Stephens RSL Sub Branch

Brian Tidyman – Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch

Raymond Turner – Agnes Water/1770 RSL Sub Branch

Adrian Wallin – Springsure RSL Sub Branch

Milton West RDF ED – Ashgrove Bardon RSL Sub Branch

Jon Willson – Emu Park RSL Sub Branch

Lynette Whatley – Woodford RSL Sub Branch

Women's Auxiliary Life Members

Jeanette Cockerell – Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch

Ingrid Munday – Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch

This list of awards and honours includes all RSL Queensland members known to RSL Queensland at the time of publication of this Annual Report.

Advocating for veterans



RSL Queensland works to amplify the voices of veterans and their families to ensure they are heard by decision-makers, driving change that improves their wellbeing.

Queensland is home to more veterans and their families than any other Australian state or territory and RSL Queensland's Veteran Services department uses data, evidence and research to share their lived experiences. This helps decision-makers develop legislation, policies and reforms that benefit the veteran community.

As well as advocating for veterans and their families to all levels of government, RSL Queensland works closely with RSL Australia, RSL State Branches and other ex-service organisations (ESOs) to foster collaboration and help drive better outcomes within the sector.

In 2024, we advanced our 2023-2025 Advocacy Strategy, with the following strategic priorities underpinning the work of our dedicated advocacy function:

Empower veteran voices

We issued our first member-focused questionnaire centred around the experience of accessing healthcare in Queensland. The data collated from this survey, along with data collected through similar questionnaires in other RSL state and territory branches, will help inform our healthcare advocacy efforts on behalf of our members.

Tell the stories of veterans and their families

Significant progress was made in connecting beyond the veteran portfolio by establishing networks within health, aged care, community services and treasury departments, ensuring that the stories and experiences of veterans are heard across government.

Pictured at the ESO Forum in November 2024, back row from left, Australian Commando Association Treasurer and Buddy Up Australia Board Chair Jeff Mclean, RSL Queensland Head of Veteran Services Support Margaret Jenyns, Defence Families of Australia National Delegate for Southern Queensland Monique Suters, RSL Queensland Head of Government Relations Nina MacKenzie, Legacy Brisbane CEO Brendan Cox, front row from left, Lives Lived Well Senior Wellbeing Case Manager Ethan Campi, Gallipoli Medical Research Research Lead, Military Families Miranda Van Hooff, RSL Queensland General Manager Partnerships and Engagement Katie Maloney, RSL Queensland Head of League Development John Hardgrave, Department of Veterans' Affairs Grants and Hubs Branch Assistant Secretary Korrily Magill, and Young Veterans Sunshine Coast President and Veterans Wellbeing Foundation founder Peter Kennedy.

Position RSL Queensland as a veteran welfare expert and government partner

Our role in strengthening the ability of the State and Federal Governments to enable veterans and their families to reach their full economic and social potential saw RSL Queensland provide subject matter expertise to a range of state and federal decision makers across 2024.

This included working with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to inform and shape a new Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act, which brings three different Acts into a single ongoing Act to simplify access to compensation and rehabilitation for veterans. Our advocacy work helped inform the new legislation to ensure that veterans would not see a reduction to their benefits and, where a veteran is currently receiving benefits under an existing scheme, those benefits would continue unaffected.

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Throughout the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, RSL Queensland maintained subject matter expertise to support the RSL in making further submissions to the Commission and appearing at hearings. We were also engaged to inform recommendations, and the Final Report handed down in September identified several recommendations that we had actively advocated for.

We were pleased to see the Federal Government accept most of the recommendations and begin their implementation. Our analysis and reporting on the Final Report and government response will continue to inform RSL service delivery. Critically, RSL Queensland is advocating for prompt consultation with our sector on the implementation strategy – particularly for recommendations requiring support from the ex-service and community sector, such as the ESO Peak Body recommendation – to ensure effective action.

