



RSL-Pioneer-Fitzroy-Highlands District  
Strategic Plan  
2021 - 2026

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- ## Introduction & Background

The Returned & Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch) is overseeing a period of immense change in the League since its inception now over 100 years ago. The League in Qld is in an enviable position.

The organisation has created a strong and stable financial position and has made significant investments into the enterprise.

The RSL in Qld is transforming to a modern, well-resourced, agile and forward-looking organisation led by highly skilled personnel.

The League's charitable status is a *social licence to operate* held in the highest possible regard. Add to this the high standards required for maintaining DGR status and the potential for RSL Qld to be granted Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status. It's clear that more work is needed to ensure that these privileges are preserved.

While RSL Qld has developed resources to enable it to understand, deal with and take advantage of modern challenges and opportunities, the same resources haven't always been available, or in some cases readily accepted, by and through the State's District and Sub Branch networks.

RSL Qld developed its 2025 Strategic Plan during 2019. The Plan maps an assertive welfare delivery strategy, reinforces its strategy to modernise its operations, adopts new constitutional structures, enhances membership value and prepares the operations for future challenges to its operations and earnings model.

The State Strategic Plan relies fundamentally on the District and Sub Branch network to operate broadly in line with the State's direction.

The Pioneer-Fitzroy-Highlands District (PFH) is one of ten RSL Districts throughout Qld, which provides a vital service to the Sub Branches and the veterans within the District. The District itself is a small organisation but provides support and guidance to the Sub Branches as well as a link between the Sub Branches and RSL Qld.

There are 22 Sub Branches and a number of auxiliaries within the PFH District. The District stretches along the coast from Rockhampton in the south to Bloomsbury north of Mackay, west into the Pioneer Valley, the Central Queensland coalfields, and the Gemfields west of Emerald.

This is the Strategic Plan for the RSL PFH District Branch. The Plan was developed to complement the key strategies of RSL Queensland.

- Strategic Plan Summary

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5
Governance, Risk, Compliance, Objects	Service Delivery, Membership	Operations, Finance Resourcing, Assets	Community Perceptions, Communication, Culture	Partnerships, Linkages
<p><i>PFH will improve governance understanding, systems, processes and standards, ensuring a practical level of compliance and risk management for the District and its Sub Branches.</i></p> <p><i>We will work closely with State Branch to develop and deliver training, systems and processes.</i></p> <p><i>We will support diversity and appropriate succession planning in the State Branch, the District and within the District Sub Branches.</i></p>	<p><i>PFH will remain a highly relevant charity delivering services to veterans and their families. Service Delivery will be developed alongside State Branch and the Sub Branches.</i></p> <p><i>State Branch is also investigating and scoping a Veteran Hub concept. As this model is developed, PFH will assess its role with respect to the Veteran Hub model.</i></p> <p><i>We will assist and promote membership growth and membership engagement wherever possible.</i></p>	<p><i>PFH will maximise all grant and income opportunities within the District. The sources will be varied but the primary sources will be State, Federal, and local governments, State Branch and our own fund-generating activities.</i></p> <p><i>We will maintain the income from the Mackay rental property and ensure it remains a long term source of income.</i></p> <p><i>The District will assist in the establishment and rationalisation of Sub Branches where it is desirable and appropriate to do so. The</i></p>	<p><i>PFH will work with State Branch and the individual Sub Branches to continue to inform the community of the work, endeavour, and achievements of the RSL.</i></p> <p><i>We will work to ensure that all Sub Branches in the District have close and cooperative relationships with local government.</i></p> <p><i>We will set the culture and endeavour to ensure that the right culture is promoted, adopted and maintained at all District Sub Branches.</i></p> <p><i>We will actively connect with and be relevant to new Veteran cohorts.</i></p>	<p><i>PFH will work cooperatively and collaboratively with State Branch to deliver and benefit from key features of 2025 strategy and constitutional changes.</i></p> <p><i>We will continue to develop strong relationships and partnerships with those organisations with similar missions and visions.</i></p>

		<i>District will work to maintain viability and sustainability of Sub Branches in the District.</i>		
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- Mission, Objects, Roles & Values
- Our Mission

*Through the Sub Branches, facilitate and promote the provision of welfare support and commemorative services to all generations of Veterans and their families throughout the District*

- Our Vision

*Every veteran and their family in the District must be treated with dignity and respect*

