

RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

SOUTH EASTERN DISTRICT LIMITED

COUNCIL MEETING 7 OCTOBER 2021

MINUTES

Presentation by Major General Stephen Day DSC, AM (Gaythorne Sub Branch)

106/21 CALL TO ORDER: 6.05PM

107/21 HOUSEKEEPING: Delegates and visitors attending are aware of the standard housekeeping policy.

108/21 SILENCE TRIBUTE, VALE & ODE: The Vale for September was read by George Royes, Greenbank. The Ode was delivered by the President. One-minute silence was observed in respect of fallen and departed comrades.

109/21 WELCOME: Kerry Gallagher AM, District President extended a welcome to the Delegates, SED Board members and visitors in attendance. He also thanked Stephen Day DSC, AM for his time and presentation; and commented that competition at the top level of RSL is good.

The SED Board at its most recent meeting offered membership to two new Board Directors. On behalf of the Council, Steve Monteath and Mike Muirhead were thanked for agreeing to join the SED Board (Steve returning to fill the deep gap that he left earlier in the year).

110/21 PRESENT:

a. Executive: Kerry Gallagher AM, District President; Judith Munday OAM, Treasurer; Judy Alterator, Company Secretary; Doug Egan, Senior Vice President; Peter Murray, Vice President; Steve Monteath, Vice President and District Welfare Officer; Mike Muirhead, Vice President; Peter Beauchamp OAM, District Advocate (on-line)

b. Councillors:

ASHGROVE (AND BARDON)

BAYSIDE SOUTH

BEAUDESERT

BEERWAH & DISTRICT

BULIMBA DISTRICT

CITY / NEW FARM

COORPAROO & DISTRICTS

DARRA & DISTRICT

DEFENCE SERVICE NURSES

DEFENCE SERVICEWOMEN'S

FOREST LAKE & DISTRICTS

GLASSHOUSE COUNTRY

GREATER SPRINGFIELD

GREENBANK

HOLLAND PARK MT GRAVATT

JIMBOOMBA

KILCOY

Ken Cook

Richard Smith

Jon Forbe-Smith

Neville Layt

Brian Daley OAM

Dr Susan Kellett

Dennis Collyer

Ted Fotek

Ann Martin

Eve Radford

George Churchward

Peter Murray

Troy Best

George Royes

Michael Weibler

Bill Malkin (on-line)

Shane Williams (on-line)

KOORALBYN VALLEY
LOGAN VILLAGE
MACLEAY ISLAND
MANLY LOTA
NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S
NERANG
REDLANDS
SALISBURY
STEPHENS
SUNNYBANK
TOOWONG
TRAMWAYS
YERONGA DUTTON PARK

Reid Stevens (on-line)
Garry Alterator OAM
Len Waldorff (on-line)
Peter Kinsella
Eric Beutel OAM (on-line)
Darren Sapwell (on-line)
Alan Harcourt
Tony Stevenson OAM
Wayne Lucas
Hugh Polson
Ross Williamson
Grahame Fullerton
June Macdonald

111/21 VISITORS: Herb Shapcott, Bayside South RSL Sub Branch; Liz Layt, Beerwah & District RSL Sub Branch; Brian Laing, Bulimba RSL Sub Branch; Adrian Pate, City / New Farm RSL Sub Branch; Brian & Rachel Archer, City / New Farm RSL Sub Branch; Robyn Green, Defence Service Nurses RSL Sub Branch; Stephen Cook, Nerang RSL Sub Branch (on-line); Ian Gray, Redlands RSL Sub Branch; Linda Harcourt, Redlands RSL Sub Branch; Alex Garlin, Salisbury RSL Sub Branch; Harry Claassen, Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch; Hayley Bryan, RSL Qld

112/21 APOLOGIES: Gary Sargent, Springwood Tri-Service; Chris Christmas, Russell Island

Moved: Judy Alterator
"That the Apologies be noted."

