

Burwood RSL Sub-branch

Submission on aspects of Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (V2.2)

1. Overall, we think that the draft Plan, while not complete and maybe requiring revision, is a very large step in the right direction. We cannot continue to do things as we have in the past, especially in terms of finance and governance.
2. Goal 1 is a very important part of both looking after veterans and of seeking to retain and strengthen RSL's position as the largest, strongest and most relevant ESO.
3. Goal 1.4 is an excellent way of making RSL relevant to veterans transitioning out of the ADF.
4. However, neither Goal 1.4 nor the explanation "What Success Will Look Like" sets a date for introduction of free membership of the RSL. Action 1c implies it is by 2022. It also seems to follow Goal 3.3 and Action 3c.
5. However, if Goal 1.4 and Action 1c are implemented on or before 2022, then there is a period between 2022 and 2024 in which there are the following results:
 - (i) There are 2 classes of members for that 2 year period; those who continue to pay membership (capitation) fees and those who receive it *gratis* pursuant to Goal 1.4; and
 - (ii) Those who are already members before 2022 are for that 2 year period subsidising the new, free members.
6. Goal 3 dovetails with Goal 1. It focusses on growing the membership.
7. Action 3f posits that by 2024 there be no membership fees or cards, just badges and an electronic membership record.
8. We suggest that, instead of what is proposed, all membership from either 2021 or 2022 (in line with Goal 1.4) be free to all members, whether existing or new.
9. It has already been confirmed by the CFO that the cost of administering the membership/capitation fee is cost neutral, at best, and that the time and effort involved is large but would be greatly reduced if membership was free. We do not say that there would be no time and effort involved managing membership but that it would be greatly reduced.
10. There is an argument that if membership were to be free then members would not "value" their membership. There are at least 2 significant answers to that proposition;
 - There are a number of sub-branches that subsidise members' fees (including Burwood) and there is no evidence that members not paying a fee in any way reduces the value of membership for any of the members of the sub-branch; and
 - There are many smaller ESOs (like more recent ones Soldier On and Mates 4 Mates) that do not charge membership fees but are respected by and attract younger veterans, which is the "contemporary membership offering" envisaged in Goal 3.2.

Geoff Lazar
President
Burwood RSL Sub-branch