

RSL QUEENSLAND
Standing Shoulder to Shoulder



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



RSL
Queensland

Living the Defence lifestyle can present families with unique opportunities and challenges. In 2020, RSL Queensland stood shoulder to shoulder with our Defence family.

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"Despite being a year of significant challenges, 2020 was also one of indispensable opportunities for RSL Queensland. Like so many others, our great organisation was forced to evaluate and adjust how we deliver our support and services.

We not only stood up to the challenges, but we came out the other side better for it."

TONY FERRIS

State President, RSL Queensland



YEAR IN REVIEW



STATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

/ **Tony Ferris**
State President, RSL Queensland

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I reflect on the year 2020 with optimism. Despite being a year of significant challenges, it was also one of indispensable opportunities for RSL Queensland. Like so many others, our great organisation was forced to evaluate and adjust how we deliver our support and services. We not only stood up to the challenges, but we came out the other side better for it.

I'm incredibly proud of our team, members and volunteers. This year has again seen a lot of changes, and not just those forced by a global health pandemic. Everyone has adapted well to the changes to enable us to continue serving the veteran community.

Operating During a Pandemic

Operating through a pandemic is a very different way of operating. The challenges presented by the changing restrictions around the pandemic provided opportunities for RSL Queensland to have more vision, find ways to adjust and improve our service delivery, and find different ways to connect.

We all had to adapt to technology and to doing things in a different way, from delivering our support to veterans and their families, to coming together for meetings and social events.

The changes to operational requirements enabled us to identify that we need to be more hands-on with our Sub Branches. We recognise the need for increased capability for our Sub Branches to be engaged and operate around challenges such as social isolation and seclusion in remote locations. Once the limitations in our capabilities were evident, we moved swiftly to put technology and support in place to better enable this connection.

Virtual Commemorations

Our key commemorations were also impacted by pandemic regulations. While we couldn't hold the traditional, in-person events that are central to remembering those that have given for us, the virtual commemorations that were born of necessity have created an enduring legacy of their own.

ANZAC Day's Light Up the Dawn commemoration was the most significant because it invited the wider community – every Australian – to participate in an alternative event that had such impact it will be carried on well beyond the pandemic years. People who would normally attend a Dawn Service or March will join with those who don't, or can't, to stand at the end of their driveways or on their verandas at 6am on every ANZAC Day to come, to not only complement the traditional commemorations, but to be part of them.

Commemorations traditionally held by RSL Queensland for Remembrance Day and Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony, and services held by Sub Branches for Vietnam Veterans' Day and other significant days of commemoration were also adapted in line with the regulations at the time.

But we still stood together – if not physically – to honour, reflect and pay our respects.

We need to continue to recognise these days of commemoration, so that people, families and communities don't forget what has been given for us; families have given their sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts, who have all, at some stage in service, defended this country. It's our duty to continue honouring that legacy.



STATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

/ **Tony Ferris**
State President, RSL Queensland

State President's Report continued

Hybrid-Style AGM

After postponement due to pandemic-related lockdowns in Queensland, our 2020 Annual General Meeting was eventually held in November. As it was the year for adaptation and change, our hybrid-style AGM saw delegates from South East Queensland districts meeting in person in Brisbane, and delegates from five districts around the state tuning into the live stream.

The result of a tremendous amount of organisation and logistical challenges from the RSL Queensland team resulted in live interaction, live voting, and the ability to communicate through technology across each of the satellite locations.

It was an effective and well-received change, and one that we can now depend on should we need to in the future.

Diversity on Board Executive

I would like to acknowledge Wendy Taylor's election to the position of State Deputy President at the 2020 AGM. Significantly for our organisation, Wendy is the first female representative to be elected to the executive of RSL Queensland's Board.

This is a reflection not only of Wendy's valued contribution to our organisation, but also that times are changing. There is a realisation from the membership that it's about diversity, change and a new organisation, while still remembering our grassroots. I'm proud to be involved with this organisation during this time of change.

The Enduring ANZAC Spirit

In all, 2020 proved to be a very good learning curve for us. It highlighted where improvement was needed, that we may not have otherwise seen or acted upon as urgently. It forced us to embrace change and adapt to our 'new normal'. It also showed the resilience of our organisation right across the state and throughout our Sub Branch network.

The qualities evoked by the ANZAC spirit – ingenuity, humour, endurance, courage and mateship – have been more important than ever this year. I've seen examples of these qualities in spades, and I'm reassured that our organisation will persevere and prosper.



CEO'S REPORT

/ **Robert Skoda**
Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

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We began 2020 with such enthusiasm at RSL Queensland. Off the back of the excellent work undertaken the previous year to develop our Strategic Plan, we had a bright and ambitious year ahead planned. And I'm so proud to be able to say that there was a lot of positivity throughout the year, despite the challenges we faced due to COVID-19.

There's been a clear indication of resilience across the entire business, which is remarkable given any number of market and economic factors that have impacted many businesses this year.

From when we first started to feel the impacts of the pandemic in March, right through to the end of the year, RSL Queensland as an organisation – and our people – have been incredibly resilient. Not only have we continued to operate, but we've also shown growth and incredible strength as we continue to progress towards the goals of our Strategic Plan.

The first horizon of the Strategic Plan runs from January 2020 to June 2021, and in the first 12 months of the horizon we have achieved so much. This time period was about securing the future of the membership in Queensland by reimagining the membership model and reinvigorating the brands.

In line with our strategic goals of relevance, influence and sustainability, and with our new purpose in mind –

"A bright future and enduring legacy for all veterans and their families"

we focused our efforts in 2020 on understanding who our customer is and ensuring we were structured in the right way to enable us to extend our support to our membership base and beyond.

We established a whole new Membership and Network portfolio to do just that. The Membership and Network team have done incredible work to strengthen relationships between State Branch and Sub Branches, and restore some of the trust that we know had been lost over time.

Our organisation has never had the level of this resourcing before. Our priority is a deeper understanding of how we can better support Sub Branches and Districts, and provide tangible and tactical solutions to some of their challenges.

We've seen some great results of this work play out in 2020, and it will only get better into the coming years.

We also focused on how we can enhance our embedded service delivery programs by considering the services we provide and making sure that they're effective and are reaching as far and wide as they need to. We changed the title of Veteran Services to Service Delivery to make sure that it is understood that we are an organisation for former and current serving Defence families and we are not exclusive.

We're focused on ensuring that the services we deliver are impactful, that veterans know what support is available to them and their families, and making access to that support as easy as possible – all with the objective of increasing the quality of life metric of veterans to at least match that of the general Australian population.

But it takes a strong workforce to underpin this support. To ensure we can deliver on our strategic goals, a key stage in our planning this year was to look critically at our organisation and establish where we needed to bolster our human resources. We need people who are passionate; people who can connect with our purpose and align with our values and vision.



CEO'S REPORT

Robert Skoda
Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

We continued to hire and welcome new staff in key roles across the organisation throughout the year. I'm incredibly proud of how our organisation's virtual recruitment and onboarding processes instilled candidates with confidence about the culture, security and warmth of RSL Queensland as an employer.

All our employees gained clarity through our Strategic Plan, which anchored them in a shared purpose and direction. When our staff understand why we're here and can see how what we do every day connects to our purpose, they engage and unite with us to improve the quality of life for all veterans and their families.

"This led to record-high levels of employee engagement and exceptionally high staff retention levels, even as we moved to establish our workforce remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions early in the year."

Our ability to support our teams in working predominantly from home has been extraordinary in terms of being able to deploy technology into people's homes and maintain continuity in the operation. As the pandemic continued, so too did our flexible work arrangements, with positive benefits and feedback from our people.

All the incredible work undertaken this year was made possible by our really robust business in the commercial arm of RSL Queensland.

Our Art Union had its largest ever revenue day occur right in the middle of the pandemic. This result, and the ongoing achievement of Art Union goals, reflect the passion, teamwork and 'can do' attitude of the team.

In fact, this Annual Report is a testament to the dedication, achievements and progress of our organisation as a whole this year.

The work undertaken has laid a solid foundation for the important work that will be carried out and projects delivered in 2021 and beyond.

On behalf of RSL Queensland, I would like to recognise the efforts of Melanie Wilson, who held the position of Chief Executive Officer in 2020. Melanie was a driving force behind our Strategic Plan and steered the organisation toward the achievements we have reached.

Thank you also to the wider RSL Queensland community for your support this year as we've faced our challenges and progressed our Strategic Plan.



STATE DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

/ **Wendy Taylor**
State Deputy President, RSL Queensland

I was appointed to the position of State Deputy President at the 2020 Annual General Meeting in November. In my submission for nomination to the executive role, I wrote that I believed I was ready to take on this position.

