

## **RSL PFH DISTRICT NEWSLETTER**

**APRIL 2020**

The events, meetings, and services I have attended in the last month are as follows:

1. Together with District Vice-President, Phil Luzzi, I travelled to Emerald for the Sub-Branch's AGM on the evening of Monday 2 March.
2. On the way back from Emerald on Tuesday 3 March, Phil and I met with Deputy President of the Blackwater/Bluff Sub-Branch, Steve Webb, and discussed various RSL matters.
3. I travelled to Bundaberg to attend the Wide Bay & Burnett District AGM and Annual Dinner on Saturday 7 March.
4. Together with District-Vice President, Phil Luzzi, and Bill Gannon, I met with State Member for Keppel, Brittany Lauga, on Thursday 12 March to discuss funding for further works to the Centenary of ANZAC Memorial at Emu Park.
5. Together with District Vice-President, Phil Luzzi, I travelled to Springsure on Saturday 14 March to attend Sub-Branch AGM.
6. On Monday 16 March, in my capacity as the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, I participated in meetings via skype with the RSL Qld Board Executive and Management concerning RSL Queensland's response to the emerging coronavirus emergency.
7. I participated via skype in District Presidents' meeting on Wednesday 18 March and an RSLQ Board meeting on Thursday 19 March.
8. On Wednesday 25 March, I participated in a skype meeting to receive a briefing on the coronavirus from the RSL Qld CEO, Melanie Wilson.
9. On Wednesday 27 March, I participated via skype in a meeting with RSL State CFO regarding the two District welfare vehicles.
10. On Monday 30 March, I participated via skype in a meeting with RSL Qld State Marketing Manager and others concerning ANZAC Day Light Up the Dawn marketing campaign.

### **District President's Voluntary Hours and Kilometers Travelled Statistics March 2020**

Voluntary Hours	155.5
Kilometers Travelled	2389
Nights Away From Home	3

### **COVID-19 Virus**

As you would be aware, Australia and the World are now faced with a public health emergency. The highly contagious virus is spreading rapidly and the Australian and State Governments have taken emergency steps to slow down the rate of infection.

Australia, like many other countries in the World, is in a lockdown and isolated from the rest of the World. The steps that have been taken are unprecedented in our living memory and has drastically changed the way we live our lives. It will also have a devastating effect on the Australian economy and impose severe financial and other hardships on many Australians.

The RSL and its members are not immune from these changes and hardships. In fact a large number of our members are in the older age bracket of the population that are vulnerable to the severe health complications that the virus can cause and result in death.

RSL Queensland has taken the view that we need to abide by government directions and desist from any activity or event that would put our members at risk. The District fully supports this view and the actions taken by the relative Governments.

We are now living in extraordinary times and there is much uncertainty as to when the restrictions on our lives will be lifted.

### **ANZAC Day 2020**

Given the restrictions that have been placed on us at the present time, public ANZAC Day commemorations as we know them will not happen this year.

RSL Qld will be releasing a widespread Light Up the Dawn marketing campaign in both the traditional and social media and are encouraging families to conduct private ANZAC Day services in driveways, on balconies, yards, and houses across the country at 6 am.

However, this may also be curtailed if the Government further restricts the numbers that are allowed to gather in groups.

### **Sub-Branch AGMs**

Most of the District's Sub-Branches have been able to conduct their AGMs before Government restrictions forced the cancellation of meetings.

There is the strong possibility that those Sub-Branches that have had to postpone their AGMs will not be able to reschedule the meetings until after the 30 June cut-off date.

Given this situation, a blanket extension has been given by the Office of Fair Trading which allows Sub-Branches to hold the meeting in the 6 months after the 30 June.

Can those Sub-Branches who have cancelled their AGMs, please confirm this with the District Secretary if you have not already done so. I know that because of the uncertainty, rescheduling of the meeting dates is near impossible at the present time.