- Our Objects

*The objects for which the Association is established are to:*

- *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,*
- *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,*
- *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,*
- *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,*
- *encourage loyalty to Australia and secure patriotic service in the interests of Australia,*
- *protect the good name and preserve the interests and standing of members of the Australian Defence Force,*
- *encourage Service and Life 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*
- *provide welfare to the sick, helpless, wounded, vulnerable, aged, destitute and needy.*

- ## Our Roles

The Roles of the Office of the Pioneer-Fitzroy-Highlands District are:

- *Uphold the Objects of the League,*
- *Be the conduit between State and Sub Branches in the District,*
- *Provide support and guidance to Sub Branches,*
- *Champion issues to State on behalf of the Sub Branches,*
- *Identify the need for education and deliver ongoing training and development,*
- *Develop, deliver and finance welfare programs for the benefit of the Sub Branches,*
- *Undertake and oversee PAWS coordination within the District,*
- *Take a lead role in policy and process development,*
- *Take a lead role in governance practices and administer good governance for the District,*
- *Influence the culture and behaviour within the Sub Branches,*
- *Engage with stakeholders,*
- *Represent the District at commemorative and community events,*
- *Take a lead role in setting the standards of professionalism,*
- *Provide mediation and dispute settlement solutions within the District, and*
- *Oversee the financial management of the District.*

- ## Our Values

Our Values are encompassed in the following statements:

- *We treat all who come within our reach with dignity, compassion and respect*
- *We honour the work of our Defence Family*
- *We take pride in our military traditions and the traditions of the League*
- *We recognise friendship and mateship as the genesis and continuing foundation of the League*
- *Our courage and strength of character provide the foundations to remain true to our convictions*

- SWOT Analysis
- Strength & Weaknesses (internal)

As they relate to the District and the constituent Sub Branches:

Figure 41 Strength & Weaknesses of PFH District	
Strength	Weaknesses
Support, dedication, passion of members	Divisive culture at times within the Sub Branches
Strong and consistent membership base	Aging of membership, lack younger prof in leadership roles, skills of directors (tech/ innovation)
Professionalism, well organised, teamwork	Insufficient welfare work being undertaken at some Sub Branches
Camaraderie, friendship, welcoming, events	Little interest within the membership in wanting to take executive positions, lack of succession planning
Support and recognition from local government representatives and general community	Inconsistent hours of opening / operations - depends on volunteers' willingness to be available. Lack of unity and standardisation/experience within Sub Branches
Leadership at District is strong and committed	Lack of strong presence in Rockhampton and Mackay
Communication, willingness to share ideas, provision of information	Number of volunteers is small and reducing
Long term membership within the Sub Branches	Reducing Sub Branch membership – PFH has lowest membership of the 10 Districts
Public perceptions are strong and positive	Financial constraints on Sub Branches, some are financially challenged, some hoard money
Open about business, business oriented, able to adopt new ideas and initiatives	Lack of (need additional) volunteer welfare support officers
Strong understanding and appreciation for Governance, Governance systems	Few social gathering opportunities promoted by Sub Branches
Commemoration - ANZAC Day Service, Remembrance Day	Lack of acceptance of new members and new skills within Sub Branches
Financial stability – District has its own income stream from rental and a tangible asset	District large, long travel distances, hard to service
District benefits from operational funding from a successful State Branch	Compliance burden on Sub Branches and the impact this has on risk, volunteers, sense of enjoyment
RSL core values are evident in the organisation	PFH is a small District, low membership numbers
We are progressive within the District	Lack of concrete succession planning (uncertain in this regard)
Regional reach – 22 Sub Branches/Auxiliary however clustered in Rockhampton / Capricorn Coast and Mackay/Pioneer Valley	Lack of clear succession in the Sub Branches
Regular meetings in the District at various Sub	Lack or adequate resources available to PFH to

Branches	achieve what is needed in the District
Promotion of the League is strong generally	Low level of understanding of the Constitution at the Sub Branch level
District welfare delivery is strong	

- **Opportunities & Threats (external)**

As they relate to the District and the constituent Sub Branches...