What I wasn't as sure about, was whether the members of RSL Queensland were ready for their first female Executive Board member. I'm delighted to report that my fears were completely unfounded.

Since stepping into the role, I have travelled around the state – restrictions permitting – and been greeted by members with a great deal of care and friendship. I can honestly say that our members have no issues with gender and their support has been overwhelming. It really is a pleasure to represent the membership and work towards providing better services for them.

RSL Queensland continues to move forwards in the veteran space, and it is a privilege to be a part of the journey. I have watched and participated in planning for the future of the organisation and wholeheartedly support the Executive Leadership Team and wider staff in achieving the goals that have been set to take RSL Queensland into the future. It is a privilege to not only see, but to be part of bringing the Strategic Plan to life.

I continue to advocate for veterans and their families whenever the opportunity arises. I have had the honour of participating in numerous memorial and commemorative services as a representative of RSL Queensland and on behalf

of our veterans. I am also honoured to be able to continue liaising with government and legislative bodies, as I did in my previous position of District President.

I look forward to my tenure as State Deputy President with passion and enthusiasm as we continue to provide for our veterans and their families.



STATE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

/ **Bill Whitburn OAM**
State Vice President, RSL Queensland

In a year that was hindered by COVID-19, 2020 was again about listening and engaging with Districts and Sub Branches, albeit in a different way. Interactions between our members, staff and the Board became more virtual as we as an organisation learnt new ways of conducting our business for our members.

I attended several AGMs and delegate meetings across the state – both in person when permitting and via video – and had many opportunities to engage with our members on issues that are confronting us as an organisation. Our Constitution has come up in many conversations and our membership believe we need change to remain relevant to our younger veterans.

The skills required to be a District President or a Director on the Board have also been discussed and it is apparent that the right people need to be elected to these positions. Our organisation is more complex than ever before, having to deal with governance, legal matters, risk management, workplace health and safety, and other areas under relevant legislation. RSL Queensland has adopted a Good Governance Guide that incorporates a range of Board policies and procedures, enabling us to be more transparent and make sound decisions at a Board level.

Our staff encountered many impediments this year and they did an outstanding job in delivering in a more complex environment. Working remotely because of lockdowns had its difficulties, but our

staff rose to every challenge thrown at them and never missed a beat. They are to be congratulated on how well they embraced our new way of engaging with our veterans and their families.

As this Annual Report demonstrates, there were many key moments in 2020 as we laid the foundations for greater things to come in 2021. Our members and staff should be proud of their commitment and effort this year as they aided our veterans and their families in what was a year of many changes and challenges.



**"Our Strategic Plan
provides a clear blueprint
to enable us to deliver on
our purpose and vision."**

ROBERT SKODA

Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

RSL QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC PLAN



STRATEGIC PLAN

/ Our Purpose

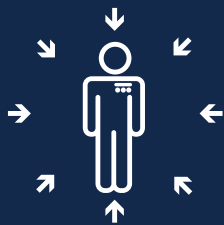
A bright future and enduring legacy for all veterans and their families.

/ Our Vision

Be the most valued and trusted partner to enrich the Australian Defence family's quality of life.

RSL Queensland developed our Strategic Plan in 2019 as our blueprint for the coming years, as we chart a strategic course to become more relevant to veterans and establish ourselves as the leading voice in our sector.

We're working towards delivering outcomes that positively impact quality of life for veterans and their families, and to transform our membership, significantly improving the way we support and work with our Sub Branches.



Relevance

Transform the lives of veterans so that their average quality of life score matches that of the general population.



Influence

Become the leading voice representing the interests of the Australian Defence community and the ESO community as a whole.



Sustainability

Continue to grow a sustainable business that enables both relevance and influence to flourish.

Pillars and Enablers



01

Impactful Veteran Outcomes



02

Reimagined Membership



03

Veteran Peak Body



04

Contemporary And Scalable Service Delivery



05

Reinvigorated Brands



06

Grow Lottery, Diversify Revenue, Invest Wisely

Pillars Are Outcomes
we will achieve in the next
5 years



Enablers Are Foundations
required to deliver our pillars

2020 Progress

2020 was our first full year of operating under our new Strategic Plan. This year we completed three significant organisational design changes to ensure we are structured in the best way to support the delivery of the strategic goals:

- a Strategy Team was formed to drive forward the work under the strategy
- an Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) was established to centralise project management functions
- the Membership & Network Team was formed to actively demonstrate our commitment to supporting our Sub Branches.

Despite the challenges we faced due to the pandemic throughout the year, we reached milestones and achieved results that have laid a strong foundation for our strategic work.

In 2020, we achieved the following in line with our strategic goals:

RELEVANCE

- Reimagined a new membership structure, with the new Membership Model being put to a vote at the 2021 AGM.
- Developed and executed our brand strategy, with work in the first phase completed.
- Evaluated our service design and expansion in line with quality of life outcomes, including supporting the implementation of the Mates4Mates Darwin Veteran Wellbeing Centre, through a \$5.4 million Department of Veterans’ Affairs grant.
- Developed and tested prototype service hubs, with initial site identification work underway for the Brisbane North Services Hub.
- Developed a data strategy to support the delivery of contemporary and scalable services, including enhancements to the General Intake & Assessment (GIA).

INFLUENCE

- Began to reset relationships and provide foundational support to Sub Branches. We met with 30 Sub Branches in 2020 (and more in 2021) through our Sub Branch Discovery Project to gain insights and identify opportunities, helping us to build trust back into the Sub Branch network through tactical network opportunities.
- Further developed relationships with Government, Defence, other state RSL bodies and other ESOs, and gained national recognition by winning the Prime Minister’s Veterans’ Employment Awards for Excellence in Supporting Spouse Employment.

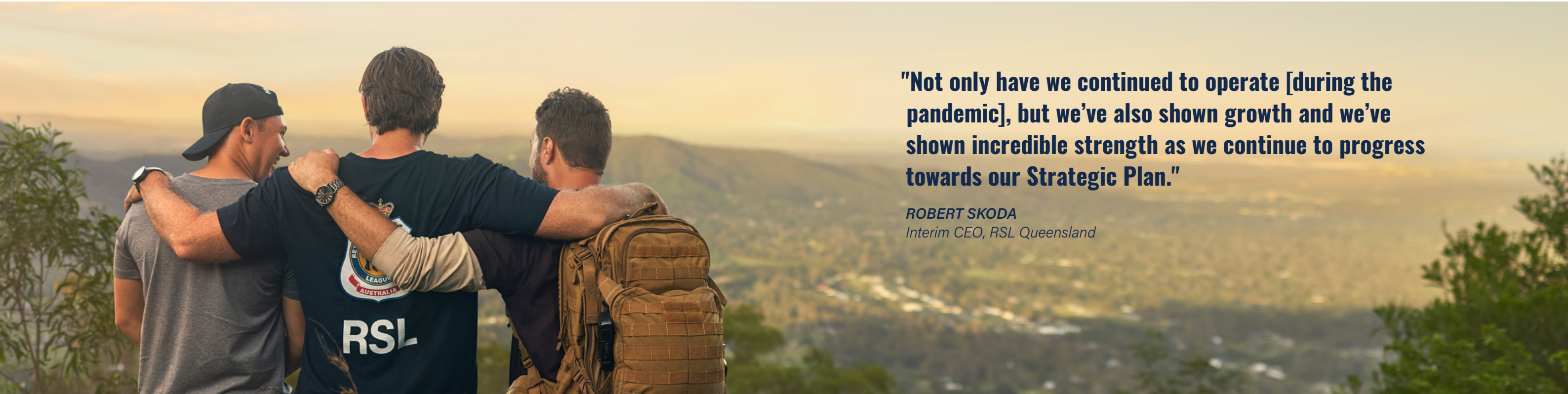
SUSTAINABILITY

- Grew our Art Union by executing super-size games, operationalising marketing automation, scaling new channels, and developing a new game.
- Developed and approved the Investment Strategy and formed an Investment Committee.

Looking Ahead

In 2021, we will focus our efforts on:

- growing our membership by completing our Sub Branch Discovery Project, rolling out our new Membership Model and Member Value Proposition (if approved by members), and implementing our Sub Branch support suite of tools.
- expanding our service delivery to support the Australian veteran community by completing our Veteran Services Strategy, opening the Brisbane North Services Hub and rolling out new services.
- launching our new Art Union lottery product, and growing our VIP customer base to further enhance the sustainability of our organisation.
- establishing a government relations function to strengthen our influence and work towards becoming the veteran peak body.
- continuing our cultural transformation, so that we maintain a strong and committed workforce.



"Not only have we continued to operate [during the pandemic], but we've also shown growth and we've shown incredible strength as we continue to progress towards our Strategic Plan."

