

RSL QUEENSLAND

# Annual Report 2025



THEIR NAME \*  
LIVETH FOR EVERMORE

ASHTON I. MITCHELL E.B.  
MOORE W.M.C.  
BALL J. McDONALD L.  
BONNETT A.W. MEGNESS D.  
MCKAY C. MCINLAY D.  
MCMMASTER C. MENAMARA J.  
NOLAN B.  
NOLAN T.  
O'FLAHERTY J.  
O'KEEFE J.  
PRICE A.  
SABLIN W.  
SILLEY W.  
ROBERTSON D.  
LAUNDERS T.  
SCOTT J.  
TANDY A.  
TEASDALE R.  
TOWNSEND O.  
WALSH E.J.  
WALSH J.J.  
WEBSTER W.C.  
WILKINSON A.K.  
WOOD S.

ROLL OF HONOUR  
1939-1945 WAR

KANE K.W.P.  
LAPPIN J.  
LESLIE J.P.  
LITTLE W.  
MALDONA  
HARDROE  
MAYRER  
MILBROE  
MITCHELL  
MOLLO  
MOORE  
MCLE  
MCW  
NUM  
O'G  
O'W  
PAI  
PE  
PE  
PP  
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R  
R



RSL  
Queensland

Supporting veterans and their families is why we exist. It's why we started, why we've grown and why we continue to build connections that support veterans and their families in and beyond service.

Through the tenets of care, commemoration and camaraderie, we support the wellbeing of veterans and their families, recognise and advocate for the exceptional skills and values veterans bring to our society, and nurture the deep and enduring ties created through service.

*Cover image: Cloncurry RSL  
Sub Branch President Kane  
Burgess, Sub Branch Secretary  
Liz Robertson and non-League  
member Graeme McDonald.*

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"We now proudly have more than 35,000 members. This trend is a positive reflection that we're on the right path and providing the supportive care, the heartfelt commemoration and the camaraderie that veterans and their families value."

**Major General  
Stephen Day DSC AM**  
*State President, RSL Queensland*

# YEAR IN REVIEW

# State President report

## Telling our truth

**It was an honour to continue representing RSL Queensland's members and Board in 2025. I strive to deliver outcomes that elevate our strengths, support those in need, commemorate our service and redefine who we are.**

As I look back on 2025, what stands out is the healthy growth of RSL Queensland's membership. For the fourth consecutive year, more members joined the League than left, expanding our membership to more than 35,000.

That's not just a number; it's the vital connection to community that more veterans and their families will now benefit from. The ultimate measure of success though, is those members' feelings of camaraderie, their experiences of care and their opportunities for commemoration and purpose.

Key milestones in 2025 made our commemorations particularly poignant. We marked 110 years since the Gallipoli landings and reflected on the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific – likely the last key anniversary with those living veterans. We paid tribute to those who served in the Vietnam War and acknowledged their ongoing legacy, while Rwanda veterans came together for their 30th anniversary reunion.

Our much-loved member publication also reached a milestone – celebrating a centenary since the first edition of *The Queensland Digger* was published. Now called *Queensland RSL News*, our magazine continues to capture our evolving stories, recognise the veteran community and record our history for future generations.

How we care for veterans impacted by service took an important step in 2025, as we reviewed our programs in light of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. It's clear that RSL Queensland has a role to play in veteran transition. Service improvements such as RSL Be:Well and the transition of Mates4Mates from a subsidiary to a business unit of RSL Queensland, enhancing accessibility for those it serves, plus other initiatives, will be key to better supporting veterans after service. In a major advocacy win that has been in the pipeline since 2024, Department of Veterans' Affairs claims and appeals were streamlined, a welcome relief for those navigating a complex system.

“

**We are highly trained Australians who embody values like mateship, courage and humour. While some mates need support, we as a group aren't broken. We continue to contribute to our communities and our country.”**

Articulating our core values has been at the heart of my work in 2025. I spoke with veterans across the state about how we define ourselves, and I engaged with employers and government about overcoming obstacles created by how veterans are depicted.

The feedback was that our narrative has drifted too far into a perception of veterans as broken. While we will always have a special obligation to support our mates who were impacted, it's time to champion our strengths as well.

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts with me on redefining who veterans are. Work has begun on a campaign to rebalance the narrative, with support from a third party, which will be ready for execution in 2026.

My gratitude also to our members who volunteer, they are integral to our mission. Stories happen every day that may never reach the pages of a report, but make RSL Queensland and our League better and stronger every year.



**Major General  
Stephen Day DSC AM**  
State President

## Connecting our community

**This 2025 Annual Report reflects a year of meaningful impact for those veterans and their families we have a responsibility for serving across Queensland. I thank everyone at RSL Queensland, and the many dedicated members across the state, for this outstanding result. Our work also impacted the broader ecosystem of veteran support, forging collaboration with our fellow RSL State Branches nationally.**

Our strategic pillars of care, commemoration and camaraderie were strengthened in 2025 through initiatives that increased connection for veterans – both digitally via online programs and physically through our Sub Branches and Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres.

The 2025 launch of our new website delivered the digital backbone of our 2030 Strategy to keep veterans connected with support and information. The website makes information more accessible and localised, improving the user experience. I applaud the combined effort of State Branch staff and League members, who brought their whole capability to bear on the development of the website.

On-the-ground services were also crucial connection points. We continued to expand our network of Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres, with a new Centre in Ipswich announced and underway in 2025. This Centre will deliver an improved model of care following the 2025 transition of Mates4Mates to a business unit of RSL Queensland.

This streamlines our already impactful service offering, while identifying complementary services delivered by other organisations. When the Centre opens in 2026, the large cohort of veterans and their families in the Ipswich area will have access to quality support under one roof.

We continued the formal accreditation of our services through the Quality Improvement Council to maintain strong governance and standards around veteran support. RSL Queensland's employment and DVA advocacy services were accredited in 2024, and further accreditation will roll out in 2026.

The true test of programs is their impact. We were honoured to win the Champion of Veteran Employment Award at the Prime Minister's National Veteran Employment Awards in November for our RSL Employment Program.

This reflects our impact on the national landscape of veteran transition, with RSL Queensland now having a national employer base that provides opportunities for meaningful employment.

We have also continued our evolving support on Australian Defence Force bases to enhance performance initiatives and provide practical wellbeing assistance.

Alongside our work in Queensland, we supported RSL Australia in evolving its core function of veteran advocacy at the federal level by providing resources and contributing to national positions. This collaborative advocacy effort helps lay the foundations for ongoing national leadership.

RSL Queensland must always look ahead to build a sustainable financial future. In 2025, we reinvested in new prize strategies and system implementations that enhanced the commercial value proposition of our Dream Home Art Union. Work is ongoing to further leverage our digital capabilities to diversify and strengthen revenue streams and realise the benefits of our investments.

With our 2030 Strategy clearly outlined, highlighted on our new website and already guiding our work, we are well on track to continue delivering initiatives that strengthen RSL Queensland's impact and sustainability. I am grateful to everyone who played a role in this success in 2025 and look forward to continuing the journey to ensure our legacy organisation has a long, thriving future.

“

**A united RSL, with clarity around our shared purpose and contributions, will provide a solid foundation for working as part of a broader support model – alongside government and other agencies – to deliver meaningful outcomes for veterans and their families.”**



**Robert Skoda**

Chief Executive Officer

# State Deputy President report

## The privilege of service

It has been my life's privilege to serve Australia through my 24-year Defence career and 12-year tenure with RSL Queensland. I was honoured to be chosen in 2014 as President of RSL South Eastern District, and in 2020 as the first female Deputy President for RSL Queensland. It is testimony to the evolution of our organisation that I was welcomed with open arms by every community, District and Sub Branch across Queensland.

As my tenure comes to a close, I am grateful for the opportunity to bring my experience as a military nurse and educator to the work of veteran support. It was a new challenge for me, one that was supported by the strong expertise within RSL Queensland.

On becoming President of RSL South Eastern District, there were 17 World War II nurses as members, and I held picnics where they connected with their peers and shared their stories. Our District now commemorates the massacre of 21 WWII nurses in 1942, with the annual Bangka Island Service. It's a moving reminder of the sacrifices of Australian nurses since the Boer War; originally without rank, uniforms and pay. I was proud to attend this commemoration again in 2025.

Every single commemoration and member funeral is important and deeply meaningful. In 2025, I was fortunate to attend many anniversaries, scholarship ceremonies,

awards, and memorial services across the region, and also helped pack Christmas hampers that bring so much joy to the veteran community.

I leave with great confidence in the leadership of RSL Queensland. Our skills-based Board has the right knowledge to move the League decisively forward for the betterment of veterans and their families.

Thank you to everyone I have worked alongside; it's been a privilege to serve with you all.



**Wendy Taylor**  
State Deputy President

# State Vice President report

## Foundations for the future

RSL Queensland is a wonderful institution. Since taking up this role in June 2025, I have been taken by the quality leadership and strong culture at RSL Queensland, as well as the thousands of dedicated members running Sub Branches and providing care and support for veterans and their families across our state. I am grateful to have stepped into an organisation that values teamwork, accountable leadership, genuine care and respect.

As I look to the future, continuing the reinvigoration of our membership is a key focus for me. As an individual from the generation who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Timor, I want veterans of all eras to know they have a place in the League now and into the future. Further, having sustainable financial resources to ensure the longevity of RSL Queensland and the care we offer current and future generations of veterans is important, and I plan to do what I can to assist with the delivery of the 2030 Strategy.

My visits to Sub Branches have been a wonderful opportunity to meet members and witness how each Sub Branch serves their community in unique ways – be that regular coffee catch-ups in Beaudesert or a homelessness program in Springwood. I've also been grateful to see the work that has been undertaken to enhance relations

with RSL Australia and other state branches; relationships which are now robust, mutually supportive and strengthening.

Thank you to all the members who volunteer in support of veterans in need, who run commemorative services, and who lead and contribute to their local Sub Branch.

I look forward to meeting many more of you, visiting your Sub Branches, contributing to the RSL Queensland Board, and advocating for veterans and their families in 2026 and beyond.



**Arran Hassell CSC**  
State Vice President

# State Secretary report

## Putting our best foot forward

RSL Queensland exists to support all veterans - from the more than 35,000 current members aged 21 to over 100, to those who have not yet joined the League. Every veteran has signed on the line, begun their training and served our nation. Every one of them has a place in RSL Queensland's future.

My focus is to ensure our League is one that all veterans want to be part of. To that end, we reviewed the RSL Queensland By-Laws in 2025 to ensure they remain current, continue to support the League, meet member expectations and align with community standards.

By-Laws are not about right or wrong. They set the tone for our values, behaviour and culture, while providing the framework for how we operate. The By-Laws guide good governance, creating more time for members to do what matters most.

Attending the Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony in Cairns was a highlight for me in 2025. Our veteran story must always include the contribution of Indigenous Australians, who in the early days had to use false names and backgrounds to sign up and serve. Acknowledging the challenges they faced on their return is not about dwelling on the past but commemorating their contribution to our nation.

I visited many Districts and Sub Branches in 2025, and was inspired to witness a positive shift towards fresh thinking.

Where new approaches have been embraced, they have reinvigorated, and in some cases revitalised, Sub Branches ready for change.

It was also heartening to see that as more women sign up to the Australian Defence Force each year, female membership of the League continues to grow.

“

**I acknowledge the contribution I see every day from our members who volunteer selflessly. Volunteering is the lifeblood of supporting veterans, and I am immensely proud of what our members across the state have achieved in 2025 and how you have improved the lived experience of all veterans.”**



*Manly-Lota RSL Sub Branch Compensation Advocate Mark Gallagher, left, with trainee advocates Kendall Morrison and Michael Muir.*

This brings meaningful representation for the many women who serve our country, along with valuable skills and perspectives that strengthen our organisation.

I acknowledge the contribution I see every day from our members who volunteer selflessly. Volunteering is the lifeblood of supporting veterans, and I am immensely proud of what our members across the state have achieved in 2025 and how this has improved the lived experience of all veterans.

That is what it comes down to – good humans doing good things and giving each other a fair go in a League they feel part of. As stewards of RSL Queensland's 110-year legacy in 2026, it is our responsibility to leave the organisation better than we found it – and we will.



**Iain Carty CSM**  
State Secretary

# Board of Directors

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

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

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



**Major General Stephen Day**  
DSC AM  
*State President*

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



**Wendy Taylor**  
*State Deputy President*

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



**Arran Hassell csc**  
*State Vice President*

Arran has served in the Army for 30 years, deploying in Australia, East Timor, Afghanistan and the United States. A highly experienced leader and executive, he is currently the Commander of 8th Brigade, Chairman and part-owner of intelligence professional services company Protegas Australia, a member of Tamborine Mountain RSL Sub Branch and Patron of Young Diggers.