### **PFH District AGM**

As you are aware, the District Executive took the decision to postpone the AGM which was to be held in Yeppoon on 27/28 March due to the escalation in the public health emergency.

The District Executive is planning to hold an electronic District Executive meeting on Friday 17 April to attend to District business. At the meeting the Executive will also consider the feasibility of running the 2020 PFH AGM electronically.

### **2020 District Budget**

As you would be aware, the 2020 District Budget was to be presented to the AGM for approval.

The District Executive has general control and management of the administration of the affairs of the District under section 25.1 of the District constitution and we will continue to run the District up until the Budget can be approved at an AGM.

I give an undertaking that we will continue to pay the operating accounts of the District as they fall due but will not authorize the payment of funds that are not operational eg donations and capital expenditure proposed in the budget.

### **2020 AGM/ State Congress**

The State AGM scheduled to be held in Brisbane on the week-end 27/28 June has been postponed until Sunday 6 September.

Given the present uncertain environment and the current estimations of the duration of the public health emergency, this may change.

The RSL Queensland Company Secretary, Leah Coogans, has put out an advice to Districts and Sub-Branches relating to the appointment of a "Replacement Delegate" to cover the absence of the delegate due to illness or other circumstances. A number of Sub-Branches were disappointed last year when in such a situation the Sub-Branch Co-Delegate was not able to vote in place of the delegate. I commend this advice to you.

To clarify this matter, I advise the following:

1. Under **Section 10 Representatives** of the District Constitution, the President of the Sub-Branch automatically becomes the delegate to the State AGM. However, a Sub-Branch can appoint another member if the President is not available to attend.
2. The RSL Queensland Company Secretary in her advice has outlined a procedure whereby the Sub-Branch can also appoint a "Replacement Delegate" to vote in place the delegate if for some unforeseen reason the delegate cannot attend the AGM.
3. Under Section 7.4 of the RSL Queensland Constitution, RSL Queensland has a duty to ensure that the District and Sub-Branch delegates have been legitimately appointed as delegates and this duty has been delegated to the District Secretary.

Given the above situation, Sub-Branches need to ensure that in the case where your Sub-Branch Delegate is not the President, then a motion appointing a delegate needs to be done at your AGM so the District Secretary can confirm this from your AGM minutes. If your Sub-Branch's AGM has already been held and this has not happened, then you need to appoint the delegate at a General Meeting of the Sub-Branch and provide the District Secretary with a copy of the minutes of that meeting.

I would encourage Sub-Branches to also appoint a "Replacement Delegate" so your vote is counted.

This procedure should also be followed when you appoint your Delegate to District Council meetings.

Given the change of date for the AGM, you may need to review your position in this regard.

### **Australian Bushfires Crisis**

We would all be aware of the bushfire crisis faced by communities across Australia over the summer months. The impact has been heartbreaking and has caused devastation across many communities, especially in the southern states.

In response to this, RSL Queensland has donated \$100,000 to support veterans in bushfire affected regions throughout Australia. The funds will be administered and distributed by RSL National.

The District Executive had included a donation of \$20,000 in the 2020 Budget for approval at the District AGM on 28 March 2020.

It was the intention of the District Executive to ask RSL National to administer and distribute these funds to veterans in need.

However, given the likely affect the coronavirus will have on our organisation, the District Executive feels that these funds should now be held to provide financial assistance to our Sub-Branches adversely affected by the coronavirus crisis.

### **District Council and Executive Meetings**

There has been no District Council meeting since the last one in November 2019. Executive Council meeting were held on Saturday 8 February and Friday 28 February. The District AGM and Council meeting set for 28 March had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

#### **2020 AGM & District Council (DC) Dates**

16 May	Gracemere Sub-Branch
18 July	Finch Hatton Sub-Branch
19 September	Capricornia & Rockhampton Region Sub-Branch
21 November	Farleigh & Northern Beaches Sub-Branch (Mackay)

Because of the public health emergency, these dates may have to be reconsidered.