ROBERT SKODA
Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

“The qualities evoked by the ANZAC spirit – ingenuity, humour, endurance, courage and mateship – have been more important than ever this year.”

TONY FERRIS

State President, RSL Queensland



OUR IMPACT

OUR IMPACT: 2020 AT A GLANCE

/ Shoulder to Shoulder with our Defence Family, in 2020.

Between January and December 2020, RSL Queensland provided a broad range of programs and services to support current and former ADF members and their families.



34,190

members across
Queensland



5,334

claims submitted



14,858

calls handled



\$783k

provided in
crisis funding



9

wellness programs



155

jobs found for
veterans and their
partners



79

scholarships
offered worth
\$698k



\$1.5m

invested in
veteran research



\$5.2m

committed to physical
and psychological
rehabilitation through
Mates4Mates



\$627k

for grassroots
support by Sub
Branches and
Districts



108

individuals and
families helped into
safe, permanent
housing



879

nights spent in
RSL short-term
accommodation



\$3m

spent on RSL
Queensland Districts to
support Sub Branches



20%

increase of new Art
Union VIP monthly
customers

Total YOY Net Profit



Total Revenue Growth YOY



Total YOY Net Assets



Total Net Profit % YOY



RSL Queensland's
Financial Highlights

RSL Queensland has experienced favourable financial growth, despite the challenges of the year. Our significant year-on-year net profit growth from recent considered investment in the Art Union and related technology puts us in an excellent position to continue a growing delivery of services and programs to support our Defence community.

"As the largest ex-service organisation in Queensland, we invest in research, targeted programs and proven initiatives to make the transition from Defence to civilian life as easy, smooth and accessible as possible."

ROBERT SKODA

Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

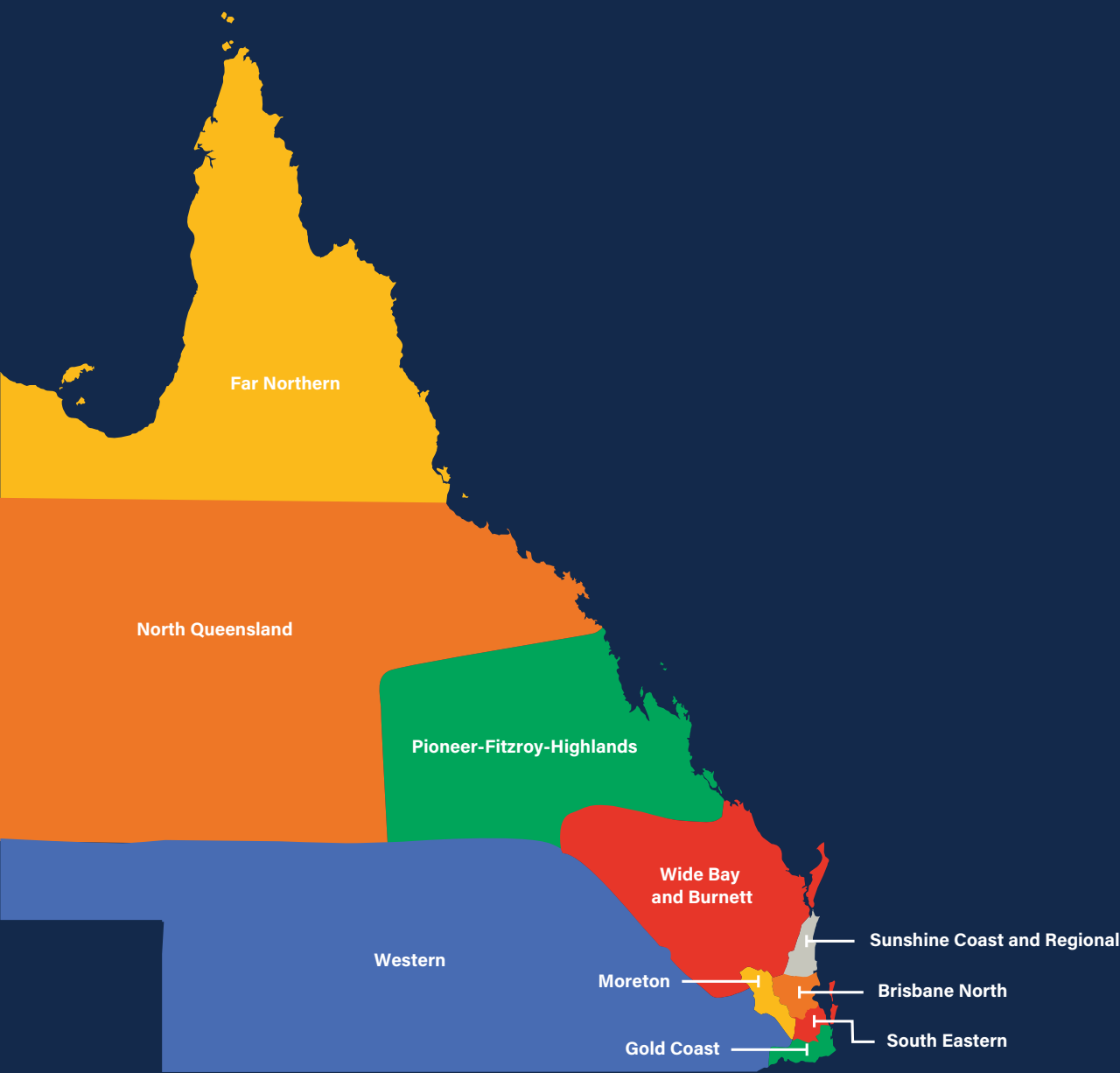


ABOUT US

/ Districts and Sub Branches

RSL Queensland has been standing shoulder to shoulder with Queensland’s Defence family for more than a century.

With 10 Districts and 235 Sub Branches, we provide practical support and assistance to current and former ADF members in every corner of the state.



Brisbane North District

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

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
- Mt Molloy
- Ravenshoe
- Torres Strait Chapter
- Tully
- Weipa
- Yarrabah

Gold Coast District

- Beenleigh & District
- Burleigh Heads
- Canungra
- Currumbin/Palm Beach
- Mudgeeraba-Robina
- North Gold Coast
- Runaway Bay
- Southport
- Surfers Paradise

- Tamborine Mountain
- Tweed Heads & 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

Pioneer-Fitzroy-Highlands District

- Blackwater/Bluff
- Capricornia & Rockhampton Region
- Carmila
- Clermont
- Emerald
- Emu Park
- Farleigh & Northern Beaches
- Finch Hatton
- Gemfields
- Gracemere & District
- Kuttabul

- Mackay
- Marian
- Mirani
- Moranbah
- Nebo
- Sarina
- Seaforth
- Springsure
- St Helens
- Walkerston-Pleystowe
- Yeppoon

South Eastern District

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

Sunshine Coast and Regional District

- Caloundra
- Coolum-Peregian
- Cooroy-Pomona
- Kawana Waters
- Maleny
- Mapleton
- Maroochydore
- Mudjimba

- Nambour
- Palmwoods & District
- Tewantin/Noosa
- Woodford
- Yandina/Eumundi

Western District

- Allora
- Bell
- Charleville
- Chinchilla
- Clifton
- Crows Nest
- Cunnamulla
- Dalby
- Djuan & 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
- Biloela
- Boyne-Tannum
- Bundaberg
- Burrum District
- Calliope
- Eidsvold Chapter
- Gayndah
- Gin Gin
- Gladstone
- Goomeri Chapter
- Gympie

- Hervey Bay
- Isis
- Kilkivan Chapter
- Kingaroy/Memerambi
- Mary Valley
- Maryborough
- Monto
- Mount Morgan
- Moura
- Mt Larcom Chapter
- Mt Perry
- Mundubbera
- Murgon
- Nanango
- Orchid Beach/Fraser Island
- Proston
- Rainbow Beach
- Rosedale Chapter
- Theodore Chapter
- Tiaro
- Tin Can Bay
- Toogoom and District
- Wondai
- Woodgate Beach
- Wowan

ABOUT US



/ **Across our Districts and Sub Branches, our members clocked up over 284,600 volunteer hours on welfare and pension activities, commemorative events, fundraising and Sub Branch support.**

Who We Are

Since we began, RSL Queensland has stood shoulder to shoulder with Queensland's Defence family. We are veterans helping veterans, united in our desire to champion the rights of all veterans.

We are the largest ex-service organisation in Queensland, providing practical support, assistance, advice and camaraderie to current and former Australian Defence Force members and their families across the state.

Through our network of 10 Districts and 235 Sub Branches, we are consistently guided by the pursuit of our Objects and united in our purpose to ensure a bright future and enduring legacy for all veterans and their families.