**Garry Player**  
*State Council Chair*

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



**Nicholas Gould**  
*Director*

As Managing Director and solicitor at Colwell Conveyancing Group, Nicholas has extensive experience in the areas of law, business strategy, risk management and governance. He has served in both the Australian Regular Army and the Army Reserve, including two postings in Afghanistan, and in an advisory role at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. Nicholas is a member of Gaythorne RSL Sub Branch.



**Chris Hamilton**  
*Director*

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



**Ashley Naughton**  
*Director*

Ashley is the Executive General Manager of Infront Security Services Group and is studying at the Command and Staff College within the Australian Defence College. Until recently he was Officer Commanding of B Squadron, 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers Army Reserve. Ashley served 10 years in the Army before transitioning to the Reserves, where he served for a further five years. He is an active member of Yeronga-Dutton Park RSL Sub Branch.



**Tony Orchard**  
*Director*

Tony brings a blend of military, financial and educational acumen to RSL Queensland. A licensed financial adviser and accredited tax (financial) practitioner, he has more than 20 years of experience in the finance industry. Tony served for seven years in the Army and eight years as a Reservist, and is an active member of Ipswich RSL Sub Branch.



**Fiona Southwood**  
*Director*

Fiona has served in the Royal Australian Navy since 1997. She is currently the lead Logistics Officer for the Mine Warfare, Diving and Geospatial Force Headquarters and previously served as Commanding Officer of HMAS Moreton and as Senior Naval Officer South East Queensland. Fiona is a member of Kedron-Wavell RSL Sub Branch.

# State Council of District Presidents

The State Council of District Presidents (SCDP) continued to uphold its governance responsibilities in 2025, meeting regularly to consider a broad range of strategic, operational and governance matters, ensuring that decisions remained grounded in respect, accountability and service to veterans.



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

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



**Mark Orreal**  
*District President, Brisbane North*

Mark served 21 years in the Australian Army, including as Regimental Sergeant Major 1 Combat Engineer Regiment. He joined the RSL in 2007 and has been an active member of Samford RSL Sub Branch since 2010. A determined and community-focused leader, Mark currently serves on the Sub Branch Board and as President of the Samford Avenue of Honour Association.



**John Edwards**  
*District President, Central Queensland*

John served 10 years in the 42 RQR Reserve Battalion. He joined Marian RSL Sub Branch in 1996, later serving as Vice President and President. From 2000, he served on the Central Queensland District Board – including as District Vice President and later District President for most of 2025. He served on the SCDP in early 2025 before stepping down at the end of the year.



**Kenneth Willoughby**  
*District President, Far Northern*

Kenneth served in the RAAF from 1970 to 1992, prior to working in mining, the PNG Reserve Police, and occupational health and safety. Kenneth has been a member of many RSL Sub Branches including Townsville, Cairns, Gordonvale, Malanda (eight years as Secretary) and now Herberton. He has held the positions of Vice President, Deputy President, and now President of Far Northern District.



**Pat Fairon**  
*District President, Gold Coast*

Pat served in the Australian Army for two years, including a tour of duty in Vietnam, before working in a variety of technical and industrial product roles. Pat has volunteered in many community organisations, including 16 years in committee and executive roles at the RSL, and 50 years' involvement with both the Maroochydore and Burleigh Heads Surf Lifesaving Clubs.



**Paul Rogers**  
*District President, Moreton*

Paul served in the Royal Australian Navy for eight years, and during his civilian career spent eight years working with the Australian Navy Cadets. An RSL Queensland member since 2005, Paul has held a variety of senior roles at Ipswich RSL Sub Branch. Paul prides himself on his calm approach and encourages members to work together harmoniously for the betterment of the veteran community.



**Kerry Gallagher AM**  
*District President, South Eastern*

Kerry served in the ADF for 29 years. He later pursued a medical career and is now CEO of the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists and Chairman of Vanguard Health. After becoming Toowong RSL Sub Branch President in 1997, Kerry was elected South Eastern District President in 2021. He chairs the Brisbane ANZAC Day Parade Committee and is also National President of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam Association.



**Grendell 'Skip' Antony**  
*District President, Sunshine Coast and Regional*

Grendell ('Skip') served in the Royal Australian Air Force from 1970 to 1990, then in the Ready Reserve until 1995. Skip has been an active member of Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch since 2010. He has served as Vice President and President of Sunshine Coast and Regional District, as well as on the RSL Queensland Governance Constitution and Awards Committee (2020-2021).



**Dennis Pollard**  
*District President, Western*

Dennis served for more than 25 years in the ADF, prior to 11 years in the Queensland public service. He joined RSL Queensland in 2000 and served as Wallangarra RSL Sub Branch President and RSL Western District Deputy President before his current role. Dennis volunteers for several organisations including the QFES Rural Fire Brigade.



**Neville Tarry**  
*District President, Wide Bay and Burnett*

Neville joined the ADF in 1976, serving for 12 years in the Army Reserves before a long career in mining. After joining Moura RSL Sub Branch in 1986, he was elected Sub Branch President in 2004. In his current role, Neville specialises in supporting veterans and Sub Branches in navigating complex administration, welfare and governance issues.



“With our 2030 Strategy clearly outlined, highlighted on our new website and already guiding our work, we are well on track to continue delivering initiatives that strengthen RSL Queensland’s impact and sustainability. I am grateful to everyone who played a role in this success in 2025 and look forward to continuing the journey to ensure our legacy organisation has a long, thriving future.”

**Robert Skoda**  
CEO, RSL Queensland

# 2030 STRATEGY

# Our mission

**RSL Queensland's mission is to provide care, commemoration and camaraderie to enable veterans and their families to live with dignity and respect. In 2025, we advanced this by supporting veterans' holistic needs, strengthening our commercial capabilities and assets, and playing a key role in the broader veteran support ecosystem.**

Our 2030 Strategy is our roadmap to delivering support to more veterans and their families, promoting wider recognition of our service people's legacy, and fostering belonging and purpose across the veteran community. While our primary focus remains on Queensland and our League, we also contribute and are committed to a unified RSL nationally.

In 2025, we delivered on our strategic priorities of care, commemoration and camaraderie through:

- **communication:** clearly communicating our mission and endeavours to the veteran community and society at large
- **commercial resources:** providing financial capacity and a fit-for-purpose commercial structure
- **capability:** ensuring we have the necessary skills, processes, and technology for success.

As part of this strategic approach, RSL Queensland began work in 2025 to rebalance the veteran narrative to a strengths-based perspective, highlighting the valuable skills, experience and ongoing positive contribution veterans make to society.

In 2026, we will refresh our 2030 Strategy to reflect on the successes to date and explore new ways of supporting the veteran community.



# Strategy progress in 2025

Our key achievements in care, commemoration and camaraderie.



## Care

### Caring for the welfare and interests of veterans

- Commenced development of the Ipswich Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre, supported by DVA, expanding our network of in-person support for more veterans.
- Invested in services accreditation for ongoing quality improvement activities to optimise care.
- Continued to develop and foster partnerships with organisations that expand proactive initiatives to improve health, wellbeing and education opportunities through programs and services.
- Expanded the RSL Be:Well online program, connecting more veterans to specialised, research-backed health and wellbeing information wherever they are.
- Further advanced our positive relationship with Defence through workshops and professional development that continued to build a support journey for current serving members.
- Established the Education and Skills Program within the RSL Employment Program, to help veterans and their partners find meaningful careers.
- Continued collaboration with Gallipoli Medical Research to undertake research that drives improvement of support services and increases understanding of veteran wellbeing needs. In 2025, this partnership culminated in the completion of the five-year Quality of Life Research Program.
- Expanded the Incarcerated Veterans Program, the first of its kind in Australia, providing support at correctional facilities across Queensland.
- Embedded the National Veteran Support Model, establishing a foundation for nationwide RSL collaboration to strengthen and improve access to essential services for veterans and their families.
- Continued work on the Theory of Change strategic framework to help deliver measurable, positive change in human wellbeing and quality of life through the ongoing social outcomes journey.
- Commenced development of the Shared Intake Service System to simplify veteran access to critical support.
- Continued support to veterans experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness in metropolitan and regional areas.

- Reviewed, adjusted and consolidated our service model, keeping the evolving needs of diverse veterans at the centre of all decision making.
- Continued to advocate and advise on simplified and harmonised legislation to support veteran claims and appeals.
- Worked with other ex-service organisations (ESO), RSL State Branches and RSL Australia to streamline and strengthen veteran advocacy and support across the country.
- Continued to collaborate with other ESOs to deliver better outcomes at a State and Federal Government level.





## Commemoration

**Enabling and supporting commemoration in honour of the service and sacrifice of veterans.**

- Proudly shared and supported commemorative events to honour the service and sacrifice of those who have served, and continue to serve.
- Engaged the community in significant dates and events in Australia's military history that brought together veterans and the community through shared respect and remembrance of service.
- Highlighted the service of veterans by sharing their stories of resilience and strength, while acknowledging their ongoing contributions and service to the community.
- Provided resources to educate and engage young people on Australia's involvement in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations, including the Postcards of Honour and Draw to Remember initiatives, connecting younger Australians to the veteran legacy on the Western Front.
- Continued to partner with the Premier's Anzac Prize, which provided opportunities for Queensland students and teachers to explore the ANZAC story and legacy.
- Collaborated with other RSL State Branches to deliver commemorative campaigns that expanded national engagement with the ANZAC spirit.

*Rosewood RSL Sub Branch 2025 ANZAC Day service.*



## Camaraderie

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

- Continued to support the RSL Queensland League through opportunities that fostered camaraderie and connection within communities, building networks that boosted wellbeing and practical support.
- Delivered a digital, online membership form for prospective new members, enabling a seamless online application.
- Facilitated and delivered State Congress with more than 170 delegates in attendance, sharing insights and member-centered outcomes.
- Identified and commenced implementation of an improved League support model.
- Redeveloped the existing online information portal, improving Sub Branch and District access to up-to-date operational information.

*Geebung Zillmere Bald Hills Aspley RSL Sub Branch President Denis Webb and Vice President Ross Davis.*



# OUR IMPACT

## 2025 at a glance

RSL Queensland is here to support veterans and their families every step of the way by providing care, commemoration and camaraderie. In 2025, we delivered a range of impactful services and programs, marked commemorative events and fostered strong member networks that provided practical support in real and meaningful ways.

### Care

 7,563

**veterans and their families** supported by our services to improve their health and wellbeing

 267

**jobs** secured for veterans and their partners in meaningful employment

 7,112

**enquiries handled**, referring veterans and their families to services that meet their needs

 5,293

**claims and appeals** submitted to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

 4,670

**individuals welcomed and supported** across our Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres in Brisbane, Cairns, Darwin, Ipswich, the Sunshine Coast and Townsville

 227

**veterans and families housed** in safe, permanent accommodation they can call home

 2,240

**veterans and their families** signed up to our online learning programs to improve their health and wellbeing

 600

**Christmas hampers delivered** to veterans and their families across Queensland, the Northern Territory and Tasmania

 4,200

**physical rehabilitation sessions** provided to Mates4Mates clients to improve injury recovery and wellbeing

 5,904

**mental health appointments** provided to Mates4Mates clients to help improve their quality of life

“

They've provided me with services that I didn't even realise I needed. It really helped me get started on the right career path and secure a role that I take great satisfaction in.”

*Veteran*



“

It's knowing how the claim impacts the veteran's life as a whole, gives them recognition for their service and has flow-on effects for their whole family, bettering their lives too.”

*RSL Queensland  
Compensation Advocate*



The veteran experience is unique and there's often unsaid understandings between those who have served. So, being able to connect with like-minded people helps us navigate post-service life."

*Veteran*



For me, ANZAC Day means remembering past conflicts and showing respect and gratitude to those who didn't make it home, but also connecting with those still with us, as we all share a common interest and camaraderie."

*Veteran*

## Commemoration

 12

**commemorative days** marked to honour veterans, including ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day

 1,114

**Sub Branch commemorative services and events** held across Queensland to connect communities

 24,000

**students involved** in the Postcards of Honour initiative, facilitated by Sub Branches across 228 schools

 21,660

**students involved** in the Draw to Remember initiative, facilitated by Sub Branches across 214 schools

 \$1m

**in commemorative merchandise funding made available**, supporting Sub Branch fundraising for local veteran initiatives

## Camaraderie

 633,464

**volunteering hours** contributed by members to support veterans and their families

 830

**veterans and family members** participated in RSL Peer-Led Programs to strengthen wellbeing through shared experience

 378

**people participated** in 12 RSL Rec Connect events to boost connection through meaningful activities

 \$1m

**in grants** allocated to Sub Branches for capital works projects

 35,512

**total members** across RSL Queensland Sub Branches

# Financial highlights

**RSL Queensland finished 2025 in a solid financial position as we continued to deliver accessible veteran services and programs across Queensland and nationally, while enhancing service delivery and support to the League.**

Positioning to serve the veteran community securely into the future meant delivering an aligned and integrated operating model to provide services, programs and recognition to veterans and their families over the long-term, through care, commemoration and camaraderie.