#### **2020 AGM – Nominations for District Executive Positions**

A nomination for each of the Vice-President and Treasurer positions has been received.

#### **2019 Audited Financial Accounts**

The Audit of the 2019 Financial Accounts has been completed by the auditor and reviewed by the District Executive.

The Audited Accounts have been signed off by the District Executive and will be presented when the AGM is rescheduled.

#### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of World War 2 in 2020**

It was decided at the last Council meeting that funding will be provided in 2020 Budget and made available to Sub-Branches for the commemoration of the event.

The District Executive has included \$20,000 in the 2020 Budget for approval at the AGM when it is rescheduled.

This event may also be affected by the public health emergency.

### **State Board Meeting**

A meeting was held via skype on Thursday 19 March 2020

#### **Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025**

##### **2020 Business Plan**

Board members were warned at the meeting that because of the resources diverted to respond to the coronavirus public health emergency and the expected down turn in the Australian economy there may be some delays to programs planned in Horizon 1 of the 2020 Business Plan and reductions in revenue budget targets. It is heartening to note that the 4 lotteries held to date have all been sold out.

Highlights of the 2020 Business Plan were as follows:

1. Lotteries sales were expected to grow from \$130 million in 2019 to over \$150 million, strengthening sustainability.
2. A contingency fund was set aside to fund emergent initiatives identified in the 2025 Strategy.
3. There will be three major strategic projects in 2020:
  - Reimagining membership.
  - Reinvigorating our brands.
  - Piloting a service hub.

2020 was to be a year to:

- Re-instate our relevance to the entire veteran community.
- Grow our influence across various stakeholders and governments.
- Strengthen sustainability in the future.

### **RSL Employment Program**

The success of the RSL Queensland Employment Program in assisting veterans to secure meaningful employment has been recognized nationally.

Following a commitment by the Federal Government to provide funding, the Board approved a pilot of the program to be delivered in South Australia, in partnership with RSL SA during 2020. The Employment Program is now operating in South Australia.

### **New State Constitution**

The Committee has now drafted a new constitution using the 2015 constitution as a base.

The draft of the new 2020 constitution was posted on the RSLQ website in early December and feedback and comments were sought from members up until the 21 February 2020.

A revised draft document has now been completed based on the feedback provided and this draft is now posted on the website.

There may be some minor changes to this document before being presented to members at the AGM in September.

### **Sub-Branch Knowledge and Communication Portal (SKIP)**

SKIP was launched on 31 October 2019.

The portal will be a single source of information for sub-branches and will contain information on a variety of topics.

Materials continue to be loaded to SKIP for Sub-Branch reference.

The District Secretary is currently providing one-on-one training to Sub-Branches throughout the District

### **Membership –MMS System**

An upgrade of the MMS system was finalised on 31 October.

The District Secretary is now providing one-on-one training to Sub-Branches throughout the District.

## **On Going Matters and Reminders**

### **Distribution of District's Monthly Newsletter**

I remind members that the District Secretary has been able to compile an email list of members through MMS and is currently distributing the newsletter electronically.

If you wish to avail of this distribution method, then please advise your Sub-Branch Secretary of your email address for recording in MMS. Further, if you are on the list and do not wish to be on the list, then please advise the District Secretary accordingly.

### **Correspondence to RSL Queensland**

Some sub-branches continue to send correspondence to State Branch directly and it is not getting to the appropriate people. Any correspondence that goes to State Branch should be directed to the Company Secretary, Leah Coogans, with a copy to Board Administrative Secretary, Mandy Bryant.

You are reminded that correspondence should be sent through the District and if you are sending emails to State Branch direct, can you please copy in the District Secretary.

### **State Government Community Gambling Fund**

Please note that that sub-branches are eligible to apply for these grants and should consider this avenue as a source of funds for maintenance and air conditioning of sub-branch halls/buildings etc.