RSL Queensland Objects

1. Provide for 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. Perpetuate 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.
3. Maintain 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.
4. Preserve 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.
5. Encourage loyalty to Australia and secure patriotic service in the interests of Australia.
6. Protect the good name and preserve the interests and standing of members of the Australian Defence Force.
7. Encourage 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
8. Provide welfare to the sick, helpless, wounded, vulnerable, aged, destitute and needy.

"The financial support is incredible, but also the support of having someone at the end of the line to talk to about where I'm at, where I'm going, do I need any other support as far as other people to talk to, and other services to be linked in with. That's the kind of support I'm getting."

ADAM MITCHELL

Former Royal Australian Air Force dog handler

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS



As RSL Queensland continues to evolve our approach to services, and the services we deliver, we will remain focused on the overarching goal of improving the quality of life of veterans and their families.

This is because veteran wellbeing is at the core of everything we do.

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

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RSL Queensland aims to empower the Defence community by enabling veterans and their families to access research-informed services and tailored programs. We invest in health research, targeted programs and proven initiatives to deliver practical support to the Defence community for their entire Defence journey and civilian life.

As part of our commitment to service excellence, we commissioned the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) to complete a comprehensive review of the most relevant government reports and veteran health research to identify and prioritise the key needs of the veteran community.

GMRF's report highlighted the needs of the veteran community against the domains of wellbeing, as identified by the Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing in Australia's Health 2018 (AIHW 2018).

These domains are:

- social support
- housing
- recognition and respect
- education and skills
- employment
- income and finance
- health
- justice and safety.

GMRF also provided recommendations to address needs, considering models of care adopted in the health and community service industry.

The report also supported a new services approach that was in creation, the General Intake and Assessment. The new approach enables our team to connect veterans and their families to multiple relevant services at the right time, based on their service preferences. The approach is the first step towards building a holistic model of care, with a tailored service plan that can service both proactive wellbeing goals and practitioner-led service interventions.



BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

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By changing our service delivery model, we have been able to increase utilisation of our existing services and lead the sector in adopting impact measurements. The positive results of this change will be evident in client outcomes in the coming years.

As RSL Queensland continues to evolve our approach to services, and the services we deliver, we will remain focused on the overarching goal of improving the quality of life of veterans and their families.

This is because **veteran wellbeing is at the core of everything we do.**

DVA Claims

Understanding the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) claims process can be confusing, time-consuming and stressful. RSL Queensland's qualified and dedicated Compensation Advocates provide guidance, advice and support throughout the DVA claims process.

Our Advocates ensure the most beneficial wellbeing outcomes are achieved by establishing the details of a claim, doing much of the behind-the-scenes legislation navigation, and helping complete and lodge paperwork.

While a claim is being determined, our Advocates will keep in touch with the veteran, providing updates and reassurance.

If a claim is unsuccessful, our team assists with an appeal to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) or Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

Our advocacy assistance is free and is available online, in person and over the phone for current and ex-serving Defence members.

In 2020, RSL Queensland fundamentally altered the service approach to this cornerstone offering by providing a digital claims service.

This resulted in an increase of 22 per cent on the previous year, with a huge 5,334 claims lodged on behalf of veterans.



Employment Program

The RSL Queensland Employment Program helps ex-Defence members and the partners of current or former Defence members find meaningful employment. Our highly trained team works with clients to determine how to best support their search for employment.

Securing meaningful employment is about more than just finding a job. It's about aiding the transition to civilian life or helping to settle in after relocation. The right role can provide meaningful engagement and direction, and result in a fulfilling career.

The program is designed to support veterans like Tristan King, who spent seven years in the Army at 8th/9th Battalion in Brisbane. Upon discharge, Tristan knew he wanted to do a trade, but felt overwhelmed trying to find a job in the civilian sector. With the help and support of RSL Queensland's Employment Program team, Tristan secured an apprenticeship with Energy Queensland.

"The RSL Queensland Employment Program's a massive help for anyone leaving Defence. I probably wouldn't be here without it. It's helped me achieve a secure job that I enjoy."

TRISTAN KING
Army veteran

In 2020, RSL Queensland found 155 jobs for veterans and their partners through the Employment Program – an increase of 17 per cent on the previous year. 10 veterans from our program were offered positions in the Ergon Energy Network and Energex Apprenticeship Program. And the program won the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards for Excellence in Supporting Spouse Employment.

Homelessness Program

Safe, permanent housing is one of our most basic needs but sadly, some ex-Defence members are lacking just that. RSL Queensland's Homelessness Program provides veterans with immediate emergency accommodation in partnership with The Salvation Army.

Once the veteran is safe, we take a holistic approach to address the causes behind the veteran's homelessness, while at the same time working to find them suitable permanent rental accommodation.

"By addressing the root causes behind veteran homelessness at the same time as we work to find them suitable accommodation, we aim to break the cycle that has led to them becoming homeless in the first place."

ROB SKODA
Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

Our initiative not only provides housing, but also through our specialist Wellbeing Advocates provides the surrounding support services to address a living condition that is generally an outcome of complex underlying factors.

In 2020, 108 individuals and families were helped into safe, permanent housing through our program, a 44 per cent increase on the previous year.

Scholarships

Higher education and training opens the door to opportunities. For those in the Defence family, this can mean employability, purpose and security. RSL Queensland provides scholarships to ex-Defence members, partners and children, to enable them to undertake tertiary study and vocational training.

For former Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) dog handler Adam Mitchell, an RSL Queensland Scholarship was just the boost that he needed.

After serving for almost 12 years, Adam retired from the RAAF in September 2019. Adam was awarded an RSL Queensland Ex-Defence Scholarship, which he has put toward a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

"In the Defence Force, we do have a very clear sense of purpose. We have missions and directives that we must follow."

Transitioning into the civilian life, that goes away very quickly, but I've found that through the study, I've been able to find that purpose again, that drive to better myself. The RSL Queensland Scholarship came at a time when I was having a bit of a rough period and it was the boost to my morale that I really needed."

ADAM MITCHELL
Former RAAF dog handler

In 2020, RSL Queensland offered 79 scholarships – worth \$698,000 – to veterans like Adam, partners and children. We made a strategic decision to reinvest budgeted scholarship funding not allocated due to shorter term studies taken by recipients. This reinvestment strategy has increased our scholarships program this year – ***a 32 per cent increase in the number of scholarships awarded, and a 40 per cent increase in the total value*** – allowing us to maximise the scholarship allocation and support more education and training opportunities for the veteran community.

Tristan's testimonial



2020 RSL Queensland Scholarship Ceremony highlights



Adam's testimonial



It was the boost to my morale that I really needed.



/ I find that **helping veterans on the trek also helps me in my recovery.**

Wellness Programs

RSL Queensland offers a wide range of initiatives to improve the wellbeing of current and former Defence members and their families, with complementary wellness programs delivered through other service organisations.

We've led the sector in making complementary initiatives accessible to the veteran community through partnerships with vetted organisations since 2015. These initiatives span respite programs for veterans and families through to research-based wellbeing initiatives aimed at assisting veterans to overcome personal challenges.

Under the banner of our Wellness Programs, we support [Diggers Rest](#), [Trojan's Trek](#), [PTSD Resurrected](#), [Veterans Care Association](#), [4 Aussie Heroes](#), [RSL RAEMUS Rover Off-Road Racing](#), [Legacy Brisbane Family Weekends](#), [Operation PTSD Support](#) and Human Performance initiatives through Department of Defence.

"I find that helping veterans on the trek also helps me in my recovery. I've got sort of a pretty long way to go in my own recovery. But Trojan's Trek has given me that boost that I needed to be able to get my life back on the track that I wanted it to go."

BRETT VAN DER HEIDE

Army veteran and Trojan's Trek participant and mentor

RSL Queensland offered nine wellness programs to veterans in 2020. We are also working with GMRF to evaluate these initiatives, determine program and client outcomes, and understand if a therapeutic benefit can be clinically evidenced. In 2020, Trojan's Trek was one of the first programs to undergo this process.

Accommodation

RSL Queensland responds to the need for short-term accommodation and affordable long-term housing for veterans and their partners.

Angus House provides short-term accommodation in a home away from home in Brisbane for veterans or their partners who need to travel to South East Queensland for medical appointments, treatment or convalescence before returning home.

In 2020, veterans and their partners spent 879 nights in RSL Queensland's short-term accommodation.

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

Brett's testimonial





/ **In true Aussie spirit,
the RSL was established in
1916 to help our mates out.**

ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS

In true Aussie spirit, the RSL was established in 1916 to help our mates out. At a time when there was no formal government welfare support for veterans and their families, members of the RSL stood up and became the voice they needed.