This included transitioning Mates4Mates to a business unit of RSL Queensland to optimise clinical services, resources and opportunities directly in line with the needs of veterans and their families. We also collaborated with other RSL State Branches on strengthening connections and progressing a more cohesive national support model to deliver a seamless experience and wraparound support across the country.

Commercial activities continued to evolve throughout 2025, with investment in the growth of the Dream Home Art Union through prize enhancements and a re-imagined VIP membership strategy. Supported by investment in systems and capability, the Dream Home Art Union delivered on customer expectations and expanded its reach into new markets – positioning the lottery for positive future growth.

RSL Queensland will continue to invest in its prize line up, systems and operations to drive long-term success and growth of the Dream Home Art Union. Our goal to provide sustainable funding for veteran services also drives further revenue diversification strategies, to ensure we can support veterans and their families now and into the future.

Our financial position in 2025 remained strong, with 98.8% of charitable funds being utilised in 2025.

 **98.8%**

of available funding, supporting our Charitable Objects, was directed towards **investment in leading health and wellbeing support, advocacy, partner programs, education, research, and social and community services** for veterans and their families.

 **\$23.3M**

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

 **\$13.8M**

delivered by RSL Queensland in donations and sponsorships, appropriate to our charitable Objects, that provided support and direct relief to veterans and their families.





“Mateship means unconditionally accepting everyone. Regardless of background, whether you’ve been to war, or you haven’t been to war, it doesn’t matter whether you’re in the Army or the Navy, or the Air Force. All that matters is that you put on the uniform of the nation and you served.”

**Major General  
Stephen Day DSC AM**  
*State President, RSL Queensland*

# ABOUT US



**Care is what we do,  
commemoration is how we  
remember, and camaraderie is  
who we are at the core.**

# Who we are

**Supporting veterans and their families is why RSL Queensland exists. It's why we started, why we've grown and why we build connections that support veterans and their families beyond service.**

We have supported the veteran and Defence community in Queensland since 1916. Each year, we build on this proud legacy by connecting, advocating for and uplifting veterans and their families so they feel supported, recognised and connected.

Through the tenets of care, commemoration and camaraderie, we support veterans' and their families' wellbeing, recognise and advocate for the exceptional skills and values veterans bring to our society, and nurture the deep and enduring ties created through service.

RSL Queensland serves those who served their country. Wherever Queensland veterans and their families live, there is a welcoming network of local Sub Branches to belong to, with opportunities to give back, find purpose, connect and receive support.

Care is what we do, commemoration is how we remember, and camaraderie is who we are at the core. Queensland is proudly home to the largest veteran community in the country, and we deliver impactful programs and services while investing in a business model that sustainably funds future growth.

Our growing network of Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres across Queensland and the Northern Territory connects veterans and their families to integrated, evidence-informed clinical and wellbeing support.

Alongside this, our digital programs improve access to practical services and support for veterans nationally. At the heart of our

community, Sub Branches foster connection and camaraderie, providing welcoming spaces where veterans and their families can belong, contribute and support one another.

As in the Defence Force, every role is vital – from dedicated members across Sub Branches and Districts, to veterans leading programs that support others' wellbeing, and the RSL Queensland employees who make this work possible. Every contribution helps improve outcomes for veterans and uphold our proud legacy.

Remembrance is central to our role as custodians of commemoration. RSL Queensland honours all veterans and their families, recognising the evolving nature of service in war and peace, at home and abroad. We engage the broader community, connect generations and foster the enduring ANZAC spirit in all Australians.

# Our Objects

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

## **RSL Queensland Objects:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

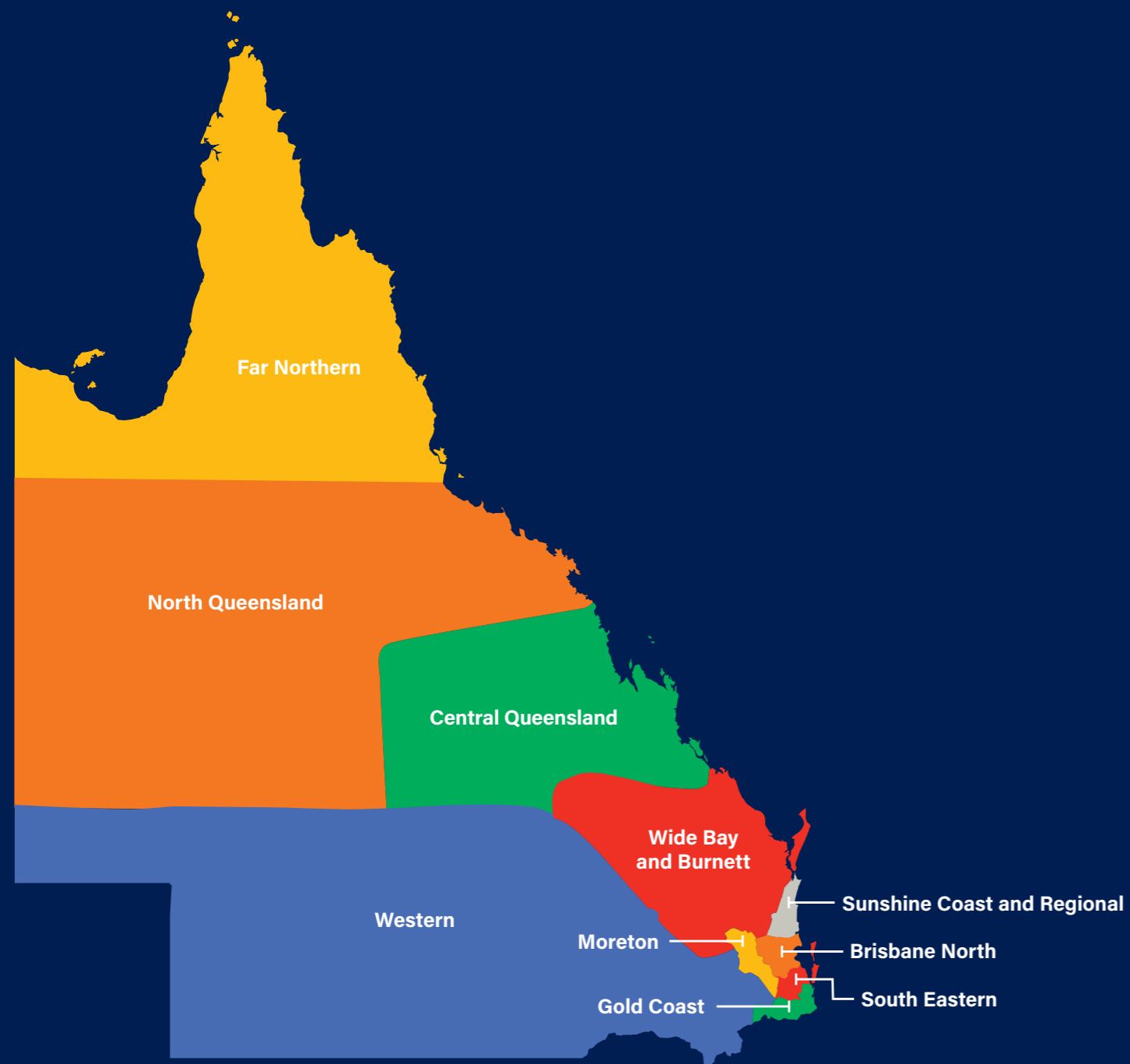
*Toowong RSL Sub Branch member Brian Venz and Yeronga RSL Sub Branch member Nick Dubravcic.*

# Districts and Sub Branches

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

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

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



## Brisbane North District

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

## Central Queensland District

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

## Far Northern District

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

## Gold Coast District

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

## Moreton District

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

## North Queensland District

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

## South Eastern District

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

## Sunshine Coast and Regional District

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

## Western District

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

## Wide Bay and Burnett District

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

Map not to scale. Information correct as of May 2026.



“As we continue to lead service delivery, it is important for us, our veteran and family clients, and those who engage with us to know that we have the governance in place to offer safe and reliable services.”

**Robert Skoda**  
CEO, RSL Queensland

# DELIVERING **IMPACTFUL** VETERAN OUTCOMES

“Care is how RSL Queensland shows up for veterans and their families, with practical support, connection and services that respond to their needs.”

**Troy Watson**  
Deputy CEO - Veteran Services,  
RSL Queensland



Care

**Caring for the welfare and interests of the veteran community is at the heart of RSL Queensland’s mission. We provide veterans and their families with tailored programs and services across the veteran support ecosystem.**

**In 2025, we connected 7,563 veterans and their families with impactful services and programs that helped them in real and meaningful ways.**

RSL Queensland’s programs and partnerships are designed to promote physical and mental wellness, open doors to employment and connection, and provide opportunities for positive futures.

Throughout 2025, RSL Queensland supported veterans and their families with everything from DVA claims assistance and career guidance to health and wellbeing services and opportunities for social connection. Accreditation of RSL Queensland’s veteran support services against the QIC Health and Community Services Standards continued.

#### **Expanding Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres across the state**

RSL Queensland’s network of Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres (VFWCs) are dedicated to improving the lives of veterans, current serving Defence members, and their families. In 2025, our Centres continued to offer specialist support and expert advice from a variety of organisations, and social opportunities – all under one roof.

The Centres take a holistic approach, bringing together services from RSL Queensland, Mates4Mates and other organisations – including veteran-focused health services – to deliver comprehensive support for veterans and their families in convenient locations. This includes support with DVA claims, health and wellbeing, employment or connecting through tailored programs or activities.

As our network of Centres grows, so does their impact. There was a 3.9% increase in people supported in 2025, with 4,670 people checking into our centres in Brisbane, Cairns, Darwin, Ipswich, the Sunshine Coast and Townsville.





RSL Queensland Deputy CEO – Veteran Services Troy Watson, Wendy Bourne MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh MP, Shayne Neumann MP, and Ipswich Mayor Teresa Harding at the VFWC announcement in August 2025.

### RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre Ipswich

In 2024, the Department of Veterans' Affairs announced \$5.445 million funding for a Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Ipswich. In August 2025, the exact location of the Centre at 260 Brisbane Street, West Ipswich was announced.

The Centre will include both RSL Queensland and Mates4Mates services and support more than 14,000 current and ex-serving Defence members and their families in the Ipswich area.

RSL Queensland's veteran service teams will provide specialist case work, advocacy,

housing assistance and financial programs, alongside Mates4Mates mental health and physical rehabilitation services, and skills-based recovery programs.

The Centre will complement RSL Queensland's growing network, including self-funded centres in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and on the Sunshine Coast.

Renovations to the Ipswich VFWC began in November 2025, with the doors set to open in 2026.

**“Ipswich is home to a large population of current and ex-serving members and their families, with RAAF Base Amberley nearby, and we’re looking forward to delivering a Centre that will allow us to expand our services and support for the veteran and Defence community in the region.”**

**Troy Watson**  
Deputy CEO – Veteran Services,  
RSL Queensland



**“The Hub means they’ll get the right support, closer to home, when they need it, delivered in a way that works with the local community. That could mean social connectivity, wellbeing support, physical rehabilitation or a combination of all three, all under one roof.”**

**Hon Matt Keogh MP**  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs



Minister for Veterans' Affairs the Hon Matt Keogh MP speaks with guests at the Ipswich VFWC announcement in August 2025.

## Health

### RSL Peer-Led Programs strengthen wellbeing

More than 850 veterans and their families strengthened their wellbeing through shared experiences as part of RSL Peer-Led Programs in 2025.

These evidence-based programs delivered real, measurable health and wellbeing benefits, and were delivered through partnerships with 13 organisations: Diggers Rest, Dig In Health, Griffith University, Happy Paws Happy Hearts, Operation PTSD Support, PTSD Resurrected – REBOOT Recovery, Queensland Ballet, Raemus Rover, Trojan's Trek, Survive to

Thrive Nation, Veterans Care Association – Timor Awakening and Waves of Wellness Foundation. Two of these partnerships – Griffith University and Queensland Ballet – were introduced in 2025.

In 2025, veterans and their families accessed a wide range of impactful programs – from nutrition literacy and therapeutic dance to relationship-building through animal training. Each program was designed to build practical skills and meaningful experiences, supporting participants to achieve and maintain positive wellbeing.



### RSL Be:Well improves health online, anytime

RSL Be:Well, our free, online program, contains helpful information and resources backed by findings from Gallipoli Medical Research. It's designed to support veterans' physical, mental and emotional health in an accessible online format.

In 2025, RSL Be:Well moved beyond its pilot phase and expanded its offering to the veteran community with four new modules: Be:Across Anxiety, Be:Exercise Inspired, Be:Healthcare Informed, and Be:A Supportive Mate. The program also grew its reach, gaining exposure through Run Army and ESO Forums.

That same year, RSL Be:Well was recognised at the Personal Injury Education Foundation (PIEF) Conference 2025 for its innovative contribution to rehabilitation – specifically its use as a culturally competent wellbeing resource helping practitioners support veterans with complex health concerns.

It was also a landmark year for growth, with usage up 400% and more than 2,240 veterans and their families signing up for online learning modules nationally.