Seconded: Coorparoo & Districts
CARRIED

113/21 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS:

Standing Conflict of Interest Declarations – Positions held by Board members:
Kerry Gallagher AM – AATTV Association and Chair of Anzac Day Committee
Judith Munday OAM – RSL Qld State Tribunal
Judy Alterator – President, Logan Village RSL Sub-Branch Inc.
Peter Murray – Delegate, Glasshouse RSL Sub Branch Inc.
Doug Egan – President, Greater Springfield RSL Sub Branch Inc.
Mike Muirhead – Vice President & Membership Officer, Toowong RSL Sub Branch Inc.

114/21 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – 2nd September 2021

The Delegate from Stephens asked that Stephens Sub Branch should be included in the discussion regarding the expenses at Greenslopes in the Treasurer's Report.

Moved: Judy Alterator
"That the minutes of the previous meeting's date be taken as read."

Seconded: Manly Lota
CARRIED

115/21 AMENDMENTS

Minute number 97/21, line 8, insert Stephens Sub Branch.

116/21 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

1. The Delegate from Manly Lota asked for:
 - a. Feedback from the Stonehouse presentation to the SED Board. The Treasurer explained that the Board presented what they plan for the future to the lady who looks after our portfolio. The names of the signatories were changed and the name of the portfolio was changed to RSL SED Ltd. Stonehouse's

- recommendation is to move to a more aggressive portfolio and by December the Board will make a decision once other plans develop.
- b. Feedback regarding helping the refugees. Doug Egan raised some issues at the District Presidents' Board meeting but has not yet been inducted onto the State Board, so he is not privy to that information. He hopes that the issues will be resolved and that he will be able to give an update to the Council in November.
 2. The Delegate from Greenbank asked for feedback on the RSL name. The District President will report back at the next meeting.

117/21 ACTION ITEMS

1. The District President raised the issue regarding the DVA response time to Leanne Cameron who was the Deputy Commissioner, Qld and is now the First Assistant Secretary, Wellbeing Services. She has undertaken to come back to the District President after reviewing their processes, both nationally and at State, to give us an answer on why there is a delay in the response time and if there is a fix for it. The Delegate for City/New Farm asked whether RSL Australia have been asked what they have done about lobbying for reduced waiting times for veterans. The District President has not approached RSL Australia as he thought it would be better to first get a response direct from the agency which causes the delay. He could go through State and Federal, but it may take some time. The Delegate from Logan Village stated that he rings up DVA every week regarding welfare issues and every time the assistance is first class. Lock down has had an impact on the delays as no-one is working in Scarborough House and are working at home instead. The District President will continue to try and get a response on delays in a general sense from Leanne Cameron.
2. Sadly, Honorary Memberships is tied up with the AGM and the MVP and it appears that is where it will stay until after the December State AGM.
3. The services that were being conducted at the Veteran Wellbeing Coordination Centre at Ramsay Hospital at Greenslopes had been queried. The roles that are being undertaken there currently are: Design Management and On-Going Oversight; Client Enquiry Officer; Hospital Visits Volunteer x six and Veteran Support Services. Most of the people in these roles are tertiary qualified. Some have additional service experience and the oversight is through someone with service experience. There are other reserve volunteers who are called in when the need arises. The services generically that are being provided is wellbeing support which includes hospital visits to identify needs, collect information and assess support availability, bereavement assistance, referral to support services including the provision of poppy services, war widows' pensions, medical and allied health information, information on Ramsay care programmes, DVA programmes and other support such as heart health, fitness support and occupational therapy; PTSD and mental health support; information regarding the support available out of the Keith Payne Unit and connection with coordinators within that unit and other similar services out of complimentary facilities; advocacy and research; provision of referrals to qualified and properly insured advocates; support for seeking information and completing documentation required to access support primarily from DVA, career transition assistance; development of programmes to match veterans in need of assistance with those who have successfully made the transition (personalised service); financial literacy and crisis support; assistance with navigating the various providers of support in times of need; and complex pathways least manageable; peer monitoring; future intentions and replications expanding to other sites whenever established; engagement of trusted partners for specialised services, such as Ramsay Health Care itself; collaboration with partner agencies, including governments, ESOs and community groups; and improved service delivery to veterans and their families. That is the services that have been developed and currently operate at Greenslopes. It was questioned by the Delegate from Stephens whether all that was done in 12 hours a week. The District Secretary to circulate the telephone support number to Sub Branches. There are six volunteers who supply the visitations to the hospital. There is some coordination that still needs to be clarified but it is work in progress.
4. The Senior Vice President does not currently have access to the State Board so he has not been able to discuss the possibility of a subsidy for the use of the logo in Courier Mail for funeral notices. The District

President, through the District Secretary, will write a letter to the State President to ask if they can consider it formally, so it will be available for discussion when the Senior Vice President attends the State Board Meetings.