104 years later, a bright future and enduring legacy for all veterans and their families is still our core purpose at RSL Queensland. We have a goal of becoming the leading voice of influence representing the interests of the Australian Defence community and the ex-service organisation (ESO) community.

And we're on our way to achieving this goal.

We're working towards a structure that will enhance our ability to advocate for and influence positive veteran outcomes. For several years, we've invested in establishing partner programs, engaging with Defence through on-base support programs, funding scholarships for ex-Defence personnel, partners and their children, and establishing an employment program to ease the transition from Defence to civilian employment.

We established Mates4Mates in 2013 as a sister organisation to engage more deeply with those transitioning out of Defence – a time when veterans most need our support.

We've also invested in rigorous research to help us better understand the needs of Queensland's veteran community, and ensure our programs and services adequately and effectively meet those needs. Since 2013 we have committed over \$14 million – \$1.5 million of which has been contributed in 2020 – to clinical research and communication of the study findings from research conducted by the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF).

This ongoing commitment to veteran health research includes the Veteran Mental Health Initiative, which has investigated the underlying psychological and cultural factors that are either supporting or impeding a veteran's adjustment to life as a civilian. In 2020, GMRF received academic publication of the Military to Civilian Adjustment and Reintegration Measure (M-CARM), the tool used to identify the factors associated with transitioning. This tool is a direct outcome of the study commissioned by RSL Queensland.

This research complements the largest ever market study of Queensland's Defence family that we commissioned in 2017, which surveyed more than 10,000 people across the state. Our ongoing commitment to market research ensures we continue to monitor the Defence family's awareness of our services.

"If we understand, we can advocate. We can make real improvements to the system, but we can't do it alone; we need the research, and we need collaboration and government engagement."

ROBERT SKODA

Interim CEO, RSL Queensland

We're building a culture of collaboration, working and consulting with other ESOs.

ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS

In 2020, our Veteran Services Support team used our growing position of authority on issues related to veterans to influence state and federal government and other veteran body decisions. In total, 14 submissions were made to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT), the Queensland Government, the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Taxation Office, the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide, RSL National and several Senate inquiries. Where appropriate, we collaborated with other ESOs to reinforce our position in our submissions.

RSL Queensland State President Tony Ferris also spoke publicly on several occasions to voice his concern, including speaking against the damaging speculation that pre-empted the legal process following the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force's (IGADF) Afghanistan Inquiry report:

"As Australians, we owe our Defence personnel the right to due legal process, including the presumption of innocence that lies at the heart of our legal system.

If illegal or unethical activities are found to have occurred, then those individuals responsible must be held accountable.

But we are very concerned about the effect ongoing speculation may have on the mental health of all veterans, not just those who are the subject of these allegations."

He also encouraged the Department of Defence to deliberate more fully on the service contributions of the thousands of Defence personnel who participated in the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan over many years, before making any decision to potentially remove the unit's Meritorious Unit Citation:

"Every day, RSL supports those who deployed to Afghanistan as part of the Special Operations Task Group, and their families.

It would be unfair if the alleged illegal actions of a small number of individuals diminished the contributions and reputations of the many who have served with honour, regularly putting their lives on the line for their country.

The overwhelming majority of our nation's veterans deserve our gratitude and respect – not to have their contributions diminished or be made to feel 'guilty by association'."

To enable us to continue to advise and lobby governing bodies, we need to continue to grow our understanding of contemporary veterans and their needs through research and engagement. As we increase our knowledge base, we'll continue to become the subject matter experts for veteran experiences and needs, which then strengthens our ability to advocate for veterans and influence change where it's needed.

We're also building a culture of collaboration, working and consulting with other ESOs to influence veteran support for the wellbeing of all veterans and their families. We're engaging the broader veteran support ecosystem to bring alignment across the sector.

We've been doing this to a degree for some time, but we have never been resourced to the level we need to be. Until now.



/ We have an incredible opportunity to play a more powerful role in advocating for veterans nationally.

ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS

In 2020, as work began on implementing our Strategic Plan, we recognised capability gaps within the organisation that need to be filled to ensure we can reach our strategic goals. For us to achieve our strategic goal of Influence – to stand up as a peak body and be the voice of the veteran – we need a team dedicated to it.

In 2021, a new portfolio will be created – Veteran Affairs and Policy – to sit beside the existing Service Delivery portfolio. The departments will work together for the betterment of the Defence family's quality of life.

"We'll sit side-by-side, but while Service Delivery might identify a particular need to be addressed, Veteran Affairs and Policy will find a program with appropriate outcomes and build their capability or build a case around it and take a submission to government.

A key differentiator with this portfolio is, it's not just about RSL Queensland growing – it's about considering how we can collaborate with the ecosystem and shape it to drive the best outcomes for our Defence family." says Robert.

With our long history, proven record of success, established credibility, and ever-growing network of services for veterans, we have an incredible opportunity to collaborate more closely with ESOs and government, and play a more powerful role in advocating for veterans and their families nationally.

Just as the RSL's founders were for their mates, we'll be the voice that our current and future veterans need us to be.

In 2020, representatives from RSL Queensland were advisors to:

- 1 The Queensland Consultative Forum, with meetings chaired by the Department of Veterans' Affairs Deputy Commissioner
- 2 The RSL National Veterans Advisory Committee (NVAC), which discusses veteran and veteran family related issues of national interest
- 3 The Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) Regional Forum, which discusses training issues for advocates in Region 1 (Queensland and Northern Territory)
- 4 The Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) as the national ESO representative providing feedback regarding Statements of Principle
- 5 The Queensland State Government, which is currently undergoing changes in its structure and introducing a Queensland Veterans' Council.

"It is in these moments that we define who we are as an organisation, and who we exist to serve."

TONY FERRIS

State President, RSL Queensland

CREATING ENDURING LEGACIES

Continued on next page ►

RSL Queensland endeavours to preserve the memory of those who served, suffered and died for Australia. In their honour, we encourage all Australians to remember their sacrifice through the annual commemoration days of ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, and other significant anniversaries.

The Australian public's determination to honour our veterans in this year of great challenge and change was inspiring.

Despite the restrictions necessary to minimise the exposure and spread of COVID-19 – or perhaps because of them – new legacies were created around these commemorations that were fitting for 2020 and will endure for years to come.

Light Up the Dawn

As the sun rose on 25 April 1915, Australian and New Zealand soldiers rowed towards the shores of Gallipoli and into history.

The landing at Gallipoli claimed the lives of hundreds of Australian and New Zealand soldiers, and wounded thousands more. It also shaped our nation, defining our intrinsic values of mateship, sacrifice and endurance.

In 2020, not even a global pandemic could contain the ANZAC spirit. With government restrictions on mass gatherings, RSL Queensland embraced an idea that began in the community, encouraging Australians to hold a personal vigil on their driveway or veranda.

On ANZAC Day, hundreds of thousands of households across the nation rose at dawn to take part in our Light Up the Dawn initiative. The country stood united – in uniforms or pyjamas, wearing medals, poppies and sprigs of rosemary – to let Australia's veterans know that their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

"I don't think any of us anticipated the outpouring of emotion that was expressed by the Australian community as they supported Light Up the Dawn."

TONY FERRIS

State President, RSL Queensland

Many spoke about what a moving experience it was to look down their street and see their neighbours lining the road in a demonstration of solidarity, respect and gratitude.

RSL Queensland's Light Up the Dawn campaign was recognised at the 2020 Australian Marketing Institute's Award for Marketing Excellence, winning the categories of Integrated Marketing Communications Program and Not for Profit Marketing.

VP75

On 15 August 1945, Victory in the Pacific was announced. The Japanese had surrendered and after six years, the Second World War was finally over.

Thousands of people flooded Brisbane's streets to celebrate, ecstatic that the war was over. The government called a public holiday and troops marched victoriously down Queen Street. But beneath the jubilation ran a thread of sadness. Many would not return home, having paid the ultimate price to assure victory. And many would return home broken in body and spirit.

Light Up the Dawn



CREATING ENDURING LEGACIES

Creating Enduring Legacies continued

This year, on the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day, RSL Queensland remembered the brave men and women who defended Australia in WWII.

"The ranks of our WWII veterans grow thinner each year, and it was important that we honoured their sacrifice on the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day."

TONY FERRIS

State President, RSL Queensland

There was once again celebration – and commemoration – in the city as the moving story of WWII and Victory in the Pacific was projected onto the façade of Brisbane's City Hall.

Hundreds of people also shared their memories and family stories of living in Queensland during the war, like WWII wireless operator Doreen Matthews, who was stationed in Townsville.

"I just remember how many soldiers came through that city on their way to each of the ships to go to war. They shipped everybody out from Townsville and there were soldiers coming and going all the time. So many of them... It's sad really."