Throughout the process, RSL Queensland supported veterans in their engagements with the Royal Commission and shared information and updates with members and across the ESO sector. This included:

- providing updates on the Royal Commission through various RSL Queensland information channels
- supporting veterans in accessing Royal Commission processes
- responding to District and Sub Branch requests for information and advice
- collaborating with RSL Australia and the national network of state and territory branches
- engaging with the Royal Commissioners and their staff.

Queensland ESO Forums

We hosted two Queensland ESO Forums in partnership with Legacy Brisbane, facilitating collaboration between ESOs and connecting them with Australian and Queensland government representatives to hear about and inform government-led services for veterans and their families.

At the May ESO Forum, we welcomed the Queensland Assistant Minister for Justice and Veterans' Affairs and Queensland Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence Industry to discuss government and opposition policies ahead of the election. The November Forum focused on health and wellbeing, featuring presentations from Gallipoli Medical Research and DVA, along with an ESO panel on veteran priorities.

An average of 48 individual organisations were represented at each forum, with a total of 165 attendees across both forums in 2024.

Advocacy, submissions and papers

RSL Queensland consistently advocates to government on issues affecting veterans and their families. We consult with members, veterans and their families, experts and other ESOs to inform our strategic approach.

In 2024, we engaged regularly with government representatives to ensure the Queensland Government's 2024-2025 budget addressed veterans' needs. We also lobbied for veteran-informed pre-election commitments and followed up with the new Queensland Government and other parliamentarians. Additionally, we hosted the Minister for Veterans' Affairs at the VFWC in Brisbane to discuss legislative reforms and respond to veterans' questions.

RSL Queensland represents the RSL on the Australian Government's expert Working Group to establish the Institute of Veterans' Advocates, aimed at providing leadership and support to veterans' advocates, set competency and training standards for the sector, and accredit and register advocates. The Institute will establish a code of conduct for advocates and ensure members have access to the training and tools they need to deliver high quality advocacy services.

We also collaborated with the RSL national network on the following federal issues:

- Pre-budget submission asking the Australian Government to invest in the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families
- Regular subject matter expert engagement with DVA and Federal Government to inform new legislation to simplify and harmonise veterans' entitlements, resulting in the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support Bill 2024, as well as formal written submission and providing evidence in-person to the parliamentary committee
- Submission to the Federal Senate Standing Committee inquiry into the Social Services and Other Legislative Amendments (Military Invalidity Means Testing) Bill 2024
- Representing RSL and raising issues through the ESO Round Table (ESORT) and the National Consultative Forum
- Advocating directly to Ministers and DVA to review and uplift remuneration to healthcare providers who see DVA clients and improve veteran literacy across the healthcare system
- Informed a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Defence Honours and Awards
- Submission to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) regarding the Evaluation of Australian Government Pilot Programs
- Response to the exposure draft of Aged Care Bill 2023
- Submission to the DVA National Consultation Framework.

Supporting our members



RSL Queensland members	
Service members	34,680
Auxiliary members	1,662
Non-League members	3,676

Membership figures as at 31 December 2024

Throughout our Districts and Sub Branches, our members delivered more than 562,758 volunteer hours on welfare and pension activities, commemorative events, fundraising and Sub Branch support in 2024.

RSL Queensland's network of more than 230 Districts and Sub Branches provide care, commemoration and camaraderie within their local communities. In 2024, we continued to provide engaging and innovative support to Districts and Sub Branches, enabling them to focus on supporting veterans and their families.