# Be there to support your mates.



**“Timor Awakening was one of the best experiences of my life. I could not believe the change in my body and my brain after the program.”**

**Lily Mulholland**  
Veteran and Timor Awakening program participant

*Veterans Care Association President Michael Stone, veteran and Timor Awakening program participant Lily Mulholland and program senior mentor Pete Parton, a former Army commander and trainer.*

**RSL**  
**Be:Well**  
VETERAN WELLBEING ONLINE

### Incarcerated Veterans Program restores service values

Our national-first Incarcerated Veterans Program, run in partnership with The Eighth Mile Consulting, supported 61 participants in 2025.

Since 2023, 12 programs delivered across correctional facilities in Townsville, Woodford, Wolston, Lotus Glen and Maryborough have reached incarcerated veterans throughout Queensland.

In July 2025, Troy Watson RSL Queensland Deputy CEO – Veteran Services announced that the program would expand to additional facilities across Queensland.

The accredited five-day, peer-led desistance support program reconnects veterans with their service values and support. Delivered by fellow veterans, the program fosters positive behavioural change. Participants overwhelmingly report an improved mindset from the experience.

RSL Queensland is also working to increase service accessibility for incarcerated veterans re-entering the community.

**“The pilot program was a crucial step in identifying an initiative that aims to reduce recidivism amongst incarcerated veterans, and ultimately, remind them of the values that were once instilled in them during Defence.”**

**Troy Watson**  
*Deputy CEO – Veteran Services,  
RSL Queensland*

**“This is a fantastic program, and I wish it could be delivered to everyone. Thank you for changing my life.”**

*Incarcerated Veterans  
Program participant*



RSL Queensland has partnered with The Eighth Mile Consulting to offer the Incarcerated Veterans Program to veterans across the state.



### Run Army strengthens ties between Defence and the Australian community

Run Army reached record-breaking scale in 2025, with more than 10,600 participants across two physical events – Brisbane and Townsville – and a virtual event. Participants walked or ran 5 or 10kms to support Defence members, veterans, first responders and their families.

Run Army is proudly presented by RSL Queensland, supporting the Army and ADF’s commitment to resilience, health and wellbeing. Despite torrential rain in Brisbane, a record 7,651 participants took part. Townsville, where the event began in 2022, also saw its largest turnout of 3,000 people. Additional participants from around the world joined via the virtual event.

Run Army 2025 raised more than \$210,000 for Legacy, Queensland Police Legacy, The Firefighter Cancer Foundation, QAS Legacy, The SES Gift Fund, and The Surf Life Saving Foundation.

# MATES 4 MATES

Here for those impacted by service.



**Mates4Mates was established by RSL Queensland in 2013 to support the wellbeing of current and ex-serving ADF members and their families. In 2025, Mates4Mates and RSL Queensland formally integrated, creating a unified force for veteran wellbeing.**

## Outstanding clinical care

For more than a decade, Mates4Mates has been delivering impactful support services to veterans and their families navigating the physical and psychological challenges of service.

In 2025, Mates4Mates supported 3,240 veterans and family members across Australia. This included 5,904 mental health appointments to improve the quality of life of those impacted by service and 4,200 physical rehabilitation sessions to aid injury recovery and wellbeing.

The Mates4Mates Skills for Recovery Program ran 343 sessions in 2025, helping participants build crucial coping strategies. Beyond short-term recovery, Mates4Mates' holistic programs create opportunities for veterans and their families to develop the skills needed to manage their health and wellbeing now, and into the future.

Veterans and their families also participated in 2,973 social activities, strengthening social connections.

## Transitioning Mates4Mates into RSL Queensland

Mates4Mates is a registered charity that seeks to improve the lives of current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, and their families, impacted by service.

During 2025, the operational activities of Mates4Mates transitioned to a business unit of RSL Queensland, enabling a fully integrated portfolio of services for veterans and families.

This transition was designed to improve both our capability and capacity to provide services that are in increasing demand.

RSL Queensland delivers advocacy and essential services, and Mates4Mates provides clinical support, in dedicated, co-located spaces. Working together for veterans under this streamlined governance model delivers integrated support for veterans and their families.

“

**We know our systems can be more efficient, and we must connect more closely with veterans and local support networks. Some changes have already taken place, including Mates4Mates joining RSL Queensland, streamlining governance and improving access to support.”**

**Major General Stephen Day DSC AM**  
*State President, RSL Queensland*

**“The integration of Mates4Mates' clinical services allows us to further expand our offering and continue our ongoing support for veterans and their families.”**

**Troy Watson**  
*Deputy CEO - Veteran Services,*  
*RSL Queensland*



## Social support

### RSL Rec Connect creates connection through activities

RSL Rec Connect helped 378 people build healthy, positive social connections in 2025 – a 4% increase in participation compared to the previous year – with 70% of participants engaging with the program for the first time.

Across the year, 12 events were held in eight locations throughout Queensland, including our Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Brisbane. Veterans and their families enjoyed a diverse calendar of free recreational activities – from creative workshops and outdoor adventures to crafts, guided tours and excursions. Highlights included woodcarving, terrarium making and camel riding, all designed to help participants try something new, meet new people and connect with RSL Queensland services.



**“After the intense environment of the military, these events give people a chance to have a feel-good experience. They’re a great place, a great environment.”**

**Steve Bain**

*Army veteran and  
RSL Rec Connect participant*

## Justice and safety

### Advocacy guides veterans through DVA claims and appeals

RSL Queensland’s free advocacy service helps veterans and their families navigate the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) process by providing support online, in person and by phone. In 2025, more than 65 highly trained Compensation Advocates were employed by RSL Queensland, with a further 124 Advocates practising in Sub Branches, across 12 locations in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

RSL Queensland Compensation Advocates worked alongside applicants, establishing the details of each claim, undertaking research, completing paperwork and lodging claims. Advocates maintained contact with applicants throughout the process. If a claim was unsuccessful, Advocates helped veterans understand the decision, offering support with appeals and Administrative Tribunal Hearings when needed.

This advocacy work resulted in 5,293 claims and appeals being submitted to DVA by RSL Queensland on behalf of veterans, their partners and their dependents in 2025, and many more submitted through Advocates in Sub Branches across the state.

**“I think the best thing you can do is make the phone call and organise to have a chat with an advocate. It’s not only what’s best for you, but also what’s best for your family.”**

**Rebecca Connolly**  
*Navy veteran*



## Education and skills

### Building futures through career development

RSL Queensland provides tailored career development support designed to help veterans and their partners build meaningful, sustainable careers in the civilian workforce.

In 2025, our career development support helped 111 veterans and family members to identify goals, understand job prospects,

study or training requirements, navigate the job market and find a rewarding career path that optimises job satisfaction and work-life balance.

This approach helped people build a clear direction towards a new career or develop plans to re-enter the workforce with information, clarity and confidence.

## Employment

### RSL Employment Program turns career goals into outcomes

The RSL Employment Program continued to help veterans and their families find meaningful employment in 2025. More than 267 jobs were secured for veterans and their partners, assisting with translating military skills for the civilian job market, crafting resumes and applications.

The RSL Employment Program supported veteran job seekers through its online jobs board, showcasing 751 unique roles across multiple industries with employers who value the skills, experience, and contributions veterans bring to their communities.

Brady Knox-Horton experienced the positive outcomes of the RSL Employment Program firsthand. Brady joined the Army straight out of school, and when he left six years later, was unsure of his next direction. The RSL Employment Program team set him up for success with support throughout the process of applying for an apprenticeship with Energy Queensland. Brady credits their help with securing his apprenticeship and long-term career.



“

**Anyone who is ex-Defence and looking for another career or apprenticeship should go through the RSL Employment Program, especially if they’re a bit older. For a mature-age apprentice like me, that support you’re provided with throughout the application process is so important.”**

**Brady Knox-Horton**  
*Army veteran*

## Wellbeing

RSL Queensland's holistic approach to support recognises that wellbeing spans every aspect of a person's life. Through case management, our Wellbeing team works alongside veterans and their families to understand their unique circumstances, challenges and goals.

In 2025, the team supported veterans and their families across a broad range of needs, including housing, finances, physical and mental health, employment and community connection. From short-term assistance to longer-term plans, the Wellbeing team remained committed to building stability, resilience and brighter futures for those who have served.



## Housing

### **Veteran Homelessness Program provides safe, stable accommodation**

In 2025, RSL Queensland's Wellbeing and Veteran Homelessness Program delivered comprehensive case management to 227 veterans experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their housing. The Program provided holistic support to address the underlying factors contributing to housing insecurity – including employment, health and financial challenges.

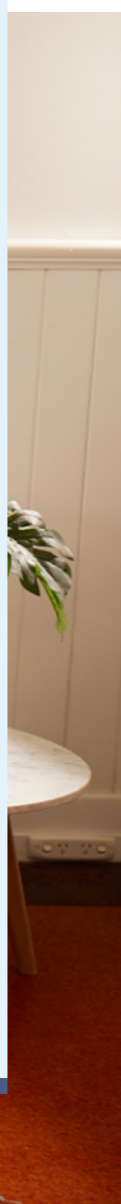
Our team worked with veterans and their immediate household (partners and dependent children) to:

- connect with emergency accommodation services
- navigate housing and homelessness support systems
- access crisis accommodation where available
- develop longer-term housing pathways through external housing providers.

### **Independent living provides affordable housing**

RSL Queensland continued providing veterans and their families with a range of affordable, long-term housing options in 2025. Independent living locations were available across the state to those who could live independently.

From Ayr to Cairns, RSL Queensland provided 125 housing units in 2025. Accommodation was allocated on a need's basis, with consideration given to financial circumstances.



## Income and finance

### **Emergency financial support meets essential needs**

In 2025, RSL Queensland supported veterans in need with \$1.28 million in emergency financial assistance, helping cover essential living costs such as groceries, transport, rent and bills.

Multiple factors can contribute to financial stress, and veterans receive ongoing assistance including emergency accommodation and referrals to other specialist services.

### **Financial counselling builds skills and confidence**

Veterans were connected to qualified financial counselling and financial education in 2025 through RSL Queensland's partnership with Bravery Trust.

Bravery Trust provided tailored solutions that helped Queensland veterans acquire new skills and confidence to better manage their finances moving forward, and professional advice to navigate issues with banks, landlords or debtors.



## Recognition and respect

### **Funerals and poppy services honour every veteran**

When a veteran passes, RSL Queensland is privileged to honour their service and support those they leave behind. In 2025, RSL Sub Branches across Queensland continued to offer free poppy services as part of veterans' funerals – a moving tribute that farewells the veteran and recognises their service to our nation. These ceremonies are available to any person who served in the ADF, whether or not they were a member of RSL Queensland.

For veterans with no known relatives, RSL Queensland continued to arrange dignified funeral services, attended by Sub Branch or RSL District representatives, ensuring no veteran was farewelled alone.



### **Bereavement and family support helps families through loss**

Throughout 2025, RSL Queensland supported families who lost a loved one who served in the Defence Force, providing emergency financial assistance if needed and guidance on compensation and entitlements through our Compensation Advocates.

We connected bereaved families with our partners at Legacy to ensure ongoing support during this difficult time.

# 13-year partnership driving veteran health outcomes

Leading independent medical research institute Gallipoli Medical Research (GMR) and RSL Queensland have a partnership that is driven by the shared purpose of improving the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families through evidence-based research and practical solutions.

## Quality of Life Research Program finalised

In 2025, GMR completed the five-year Quality of Life Research Program in partnership with RSL Queensland. The program addressed critical knowledge gaps and delivered practical, translational solutions to improve the wellbeing of veterans and their families. In its final year, the research focused on polypharmacy, veteran families in transition, and the spillover effects on families where a veteran requires informal care.

Research findings have already been translated into world-first tools and programs including the online learning program RSL Be:Well. In 2025, GMR research informed the creation of four new RSL Be:Well modules, including Be:A Supportive Mate.

This module resonated strongly with users due to its relevance to the lived experience of the veteran community and the crucial role camaraderie plays in positive transition. RSL Be:Well engaged more than 2,750 users in 2025, providing a vital resource that bridges health and connection to support holistic wellbeing.

## Improving veteran transitions

In February 2025, GMR and RSL Queensland co-hosted an event at Australian Parliament House in Canberra, to showcase the world-first transition tools, critical veteran research, and holistic support for veterans and their families made possible through the partnership. The event brought together government, Defence and DVA

representatives to highlight the partnership's impact and ongoing commitment to improving veteran transitions.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide referenced transition tools developed through the partnership, including M-CARM, MT-Ready and Go Beyond, as key resources addressing reintegration challenges.



