



R S L N S W

*Respecting, supporting and remembering
our veterans and their families*

Commemoration, Events, Honours and Awards and Memorabilia

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1. Overview

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is designed to assist District Councils and sub-Branches with the preparation and conduct of commemorations and events, submission of nominations for Honours and Awards and the responsibilities regarding the keeping of Memorabilia.

2. Procedure

The protocols and procedures listed in this SOP are in accordance with accepted Australian practice and should not be varied, unless exceptional circumstances exist.

3. Commemorations and Events

- a) RSL NSW has a proud tradition of excellence in all its undertakings, particularly its respect for the correct use of protocols and procedures. The incorrect use of protocol at commemorations and events can cause severe embarrassment.
- b) Commemorations and events conducted by RSL NSW entities must be carefully planned, coordinated, and prepared by the entity concerned. The RSL NSW entity must ensure that the commemoration or event is conducted in accordance with the RSL NSW Protocol Guide (Revised). Particular attention should be paid to the following chapters of the guide:
 - i. Invitations,
 - ii. Order of Precedence,
 - iii. Briefs to Official Guests,
 - iv. Seating Arrangements,
 - v. Toasts,
 - vi. Speeches,
 - vii. Royal and Vice Regal Occasions,
 - viii. Dress, and
 - ix. Flag Protocol.
- c) Should doubt exist about a particular aspect of the protocol or procedures contained in this SOP, then clarification must be sought, prior to the commencement of the activity. Clarification should be sought from the State Secretary of RSL NSW, in each case.

4. Honours and Awards

4.1 Australian Honours System

- a) Like nearly every other country in the world, Australia has a system of honours and awards so its citizens can be recognized for excellence, achievement or meritorious service and contributions to our society. Honours help define, encourage and reinforce national aspirations, ideals and standards by identifying role models. We give honours to recognize, celebrate and say thank you to those who make a difference, those who achieve their best and those who serve others.
- b) Australian honours are unique in that they were designed for the community to make nominations. The Australian honours system is free of patronage or political influence. Anyone can nominate an Australian citizen for an honour.
- c) Nomination forms for awards can be found at <https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/nomination-forms> , or by telephoning Government House, Canberra on 02 6283 3604.

4.2 RSL Awards

- a) The RSL of Australia has instituted awards to recognise any person or body which has given outstanding service.
- b) The Board of RSL NSW is empowered to propose these awards to the National Executive. Such awards are:
 - i. Meritorious Service Medal for Life Members.
 - ii. Life membership for Service members.
 - iii. Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge for non-Service members.
 - iv. Certificates of Appreciation.
 - v. 50-year Membership Certificate for members who have past 50 years of membership.
- c) Additional to these awards the Board of RSL NSW may award a Certificate of Appreciation to any person or body.

4.3 Meritorious Service Medal

The criteria for The RSL Meritorious Service Medal are:

The nominee is/has been:

- a) A Life Member;
- b) A member for at least 30 continuous years; and
- c) In the opinion of the Board, given at least 25 years outstanding service to the League;

Submissions may be made at any time but must reach RSL NSW prior to 31 August each year.

4.4 Life Membership

- a) A Service Member may be awarded Life Membership if the Service Member has:
 - i. been a member for at least 15 continuous years, and
 - ii. in the opinion of the Board, the Service Member has given long, continued and outstanding service to the League.
- b) Life membership applications will be considered three times per year. The following dates are the deadlines for applications to be received at RSL NSW:
 - i. 22nd January (for presentation at ANZAC Day commemoration events)
 - ii. 31st May (for presentations at sub-Branch events in September & October)
 - iii. 31st August (for presentation at Remembrance Day commemoration events)

4.5 Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge

- a) The highest award that may be made by the League to a person, who is not a Service member, is a Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge.
- b) Such an award shall not be made to a person who is eligible to apply to become a Service member of the League.
- c) Such an award shall only be made to a person if, in the opinion of RSL NSW, and the National Executive, such person has rendered outstanding service to the RSL NSW, ex-service personnel or their dependents.
- d) Submissions for the Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge must reach RSLNSW by the 31st July each year.

4.6 Certificate of Appreciation

- a) The Branch may award a Certificate of Appreciation to any person or corporation considered to be worthy of special recognition for services rendered to the League pursuant to the National Rule 28.
- b) Submissions for the award of the Certificate of Appreciation may be submitted at any time.

4.7 50 Year Membership Certificate

A Service Member or Life Member, who has given not less than 50 years continuous services as a member of RSL National, may be granted a 50 Year Membership Certificate by the National Executive.

4.8 Nomination Forms

Nomination forms for each type of award can be found on the RSL NSW website, by emailing support@rslnsw.org.au or by telephoning Support on 1300679775.

5. Memorabilia

- a) Every year thousands of Australians are deeply moved while viewing the national Roll of Honour and the museum displays at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Yet reminders of Australia's participation in war are also in our local communities – honour rolls, war memorials, firearm displays and memorial halls. Smaller, more fragile items such as photographs and documents relating to Australia's experience of war are preserved and exhibited in many Returned and Services League (RSL) meeting rooms as well as in local museums and State archives. Much material is also in private hands.
- b) To give future generations the opportunity to understand and appreciate Australia's war heritage at a national, state and local level, as much of this material as possible needs to be preserved. There are many instances of individuals, communities and organisations responding to this challenge in imaginative ways. Local government is also very aware of its responsibilities towards major municipal memorials and these are usually well maintained.
- c) Sadly, there have also been worrying instances of the loss of war heritage items such as memorial honour rolls being souvenired or offered for sale. Personal papers and diaries have been known to turn up on the local tip. For many years that generation of Australians who directly experienced the world wars valued and cared for this material. Recently, in both metropolitan and regional areas, economic and social change has resulted in the removal or demolition of memorial halls and schools. The result has been the loss of historically significant honour rolls, photographs, letters, medals and other items.
- d) Other important material, however, relating to Australia's participation or subsequent commemoration of war has survived. Some remains in the private possessions of veterans, their immediate family or descendants. With the death of a veteran, family members are often unaware of the significance, both for themselves and the community, of medals, papers and other memorabilia. Other material is scattered in a number of locations in the community – in RSL clubs, local halls, churches and local museums. As much of it as possible, needs to be identified, assessed and preserved.
- e) RSL NSW members can play a significant part in educating the public in the need for the preservation of this memorabilia during their many interactions with their local community.

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- f) Managing the display of memorabilia collections, can sometimes be an exhausting task, depending on the size and scope of the display. To assist RSL NSW members who may wish to or are undertaking this task, the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries may assist. These standards can be found at: http://www.magsq.com.au/_dbase_upl/NSFAMG_v1.5_2016.pdf

6. Display of Firearms and Prohibited Weapons in NSW

- a) To display firearms or prohibited weapons in NSW an organization must possess a permit issued by the NSW Police. The Firearms Registry can be contacted by telephone at 1300 362 562, for all advice related to seeking a permit.
- b) Firearms or weapons on display must be secured in such a manner as would reasonably prevent their removal other than by the permit holder or an authorized employee.
- c) No firearms or weapons can be displayed unless reasonable precautions have been taken to secure the firearms or weapons to prevent them from being lost, stolen or coming into the possession of an unauthorized person.

7. References & Resources

References

RSL NSW Protocol Guide (Revised)

Government House <https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/nomination-forms>

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries
http://www.magsq.com.au/_dbase_upl/NSFAMG_v1.5_2016.pdf

8. Document Control

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