Key support provided included:

- financial support through the Charitable Objects Fund for charitable and welfare support
- assistance to 117 Sub Branches with their Annual Information Statement submission to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)
- reimbursed \$1.1 million for commemorative merchandise sales for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day
- helped 157 Sub Branches with funding for asset purchases, upgrades and building repairs
- supported Sub Branches to submit 160 grant applications, a 20% increase on 2023
- secured \$2.1 million in grant funding, a 90% increase from the previous year, and applied for \$2.2 million in grants that remain pending
- providing group training to 451 Sub Branch volunteers across the 10 Districts on membership management, governance, IT, and the Sub Branch Knowledge and Information Portal
- listed more than 1,033 Sub Branch commemorative services and events on the RSL Queensland website, a 28% increase from the previous year
- helped more than 55 Sub Branches engage with 269 primary schools and an estimated 21,000 students through the 'Postcards of Honour' ANZAC Day program

- enabled 47 Sub Branches to engage with 177 schools and 14,205 students for Remembrance Day through 'Draw to Remember'
- developed new governance training, including ACNC online courses, an updated reference manual, and online guides to reflect Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and ACNC changes
- assisted Sub Branches with constitutional issues requiring State Branch Board approval
- engaged with ESOs and the broader community to drive recruitment for Sub Branches
- advertised casual vacancies for Sub Branch committees on the RSL Queensland jobs portal.

In 2024, we introduced initiatives to support Districts and Sub Branches, including:

- monthly membership reporting for Districts
- streamlined membership renewals processing
- communication platforms within the Membership Management System for SMS tracking and storing.

For the third consecutive year, we saw membership growth compared to the previous year. This growth highlights the ongoing value of community connection and camaraderie for veterans and their families. However, we also recognise the challenges faced in some regional and rural towns, where the number of veterans may be limited, especially in towns with smaller populations.

We continue to support Sub Branches across Queensland in establishing themselves as central hubs for delivering care, commemoration and camaraderie to local veterans and their families.

Funding our future



The Dream Home Art Union has always been more than a prize home lottery; it's a legacy of giving back to veterans and Defence members by funding the much-needed care and support provided through RSL Queensland.

Embracing a new name

In 2024, RSL Art Union underwent a re-brand, embracing a name that reflects our rich history and enduring mission: Dream Home Art Union, proudly RSL Queensland.

Our story began in the spirit of mateship, born from the need to support veterans facing immense challenges after World War I. In 1956, the first Dream Home Art Union was created as a sustainable way to fundraise for RSL Queensland to provide ongoing support to those who served.

In 2024, following extensive research, we proudly returned to that original name – a name that symbolises our commitment to both our winners and the veteran community we serve, and reflects our priority of long-term sustainability of the Art Union's stream of funding for RSL Queensland.

While our name has changed, our mission remains the same: to offer life-changing opportunities through our prize homes while continuing to support veterans and their families.

Transforming winners' lives

The Dream Home Art Union continues to offer Australia's largest prize home lottery, with 10 multi-million-dollar prize home draws in 2024. These included beautiful beach homes, apartments, and house and gold prize packages.

In 2024 alone, more than \$50 million in prizes were awarded, including our biggest Art Union prize to date – a \$13 million 'Dream Home' apartment complex in Tallebudgera Creek on the Gold Coast, which surpassed the previous record as Australia's largest charitable prize home on offer. Among the other prize homes on offer were an \$8 million Gold Coast beach house, a \$7.4 million Gold Coast apartment complex, and a \$3.5 million dream hinterland estate.

All of these prizes gave winners the chance to own their dream home, while at the same time knowing proceeds were going to a charity that supports veterans and their families. Winners like Dorothy* from the NSW South Coast, who won a \$3.5 million prize, including an apartment with stunning ocean views at Coolangatta on the Gold Coast.

"I just didn't believe it! This sort of thing doesn't happen to people like us!" Dorothy said when informed of her win. Dorothy has kept the apartment, allowing her sons and their families to holiday on the Gold Coast, while making plans with her husband to make the apartment their peaceful retreat too.

Dorothy also won \$750,000 cash as part of the prize and has set up accounts for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, which she says gives her great pleasure: "Everybody wants to do it for their children, but not everybody can."

"It breaks my heart when I hear stories about veterans sleeping on the streets, and I think, 'This shouldn't be happening! It's thanks to them that we've got the country that we have!'"

DOROTHY*

2024 Dream Home Art Union winner

**Name changed for privacy*

Changing veteran futures

As we move forward under the banner of Dream Home Art Union, proudly RSL Queensland, we do so with deep gratitude for our customers. Their participation enables us to make a lasting difference in the lives of those who have served our country.