**It's the translation of our world-leading research for meaningful impact that defines the GMR and RSL Queensland partnership. Research must not sit on a shelf. It must be implemented, evaluated and refined so that it genuinely improves lives – and that is what we are most of proud of at GMR, that we are supporting better health outcomes for our veteran community."**

**Miriam Kent**  
CEO, Gallipoli Medical Research



Gallipoli Medical Research and RSL Queensland co-hosted an event at Parliament House in Canberra. *Above:* From left, Legacy Brisbane CEO Brendan Cox, GMR Board Member Dr Bernadette Boss CSC, Ramsay Health Care Australia Chief Medical Officer and GMR Board Member Dr Robert Herkes, GMR CEO Miriam Kent, GMR Patron The Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, Greenslopes Private Hospital CEO Justin Greenwell, GMR Patron Emeritus Prof John Pearn AO GCStJ RFD and RSL Queensland CEO Robert Skoda. *Below left:* GMR Board Member Dr Bernadette Boss CSC and RSL Queensland CEO Rob Skoda. *Below right:* DVA Repatriation Commissioner Kahlil Fegan DSC AM and RSL Queensland General Manager of Partnerships and Engagement Katie Maloney.



“Our Sub Branches have done an outstanding job in rebuilding the services and marches that the pandemic largely put on hold for a few years. This year, across Queensland, the League held more than 500 services - more than in living memory. This is a testament to their determination to ensure the community commemorated, together.”

*Major General  
Stephen Day DSC AM  
State President, RSL Queensland*

# Commemoration

RSL Queensland is proudly the custodian of commemorations across the state. In 2025, working with Districts, Sub Branches and members, we helped bring veterans and their communities together to mark key commemorative events, ensuring the legacy of service endures across generations.

Throughout the year, Sub Branches hosted 1,114 commemorative services and events across Queensland. Several significant milestones made commemorations more poignant than ever, while creative ways to commemorate engaged people of all ages in remembering and honouring all those who have served and continue to serve.

## Bringing the ANZAC spirit to life

ANZAC Day 2025 marked 110 years since the Gallipoli landings in 1915. The tradition of rising early for the Dawn Service has been passed down through generations of Australians, and more than 500 moving commemorative events were hosted by RSL Sub Branches across Queensland on 25 April.

ANZAC Day honours all those who have served in every conflict and peacekeeping mission. In 2025, Australians were encouraged to connect with the core values of courage, mateship and sacrifice through the theme ‘That’s the ANZAC spirit.’

Partnerships with Queensland-based national sporting teams the Gold Coast Suns (AFL) and Queensland Reds (Rugby Union) supported commemorative initiatives during their respective ANZAC rounds, helping bring the ANZAC spirit to wider audiences.

This reach was further strengthened through the generous support of the Outdoor Media Association, which enabled the ANZAC spirit campaign to be shared nationwide through billboards and digital signage in shopping and transit centres. At the same time, Sub Branches collaborated with sporting and community groups in their local areas to mark ANZAC Day.

The Postcards of Honour initiative brought children and veterans together, with members from 53 Sub Branches visiting 228 schools to share the significance of ANZAC Day. More than 24,000 students created illustrated postcards with messages of thanks to veterans, an increase of 14% from the previous year.

“

A Dawn Service is a quiet and sombre time of day to reflect. We can appreciate, while remembering, what it must have been like for those on the frontline not knowing what they were charging into.. To me, ANZAC spirit has become a part of our national identity.”

**Gillian Bryant**  
*Cairns RSL Sub Branch Vice President*





RSL Queensland's Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony was held in Cairns on 31 May 2025.



**Our next leaders in some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities are going to be ex-service people, and they've got all the qualities of leadership. My vision is to support those and all young people."**

**Uncle Phillip Bowie**

*Royal Australian Navy Indigenous Elder*



Royal Australian Navy Indigenous Elder Uncle Phillip Bowie and Cairns RSL Sub Branch President Nathan Shingles.

### Recognising service at the Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony

To recognise the legacy of the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who served their country, RSL Queensland's Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony was again held to coincide with National Reconciliation Week.

The Indigenous Veterans' Ceremony was held in Cairns in 2025, for the second year running. Keynote speaker was Uncle Phillip Bowie, one of the first Torres Strait Islanders to join the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) during the Vietnam War in 1965. He followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, who served in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion fighting the Japanese during World War II, and his father and uncle, who supported the Battalion by transporting water to Horn Island.

Uncle Phillip recently served as one of the Navy's first Indigenous elders, mentoring several Indigenous groups within the ADF and sharing his passion for serving and protecting country, while maintaining cultural identity.

### Marking the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific

"The war is over!" are words 99-year-old veteran Leslie Sinclair will never forget his comrades yelling, as they ran up the beach in Balikpapan. It was 15 August 1945, the 20-year-old had served two years and lost half his brigade in battle.

The 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific in 2025 honoured the declining number of World War II veterans like Leslie. Around Queensland, numerous Sub Branches held wreath-laying ceremonies acknowledging the 17,000 Australians who died in the Pacific War.

In Brisbane, historians shared stories of 'spontaneous celebrations' in the streets, while Townsville hosted a three-day commemorative program. At the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka), RSL Queensland organised a special VP80 display where State President Major General Stephen Day DSC AM spoke about the Showgrounds' wartime role and the 1945 peace celebrations.

**"Oh, the mateship you had – you never forget them. I would serve my country again if I had to.. There's now two of us left from the battalion, so I think it's important for people to know our story."**

**Leslie Sinclair**

*WWII veteran and Townsville RSL Sub Branch member*



### Queensland unites on Vietnam Veterans' Day

On 18 August 2025, the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, communities across Queensland marked Vietnam Veterans' Day to remember the courage of more than 60,000 Australians who served.

At Brisbane's Vietnam Veterans' Day service, the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, reflected on the "bravery and dedication of all who served", acknowledging their immense contributions, the hardships they faced, and extending gratitude to Vietnam veterans and their families for their ongoing work in the community.



**"It's important to commemorate the commitment and lives lost during the Vietnam War..mateship and trust in another was most important. You never wore badges of rank or anything; you just locked in and helped each other no matter what."**

**Greg Gilbert DSM**

*Clayfield-Toombul RSL Sub Branch member*

## Remembering to Remember

In 2025, more than 165 RSL Sub Branches held Remembrance Day services across Queensland. In the lead-up, RSL Queensland invited the public to visit Anzac Square to view a projection of falling poppies illuminated on Brisbane's Shrine of Remembrance and place a poppy in tribute to those who lost their lives in service.

On 11 November, RSL Queensland organised the official Brisbane city service at Anzac Square, bringing together an estimated 1,500 veterans, families, dignitaries and members of the public for a formal commemoration.

Sporting clubs also helped amplify the campaign across their social media channels, with more than a dozen clubs – including Brisbane Heat, Brisbane Lions, Netball Queensland, Queensland Firebirds and the NRL – sharing our Remember to Remember message, contributing to a 91% increase in campaign reach. Further support included in-stadium promotion, media coverage and a fundraising contribution to the Poppy Appeal.

Student participation in Draw to Remember grew by 52% in 2025, reaching 21,660 students across 214 schools. More than 50 Sub Branches visited schools to share stories of service with the next generation. Students then created large-scale chalk murals on footpaths and courtyards, forming living memorials.



**"I just love that it's a way of connecting people, which is so important. All these poppies have come from so many other communities, and are all sewn into one. It gives you this physical reminder that you're part of one community."**

**Andrew Law**  
*Sandgate RSL Sub Branch Secretary*

A partnership between Sandgate RSL Sub Branch and the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA) brought a creative remembrance initiative to life in 2025, supported by thousands of poppy knitters across the country.

Led by Anne Jenkins, the project received more than 4,000 poppies, brought the community together and captured the imagination of children, who learnt the significance of the poppy.



## Premier's Anzac Prize brings history to life

The Premier's Anzac Prize, proudly sponsored by RSL Queensland, takes Queensland students on a tour of the UK, France and Belgium retracing ANZAC history. In 2025, the group travelled during the 110th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, attending a moving Dawn Service at Villers-Bretonneux.

The winners, from a range of State, Catholic and independent schools, also attended a workshop in Brisbane with the State Library of Queensland to research untold soldiers' stories and participated in a 'white gloves experience' with rare journals and trench art.

Alongside their learning, students fundraised for Mates4Mates, fostering the understanding that the ANZAC legacy continues today, through our services to support veterans returning from more recent conflicts.



**"Before we left, we knew about the First World War from history books, our grandparents, teachers and commemorations. These past two weeks have transformed something we knew into something we could feel."**

**Morgan**  
*2025 Premier's Anzac Prize  
teacher chaperone*





“Strengthening our focus on simple, effective governance, not governance for it’s own sake, will create more time and capacity for members and committees to concentrate on the work that matters most.”

**Iain Carty CSM**  
*State Secretary, RSL Queensland*

# Camaraderie

*Toowong RSL Sub Branch members.*

Every day, across the state, camaraderie can be seen in action through the efforts of dedicated members of RSL Queensland Districts and Sub Branches. Veterans find many unique ways to show up for themselves and each other - from endurance challenges and sporting achievements to fundraising events and journeys of commemoration.

At its heart, this is about continuing to serve - showing up for one another, offering support when it’s needed most and creating moments of connection that can brighten a day. It’s veterans and their families coming together, looking out for each other and inspiring others to do the same.

## Record-breaking swim honours comrades

*Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch  
Brisbane North District*

Imagine swimming the English Channel backwards, just legs and fins, against the tide. That’s where Royal Australian Navy veteran and Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch member Ashley Semmens was in June 2025, determined to be the first person to ‘fin’ across the channel for his comrades.

Four years earlier, Ash had been medically discharged after 18 years as a clearance diver. To get out of what became a ‘dark point’ in his life, Ash volunteered with the Navy Clearance Diver Trust (NCDT).

Seeing fellow veterans’ struggles inspired him to take on a big challenge in their name. Ash not only raised \$150,000 for NCDT, but inspired many others to find purpose through giving back.



Find your purpose and whatever it takes, make it happen.. healing is possible, and we can heal ourselves.”

**Ashley Semmens**  
*Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch member*





### Meals make a real difference

*Mirani RSL Sub Branch  
Central Queensland District*

Homelessness is a national crisis, and Mirani RSL Sub Branch President Bob England and fellow RSL members see the impact firsthand in their community. Bob and the members decided that supporting local not-for-profit service Chances House would be the best way to directly help those in the area doing it tough.

Chances House offers the region's only meal service, drop-in centre and healthcare program, which includes case management, healthcare assistance, storage lockers, essential items, internet and computer access, tea and coffee, a range of activities and much more.

Knowing the difference a hot meal can make, Mirani RSL Sub Branch held a raffle and other fundraising efforts throughout the year. They raised \$500 for food to donate to Chances House, which was gratefully received.

**“As RSL members, we see firsthand the challenges people in our community are facing. Supporting Chances House was a way for our Sub Branch to come together and make a practical difference, because something as simple as a hot meal can restore dignity, hope and connection.”**

**Bob England**  
*Mirani RSL Sub Branch President*



### Lost, but never forgotten

*Herberton RSL Sub Branch  
Far Northern District*

The town of Evelyn Scrub had a thriving agriculture and timber industry pre-1914, but when 41 men from the area enlisted to serve in WWI, the town lost 90% of its male population. Many never returned, or came home with illness and injury.

According to historian and Herberton RSL Sub Branch Treasurer Shaaron Lindwood, the town never recovered.

A cenotaph was erected around 1918, with brass plaques memorialising the local men who served. It now stands in a grassy paddock – all that's left of the original township.

To preserve this piece of history, Herberton and Ravenshoe RSL Sub Branches and Tableland Regional Council joined forces in 2025 to restore the monument, which is a focal point of remembrance for the surrounding community.

“

**“It's a reminder that sometimes, war can have an everlasting effect on communities and all we are left with are beautiful monuments like this one.”**

**Shaaron Lindwood**  
*Herberton RSL Sub Branch  
Treasurer and historian*

## Building community connection

Nerang RSL Sub Branch  
Gold Coast District

It's amazing what sharing a cuppa can do, especially with Nerang RSL Sub Branch member Nea Storan. Nea volunteers 40 hours a month across two Sub Branches; holding ladies' morning teas, coffee groups, and visiting the retirement villages of veterans and widows who can no longer attend meetings.

Nea has fond memories of serving in the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps, but recognises the vital need for ex-service organisations to support veterans and their families who are struggling. This dedication led her to work in the Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch welfare team, and recently into the role of Vice President of Welfare for the Gold Coast District Board.

Nea welcomes her new challenge and the opportunity to deepen her impact with the Queensland veterans' support network.

**"Bringing a bright spot to someone's day or helping them connect with others – that's what warms my heart and why I do it."**

**Nea Storan**  
Gold Coast District  
Vice President of Welfare



## Taking commemoration back to the battlefield

Kalbar RSL Sub Branch  
Moreton District

Researching diggers' stories is a passion for Kalbar RSL Sub Branch member Tony Young, who has written service biographies for over 30 years. When this work led him to meeting General Sir Peter Cosgrove at the Sydney Fromelles commemoration, Tony and fellow RSL member Stephen Pace were inspired to embark on a bigger pilgrimage.