5. The District President will circulate the initial training day programme before the next meeting.

118/21 CORRESPONDENCE – Inwards and Outwards

Moved: Judy Alterator

Seconded: Forest Lake & Districts

“That the Inwards be received and the Outwards be adopted”

CARRIED WITH STEPHENS ABSTAINING

CORRESPONDENCE - In

1. The Company Secretary recommends that you attend the presentation on the Kokoda Trek organised by City / New Farm (email circulated on 5th October).
2. The Veterans Home Care (VHC) programme circulated by District Secretary on 6th October. DVA has become aware of emails circulating within the veteran community that contain inaccurate information related to the Veterans Home Care (VHC) Program. If anyone didn't receive that email, please let the District Secretary know and she will recirculate it.
3. The answer from Bradley Skinner as to why DVA reports regarding assessments and benefits for members are not circulated from RSL Qld to Sub Branches is that Veteran Services do not receive these reports. Bradley's view is that DVA circulates news direct to their advocacy and that you have to keep your ear to the ground for any new information.

CORRESPONDENCE – Out

1. Christmas hamper nominations. The deadline has been and gone; and 40 nominations will be selected and sent in to RSL Qld by 18th October. We hope that the hampers will be available for collection at the December Council Meeting unless you have requested for them to be sent directly to the nominee or your Sub Branch.
2. The RSL Qld media team is preparing for Remembrance Day and are developing a commemoration campaign. They are looking to do stories and PR pieces on members in Brisbane, amongst other areas, to highlight our veterans and Sub Branches around QLD as we approach Remembrance Day. If you have any members who would be willing to speak through different media and are happy to be in front of a camera to tell their story, then please let the District Secretary know by 15th October. The selected members will have media team members to support them.
3. Remembrance Day merchandise reimbursement portal will not be up and running before 2022 and the District Secretary will run through the process of claiming back for any merchandise at the end of the meeting.

119/21 BUSINESS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE - Nil

120/21 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. Last month there was some question about the finances and the financial management of the District. The District President felt he was slow in responding and should have been more protective of our Treasurer. Your Treasurer has been looking after the books and working in this District for many years. She is a fearless advocate for the financial security and stability of this organisation and quite often queries, as she should, on whether or not expenditures should be made on various activities of this District. Within that, the period of turbulence for almost the last 24 months, should be considered. The District virtually has had no income, has made a major purchase, continues to deal with a number of outstanding matters in relation to Sub Branch activities and the trail that they leave when they close. The District President's view is that the Treasurer delivers exceptional service to this District and if there is an outstanding amount of money, and if there is an over-spend, it has got to be considered within the environment in which we exist. Considering where we have come from and the environment in which we have travelled through, SED is in a remarkably

sound position in terms of liquid and other assets. The District President is not suggesting at any moment that the Treasurer or any other member of the Board should not be questioned on activities, but he asked all present to think about those questions to ask, the background in which they are asked, and the spirit in which they are asked.

There has been a considerable amount of money spent on the Wellbeing Centre at Greenslopes. In researching where the RSL came from for Redlands' annual lunch address, the District President found these words on the foundation of the RSL in 1916: 'To ensure a unified approach to address the lack of organised repatriation and medical services to those returning from service in the Great War.' That was the singular and sole purpose of the establishment of the RSL over 100 years ago. The first objective of this District is: 'The District Branch is established for the principle purpose of promoting the interests of welfare of former and serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their dependants and for this purpose have the following objectives: first provide for the sick, helpless, wounded, aged, vulnerable, destitute and needy amongst those who are serving or have served in the Australian Defence Force and their dependents.' That is our first and primary objective. The District will never meet our primary cause if we don't spend money. The decision has been taken that the primary cause will be served and be front-doored at Ramsey at Greenslopes through our welfare centre. Secondly, through whatever assistance we can offer through the sub branches which are the engine room and the front door of the RSL. Our job is to support those members of the veteran community who are not able to look after themselves.