Proceeds from every ticket sold in the Dream Home Art Union go towards a range of support services and programs delivered by RSL Queensland.

In 2024, 92% of RSL Queensland's available funding, supporting our Charitable Objects, was directed towards investment in leading health and wellbeing support, advocacy, partner programs, education, research, and social and community services for veterans and their families.

Those we help

We help veterans like Eloise, who served with the Intelligence Corps for 14 years before transitioning to the Reserves. Eloise read about Happy Paws Happy Hearts' Defence Families Program in an email from her local Sub Branch. "I thought straight away, that's for me!" she said.

Designed for veterans and current Defence members and their families, and fully funded by RSL Queensland, the program promotes connections between humans and animals, as well as between people.

"Animals can provide that connection, that social support that humans sometimes can't, especially if you're feeling isolated yourself."

ELOISE

Veteran and member of RSL Queensland

Sustaining our future

To ensure the Dream Home Art Union can continue to generate the funds required to support the growing needs of the veteran community, work was undertaken in 2024 on promising projects that aim to further enhance our stream of prizes and the value proposition for VIP members. These projects will come to fruition in 2025 and will support sustainable growth into the future as we continue to support veterans and their families.



COMMITTEES

The Board of RSL Queensland is supported through several Committees, whose role is to provide expert advice, recommendations and insights on specific areas to the Board. The Committees allow for a more detailed focus on their nominated areas and assist in developing and managing the organisation's governance structure and capabilities.

Each Committee is comprised of at least one Board member, as well as several independent external experts, with skillsets in the particular area under consideration.

The Committee structure has been established to ensure RSL Queensland can deliver its governance responsibilities in pursuit of our charitable Objects and our mission to provide care, commemoration and camaraderie to enable veterans and their families to live with dignity and respect.

Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit & Risk Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Board to ensure an understanding and appreciation of the present and future risks regarding the financial and general operations of RSL Queensland.

The Committee focused on key outcomes, including:

- developing a Policy Review Workplan, which has enhanced transparency of document reviews and supported the endorsement by the Committee of several new policies, including a Property Policy, Organisational Resilience Policy and Responsible Use of AI Standard
- endorsement of the Enterprise Risk Management Framework with the introduction of Top Risks and Risk in Focus Reports/Deep Dives.

Chairperson: Nicholas Gould



Nominations, Remuneration and Board Governance Committee

The Nominations, Remuneration and Board Governance Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Board on matters relating to shaping and maintaining the desired culture across RSL Queensland. This includes training, talent management and cultural initiatives, processes and remuneration frameworks, as well as recommendations to the Board on Board governance issues.

The Committee continued to support the Board throughout 2024 and provided advice on a range of issues, including:

- review and endorsement of remuneration and incentive frameworks, ensuring employee pay structures are fair in the market
- endorsement of the Good Governance Guide updates for approval
- increased governance of Board and Committee member checks, conflicts and election processes
- endorsement of the New Board and Committee Evaluation Guideline for approval
- endorsement of the 2025 Director Election Process endorsed alongside the enhanced Executive Officer and Skills Based Director Application and Nomination Forms.

Chairperson: Wendy Taylor



Investment Committee

The Investment Committee provides support and makes recommendations to the Board in relation to investment matters and exercises any delegated authority from the Board regarding RSL Queensland's investment portfolio.

In 2024, the Committee held extensive discussions and addressed questions to present recommendations to the Board around the Capital Management Framework, to support a considered approach to investment, assets and revenue diversification.

Other key focuses of the Committee included:

- supporting the risk assessment of 'RSL Queensland becoming financially unsustainable'
- property evaluations which led to a broader, full-scale review of property and assets and evaluation for Board consideration
- endorsement of the new Property Policy
- endorsement of the Commercial & Investments Integrated 3-year Plan and Budget.

Chairperson: Dr Adam Walk



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