Figure 42 Opportunities & Threats for PFH District	
Opportunities	Threats
Networking with and relevance to younger veterans	Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• loss through attitude, lack of relevance, inability to resonate with younger veteran,</li> <li>• Aging demographic of existing members, declining base</li> </ul>
Implementation of RSL Queensland 2025 Strategy in full esp: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSL Queensland Membership Structure &amp; benefits</li> <li>• Veteran Welfare/Service Hub in Mackay or Rockhampton</li> <li>• - New roles &amp; resources within RSLQ to help support SB's</li> </ul>	Ignorance, lack of leadership, arrogance, self-importance not accessing the right people/leadership
Great use of social media platforms to communicate services connect with members, potential members	Loss/reduction of rental income due to inability to lease premises
	Major PR issue to damage the brand
	ESOs attitude towards the RSL Movement
	Not being able to grow our membership may threaten our existence.
	Perception of the RSL amongst community and membership
	A changing in our own culture – eg becoming complacent or developing a sense of self-importance, arrogance, not respect for the Objects of the League
	Decline in Sub Branches, keeping small and isolated ones operating (provided viable)
	Constitution not being passed at the next GM and the repercussions of that
	Maintaining governance standards and understanding

- Implementation strategies
- Strategic Pillar One – Governance, Risk, Compliance, Objects

**Contextual summary:** The League, State Branches, Districts and Sub Branches are highly impacted by non-performance within the organisation wherever they may occur. The non-compliance risks are very high and at the same time, stakeholders, principally the ACNC and the general public, are increasing compliance and governance expectations and requirements.

State Branch is active in this area and is developing materials and methods to improve this area of risk and responsibility. We have a key role to play at the District level, as the conduit between State and the Sub Branches in the area.

**Strategy statement:** PFH will improve governance understanding, systems, processes and standards, ensuring a practical level of compliance and risk management for the District and its Sub Branches. We will work closely with State Branch to develop and deliver training, systems and processes. We will support diversity and appropriate succession planning in the State Branch, the District and within the District Sub Branches.

Figure 51 Strategic Pillar One – Governance, Risk, Compliance, Objects

Strategic initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide governance training at the District Executive every two years</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage State Branch to provide face to face governance training to the Sub Branches every two years</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain high levels of governance compliance at the District level through seeking an independent review every two years</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction training for new District Executives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement letter of engagement with District Executive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage State Branch to develop and promulgate a suite of policy and process templates for District and Sub Branches</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a committee comprising of young veterans to provide advice, recommendations future leaders</li> </ul>

- Strategic Pillar Two – Service Delivery, Membership

**Contextual summary:** The League and its state-wide Sub Branch network, have developed an extensive membership, volunteer base and Veteran support client base. In Qld and throughout Australia, the League expects the Veteran client base to grow

over the next ten years. Certainly, the welfare / wellbeing and assistance needs of the new Veteran differs from those of previous Veteran cohorts.

Sub Branches are the life-blood of the District and the State Branch. The plan is for them to continue to attract membership and volunteers and deliver welfare and wellbeing services. The proposed new member value proposition should grow membership and relevance.

Volunteering should be attractive to Veterans and the general public; volunteers respond to clear and reasonable direction and should be trained, guided and supervised appropriately. Volunteers don't respond well to disorganisation, a lack of outcomes and poor culture.

The needs of Veterans are becoming far more complex and diverse. Sub Branches are likely to be able to continue to provide emotional and day-to-day support, education, ceremonial duties and camaraderie. More complex needs and services are likely to be provided in a different way and this may be through a network of funded Veteran Hubs.

The League is developing closer relationships with other charities and ESOs as a referral base to ensure best outcomes for Veteran and their dependants. We will focus our services and membership engagement with the changing needs of the Veteran in mind and in line with the State strategic plan. We embrace technology and innovation for internal and external communication, welfare delivery, and operational processes.

**Strategy statement:** PFH will remain a highly relevant charity delivering services to veterans and their families. Service Delivery will be developed alongside State Branch and the Sub Branches. State Branch is also investigating and scoping a Veteran Hub concept. As this model is developed, PFH will assess its role with respect to the Veteran Hub model. We will assist and promote membership growth and membership engagement wherever possible.

Figure 52 Strategic Pillar Two - Service Delivery, Membership	
Strategic initiatives	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to grow and enhance the major programs that have commenced, including the Dental Health Subsidy and Live Life Alarm programs. Programs that resonate with younger Veterans will be identified and proposals will be funded through the Charitable Objects Fund.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work cooperatively with State Branch and advocate for a Veteran Hub in either Rockhampton or Mackay.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage Sub Branches to access grant programs, identified by the State</li></ul>

Network Funding Manager.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with State Branch to establish and roll out guidelines for service delivery and other activities at the Sub Branch level.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on membership growth to the Sub Branch network.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In cooperation with State Branch, establish and promulgate a simple annual business planning process and template for Sub Branches.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership value proposition work with and support State Branch with implementation of MVP.</li> </ul>

- **Strategic Pillar Three – Operations, Finance Resourcing, Assets**

**Contextual summary:** The District is in a relatively strong financial position, with cash reserves tangible assets and reliable annuity rental income from an established tenant. But while the District is in a sound position, the Sub Branches are in various states of financial security.