2. The District President received notification that certainly one Sub Branch didn't feel that the two motions that were put at our last council meeting were appropriate or legitimate. Constitutionally, it is legitimate. When asked who was against the two motions, there were no hands in the air. For that reason the District President asked for those two motions to be put again. One of the other issues was that if the President doesn't wish to serve on the State Branch then he should resign. His reason for stepping off the State Branch as a director is simply to apply whatever energies and capabilities he has to the District's needs as he was elected District President. Automatically, but with no vote, he went to State. He would like to apply whatever energy and commitment he has to developing the services and systems within the District where our members and any veteran who needs our help should get it. The decision is entirely within this council and Delegates attend meetings with the endorsement of their sub branch to vote within this Council. The Senior Vice President was asked to move a motion.

Moved: Doug Egan

No Seconder

"That the Council of SED has a no confidence vote in the President and he should stand down."

The purpose of this motion was to show that the District President is responsive and responsible to the Council. As in any other democratic society it is the majority view which counts and as there is no seconder, the motion lapses. The Delegate from Logan Village questioned whether this motion was necessary since the majority voted upon it and the motion was carried at the previous meeting. The Delegate from City / New Farm disagreed and some of the members were concerned about the lack of democracy in moving the motion and the Sub Branch were unhappy that they were not consulted in relation to the voting. It was felt that certain views were not supported by the Constitution but were supported by precedence; but precedence has no relevance to governance. The District President believed this view would have to be sustained at the AGM with a change to the constitution.

It did not appear necessary to hold the second motion as the issues were resolved and the motion will still stand.

Please be aware that the CEO of RSL Qld has resigned and the General Manager of Welfare Services and Advocacy, Rob Skoda has taken on the role of Interim CEO. The District President was given no reason as to why the CEO resigned.

121/21 TREASURER'S REPORT

Moved: Judith Munday OAM

"I move that the Treasurer's report be accepted."

Seconded: Forest Lake & Districts

CARRIED

The Delegate from Manly Lota questioned whether the Charitable Objects Funding came from Woolworths. It was confirmed that an annual amount comes from State from which grants can be paid. Woolworths money covers anything that can't be covered in the COF, such as welfare.

Some good news: the \$78,000 which was paid to the tax office when we bought Logan was repaid two weeks ago so the finances are a little different to the printed figures. The electricity is a large amount but as the three venues at SED are on the same metre, Events on Oxlade and Methryr Bowls reimburse us for water and electricity. It is hoped that the solar panels on the Limbless Soldier building will further reduce the bills. There is a little money in credit in electricity and phones from Logan.

SED SOLVENCY STATEMENT

"That in the Management Committee's opinion, the Returned and Services League of Australia South Eastern District Ltd is solvent and there are reasonable grounds to believe that it will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable".

Moved: Judith Munday OAM

"That the Solvency Statement has been accepted."

Seconded: Logan Village

CARRIED WITH STEPHENS ABSTAINING

122/21 REPORTS

a. SED District Advocate – DVA Activities:

- 1) One of the problems of assessment of claims is, that in a lot of cases, DVA are using agency contractors, who go by the book which they don't know about. The bad results then have to be appealed by our Advocates who win the appeals before it even gets to the VRB.
- 2) Due to lockdowns, they are using Local Medical Officers (LMOs) who are contracted from practises. Once again, they do not know about the intricacies of service life and don't support injuries. They just put it down to old age or accidents. Recent applications which were put in around April this year have been dealt with rather speedily, especially psychiatric cases. They have the highest priority, but anything pre-April this year, Advocates are still waiting on. The SED Advocate has about 100 cases from 2019 and 2020 period which are still outstanding and need to be investigated.
- 3) Advocates don't receive DVA reports about changes, etc as referred to earlier, but RSL Qld have staff such as Margaret Jennings who have weekly and monthly interviews with the chairperson at DVA. They are aware of changes coming into the system before Advocates do. It is thought that RSL Qld still have their contact at DVA who should be distributing information to Districts for them to circulate to Sub Branches. The SED Advocate believes that the Pensions & Welfare Services should be doing this. The District President thanked the SED Advocate for all his continuing service in the area of advocacy within the District and asked whether it would help if we had a standing invitation for a DVA representative to attend our council meetings. The SED Advocate thought that a person within the senior ranks, such as the Assistant Deputy Commissioner would probably be a good person to approach. District Secretary to draught a letter for the District President to send. The delegate from Sunnybank asked for clarity about the LMOs. The SED Advocate confirmed that the departmental officers are forming their own opinions because they are civilian doctors who have no background experience within DVA or within the Defence Force.