### **District Website/Facebook**

Website address is [www.rslpfdistrict.org.au](http://www.rslpfdistrict.org.au)

Sub-branches are encouraged to keep providing details of events, photographs, etc to Vice President, Phil Luzzi, or District Secretary, Lynette Phillips, for placing on the district website and facebook page.

### **Dental & Allied Health Program**

The Dental Health Program has been incorporated into the new Dental & Allied Health Program which commenced on 1 January 2020.

So far this year, 20 applications have been approved at a cost of \$7,958.29:

Dental \$4,807.65, Hearing \$1,897.04, and Optical \$1,253.60.

### **LiveLife Alarms Program**

The program is permanent and continues in 2020.

So far this year, there have been 4 new alarms issued, and 3 renewed at a cost of \$1,611.82.

Sub-Branch Presidents are reminded to keep an eye out for members who would benefit from the program.

### **District PAWS Coordinator**

The District PAWS Coordinator will be liaising with Veteran Services at State regarding the running of further General Welfare courses during the year.

### **Donations to Mates4Mates**

The District Executive has considered providing a further donation to Mates4Mates in 2020. \$5,000 has been provided for in the 2020 District Budget to be presented at the AGM when it can be held.

Sub-branches are encouraged to consider donating funds to Mates4Mates if they are in a position to do so.

District Secretary, Lynette, has the relevant paper work that needs to be completed and sent with your donation.

### **Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF)**

The District Executive has considered providing a further donation to GMRF in 2020 and \$5,000 has been provided for in the 2020 District Budget to be presented to the AGM when it can be held.

RSL Queensland has donated considerable funds to GMRF over recent years to enable the completion of the Vietnam Veterans PTSD study. Further, State is currently funding a study into the transition of servicemen and women from the services to civilian life.

Sub-branches are encouraged to consider donating to GMRF if they are in a position to do so as it would be worthy welfare spending.

### **District Charitable Objects Fund**

A further \$100,000 of funds has been allocated to the District for 2020.

The guidelines and application form have been sent to all sub-branches. Please note that applications are limited to a maximum amount of \$10,000 and applications cannot be retrospective.

All applications need to be on the application form and be in accordance with the guidelines. Sub-branches need to ensure they familiarize themselves with these documents before an application is made.

Sub-branches are encouraged to come up with worthy projects and apply for funding. You need to sell your proposal in the application.

So far this year, 2 application have been approved at a cost of \$ 3,068.

### **Sub-Branch Support Program**

Funding is available in 2020 through this program for those sub-branches in financial need.

So far this year, no applications have been approved.

Please refer to program policy and guidelines. An application needs to be made on application form.

### **2020 Cadet Funding**

State Branch has provided funding of \$ 27,399 for 2020.

The District Secretary has put out an advice to Sub-Branches calling for applications by a date in late June so the District Executive can assess applications at meeting on Saturday 4 July and make recommendations to the District Council at meeting on Saturday 18 July.

### **Emergency Welfare**

A budget of \$10,000 has been allocated for Emergency Welfare funding during 2020.

So far this year, \$3,513.91 has been spent.

As I have alluded to earlier, 2020 is going to be a very difficult year for the RSL and our members given the challenges facing Australia at this time.

Sub-Branch Presidents and Executive need to be on the lookout for veterans and RSL members who are doing it tough as a result of the current public health emergency. This will be challenging given that a large number of our members are in the age group vulnerable to the severe health complications that can be caused by the virus. Please do not put them at risk by making social visits, but check up on them regularly by telephone.

District and State are in a position to provide financial resources if funds are needed.

Keep up the good work and remember that your District is here to help in any way we can.

Kindest regards

Barry Vains OAM

District President

## **THE LAST POST**

<b>Member ID</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Deceased Date</b>	<b>Sub Branch</b>	<b>Last Financial Year</b>
1525710	Walter	Murphy	7/05/1920	4/03/2020	Clermont Sub Branch Inc.	SMLIFE