The duo attended the Fromelles commemoration in France and then visited every Kalbar man buried or memorialised in France or Belgium. They also delivered RSL Queensland Coins of Appreciation to French museums, honouring the French citizens who ensured Australian's WWI contribution was remembered.

Walking through the graveyard after the Fromelles commemoration and reciting the Ode of Remembrance at VC Corner was a highlight of Tony's life.

**"Families would not have had the financial wherewithal to travel to France or Belgium to visit the graves back in the 1920s. There would be quite a number of men who have never had a visitor, so we laid poppies at their gravesites or on their memorial walls."**

**Tony Young**  
Kalbar RSL Sub Branch member



**"Given we've got veterans living across the country, it can be really hard to get a lot of people together at the same time to catch up. All Rwandan veterans trained here before deployment and for many of us, Townsville was where our military careers were shaped."**

**Colin Mosch**  
Townsville RSL Sub Branch President

## Rwanda veterans march together again

Townsville RSL Sub Branch  
North Queensland District

The Australian peacekeeping mission following the Rwandan Civil War is described as one of the most difficult ever undertaken. Over 600 Australian personnel from Army, Navy and Air Force were deployed to Rwanda to provide medical and humanitarian aid from August 1994 to 1995.

The two contingents of personnel overlapped in April 1995, making April 2025 a significant milestone for them to be reunited.

Rwanda veteran and Townsville RSL Sub Branch President Colin Mosch brought together veterans from across the country in Townsville, where all personnel were trained ahead of deployment. Through the support of Townsville RSL Sub Branch, a five-day reunion was held with multiple opportunities for veterans to reconnect.

Rwanda veterans led the ANZAC Day march through Townsville in a moving commemoration of their comradeship.

## Remembering the Korean War

Forest Lake and District RSL Sub Branch  
South Eastern District

Victor Jones was so determined to serve that he bypassed his father's refusal by securing a doctor's signature to join the Royal Australian Navy at 19. By 1952, he was a radar operator aboard HMAS Bataan, fighting in the Korean War. He endured freezing winters and survived a harrowing near miss when enemy fire struck the ship.

Victor enjoyed service, but medical discharge meant returning to civilian life. He found community and support at Forest Lake and District RSL Sub Branch.

As one of the last veterans of the Korean War, Victor believes Korean Veterans' Day on 27 July is vital to ensure that the over 18,000 Australians who served, in what is sometimes known as 'the forgotten war,' are always remembered.



**"It's important to have a specific commemoration for the Korean War; there's not many of us left."**

**Victor Jones**  
Forest Lake and District  
RSL Sub Branch member

## From tragedy to Invictus gold

Caloundra RSL Sub Branch  
Sunshine Coast and Regional District

During his military career as an avionics technician, Adam Jackson served two tours in Afghanistan, maintaining Chinook and Black Hawk helicopters. Life changed instantly in 2020, when a major stroke left him paralysed on his right side.

Forced into medical retirement, and told he may not walk again, the Caloundra RSL Sub Branch member took on adaptive sports as his recovery tool. Adam relearned to walk and talk, using his dream to represent Australia at the 2025 Invictus Games in Canada as the vital goal he needed.

Adam won two gold medals in indoor rowing, crediting victory to his wife and daughters – caregivers during his recovery. He often speaks about the ‘unconquerable’ character of the veteran community and uses his platform to mentor others.



**“You’ve got to keep moving. You’ve got to keep striving to be the best version of yourself for you and whoever’s there for you.”**

**Adam Jackson**  
Caloundra RSL Sub Branch member



## Jungle rescue leads to lifelong legacy

Miles RSL Sub Branch  
Western District

Commando Eric Geldard OAM turned 100 in 2025, after serving Miles RSL Sub Branch for eight decades, as president on multiple occasions. Eric helped establish the Miles War Memorial and war museum.

Eric counted himself as very fortunate to survive the war. While serving in New Guinea, weeks before the war ended, a bullet severed his femoral artery. Papuan carriers stretchered him 4,000 feet down the treacherous jungle track, saving his life.

A treasured memory for Eric was when 50 years later, at Townsville’s Victory in the Pacific commemorations, he had the chance to thank Raphael Oimbari, a representative of those Papuan carriers.

Eric celebrated his 100th birthday in January surrounded by family. He sadly passed away in March 2025 and will be greatly missed.

**“It was my parents’ belief that we should try to put something back into the community where we live.”**

**The late Eric Geldard OAM**  
Former Miles RSL Sub Branch President  
(1983-1985, 1998, 2000-2001 and 2015)

## Fostering purposeful community

Tiaro RSL Sub Branch  
Wide Bay and Burnett District

It’s all about giving back at Tiaro RSL Sub Branch, where Vice President Graeme Davis is proud to see the tightknit membership of 65 creating a powerful community support system.

Alongside his wife Heather, who is president of the local RSL Auxiliary, Graeme ensures the Sub Branch is a vibrant, inclusive hub. Fridays are social days with tea and cake for all members, providing a vital space for mateship and checks ins.

Graeme is always busy, whether planning fundraising events, driving veterans to medical appointments or doing grocery runs. He has spearheaded an initiative integrating community correction volunteers into Sub Branch activities, fostering lasting bonds and mutual respect.

What matters to Graeme is that everyone can enjoy the sense of purpose volunteering brings.

**“I thought it was a good time in my life to give back to an organisation that has given so much to me.”**

**Graeme Davis**  
Tiaro RSL Sub Branch Vice President



## Redefining the veteran narrative

RSL Queensland State Congress

More than 170 delegates from across Queensland came together to discuss the future of veteran support and camaraderie in their local communities at the 2025 RSL Queensland State Congress.

The annual event connects the League and member representatives, allowing them to network, learn and discuss important matters.

RSL Queensland State President Stephen Day DSC AM shared feedback from his conversations since the 2024 State Congress about how veterans want to define themselves. The overwhelming response was ‘with the truth’.

Stephen said most veterans benefit from their service, while some are impacted by it, and neither experience fully defines who they are. He proposed a ‘veteran’s creed’ to articulate that story for themselves.

During the Annual General Meeting, Arran Hassell CSC was newly appointed as State Vice President and Christopher Hamilton was re-appointed as Director.



**“For too long, the public narrative surrounding our community has been focused on struggle and the scars of service. While we will never stop supporting those in need, we must begin to project our strength. We are a community of competence and capability.”**

**Major General Stephen Day DSC AM**  
State President, RSL Queensland



### Bringing cheer with the Christmas hamper project

RSL Queensland State Branch

RSL Queensland delivered 600 Christmas hampers to the veteran community in 2025, sourced from local and veteran-owned businesses.

Giving back, from one veteran family to another, is what Mark Lang most enjoys about being part of the RSL Queensland Christmas hamper project.

Mark feels immense pride knowing his handcrafted sauces and relishes bring festive cheer to veterans' tables across the state.

Mark founded Lang's Gourmet in 2002 after serving nine years in the UK Armed Forces. What began as a small-scale venture grew into a nationally recognised brand that remains proudly Australian owned and operated.

One of many veteran-owned business products, Mark's chutney is handcrafted using local ingredients. Mark frequently employs fellow veterans and has built his business on the values of loyalty and sacrifice; deeply ingrained from his years of service.



**"You took me back a peg when my hamper arrived this morning. What a wonderful gesture - I am honestly gobsmacked with delight."**

**Veteran and Christmas hamper recipient**



**"It's an amazing achievement that RSL Queensland has had a magazine in publication for 100 years. It's important to understand where you came from because it helps you to know where you're going."**

**Robyn Hamilton**  
Lead of Collection Building and Interpretation  
at the State Library of Queensland

### Centenary of The Queensland Digger

RSL Queensland State Branch

According to our State President Stephen Day DSC AM our member magazine is "our voice – a platform to share stories, connect as a group and spread new ideas across this geographically large state."

In 2025, *The Queensland Digger* became the story; celebrating 100 years of a member publication still going strong, now as *Queensland RSL News*. The much-loved magazine is delivered from Thursday Island to Mount Isa and everywhere in between, and as part of the centenary all past copies have now been digitised by the State Library of Queensland.

The member magazine's longevity reflects the way it has evolved with the organisation. It has faithfully recorded history, while charting our course in a changing world. It also inspires action. When a great initiative from a Sub Branch or District is celebrated with an article in *Queensland RSL News*, it is swiftly adapted to benefit another community.

Everyone has a favourite section of the magazine. For Stephen Day it's the personal stories of our diverse veterans of all ages that "capture the values of mateship and service that run through each generation."



# Awards



**Awards play an essential role in recognising the dedication and service of RSL Queensland members.**

**Through the Australia Day Honours List, King's Birthday Honours List and RSL Awards, members are acknowledged for the many different ways they contribute, from leadership and advocacy to volunteering and community support.**

Nominations come from across the League, reflecting the breadth of service within the organisation.

These recognitions help maintain a thriving membership by celebrating commitment and strengthening connection.

They reinforce a culture where contribution is valued and genuinely rewarded.

Congratulations to all those whose hard work for the veteran community has been recognised. On behalf of RSL Queensland, we thank you for your commitment and care.

## Australia Day honours list

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

**Gary Lex Gibson**, Springfield Lakes, for service to veterans, and to the community.

**Jennifer Marian Waldron**, Bullyard, for service to veterans.

**Sean Mulqueen**, Founder and President of 42 for 42, for service to veterans and their families.

## The King's Birthday honours list

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

**Donald William Davey**, Kingaroy, for service to veterans and their families.

**David Draper**, Eagleby, for service to veterans.

**The late Neville Stanley Galbraith**, Deception Bay, for service to lawn bowls, and to veterans.

**Major David Bernard Melandri (Retd)**, Highfields, for service to veterans and their families, and to the community of Toowoomba.

**The late Ian William Rieck**, for service to veterans and their families.

**William Joseph Ross**, Carrara, for service to veterans and their families, and to the community.

**The late Jocelyn Anne Templeton**, Banyo, for service to veterans and their families, and to the community.

## RSL Awards

### Meritorious Service Medal

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

**Alan Harcourt** – Redlands RSL Sub Branch

**John Thompson OAM** – Stephens RSL Sub Branch

**Wayne Carter** – Yeppoon RSL Sub Branch

### Life Members

*The following members were awarded Life Membership in recognition of their dedication to the League:*

### Service Life Members

**Brian Avery** – Bray Park-Strathpine RSL Sub Branch

**Mark Berkovich** – Crows Nest RSL Sub Branch

**Kenneth Blair** – Tully RSL Sub Branch

**Michael Carter** – North Gold Coast RSL Sub Branch

**Robert Cody** – Mudjimba RSL Sub Branch

**Bruce Coulton** – Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch

**John Craufurd** – Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch

**Shirley Culey** – Gin Gin RSL Sub Branch

**Barry Harding** – Stephens Sub Branch

**Phillip Hunter** – Tamborine Mountain RSL Sub Branch

**Michael Holloway** – Tin Can Bay RSL Sub Branch

**Horace Hunt ESM** – Caboolture-Morayfield and District RSL Sub Branch

**Mervyn Kahler** – Pittsworth Sub Branch

**Hans Kaiser** – Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch

**Linda Lahey** – Bray Park-Strathpine RSL Sub Branch

**Doreen Mortimore** – Ravenshoe RSL Sub Branch

**James Nuttall** – Mount Isa RSL Sub Branch

**Gordon Powell** – Mareeba RSL Sub Branch

**Steven Reynolds CSM, RAN** – Kingaroy/Memerambi RSL Sub Branch

**Alfred Richardson** – Bray Park-Strathpine RSL Sub Branch

**Tony Schaper** – Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch

**Carol Steley** – Bribie Island RSL Sub Branch

**Robert Walford AM, AFC** – Mudjimba RSL Sub Branch

**Jonathan Welch** – Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch

### Women's and Citizens' Auxiliary Life Members

**Ian Attenborough** – Nebo RSL Citizens Auxiliary

**Wayne Hungerford** – Nebo RSL Citizens Auxiliary

**Marilyn Selby** – Geebung Zillmere Bald Hills Aspley RSL Sub Branch

# Advocating for veterans



*Pictured at the ESO Forum were, from left, Dr Andrew Khoo, Medical Director, Military and Veterans Programs – Ramsay Clinic New Farm; Brendan Cox, CEO – Legacy Brisbane; Megan Read, Executive Director – Veterans Queensland; Tara Hatzismalis, Deputy Commissioner QLD – Department of Veterans' Affairs; Dr Nikki Jamieson, Founder – Moral Injury Australia; Annabelle Wilson, Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner – Department of Veterans' Affairs; Padre Gary Stone, Founder – Veterans Care Association; Robert Skoda, CEO – RSL Queensland; and Daniel Bennett, Head of Government & RSL Branch Relations – RSL Queensland.*

**In 2025, RSL Queensland continued to be a voice for veterans at all levels of government. By using data, evidence and research, we shared the lived experiences of veterans and their families to help key decision makers develop legislation, form policies and undertake reforms that secured positive outcomes for the veteran community.**

As well as advocating for veterans and their families, RSL Queensland worked closely with RSL Australia, RSL State Branches and other ex-service organisations (ESOs) to foster collaboration and centre veteran voices on key matters that helped drive better outcomes within the sector.