b. SED District Wellbeing Report – Steve Monteath was welcomed back. Report as tabled with one important item. If anyone knows of any veterans in strife with the police or QPS, please inform the police and let

them do their work. You don't interfere with QPS, let them do their job. If it is a welfare issue you can come in afterwards if the courts will allow you in. The District President noted that there were a couple of events on which may be of interest to Sub Branches within the District and he thought it was uplifting to see that there is specific focus on women's issues on Saturday, 10th October.

- c. Sub Branch Reports - Bayside South, Beerwah & District, Defence Service Nurses, Defence Servicewomen's, Kilcoy, Macleay island and Salisbury.
- d. Sub Branch Newsletters – Beaudesert (August), Forest Lake & Districts and Sunnybank.
- e. Membership Demographics – The Senior Vice President apologised for not having a written report. He explained, as everyone is aware, that we have had a potential member issue for many years and he has been working with Hayley Bryan from State targeting areas that they feel are most appropriate. It was noted that the quality of memberships was as important as the quantity. He has spoken to Defence Service Nurses about targeting on base and there is a skeleton plan. Any ideas and volunteers are welcomed. There will be a written report for the next meeting. The delegate from Manly Lota asked whether there was any idea of the percentage drop in memberships and whether the numbers are declining at a greater rate than in the last couple of years. The Senior Vice President explained that within the District there are areas of growth and areas of decline. Greater Springfield have had an explosion of memberships in the last couple of months and Tramways, for example, has stagnated. We are currently in the process of amalgamating two Sub Branches to alleviate the issue of declining memberships. There are boosts in membership around Anzac and Remembrance Days and during the rest of the year we have a lull. This lull needs to be addressed so the increase of membership can be kept constant throughout the year. Hayley explained that in 2020 RSL Qld had 1700 new members across the state (not including transfers) and we lost over 2,500. That could be due to COVID or the current cumbersome renewal process. There is an extensive data report that is circulated to Sub Branch Presidents and Hayley offered to visit sub branches to explain the detail of this report. She has presented to nearly 15 sub branches about the MVP. She has another four booked in before the end of November. The Senior Vice President emphasised that this was a great way to showcase what sub branch can provide for non-members and that we are not just all about a beer and parmie. If anyone needs assistance, please let the Senior Vice President know and we can all support each other. The District President added that he is keen to help with membership. Sadly, the monthly Vale gives us a clear indication of one of the obstacles that we face. It is a big list and we have to replicate that with new members simply to end up with no growth. The District President has approached the Senior Defence Force Officer for him and the Senior Vice President to attend the next resettlement seminar at Enoggera. If there is any RSL representation there they will support them. If that isn't, they will be there in the front line. The District President also reported on the amalgamation meeting of Ashgrove and Bardon. Bardon could no longer sustain the executive with their membership but together with Ashgrove, they have energy and some prospect of continuing to exist with the possibility of growth.

Moved: Judy Alterator
"That the Reports be accepted as presented"

Seconded: Defence Servicewomen's
CARRIED

123/21 HONOURS AND AWARDS: Nil

124/21 GENERAL BUSINESS

1. The Delegate from Greenbank reported on an article in the Courier Mail from 4th October: RSL goes to war, Queensland RSL imploding, senior executives leave and members resign. The District President reported that there have been a number of senior executives who have resigned from State RSL, including the CEO.

The District President respectfully asked all present not to float any speculation and that he would ask the State President for an explanation.

