

RSL NSW Veteran Support Fund (VSF) (The 'Contribution Pool')

Rationale and Purpose

Many younger veterans do not see the RSL as relevant or supportive and are instead turning to a myriad of new organisations. To enable the RSL in NSW to achieve its charitable purpose more effectively and reassert its position as the leading veteran's organisation in the internet and cyber space era, the RSL needs to work as one to take advantage of scale and resources but deliver locally through our network of sub-Branches. Doing so will enable the veteran and wider community to know what the RSL stands for and does, refreshing the RSL movement.

Underpinned by principles, including transparency, sub-Branches will be able to choose to contribute to the strong future of the RSL by donating to a 'contribution pool' called the **RSL NSW Veteran Support Fund (VSF.)** As a member-based organisation, the VSF is to be *oversighted by representatives of those making the donations.*

Aligned with the objectives of the Strategic Plan, expenditure will be directed to the areas to achieve key goals, **so veterans and the wider community knows what the RSL stands for and does to support the veteran community.** The RSL name and symbols will be synonymous with veteran support and advocacy, and by leveraging available resources its profile can be widely promoted.

Key outcomes include:

- increasing membership (everyone who has served in the ADF, living in NSW, to be a member);
- enhanced reputation, community awareness and knowledge of the RSL charity (vs role of licensed RSL or services club);
- a healthier and happy veteran community; and
- a significant reduction in the number of other veteran charities that purport to deliver the same purpose as the RSL.

By demonstrating what can be delivered and ensuring that sub-Branches and their volunteers remain at the centre of what the RSL stands for and delivers, those who have served will want to join the movement to support each other, have fun, strengthen the voice of veterans, and support veterans in need.

Principles

The VSF is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- **Transparency.** All income, expenditure and performance can be monitored by members.
- **Alignment.** Expenditure is to be aligned with the Constitution (charitable purpose and the Strategic Plan – ensuring a strong and successful future of the League in NSW.)
- **Compliance.** Management of the expenditure from the pool is to meet all regulatory requirements.
- **Sharing.** By leveraging funds available, outcomes can be multiplied as branding and awareness increases. Each sub-Branch Chapter regardless of the size of its community benefits.

- **Purpose.** The pool is aimed to deliver the RSL's charitable purpose.

Governance

The RSL NSW Board, through the RSL NSW Constitution, is ultimately accountable for all monies across the League. The CEO is accountable to the Board, and through the Board to the members for the operation of the VSF.

For good governance and to ensure transparency and performance, the VSF will be oversighted by a volunteer committee called the 'Fund Oversight Committee (FOC).' The FOC will comprise representatives from sub-Branches *or groups* of sub-Branches which have contributed to the VSF.

The RSL NSW executive (CEO) is responsive to the FOC for managing the VSF.

The FOC is to meet bi-monthly and receive papers including financial accounts and performance reports at least five days prior to each meeting.

The FOC is formed by representatives as follows:

- Individual sub-Branch donations \$500 k and over – permanent seat
- Donations \$200 - \$500 k – seat (can be single donation, or a representative from multiple donators, i.e. if six sub-Branches together donate \$200 k, they can appoint a representative to the FOC)
- DPC Representative (Appointed by DPC to represent smaller donators not included in categories above.)
- Non-voting members include CEO, CFO and State Secretary
- Secretariat – provided by ANZAC House

The Chair of the FOC is a *permanent* member of committee elected by vote of the entire Committee.

Operation

Roles and Responsibilities.

- **Board.** Approve annual budget and accountability
- **District President's Council.** Advisory and accountable for recommending new expenditure (initiative) proposals
- **Fund Oversight Committee.** Endorse budget for approval, oversight performance, and ensure communication to all members
- **Chair, Fund Oversight Committee.** Manage committee meetings, liaison with executive and DPC, casting vote if required
- **CEO.** Responsive to the FOC, accountable to the Board and responsible for the administration of the VSF.
- **CFO.** Accounting, compliance, and reporting.

Annual Budget Approval. The CEO is to prepare a full budget proposal for the VSF to consider by 1 October every year, with a four-year outlook. The budget proposal is to include a description of the proposed purpose to which funds will be expended, with performance indicators. The budget is to be considered and endorsed by the FOC by 31 October and approved by the Board by 30 November. A proposed Budget for 2022, and corresponding detail on initiatives to be funded is at Annexure A.

Reporting. Expenditure is to report against outcomes. Where possible, performance indicators are to be aligned to RSL NSW's corporate reporting. For example, a Veterans Wellbeing Index (how veterans are being supported) numbers of new members, average age of membership etc.

KPIs are to be proposed through expenditure proposals, and then agreed and set by the FOC. (Noting the need to ensure underpinning data to support the KPI.)

Reporting is to be transparent and available on-line to members.

Expenditure Priorities. The VSF 'fills from the top.' That is, funds received go to the top priority initiative, then cascade down to the next. For example, if the budget (target) is to fund \$6 m in initiatives, with the first three needing \$5 m, i.e., #1 \$2.5 m, #2 \$1.5 m and #3 \$1 m, but only \$4 m is received in the pool then *only priorities 1 and 2* will be delivered. For this reason, it will be critical for sub-Branches to forecast what they intend to contribute by 31 December each year, with a four-year outlook to enable detailed planning to occur and expectations to be managed.

Tiers. Initiatives can be classified as Tier 1 or 2. The adjudication on tiering is by the DPC through the proposal process, or on recommendations from the CEO via the budget. A donating sub-Branch can decide to donate specifically to a Tier 2 initiative. These funds cannot be used for Tier 1 activity. For example, several sub-Branches want to donate to maintain the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. These sub-Branches may choose to continue to do so, and when funds are received, the large 'cheque' is collectively presented, with due strategic and local communications to achieve a greater level of awareness in the veteran and general community about what the RSL does and stands for. Those contributing sub-Branches are invited for instance to the presentation event which, because of the strategic nature of the donation, will receive coordinated concentrated media and social media attention.

New Initiatives. This is a critical operational process. New expenditure proposals should be provided to the CEO through the DPC on a proforma (Annexure C) by 1 August for the following calendar year.

Technical Accounting. Donated funds will be designated and transferred to the VSF by Electronic Funds Transfer. ANZAC House accounting staff are responsible for managing and reporting.

Donations outside of VSF. It is envisioned that donation to the VSF will be made after a sub-Branch has funded local initiatives, per the Strategic Plan. This sub-Branch expenditure, like the VSF must be directed to the charitable purpose, it must not be directed to other charities, or to any purpose that is included in the VSF. All expenditure is to be detailed in the SBA, there will be no 'other' category.

Donations received more than budget. If the VSF receives donations above the budget, the funds will *rollover* to the following year.

Donations from sub-Branches which own property. Many sub-Branches receive income from rented premises including clubs or investment properties rather than cash or equities investments. These sub-Branches contribute earnings to the VSF in the same way as those receiving returns from cash investments.

Foundation (Year 1) Budget Proposal

The first proposed VSF budget is set out at Annexures A and B. Future proposals would come through the DPC and added to and prioritised within the VSF by the FOC and approved by the Board.

Annexures:

- A. Summary 2022 Budget and Supporting Detail
- B. Proposed 2022 Budget
- C. Proforma for new Proposals (To be issued)

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