## Simplifying and harmonising compensation legislation

A long-standing challenge for veterans has been navigating multiple pieces of legislation for claims and appeals. In 2025, RSL Queensland undertook sustained advocacy work, alongside RSL Australia and RSL State Branches, working closely with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to simplify and harmonise these laws.

This work contributed to the introduction of a single, streamlined legislative framework, simplifying the process and making it easier for eligible veterans and their families to access rehabilitation and compensation through DVA.

Another outcome of the legislation is to enable easier training and upskilling of Compensation Advocates, increasing their capacity to support more veterans. The streamlined system will be implemented on 1 July 2026.



*Kahlil Fegan DSC AM, Australia's Repatriation Commissioner, speaking at an ESO Forum in 2025*

## Positive steps forward on Royal Commission recommendations

RSL Queensland supported RSL Australia to make several submissions to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which delivered its final report and recommendations in September 2024, with the Australian Government response in December 2024.

The Royal Commission recommendations highlighted the importance of advocates supporting veterans to access benefits available through DVA claims and the need for more funding for both professional paid advocates and volunteers. In response to the Royal Commission recommendations, DVA approved a funding increase to the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) grants for advocacy.

Another outcome of the Royal Commission recommendations was the establishment of the Institute of Veterans' Advocacy (IVA) in 2025, an independent governance body to support advocates who assist veterans and their families for claim entitlements related to their Defence service. The IVA will develop competency and training standards, accredit and register advocates, oversee a code of conduct, and manage complaints about advocate performance or behaviour.

Working with RSL Australia, RSL Queensland helped build the IVA Working Group in 2025, which aims to promote the world's best practice advocacy for veterans and families. RSL Queensland representation on the IVA Board helped develop key processes and procedures that will shape advocacy in the years ahead. The IVA will come into effect in 2026.



**As RSL Queensland reflects on the Royal Commission and the Government's response, it is clear veteran transition must be a priority, and through employment, research, advocacy and service reform, we are strengthening that support."**

**Troy Watson**  
*Deputy CEO - Veteran Services,  
RSL Queensland*

## Advocating strongly with Queensland Government

With the largest veteran population in Australia, Queensland carries a significant responsibility to support current and former ADF members and their families. In 2025, the Queensland Government recognised this by committing funding in the State Budget to develop the first Queensland Veterans and Veterans' Families Strategy.

Advocating for a state strategy has been a key priority for RSL Queensland, shaped by ongoing conversations with members, Sub Branches and the broader veteran community. The commitment marks an important step toward a coordinated approach to veteran support, while also recognising the significant economic and social contributions veterans and their families make to Queensland communities.

Consultations across the state invited veterans and their families to help inform the strategy, supporting broader efforts to address recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

Throughout the year, RSL Queensland continued to represent veterans on the Queensland Veterans' Council and contributed to State Government consultation forums supporting the inaugural Veterans and Veterans' Families Strategy. We also continued to engage directly with Veterans Queensland, providing feedback on the government's strategic direction.

**We're committed to open and honest communication to ensure the veteran community is supported."**

**Janelle Poole APM MP**  
*Assistant Minister for Community Safety, Defence Industry, Veterans and North Queensland*

## Amplifying the voices of veteran service providers

Our two Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) Forums in 2025 provided a platform for state-wide collaboration on veteran health, wellbeing and legislation. Delivered in partnership with Legacy Brisbane, these Forums brought together government, community, Defence and veteran support organisations to share learnings and explore new opportunities to strengthen the veteran community.

A key focus of the 2025 Forums was the implementation of reforms following the Royal Commission recommendations. Panel discussions and guest speakers offered insights from across the sector.

Janelle Poole APM MP, Queensland Assistant Minister for Veterans, discussed the veteran support budget and Queensland Veterans' Strategy, while Annabelle Wilson, Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner (DVA), spoke about bridging the gap between lived experience and government policy.

Attendees also heard updates on consultations for the Queensland Veterans and Veterans' Families Strategy, the Taskforce on Wellbeing Agency and Peak Body, and a DVA-funded mental health literacy and suicide prevention training program.

**We have seen tremendous growth in our ESO Forums since we began delivering them in 2016. What we're seeing each time we come together is that not only are we aligned with one core purpose – to support veterans and their families – but more often than not we're seeing partnerships formed between organisations to provide holistic support to the veteran community."**

**Katie Maloney**  
*General Manager Partnerships and Engagement, RSL Queensland*



## Advocacy in action

As an integral part of amplifying veterans' voices at all levels of government, RSL Queensland consulted with members, veterans, their families and other ESOs to inform submissions that helped drive meaningful change.

Towards the end of 2025, RSL Queensland, along with other RSL State Branches and their advocacy representatives, united to strengthen their collective advocacy efforts at both a federal and state level. This alignment supports a more coordinated national advocacy presence, ensuring the work of the RSL is consistent and in the best interest of all veterans and their families across the country.

**In 2025, RSL Queensland collaborated on the following state and federal issues:**

- Participated in key forums, including the RSL Australia National Veterans' Affairs Committee and DVA's Queensland Consultative Forum, providing input on veteran policy and services.
- Contributed to the Senate inquiry on Defence Honours and Awards.
- Worked with DVA on legislative reform, implementation of the revised Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA), and improvements to online claiming processes to address the behaviour of fee-for-service providers.
- Made submissions regarding:
  - extending a GST concession on new vehicles to recipients of Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) and Additional Disablement Amount (ADA)
  - expanding the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal to include select additional missions
  - leveraging the skills, strengths and expertise of veterans and their families who volunteer.
- Worked with DVA to deliver information sessions on lodging claims.
- Contributed to the ongoing Senate inquiry into superannuation and pension schemes for Defence personnel and veterans.
- Supporting steps taken by DVA and the IVA to strengthen oversight of commercial and fee-for-service organisations, with continued collaboration on this work.



*Pictured at the ESO Forum in June 2025, from left, Katie Maloney, General Manager Partnerships and Engagement, RSL Queensland, Brendan Cox, CEO, Legacy Brisbane, Margaret Jenyns, Head of Veteran Services Support, RSL Queensland, Teena Blewitt PSM, DVA Deputy Secretary, Taskforce on Wellbeing Agency and Peak Body, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Janelle Poole APM MP, Assistant Minister for Community Safety, Defence Industry, Veterans and North Queensland, Queensland State Government, and Troy Watson, Deputy CEO - Veteran Services, RSL Queensland.*

# Supporting our members

Throughout our Districts and Sub Branches, our members delivered more than 655,504 combined hours of volunteering on welfare activities, commemorative events, fundraising and veteran support in 2025.

RSL Queensland's network of 10 Districts and around 230 Sub Branches and Chapters - collectively known as the League - is at the core of how we support veterans and their families every day.

Run by members, RSL Sub Branches play a key role in connecting and supporting veteran and wider communities. As well as leading local commemoration activities, the League is often the first point of contact for veterans and their families seeking support or social connection.

Each District provides administrative support to the Sub Branches and Chapters within it, enabling care, commemoration and camaraderie to reach veteran and Defence communities all over Queensland.

In 2025, RSL Queensland continued to provide engaging and practical support to Districts and Sub Branches, enabling the League to focus on supporting veterans and their families locally.

Key support provided included:

- \$1.3 million in financial support was made available through the Charitable Objects Fund for charitable and welfare support
- assisted 144 Sub Branches with their Annual Information Statement (AIS) submission to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)
- \$1 million in grants allocated to 36 Sub Branches to upgrade and maintain facilities through capital works projects
- a budget of \$1 million was provided for the reimbursement of Sub Branch commemorative merchandise sales for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, supporting their fundraising efforts
- assisted Sub Branches to submit 177 grant applications - a 10% increase on 2024 - securing \$1.65 million in grant funding to upgrade facilities, deliver veteran welfare programs and strengthen their capacity to serve local communities
- provided group training for 769 Sub Branch members across all 10 Districts, covering membership management, governance, digital support and operational activities
- more than 1,114 commemorative services and events hosted by Sub Branches, a 7% increase from the previous year, driving increased attendance at commemorative events
- supported 53 Sub Branches to engage with 228 primary schools through the 'Postcards of Honour' initiative, reaching an estimated 24,000 students, increasing their awareness of ANZAC Day - a 14% increase in student participation from 2024

## \$1.3 million

in financial support was made available through the Charitable Objects Fund for charitable and welfare support



Rebecca Petersen, bursary recipient Evelyn Petersen, Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch President Darren Sapwell and Bunnings Robina Activities Organiser Kylie Mosen.



Citizens' Auxiliary President Judy Hunter and Gordonvale RSL Sub Branch Secretary and Treasurer Peta Ison.



Charters Towers RSL Sub Branch.

# \$1 million

in grants allocated to 36 Sub Branches to upgrade and maintain facilities through capital works projects

- supported 53 Sub Branches to engage with 214 schools through the 'Draw to Remember' initiative, engaging 21,660 students to learn about the significance of Remembrance Day – a 52% increase in student participation from 2024
- assisted Sub Branches with constitutional issues requiring State Branch Board approval
- Sub Branches distributed close to 2,000 hospital packs to hospitalised veterans across Queensland
- continued to engage with ex-service organisations and broader community groups, which helped cement the important role Sub Branches play for veterans and their families locally
- coordinated St John Ambulance accredited training for Sub Branch volunteers across the state, covering mental health awareness, first aid and emergency response
- delivered an enhanced membership experience through the introduction of a digital membership form, incorporating online document credentialing and an integrated payment gateway, making it easier for veterans to join their local Sub Branch.



Woodford RSL Sub Branch Treasurer Paul Malone.

## League membership

For the fourth consecutive year, membership grew compared to the previous year – a testament to the ongoing value of community connection and camaraderie for veterans and their families. We also recognise that this growth is not uniform across Queensland. In some regional and rural communities where veteran numbers are limited, maintaining and growing membership can be a challenge – and one we continue to monitor.

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

## RSL Queensland members

Service members	35,512
Auxiliary members	1,788
Non-League members	4,871

Membership figures as at 31 December 2025



Edmonton RSL Sub Branch President Gordon Burgess and Vice President Jeff Langham.



**Funding** our future



**Our long-standing Dream Home Art Union transforms lives by funding vital support for veterans and their families, while making dreams come true for the everyday Australians who support them.**

### **More than a lottery**

The Dream Home Art Union began almost 70 years ago in 1956 as a way to support the Australian veterans of World War I.

In 2025, the need for sustainable funding for veteran services remained as important as ever. Now operating again under its original name, the Dream Home Art Union, proudly RSL Queensland, continues to support veterans and their families while offering Australians the chance to win dream homes and new prizes.

“



**The Dream Home Art Union remains one of the most important ways we support veterans and their families, while strengthening the sustainable and diverse revenue streams needed to secure that support into the future.”**

**Tracey Bishop**  
Executive General Manager – Growth and Transformation, RSL Queensland

## Winning strategy

As the prize home lottery market becomes increasingly competitive, we implemented a dynamic growth and transformation strategy to ensure veterans and their families can continue to rely on this vital revenue stream.

To support this, we listened closely to our loyal Dream Home Art Union customers – those motivated by supporting veterans and their families, and those drawn by the prize – and focused on rewarding their ongoing commitment.