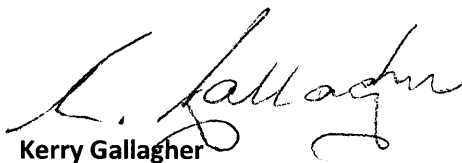
2. The Senior Vice President explained that we have had some recent incidences regarding members of the League making complaints. These go to RSL Qld and come back to District. District Secretary to circulate the dispute resolution process as a guide for handling complaints to Sub Branches.
3. SED Veterans' Health Week Event - Vice President, Peter Murray reminded all present to attend the barefoot bowling at Merthyr Bowls Club at 3.00pm on Thursday 4th November followed by a barbeque before the next Council Meeting. This is open to anybody and, if interested, please let the District Secretary know.
4. The Delegate for Manly Lota explained that there is an administration assistant who is available to sub branches currently working for Manly Lota as a casual. She is a receptionist for welfare, paid through DVA grants and is looking for extra work somewhere else. She is an experienced receptionist for DVA, experience in writing reports and communicating updates. She has additional skills such as members records and event organising (Anzac Day). She is either looking for full time work or a couple of days working at another branch. You can apply for funds to pay her. If you get her through welfare she is employed by welfare. She is very good and comes highly recommended. She is computer literate and is trained on State systems. If you are interested in employing her, please contact Peter Kinsella or Donna Jones herself at Manly Lota Sub Branch.
5. The Delegate at Redlands discussed an email he had received from his Compensation/Welfare & Training Officer regarding the requirement for Advocates to record all their interactions with veterans when assisting with welfare and compensation. The Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) tool currently used is a database called Vpad (Veteran Pad) which was supplied by the DVA over 10 years ago. The program has been useful but is now failing on a regular basis. The Delegate thought it would be interesting to have a discussion as to how other Sub Branches record their discussions, especially when veterans move around and change advocates; and if a similar CRM could be made available to all as the information is very important in supporting the veteran community and keeping in mind government requirements. The District Secretary to circulate this email to all Sub Branches.
6. The Board Secretary ran through the details of the SED AGM which is kindly being hosted by Toowong Sub Branch on Saturday, 26th February 2022. Unfortunately, it is not possible to hold both SED's 100th Anniversary and the AGM on the same day as intended. Pending the new lease being signed for Events at Oxlade, six months' redevelopment will commence so the Birthday celebrations will be held in late July / early August. For the AGM, registration will be on Friday night for about an hour and there will be limited accommodation. Registration will continue on Saturday morning from 7.00-8.15am. A golf carts will be available to take people up and down the hill for the wreath laying ceremony from 9.00 to 9.30am. The AGM will be held without the normal speakers and will finish with lunch. Details to be circulated in November.
7. The Delegate from Bulimba briefly described the plans for their event on Saturday, 10th October at the Memorial Bowls Club as part of the Veterans' Health Week. Brochures available and follow up bare foot bowls event on Sunday, 24th October.
8. Details of Sunnybank's Remembrance Day Service is on your seats.
9. District Secretary updates:
 - a. Poppies for Remembrance (box of 96) and RSL masks (20) were available for distribution at the meeting for all Sub Branches.
 - b. State Congress – thank you to all Sub Branches who have taken action and used the correct wording in their AGM / GM minutes regarding the Delegate and their replacement delegate in the event that they are unable to attend. This is crucial in order for your Sub Branch to have a vote. Please send your registration nominations to me by Monday, 18th October.
 - c. Branch Bulletin and Member Update - if your President and/or Secretary isn't receiving these documents, please could their email address be updated on the sub branch positions' page on MMS.

- d. Remembrance Day Memorabilia Reimbursement Process – information has been circulated for claims after 11th November. Please see the criteria.
- e. Remembrance Day Events – thank you for your responses and these have been published on the RSL Qld website.
- f. Following on from recent MIT Roll Outs, please inform the District Secretary when you are using your new email address so that email circulation lists can be kept up to date.

125/21 NEXT MEETING – Thursday, 4th November 2021 commencing at 6.00pm.

126/21 SUB BRANCH UPDATES – to be held over until the next meeting.

127/21 CLOSURE – There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.07pm.



Kerry Gallagher
President



Judy Alterator
Company Secretary