DOREEN MATTHEWS

WWII wireless operator

Remember to Remember

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month marks the moment the guns fell silent on the

Western Front after the bloodshed of World War I. Over the past century, this moment has been adopted across the globe as a time to remember those who served and sacrificed in all wars and conflicts.

On Remembrance Day this year, we asked Australians to Remember to Remember; to pause for just one minute to remember and honour all those who have served and continue to serve our country to ensure the freedoms and privileges we enjoy today.

"The little bit of time it takes out of your day to just stop, pause and remember means the world to everybody [who's served]. It shows that you are thinking about the sacrifice they made and it's a level of respect you can offer to those people who went before you."

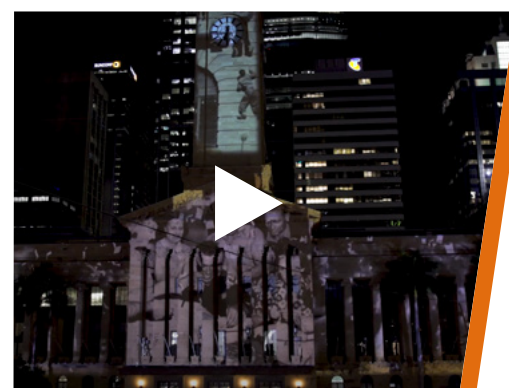
JARRETT BIRD

Australian Army veteran and RSL Queensland employee

To aid in social distancing and allow people to remain safely in their homes, we live-streamed the official Remembrance Day service from Brisbane's Shrine of Remembrance for the first time in RSL Queensland's history.

And in line with government regulations, smaller Remembrance Day services were held in person by RSL Sub Branches around the state, providing opportunities for all Queenslanders to remember.

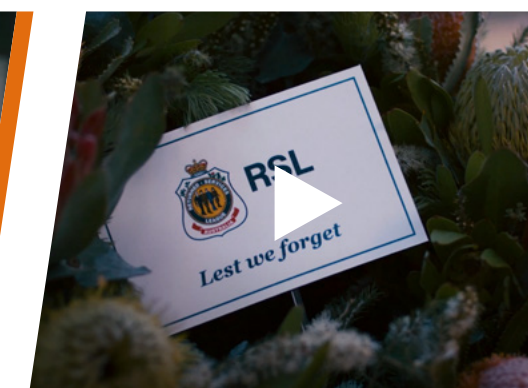
VP75



Doreen's story



Remember to Remember



SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

/ **Our members are the heart
and soul of RSL Queensland**

RSL Queensland members*

*as of 31 December 2020

Service members	31,848
Citizens' Auxiliary members	750
Women's Auxiliary members	537
Non-League members	1,055

Our members are the heart and soul of RSL Queensland. They volunteer hundreds of hours of their time to help fellow veterans in need, provide opportunities for social connection, and commemorate important anniversaries. We would not be able to look after veterans in local communities or deliver our services so broadly without them.

As of December, there were over 34,000 members attached to 235 Sub Branches across the state. We know that we need to grow our membership to ensure the future of RSL Queensland and preserve our heritage for the next 100 years.

This year, as part of our Strategic Plan, we established the Membership & Network portfolio to revitalise the support we provide members and Sub Branches, and safeguard their role in the organisation.

The Membership & Network team is dedicated to supporting our Sub Branches as they navigate unique challenges, including membership growth, financial sustainability, marketing and technology support, and advocacy training. The team is resourced to work alongside our Sub Branch volunteers to help them grow and thrive, now and into the future.

With the objective of rebuilding trust and relationships with Sub Branches and providing a better level of support, a significant Sub Branch Discovery Project commenced in 2020. The Membership & Network team visited Sub Branches throughout the state to listen to members and understand their challenges and needs and work together to identify ways forward.

By mid-December, the team had visited 120 Sub Branches and spoken to over 400 members, with more visits to come in the first half of 2021.

The Discovery Project aimed to ask Sub Branches significant questions around their biggest challenges, what's important to them, what they want to achieve, and, importantly, how State Branch can help and best enable them.

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

"We're working hard to align better with our Sub Branches and members, so we can ensure RSL's legacy continues into the future."

KALIE ASHENDEN

*Acting General Manager Membership and Network,
RSL Queensland*

Several tactical opportunities were also delivered this year to demonstrate to Sub Branches and Districts that we're here to support them in growing and thriving. As well as reimbursing all costs associated with commemorative merchandise to support Sub Branches with their fundraising efforts, we worked to deliver the following programs before the end of 2020:

- Internet Adoption Program: we provided financial and technical support for Sub Branches to access high-speed internet connections
- Managed IT Services: we trialled a technology equipment package in 10 Sub Branches to test whether the equipment is fit for purpose. Suitable packages will be rolled out across the whole Sub Branch network in 2021
- Charitable Objects Fund (COF): we simplified the process for applying for money under the COF, which provides funding to Sub Branches to deliver welfare support
- Hospital Care Packs: we sent out 100 packs to each District to trial new items, and plan to make suitable packs available year-round in the future
- Sub Branch Knowledge and Information Portal (SKIP) Enhancements: we sped up our response times, provided notifications when new content is added and reviewed existing content with the view to launch new content in 2021.

Significantly in 2020, we began work on defining our Member Value Proposition (MVP), which will help address our declining membership by outlining the many reasons to join RSL and why to stay. A two-phase research project involved consultation with close to 1,300 people to ensure we have broad representative views to inform this important work. Our MVP will be a key focus in 2021.

Also in development for launch in 2021 is a suite of tools for Sub Branches, including governance tools and training, and a professional advisory panel of human resource, finance and legal experts.

We will continue to work with members and Sub Branches to identify how we can provide further support and value to our Sub Branch network. Supporting our Sub Branches in this way signals an exciting shift in focus back to RSL Queensland's core purpose of ensuring a bright future and enduring legacy for all veterans and their families.

Managed IT Services rollout



STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Continued on next page ►

**“In times of uncertainty,
Australians have always been
able to draw on our ANZAC
spirit to get us through.”**

TONY FERRIS

State President RSL Queensland

RSL Queensland stands shoulder to shoulder with Queensland's Defence family. We are veterans helping veterans.

A Little Help for Our Friends

Tully RSL Sub Branch, Far Northern District

After learning that local veteran John Bryant had no means of shopping or visiting his doctor without help from a neighbour, Tully RSL Sub Branch stepped in and bought John a mobility scooter. This newfound mode of transport is enabling Jim the freedom to return to the community and see his friends.

The Sub Branch successfully applied for welfare funding from the Far Northern District to purchase the scooter. Although COVID-19 slowed everyone down, Tully's welfare work continued unabated as they continue to support local veterans.





STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Standing Shoulder to Shoulder continued

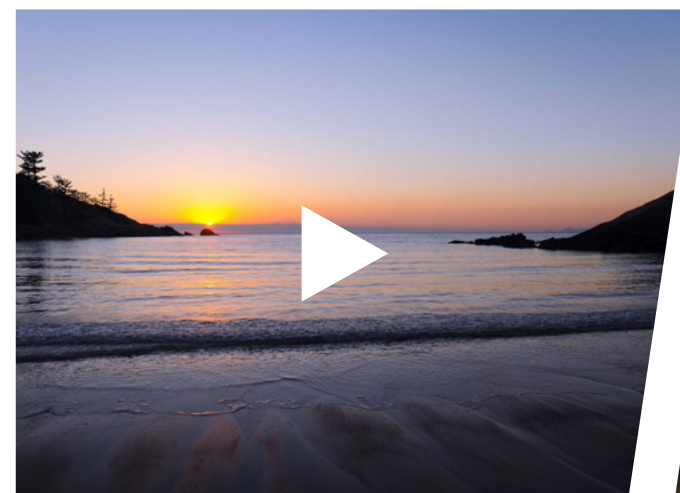
Island Community Rallies in Commemoration

Magnetic Island RSL Sub Branch, North Queensland District

At a time when everything else felt so dark, Light Up the Dawn brought light and hope to the small, close-knit community of Magnetic Island. With the moving traditional service unable to go ahead because of COVID-19 restrictions, the Magnetic Island RSL Sub Branch rallied the small island community to join in Light Up the Dawn instead, and they responded.

From the local Rural Fire Brigade to the Police and other community groups, the community spirit was shining bright across the Island as the sun broke the dawn. The 2,000-strong community honoured and remembered veterans past and present in the best way they could in 2020.

Magnetic Island RSL
Sub Branch Light Up the Dawn



Anniversary Brings Community Together

Gracemere and District RSL Sub Branch, Pioneer-Fitzroy-Highlands District

The 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific was a significant moment to commemorate in 2020. As the Second World War ended, celebrations were held around the country. To commemorate this significant event, the Gracemere and District RSL Sub Branch hosted the 75th VIP Anniversary Service Dinner on 29 August.