**Strategy statement:** PFH will maximise all grant and income opportunities within the District. The sources will be varied but the primary sources will be State, Federal, and local governments, State Branch and our own fund-generating activities.

We will maintain the income from the Mackay rental property and ensure it remains a long term source of income. The District will assist in the establishment and rationalisation of Sub Branches where it is desirable and appropriate to do so. The District will work to maintain viability and sustainability of Sub Branches in the District.

Figure 53 Strategic Pillar Three – Operations, Finance Resourcing, Assets

Strategic initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise closely with State Branch and establish/continue systems for early financial reporting and distress notification eg traffic light monitoring.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage State Branch to establish a simple assessment tool (fast check-list audit) to assess Sub Branch compliance and financial stability.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage member Sub Branches to establish annual budgets for control of income and expenditure.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Sub Branches to utilise the services of the State Network Funding Manager to identify and access grants.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Sub Branch merger possibilities and promote possibility of rationalisation where multiple Sub Branches exist.</li> </ul>

- Liaise with State Branch on options for (holding / selling) Sydney St property.

- **Strategic Pillar Four – Community Perceptions, Communication, Culture**

**Contextual summary:** The RSL in Qld, has strong relationships with government and other key policy stakeholders. In the public eye, we have a highly recognisable brand, and we are a trusted organisation associated with the major national commemorative occasions and Veteran’s support and advocacy.

While we have a very compelling *narrative* as the leading ESO in Australia, many external stakeholders (government, public, ADF, DVA, ESOs) are almost certainly confused at our proper roles, how we function, our achievements and our contributions to the community.

RSL Sub Branches involvement in poker machine gaming can cause public debate and divide general opinion and we need to manage both our members and broader community expectations. We may be seen as male-oriented and oriented towards older generations.

We remain vulnerable to on-going and further brand impacts, wherever they may occur, whether that be at the national level, State Branch levels, Districts or within Sub Branches. Our understanding of and compliance with the requirements of the ACNC will remain at the forefront of our compliance regime.

While respected, there may be a view amongst new Veterans that the League is reticent and slow to change; that unless we modernise, our ability to appeal and resonate with the younger and diversified Veteran base will diminish and this is likely to lead to a deterioration in membership, our volunteer base and our relevance.

**Strategy statement:** PFH will work with State Branch and the individual Sub Branches to continue to inform the community of the work, endeavour, and achievements of the RSL. We will work to ensure that all Sub Branches in the District have close and cooperative relationships with local government. We will set the culture and endeavour to ensure that the right culture is promoted, adopted and maintained at all District Sub Branches. We will actively connect with and be relevant to new Veteran cohorts.

Figure 54 Strategic Pillar Four – Community Perceptions, Communication, Culture

Strategic initiatives

- Create a new members and younger Veterans’ advisory committee for the District

to advise on a range of issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The District will continue to plan and conduct events associated with national historical / significant events.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Sub Branches to plan and conduct events associated with national historical / significant events.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Sub Branches to develop and promote greater family/community friendly events for the League.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Sub Branches to maintain close relationships with parliamentary/local govt representatives.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of District Executive to attend commemorative events.</li> </ul>

- **Strategic Pillar Five – Partnerships, Linkages**

**Contextual summary:** The League recognises that it doesn't operate in isolation and can't deliver on its own, the full suite of services that the Veteran community needs. Better outcomes are achieved through cooperative arrangements with other Sub Branches, Districts, State Branch etc as well as external organisations including government, other ESOs, charities and non-charitable enterprises.

We acknowledge that there is a range of excellent, well-established, highly-regarded and proficient organisations, both charitable and non-charitable, that meet the needs of others and provide program delivery in many areas in which League has no or low levels of competency or no delivery infrastructure. This District and its Sub Branches will not operate at the exclusion of these organisations but will work closely and pro-actively with them to achieve optimal outcomes.

**Strategy statement:** PFH will continue to develop strong relationships and partnerships with those organisations with similar missions and visions.

Figure 55 Strategic Pillar Five – Partnerships, Linkages
Strategic initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PFH will work cooperatively and collaboratively with State Branch to deliver and benefit from key features of 2025 strategy and constitutional changes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to develop strong relationships and partnerships with those organisations with similar missions and visions</li> </ul>