



Werris Creek RSL sub-branch

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all correspondence please
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Re- 2020 Draft Strategic Plan Members Consultation

Dear Mr Black.

Firstly Congratulations on your appointment as our RSLNSW CEO

I heard you speak at our latest congress in Albury and really feel you are what we need after the last two years of unrest and mistrust.

Sir I have just received confirmation of your visit re the above topic.

I took your draft calendar to our last North West District Council Meeting and encouraged our members and our sub-branches to participate in these discussions.

At this stage I am unable to make the meeting scheduled for Tamworth in the New England District.

I sincerely thank the Tamworth RSL sub-branch for putting this on and extend my thanks to Director Lambkin.

I have read the Draft and have some comments I would like to submit for some consideration.

Our sub-branch was reluctant at State Congress to support the constitution due to some of the associated problems that come with it. However we also could see we needed to support it to allow us to move forward.

My previous submissions on the constitution raised concerns over

- i) smaller regional sub-branches,
- ii) ability or inability to fund raising,
- iii) District Councils Boundaries and possible RSL NSW board changes to same.
- iv) The District Presidents Council

Now to the current document:

On page 2 the second paragraph states "Over 80% of the leagues wealth rests with less than 20% of its members".

Here lies the crux of our problems both past and future. This 20% needs to stop hoarding under their charitable status and start supporting those sub-branches and district councils in financial need to carry out the representation of RSL in the bush. We have not been able to fund raise for two years.

Wealthier sub-branches and district councils have not been permitted to support us over that two-year period.

Which brings to the last sentence of that paragraph "Poorer sub-branches are having to fundraise, whilst others feel they do not need to"

Solution: Enforce the donation policy under the nsw acts on these wealthier sub-branches who are using the charitable status of the NSW RSL to run a lucrative business as a charity and who as a charity are not required to pay taxes.

Take legal action to freeze their assets and as they are part of RSL NSW revoke their charters, if they don't comply and publicly name and shame.

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1.4 " In conjunction with other states, provide free RSL NSW membership to all discharging or retiring ADF members."

The Board needs to look at "**providing free RSL NSW membership to all who are eligible to join the RSL of NSW**"

I don't believe the Board should favour one section of its membership over another.

"discharging and retiring," only?

Many of our current members have and are paying a membership fee and have done so for many past years and for what? For the right to be a proud member of a great organisation doing great work for those in need. No self-gratuities.

To be on the coal face in their communities explaining and defending the RSL against many other splinter groups.

Many of our members have also carried out Welfare Work, Pension work, been part of legacy, representatives in other community organisations and committees. We pay an annual fee to be able to do this.

Page 9

3.5 Great concept, 2024 I'm hoping to still be around but still not "(smartphone savvy) a section of the membership will be hugely affected.

Page 12

6.5 Another great goal if we can achieve it.

Data base needed of all clubs that either

- i) Use the logo but have nothing to do with or do not financially contribute to the RSLs aims and objectives. Are they just a club profiting on our rsl emblem? (name them through a publicity campaign.)**
- ii) Do they use the logo and have a sub-branch and/or contribute through the community funding programs via their poker machine income)? If they're not contributing financially approach them via their board for financial support. Is the sub-branch being financially supported by the RSL Club and what are they (the sub-branch) doing with these funds?**
- iii) Partner with Clubs NSW to identify the roles and purposes of RSL clubs and NSW RSL then together market the RSL Badge for both identities**

“Rationalise the number of districts”

“Consolidating unsustainable sub-branches as chapters.”

7.10 At congress 2019 we were assured this was off the table. Although we accept and acknowledge the board has the “power” to change the current district’s boundaries or create a district we feel very betrayed and misled that this is being re-considered so early after congress and the constitution was accepted.

Our District Council (North West) takes in from the Queensland border south to the Upper Hunter (Murrurundi Range) North East and East to the New England District and West to Central Western District.

We have 6 local government areas being Lightning Ridge, Mungindi? Moree, Narrabri, Walgett, Gunnedah & Liverpool Plains Shires.

It is at least a 4hour and 24 minute drive from Mungindi to Quirindi, It is minimum of a four hour drive from Quirindi to Collarenebri some of our major country roads are not in the best condition, narrow and potholed. Flood prone.

Reducing the speeds that are able to be travelled quite considerably.

Wintertime, drought, livestock and wildlife on roads.

These are just a small snippet of challenges faced by our delegates to attend District Council meetings.

Internet usage and coverage is unreliable cutting out the possibility of utilising Skype. Many members don’t know how to use this medium and come to the meetings for the social aspect as well as the business side of matters. (Isolation)

We have grave concerns that the board would consider breaking this District Council up and place us in neighbouring district councils.

For example Upper Hunter, New England or Central Districts. Nothing against these districts that are doing a great job representing the RSL in NSW.

About 5 years ago both the Upper North West and Lower North West voluntarily choose to merge to form the current North West District it is working very well. It is a large area of the north west.

At a sub-branch level

We have complied at all times with RSL NSW direction and expectations. Before the Bergin enquiry we had the then Compliance manager Mr John Boyle visit our sub-branch and advise us on where we were lacking in our reporting and or record keeping. At that time he found we were not reporting expenditures through the minutes. Some of our payments as welfare could be questioned. One bank statement was not available as it was with the auditor.

Since the Bergin inquiry we gave up our CFN and ceased fundraising and did not accept donations as directed. We have not had an income for over two years. **Will the board look at these past two years and consider us unsustainable?**

I have taken the opportunity to place our financial records on electronic file and audited each year to see if we were compliant re the ACNC guidelines. There were several years (about 3) where we were not,(out of 40+years) but another year where we paid 300% of our income/savings to our charitable purpose. (State branch)

We are a small sub-branch in regional Australia trying to represent rslnsw and support our veterans and the memory of those who served.

If you choose to make us a chapter (probably of Gunnedah as we have affiliates) our members would leave the league. Mainly due to the fact they are also mixed up in many other community groups.

RSL presence would then have to be supplied by the Quirindi sub-branch and or the Gunnedah, Tamworth sub-branches which are already stretched.

Believe me when I tell you local councils will not pickup the mantles re Anzac Days, memorial preservation ect.

We also have concerns with the newly formed District Council Presidents Forum.

Who elected the chair?

How was he elected?

How and who will elect this person in the future? (Surely it must come back to the membership.)

Who elected the DC7,9 whatever it is?

Does or will this group be able to represent the many differing areas leaving out political party differences, local and regional agenda's.

What sort of a voice/representation will be had via skype?

How distant are the DC7 from the board?

Is there really a point in having this tier as they can only offer advice to the board.

In other words what's wrong with the current District Council level.

Who's paying for the travel and overnight accommodation for this sector and those Presidents or representatives attending the meetings?

How sustainable is this for RSL NSW when they are already in financial restraints/difficulties. (Refer back to my solution on page 2)

In closing I want to say 80-90% of the Strategic Plan is excellent and worth implementing.

Thank you for taking the time to read this response.

I hope I have put some positive solutions and or comments forward.

I remain sincerely yours

P A Moules

Honorary secretary 2020

Werris Creek sub-branch & North West District Council