The event brought the Sub Branch together, as Secretary Ruth Harris and Vice President Tony Harris, along with other members, organised the event. 140 veterans and guests were entertained by guest speakers and the Rockhampton Pipe Band. The Dinner was made possible thanks to funding through the Charitable Objects Funding, and was hailed a success, receiving the District President's Award for 2020.



A Place to Connect

Murgon RSL Sub Branch, Wide Bay and Burnett District

A safe and welcoming space to provide welfare, advocacy and connection with others is important for an RSL Sub Branch's activities as they support veterans in their community. In 2020, the town of Murgon laid foundations for a new drop-in centre which will provide a place for Sub Branch meetings, events, welfare and advocacy, and a space for community services, including telehealth calls.

With plans five-years in the making, the project brought the Murgon RSL Sub Branch together, with the entire membership and auxiliary involved in the design, fundraising and building of the centre. Grants and donations enabled the project to commence.

"Though We Didn't Know You, We Will Remember You."

Ipswich RSL Sub Branch, Tamborine Mountain Tweed Heads and Coolangatta District

When 94-year-old British veteran Brian Fortune passed away at Ipswich Hospital, he died without anyone by his side. Brian had no known family or next-of-kin. It was a lonely death. But when Ipswich RSL Sub Branch were asked to help honour Brian, they arranged a Poppy Service and put a call out for a handful of veterans to attend Brian's funeral service.

More than 300 people turned up to honour Brian and pay the respect that he deserved. And by the time the bugle and bagpipes fell silent, hundreds of poppies laid atop Brian's coffin.

Our Stories Make Us Who We Are

Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch, Western District

Everyone has a story to tell. With that in mind, Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch patron Karen Woods spent 18 months compiling the stories of members in a heartfelt booklet to be shared among family and friends.

"Being mindful of the ongoing challenges our servicemen and women face, and having huge respect for Goondiwindi members, I wanted to persuade each of them to tell their story and compile them into a booklet."

This would enable them to share what life was like before, during and after service. The aim was for members to read each other's stories and be encouraged to talk to each other in a way that offered some unofficial 'counselling.'"

It Takes a Village to Help a Veteran

Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch, Sunshine Coast and Regional District

Elderly veterans and their partners were among the most impacted by country-wide lockdowns due to COVID-19, with restrictions on social contact and shopping for essentials. Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch identified the need for additional support among their community and teamed up with their community to help.

A donation from Budget Direct Auto and General was used to purchase ingredients, the chefs in the Kawana Waters Surf Life Saving Club cooked three-course meals, and members of the RSL Sub Branch, the surf club and the general community delivered the hot meals to veterans. 75 meals were prepared each week for seven weeks, for a total of 525 meals delivered to appreciative veterans.



A Win for the Veteran Community A Year to Remember

Brisbane North District Branch

In a win for the veteran community living north of Brisbane, Brisbane North District Branch officially opened the doors of its sparkling new headquarters at Strathpine. The centre is open to the public and offers members of the Defence family assistance to access a range of services, including mental health support, health and clinical care, RSL legal aid, transition support, home and transport assistance, and more.

The new facilities offer a welcoming place for veterans to drop in and meet, and include offices, interview rooms, a large boardroom, workstations, reception area, hotdesking facilities for visitors and a fully equipped kitchen.

Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch, South East District

2020 was a year to remember for many reasons, and Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch made sure of it by hosting a combined commemorative event, A Year to Remember. Recognising the Korean War, Vietnam War, Battle for Australia and the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the occasion made up for the cancellation of various individual events during the year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Local high school students were involved in the service, which was supported by the Band of the 1st Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. A Year to Remember was held on 24 October on Sunnybank State High School's oval, next to the Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch.

Catching Up at Annual BBQ

Gold Coast District Branch

Australia Day provides a fitting opportunity to get together with mates and connect. Which is exactly what RSL Gold Coast District does every year on 26 January.

In 2020, before the height of COVID-19, the District Australia Day BBQ was held at the Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch. With a crowd of around 40 people from Sub Branches across the District attending, the BBQ provided a chance for members to catch up, reminisce and celebrate.

Delivering Joy to Those Most in Need

RSL Queensland

Christmas 2020 was a first for many, with communities across the globe battling isolation and financial hardship due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. To help provide a little Christmas cheer, dozens of RSL Queensland's Brisbane staff volunteered their time to pack hampers full of goodies like puddings, mustards, nuts, chocolate, toys and gifts for those of our Defence family most in need.

Recipients of our Christmas hampers included a 102-year-old digger, a Medal of the Order of Australia recipient, 60 young families, veterans battling post-traumatic stress disorder, 40 people who recently received support via our homelessness program, and more than 90 older veterans and war widows who are isolated or in poor health.



Christmas Spirit Hampers

"Not only are we focused on achieving income goals to financially support programs for veterans, but we are also providing opportunities for the Australian public to give back to veterans with the benefit of potentially changing their life. It's a donation with a dream."

TRACEY BISHOP

General Manager RSL Art Union

SUSTAINING OUR BUSINESS

RSL Queensland delivers an extensive and comprehensive range of support and services to help veterans and their families through various stages of their Defence journey.

To enable us to deliver these services, increase our support and grow our reach under our Strategic Plan, we need sustainable financial sources.

The RSL Art Union was created to provide a secure funding source for the work of RSL Queensland, and 65 years later, it remains our largest and most critical source of income. About 99 per cent of our funds are generated directly through the lottery program, with the revenue from ticket sales from the luxury prize home lotteries run by RSL Art Union allowing us to continue to provide support programs to veterans and their families. The remainder of our funds come from investments and a small number of government grants.

The RSL Art Union is Australia's largest and most successful prize home lottery program. But in 2020, the lottery's resilience was tested as COVID-19 brought a level of uncertainty. Sales channels were heavily impacted when the effects of the pandemic were first felt, as discretionary spending among customers decreased, shopping centre sales booths were closed and door-to-door sales were suspended.

These sales channels, along with outbound telemarketing, are key to reaching the customer base and providing greater resilience to the lottery.

Continued on next page ►

Australia's biggest
ever prize home lottery



SUSTAINING OUR BUSINESS

"I always purchase the RSL [Art Union tickets] as I think they are just the best value for money AND it goes to a great cause!"

"My dad was in the Second World War. I know the hard work our diggers have dedicated to our country. It's why we support RSL Queensland."

WINNER STATEMENTS

But as restrictions eased, and with strict COVID-safe plans in place, our shopping centre kiosks and door-to-door sales channels returned and contributed to significant highlights for 2020, which include several new records being set.

- The RSL Art Union's highest discretionary revenue day ever was recorded during the pandemic. This is made even more remarkable by the fact that the revenue was generated on the back of a \$2,000 promotional investment.
- Following the restructure of the RSL Art Union's VIP program in 2019, the first full year of the new VIP proposition was a phenomenal success in terms of growth. Increasing 20 per cent in one year, the growth rate broke all previous records and nearly doubled that of the previous year. Introducing weekly \$5,000 draws and quarterly \$100,000 draws for VIP members provided more opportunities for them to win a prize in the VIP program and ultimately resulted in more VIP customers.
- 2020 was the first time that two whole apartment complexes have been offered in a year, with two Golden Treasure prize draws run; one in April worth \$7 million, and one in December worth \$8.5 million – which at the time was also the highest value prize line-up to date.

These results were on top of the development of a new lottery product that aims to provide resilience to the RSL Art Union's income by broadening the customer base. The research and development for a more interactive lottery game was undertaken in 2020 ahead of the game's launch in 2021.

The year's key achievements and their respective revenue contribute to the financial underpinning of RSL Queensland's Strategic Plan, which will see an increase in suitable and necessary support services delivered to veterans across the state and around the country.

RSL VIP Hero Josh Pratt



We're working towards delivering outcomes that positively impact quality of life for veterans and their families.

A photograph of three people hiking on a dirt trail during sunset. In the foreground, a woman in a purple tank top and black shorts is running towards the right, smiling. Behind her, two men are walking. The man in front of them is wearing a dark blue t-shirt, khaki shorts, and a camouflage cap. The man behind him is wearing a dark blue t-shirt, khaki shorts, and sunglasses. They are surrounded by trees and a large tree trunk is visible on the right side of the frame. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow.

DELIVERING IMPACTFUL VETERAN OUTCOMES

Creating a Brighter Future for Veterans Through Research

Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) is committed to understanding the impact that military service has on veterans and their families from both a physical and mental health perspective. The long-standing partnership between GMRF and RSL Queensland is built on trust and a shared vision to create a brighter future for veterans through research.

