

**To: Ballina Sub-Branch (Attn: Treasurer)**

**Cc:**

Strategic Plan (Feedback)

File

Dear Ted,

**RE: For Consideration - Strategic Plan**

Thank you for sharing your 'outside of box thinking' in your email below.

I agree with your leading point. The proposed RSL NSW strategic plan aims to put sub-Branches at the centre, working collaboratively as a League in NSW to more effectively deliver our charitable purpose. Without fundamental changes, as proposed, the evidence points to the continued decline in membership, falling relevance and dwindling community standing. I think this change, to be working as one in NSW, will have to occur before you could move to a national body as you have suggested. That's the decision currently before RSL NSW members and I hope we can re-schedule the important consultation with your sub-Branch soon, so this can be discussed further.

I agree about overlap in constitutions – work to be done there (there could be another layer if a NSW sub-Branch chooses to incorporate!)

Not so sure about NSW Branch 'overheads' being called out Ted – from 1 Jul 2020 there will be just 24 staff running four entities/trusts plus sub-Branch accountability? Qld has over 280 staff. Our Board has assessed risks to compliance and basic tasks with this small structure. As stated in the strategic plan consultation material there is an option for NSW members to consider, under operating models, that sees RSL NSW State Branch dissolving and NSW Sub-Branches reporting into Qld that will become 'RSL Australia' – per their strategic plan. Most feedback from NSW sub-Branches is negative to this approach, and a better narrative is required. Also, most sub-Branch feedback has indicated that we need effective representation in Canberra. (I guess Qld HQ could position an element in Canberra?)

I strongly question the idea about 'reporting to DVA.' An ESO's role is to fiercely represent the interest of the impacted person/organisation – to ensure government meets the needs of veterans. Common thoughts amongst many current serving and more recent retirees and discharged ADF personnel is that the RSL is not relevant anymore, and doesn't offer what younger veterans are seeking and is not an effective lobbyist anymore in the modern world of social media. I think the points about the RSL can easily change, and as the proposed strategic plan suggests, if we work collaboratively including managing our funds in a 'pooled' way, we can more effectively modernise and deliver our purpose. This, combined with strong leadership will enable the RSL to 'absorb' other ESOs that have more recently 'sprung up' to fill the void because as one recent veteran put to me, "the RSL has had its head in the sand, and they just have meetings and fight amongst themselves rather than care about veterans." We need a strong and independent RSL – to do this we need to work collaboratively and demonstrate cohesive leadership.

I hope this feedback on your suggestions is useful for our discussions. It is really important I get up there to listen to you and your members, and hopefully that can happen again soon!

Regards, Jon

**Jonathan Black**

Chief Executive Officer