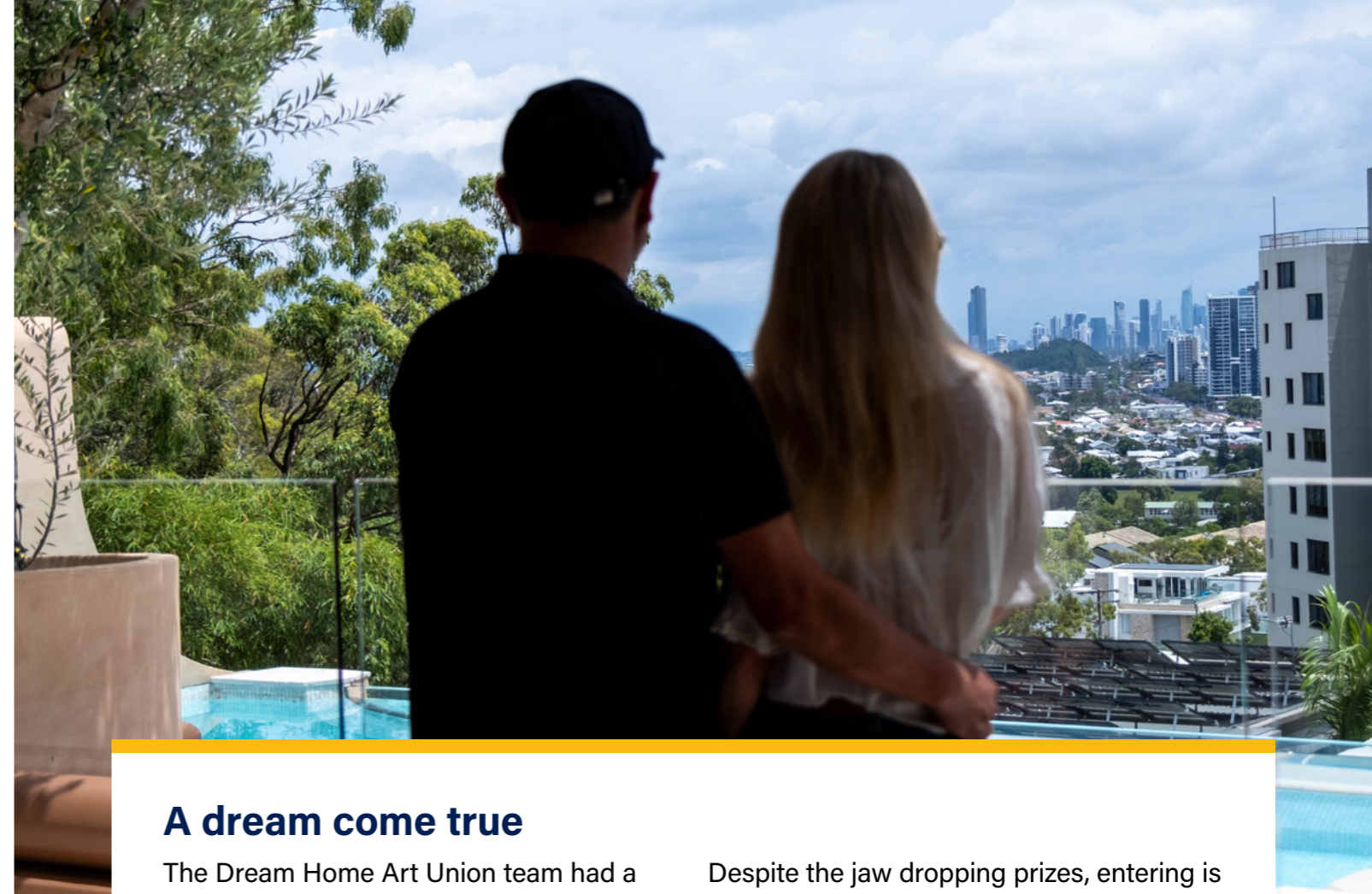
Building on enhancements introduced in 2024 to improve prizes and the value proposition for VIP customers, 2025 saw the delivery of a new prize strategy. The introduction of a monthly subscription model helped simplify billing, while the prize offering focused on what we know appeals most – higher-value homes, more opportunities to win, daily cash prizes, and aspirational rewards including luxury trips and cars.

VIP Club members continue to engage strongly, with early results indicating positive customer sentiment and performance in line with expectations.



Being a retired police officer and knowing how important charities such as the RSL are, we were more than happy to sign up as VIP members, recognising the excellent work that is carried out to support service personnel. The win was a pleasant and unexpected bonus. Thank you.”

*Winner, Dream Home Art Union  
VIP Everyday Draw*



## A dream come true

The Dream Home Art Union team had a busy 2025, delivering a diverse range of prizes including AFL experiences, gold bullion and luxury holidays. They also guided winners overwhelmed by sudden luck as they deliberated which prizes to choose.

One winner chose a property in the Mornington Peninsular, deciding a sea change was worth the move from Sydney. Another selected gold over a Freshwater apartment, instantly becoming a multi-millionaire. One \$11.7 million Kirra Beach apartment complex was won with a single \$10 ticket.

Higher-value prizes throughout the year saw some magnificent properties in the draw. These included a \$13.7 million Byron Bay A-list home, the \$11.7 million Kirra Beach trio of apartments just metres from the surf, the \$13 million ‘Dune’ Burleigh Beach mansion perched high above the coastline, and a \$10.2 million Gold Coast townhouse complex, along with \$300,000 to \$1 million in gold bullion for multiple winners.

Despite the jaw dropping prizes, entering is not about winning for most Dream Home Art Union customers. They buy tickets to support veterans and never expect to receive a call.

“I’m sorry!” were the first words one 2025 winner said to our team as she walked into her dream home. It had taken seven phone calls, three LinkedIn messages, an email, and a signed note delivered by post to convince her to stop hanging up the phone on her big news. She simply could not believe she was not the target of a scam, but the recipient of a \$4 million prize. Now in her mid-70s, she and her partner are beginning a new chapter of their lives, enjoying stunning ocean views and a home they never imagined possible.

Across every draw, winners share the same response – genuine gratitude, regardless of prize size.



### Funding vital services

The Dream Home Art Union provides a stable revenue stream, allowing RSL Queensland to focus on supporting veterans and their families with services and programs that deliver real, lasting impact when it matters most.

This support is a lifeline for veterans like Michael, who joined the Australian Defence Force at 15 and served along the east coast of Australia, New Zealand and southeast Asia. While he valued his time in the Navy, recalling pirate patrolling, convoying and sailing through typhoons, the journey back to civilian life took its toll, and eventually his life unravelled.

When Michael sought help, he connected with the RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Brisbane. There, he received emergency financial support and the assistance of a Compensation Advocate, laying the foundations for him to address his mental health and rebuild his life.

### Sustainable support for the future

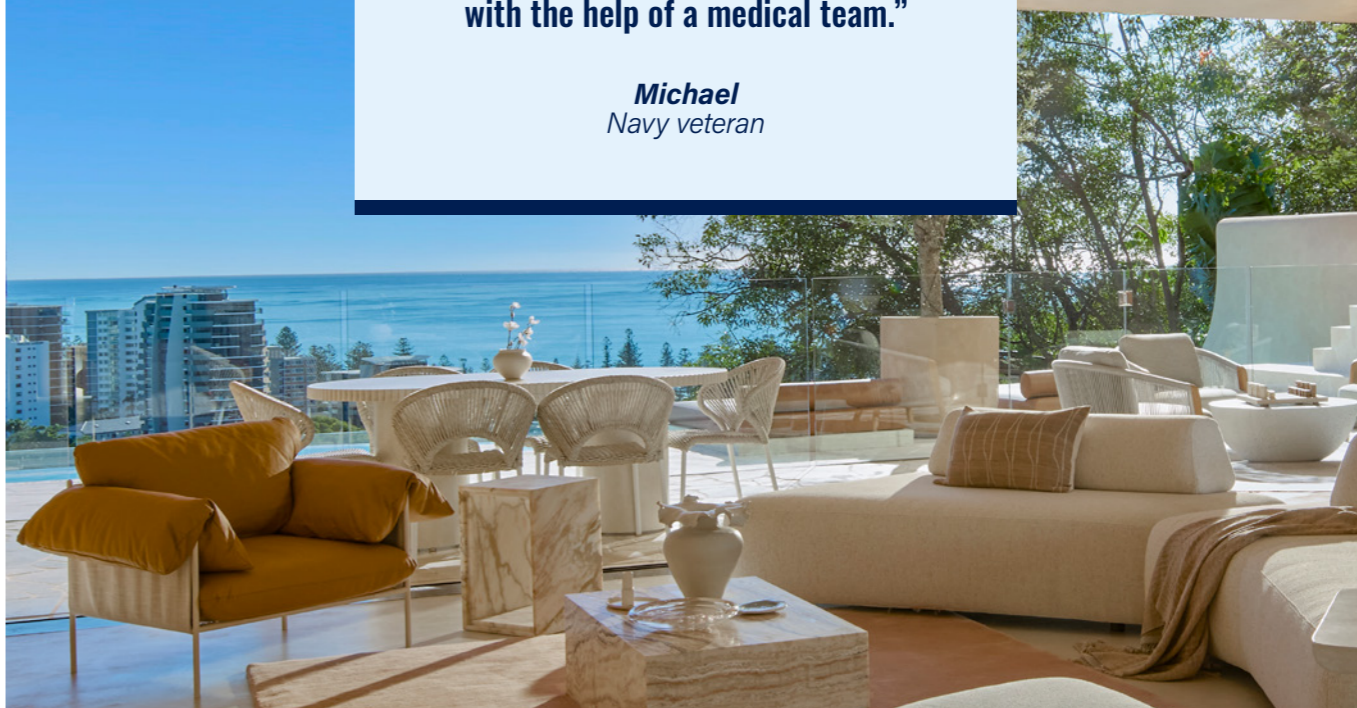
The Dream Home Art Union, proudly RSL Queensland, remains Australia's largest charity lottery, operating in an increasingly competitive environment. In 2025, we continued to respond to a changing market, including other lotteries operating under different regulatory frameworks and increased marketing investment, by refining our approach to maintain strong performance and long-term sustainability.

Our mission remains unchanged since the very first Dream Home lottery in 1956 - to support veterans and their families now while securing funding for future generations. Today, we benefit from the legacy of the Dream Home Art Union and remain committed to the ongoing strategic work required to diversify revenue streams, explore the opportunities of forward-facing digital projects, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of RSL Queensland's funding to support veterans and their families.



**It's like I've been at the top of a mountain, and I'm walking down slowly with the help of a medical team."**

*Michael*  
Navy veteran



# COMMITTEES

The RSL Queensland Board is supported by a number of Committees that provide expert advice, insights, and recommendations. These Committees enable more detailed oversight of their designated areas and support the development and effective management of the organisation's governance framework and capabilities.

Each Committee includes at least one Board member, along with independent external experts who bring specialist skills and experience relevant to the Committee's focus area.

The Committee structure ensures RSL Queensland meets its governance responsibilities while advancing its charitable Objects and fulfilling its mission to deliver care, commemoration and camaraderie, enabling veterans and their families to live with dignity and respect.

## Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee delivered a substantial body of governance, assurance, oversight and strategic risk-related work in 2025. Key themes included advising on major transformation programs, risk governance maturity, financial oversight, governance framework strengthening, people and culture, and oversight of Dream Home Art Union and digital operations.

### Key work included:

- reviewing, updating and endorsing several critical policies and procedures, including the Enterprise Governance Framework, acknowledging the organisation's governance maturity
- extensive assurance and oversight over the Digital Blueprint Program and enhanced prize and value proposition for Dream Home Art Union VIP customers, and oversight of closure of the Digital Blueprint Subcommittee, returning governance to mainstream structures
- discussing audit maturity, co-sourcing model development, and emerging audit technologies (including early AI governance considerations)
- overseeing change initiatives including the Veteran Services restructure and cultural alignment, and leadership considerations
- increased focus on ethics, delegated authority understanding, and Board and Committee training.



**Chairperson**  
Nicholas Gould

## Nominations, Remuneration and Board Governance Committee

During 2025, the Nominations, Remuneration and Board Governance Committee played a central role in strengthening Board effectiveness, leadership capability and governance maturity across RSL Queensland.

### Key work included:

- strengthening Board governance through updated Committee Terms of Reference, clearer tenure and succession settings and reinforced skills-based appointments
- reviewing and updating the Board skills matrix and Director position descriptions to support future focused capability and succession planning
- approving the 2025 Board and Committee evaluation framework, including an external Board review, reinforcing continuous improvement
- leading a comprehensive review of Director remuneration, delivering a clear, benchmarked and defensible framework supported by transparent member communications
- overseeing Director elections, nominations and professional development initiatives, strengthening transparency, diversity and leadership capability across the Board.



**Chairperson**  
Wendy Taylor



## Investment Committee

Throughout the year, the Investment Committee played a key role in strengthening RSL Queensland's capital, investment and property oversight, with a focus on long-term sustainability and risk management.

### Key work included:

- providing oversight of the Financial Assets Portfolio, including Strategic Asset Allocation recommendations, and active engagement with the Delegated Portfolio Manager
- endorsing capital and investment decisions, including the mid-year forecast, longterm inventory funding considerations, and major property acquisitions and disposals
- undertaking comprehensive reviews of mission-related, commercial and vacant land properties, making recommendations to the Board on retention, disposal and future use
- managing emerging investment risks, including scrutiny of external fund governance issues and escalation of outsourcing risks.

Having implemented strong and effective governance for investment and capital management, the Committee concluded its operations at the end of 2025. Oversight of the Financial Assets Portfolio has now transitioned to the Audit and Risk Committee to ensure ongoing alignment with the organisation's broader risk framework.



**Chairperson**  
Dr Adam Walk

## Service and Clinical Governance Committee

Mates4Mates transitioned its operational activities to RSL Queensland in mid-2025. This increased the range and complexity of services delivered directly by RSL Queensland and in response, the Board established the Service and Clinical Governance Committee, which became operational in September 2025. The Committee oversees RSL Queensland's clinical, wellbeing, employment, advocacy and compensation services, and advises the Board accordingly.

### Comprising highly qualified professionals from the Defence and health sectors, the Committee's key activities in its initial months included:

- reviewing service delivery operating frameworks
- overseeing service performance and quality indicators
- refining incident reporting processes and reviewing incidents
- reviewing service delivery content within the organisation's Enterprise Risk Management Standard and Risk Appetite Statement
- providing advice on the development and implementation of clinical education resources.



**Chairperson**  
Dr Ian Gardner



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