Our partnership achieves its mission of improved quality of life for veterans and their families by providing evidence-informed programs to meet the needs of veterans. Throughout 2020 the partnership continued to flourish and deliver impactful veteran outcomes.

Helping Veterans and their Families

In 2020, RSL Queensland commissioned a GMRF research project led by Principal Research Fellow, Dr Angela Maguire to identify the key areas of need for veterans and their families to provide RSL Queensland and Mates4Mates with critical evidence to inform service planning. RSL Queensland now uses this evidence to inform the program delivery of both organisations.

RSL Queensland and Legacy Brisbane also joined forces with other stakeholders including Open Arms to deliver the 'Family with a Veteran' research project led by GMRF.

The results of this research project provided important evidence in considering models of care for supporting families and managing a veteran with complex multiagency needs.

Enhancing Services

In addition to the 'Family with a Veteran' research project, Dr Maguire also worked closely with RSL Queensland to help identify ways of objectively evaluating the impact of RSL Queensland programs and services.

Implementation of these recommendations is underway and will continue to enhance the services provided by RSL Queensland now and into the future.

Community Support through COVID-19

Due to increased COVID restrictions at Greenslopes Private Hospital throughout 2020, a major GMRF research project studying the sleep conditions of veterans with PTSD was faced with logistical challenges. We're thankful for Queensland's RSL community and the generosity of Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch who provided a COVID safe place for our veterans and researchers to meet.

Easing the Adjustment to Civilian Life with M-CARM

In November 2020, following six years of world-class research, GMRF published the M-CARM academic manuscript and launched the M-CARM online tool (m-carm.org). Available to all veterans, the M-CARM is a free online assessment to help veterans identify how well they are adjusting to civilian life after military service.

This publication indicates a significant milestone in the research partnership, demonstrating the important positive impact of research for veterans.

RSL Queensland is dedicated to enhancing outcomes for veterans by committing to long-term investment in GMRF veteran-specific research. This partnership ensures RSL Queensland are well versed on the latest veteran research and how this helps to inform future service delivery models.

"Our research projects have progressed at a rapid pace with thanks to our supporters and research partners such as RSL Queensland. Whether in the laboratory or the clinic, our scientists and researchers are working relentlessly to realise our vision of enhanced health of the Australian veteran community through the highest quality research."

MIRIAM DWYER

CEO, Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation

/ The long-standing partnership between GMRF and RSL Queensland is built on trust and a shared vision to create a brighter future for veterans through research.

Miriam Dywer

CEO, Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation

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GALLIPOLI
MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Remembrance through research



Actively Changing the Lives of Veterans

RSL Queensland established Mates4Mates in 2013 to provide physical, psychological, and social connection support services for those experiencing service-related physical injuries, mental health issues and isolation.

Throughout 2020, Mates4Mates continued to actively change the lives of current and ex-serving Defence Force members who have been impacted by service, and their families.

To date, more than 6,000 people have directly benefited from our services and continue to access support regularly. With more than 23,000 connections provided by Mates4Mates staff and a 300% increase in the number of clients actively accessing our services compared to 2019, more than ever before, Mates4Mates supported veterans and their families to find a new way forward in 2020. Our impact in 2020 included:

- 4,038 psychology appointments to improve the mental health of the Defence community
- 2,269 exercise physiology sessions to improve injuries and help more people manage their pain
- 7,500 social connections facilitated to bring people across Australia together to reduce isolation.

2020 brought about many unforeseen circumstances and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of Australia's first COVID-19 lockdown, we had to close the doors of our Family Recovery Centres across the country. A new strategy for delivering services online was quickly developed, and Mates4Mates re-launched services within 24 hours of the lockdown, all while keeping our members informed and engaged.

When COVID-19 lockdowns were occurring in most states and territories, our people made over 1,100 welfare calls and delivered over 700 pieces of online content to keep the Defence community connected.

The incredible response to online services meant that, even after the doors had reopened at our Family Recovery Centres, Mates4Mates retained and continued to grow our online service delivery presence.

We also saw growth in the Northern Territory as we appointed a Regional Manager in October and officially launched our services in the Territory for the first time.

To increase service delivery in the future, we ran several fundraising initiatives, including an April Appeal, Tax Appeal and a National Giving Day. Through each initiative, our community of supporters and the general public showed unwavering support for veterans. This fundraising helped ensure awareness of Mates4Mates continued and gave more people the opportunity to give back to veterans.

As a result, more veterans and their families were able to find the support they needed.

Mates4Mates has Family Recovery Centres in South East Queensland, North Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory, as well as online services and outreach areas across the country.

TROY WATSON
CEO, Mates4Mates

"I no longer feel as though I have to tough it out by myself. I am so very grateful to have found Mates4Mates."

TIM*
Veteran

*Name has been changed to protect identity.

Troy Watson

CEO, Mates4Mates

w mates4mates.org
p 1300 4 MATES

MATES4MATES

Here for those impacted by service.



The Board of RSL Queensland is supported through committees that assist in developing and managing the organisation's governance structure and capabilities.

Each committee comprises members of the Board and additional independent committee members. Each committee operates under a committee charter or Terms of Reference.

Committees do not have decision-making authority, but they advise and make recommendations to the Board. Each committee is supported by business units within the organisation, such as Corporate Services and Veteran Affairs and Policy, and are assisted in their operations by the Company Secretary.

The Sub Committee structure has been established to ensure RSL Queensland can deliver its governance responsibilities in pursuit of our charitable objects and our purpose to ensure a bright future and enduring legacy for all veterans and their families.



RSL QUEENSLAND COMMITTEES

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and 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.

Specifically, the Committee oversees the year-end reporting process, the system of internal control, the management of financial risks, and the internal and external audit process.

The Committee carries out its work in accordance with RSL Queensland's desire to operate in an ethical environment with good corporate governance practices.

In 2020, the Audit and Risk Committee oversaw:

- the risks associated with the financial and operations of RSL Queensland with the

onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, particularly the effect on the Lotteries revenue stream, the safety of RSL Queensland staff and RSL volunteers, and the business continuity of the organisation

- the review of RSL Queensland's risk appetite, risk policy, WHS system, and the Committee's Terms of Reference documentation
- the establishment of an Investment Committee and the recruitment of independent skills-based committee members.

BARRY VAINS OAM

Chair, Audit and Risk Committee



Nomination and Remuneration Committee

The Nomination and Remuneration Committee provides advice to the Board on matters relating to shaping and maintaining the desired culture across RSL Queensland. This includes training, talent management and cultural initiatives, Board and CEO performance evaluation criteria, and processes and remuneration frameworks.

In 2020, the Nomination and Remuneration Committee achieved:

- a review of several policies and practices, with recommendations made to the Board in relation to remuneration, retention, KPIs, terms of reference and board skills

- an update to the Committee's Terms of Reference to enhance their contribution to the Board.

The Committee would like to thank Company Secretary Leah Coogans for her work and contribution to the group.

Wendy Taylor

Chair, Nomination and Remuneration Committee



/ **Providing direction
and guidance
to RSL Queensland**

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee was established in 2020. It provides direction and guidance to the Board in the investment of cash and reserves that are surplus to the organisation’s immediate to medium-term operating requirements.

The Committee’s remit includes the investment of funds over the short, medium and long term, and incorporates RSL Queensland’s property investments, the RSL Art Union property prize bank portfolio and other RSL Queensland business investment opportunities.

The Audit and Risk Committee oversaw the establishment of the Investment Committee, which was formed during the second half of 2020.

One RSL Queensland Director was appointed, and four independent skills-based members were recruited. The inaugural meeting of the Committee was held on Friday 20 November.

BARRY VAINS OAM
Chair, Investment Committee

Constitution and Awards Committee

The Constitution and Awards Committee provides the Board with advice and recommendations on memberships, RSL Awards, Constitutions and By-Laws. This includes matters relating to the development of proposed State, District and Sub Branch Constitutions and awards.

In 2020, the Constitution and Awards Committee undertook the following work:

- assisting Sub Branches to update their Constitutions, in particular the nine Sub Branches that received letters from the Commissioner for State Revenue to ensure that they comply with the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendments Bill (ROLAB)
- ensuring the correct evaluation and nomination process was undertaken before recognising the appropriate member for the Meritorious Service Award
- recognising the wonderful work carried out by members of the League and Auxiliaries by ensuring the correct processes were undertaken to award ten service members and one auxiliary member Life Membership.

The Constitution and Awards Committee will be modified to become the Governance, Constitution and Awards Committee in 2021, to be chaired by Bill Whitburn OAM.

MERV BROWN OAM
Chair, Constitution and Awards Committee

Merv Brown OAM



/ We recognise the wonderful work carried out by our members



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