

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE NSW (RSL NSW)
AND RSL & SERVICES CLUBS ASSOCIATION (RSL & SCA)

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RSL & SERVICES CLUBS



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This MOU is not legally binding and is not intended to create legally binding obligations on the parties.

OBJECTIVE

RSL NSW and RSL & SCA aim to work together at both a strategic and local level to deliver the best outcomes for veterans and their families and local communities. The organisations acknowledge their shared history and broadly aligned objectives but note their different legal structures and purpose. Importantly RSL NSW is a charity, whereas RSL & SCA member clubs are not.

BACKGROUND

RSL NSW is a charity for veterans and their families, incorporated in NSW with approximately 350 sub-Branches and 35,000 members. The mission of RSL NSW is to ensure that veterans and their families are respected, supported, and remembered.

The RSL and Services Clubs Association is an industry association of not-for-profit licensed community RSL and Services Clubs, formed in 2001. It represents 160 of the over 200 RSL and Services Clubs in NSW.

Most RSL and Services Clubs have historically been related or entwined with RSL sub-Branches. NSW legislative changes in the early 1970s required separation between the licensed club operations of RSLs, and the member/volunteer charity activities. As a result, there are now two legally separate constituent bodies – the committee of the RSL sub-Branch, and the board of directors of the RSL Club.

In many instances, the separation of the two bodies did not come with complete separation in the governing framework, property and branding. For example, there are several individuals who hold roles on both bodies, there remain 30-40 properties occupied by club operations that are owned by RSL sub-Branches, and many of the Clubs continue to use the brand 'RSL' with the agreement of RSL NSW and the requisite Ministerial consent.

Both organisations seek productive relationships between clubs and sub-Branches, with clarity of governance relationships and boundaries, well documented and appropriately valued financial and property transactions, optimal and efficient property management, and combined contributions to commemorative activities, community activities, and veterans' welfare.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

RSL NSW and RSL & SCA seek to:

1. Ensure that RSL & SCA Clubs maintain an affiliation with RSL NSW by demonstrating an appropriate and ongoing commitment to veterans and their families in NSW. It is understood that RSL & SCA clubs support a range of community & sporting organisations and services assisting local residents including veterans, but a greater priority for services directly assisting veterans and their families is sought.
2. Improve governance within each organisation so that RSL & SCA clubs and sub-Branches can operate practically and legally in pursuit of their separate but aligned missions. We recognise that this may take time, however, we are committed to achieving this through compliance with legislation and regulations that govern our organisations and specifically:
 - a. Working together to make sub-Branch committees and club boards as independent of each other as possible in order to address and manage actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest issues, and
 - b. Working together to resolve governance and compliance issues that may face our organisations and that result from sub-Branches owning properties leased to RSL & SCA clubs.
3. Jointly manage issues between clubs and sub-Branches that have the potential to impact on the good name of the RSL.
4. Ensure the sustainability of both organisations by focusing on their relevance to younger veterans and their families.

JOINTLY AGREED PRINCIPLES

- Both organisations recognise the importance of an RSL presence in smaller towns and regional areas.
- RSL & SCA will work cooperatively with RSL NSW in the delivery of charitable services to veterans and/or commemorative activities. RSL NSW is the recognised expert in the delivery of non-clinical professional welfare services to veterans and their families in need.
- It is recognised that licensed club Boards are autonomous and will make decisions on grants and donations based on their understanding of the needs of their local communities, with the RSL & SCA providing advice and leadership to its member clubs.
- It is recognised that RSL NSW sub-Branches must make decisions in pursuit of the charitable purpose of RSL NSW.
- RSL & SCA will work with RSL NSW to strengthen the public's perceptions and support for the RSL 'Brand'.

IMPLEMENTATION

Both groups will convene a joint working group from early 2019 to manage the implementation of this MOU.

The initial workstreams for the working group will be aligned to the strategic objectives:

1. Affiliation with RSL NSW:

- a. Quantify the current contributions of RSL&SCA clubs to veterans and their families (both financial and non-financial).
- b. Determine the appropriate contribution mechanism to support affiliation moving forward.
- c. Jointly work to ensure veterans and their families are appropriately recognised in ClubGRANTS programs and Government regulations.

2. Governance:

- a. Build detailed understanding of the current state of constitutional and governance inter-relatedness between clubs and sub-Branches in NSW.
- b. Develop a plan and timeframe in which to make sub-Branch committees and club boards as independent of one another as possible.
- c. Develop a jointly agreed best practice to manage property transactions between clubs and sub-Branches.

3. Joint Issues:

- a. Communicate to members of both organisations best practice in club/sub-Branch relationships, as well as jointly identified issues.
- b. Manage any joint issues with potential to effect the RSL name as they arise.

4. Younger veterans:

- a. Review the operations and services of both organisations to ensure they are appropriate to younger veterans.
- b. Work to recruit younger veterans to volunteer and leadership positions in both organisations.

JAMES BROWN

President
RSL NSW

DEAN THOMAS

Chairman
RSL & SCA