

RSL NSW, RSL SCA, AND ClubsNSW MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



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RSL & SERVICES CLUBS



This MOU is not legally binding and is not intended to create legally binding obligations on the parties.

PURPOSE

RSL NSW, RSL & SCA and ClubsNSW (the parties) aim to work together to deliver the best outcomes for veterans and their families, and local communities. This MOU is not legally binding and is not intended to create legally binding obligations on the parties.

BACKGROUND

RSL NSW is a charity for veterans and their families, incorporated in NSW with approximately 340 sub-Branches and 27,000 members. The mission of RSL NSW is to ensure that veterans and their families are respected, supported, and remembered.

The RSL and Services Clubs Association is an industry association of not-for-profit licensed community RSL and Services Clubs. It was formed in 2001 and represents 160 of the over 200 RSL and Services clubs in NSW.

Established in 1920, **ClubsNSW** is the peak representational body for the NSW club industry. ClubsNSW represents more than 1200 member clubs and makes an important contribution to state and national policy direction, including the development of industry-specific legislation relating to alcohol, gambling, taxation, and industrial relations. In addition to these services, ClubsNSW executes media and PR communications, tailored training solutions, financial services, events, and responsible gambling services. The Association's purpose is to put the interests of clubs and the communities first.

Most RSL and Services Clubs and some ClubsNSW member clubs have historically been related or entwined with RSL sub-Branches. NSW legislative changes in the early 1970s required separation between the licensed club operations of RSLs, and the member/volunteer charity activities. As a result, there are now two legally separate constituent bodies – the unincorporated association RSL sub-Branch, led by a Committee, and the club (not-for-profit) company, led by a board of directors.

TERM

The term of this MOU is three (3) years from the date of signature by all parties.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The parties seek to:

1. Encourage clubs to maintain an affiliation with RSL NSW (State and all sub-Branches) where there is a historical link, by demonstrating an appropriate and ongoing commitment to veterans and their families in NSW.

2. Generate mutual support across community engagement, membership, and community involvement.

3. Improve governance within each organisation where there is an affiliation between a registered club and sub-Branch, so they can operate practically and legally in pursuit of their separate but aligned missions. This includes:

a Working to make sub-Branch committees and club boards independent of each other to manage and address conflict of interest issues.

b Resolving governance and compliance issues where sub-Branches lease properties to clubs.

c Developing and sharing guidelines and best practice for governance, including online webinars.

4. Advocate for joint membership of current serving and ex-service personnel of clubs and RSL NSW. Explore potential for interested registered clubs to offer complimentary membership to current service and ex-service personnel, and/or a customised veteran member offering.

5. Encourage greater levels of engagement between veterans and both registered clubs and sub-Branches.

6. Promote veteran welfare support initiatives as category 1 ClubGRANTS worthy grant applications.
7. Jointly manage media, governmental, and public policy issues between clubs and sub-Branches that have the potential to impact the RSL and services associated brands.

8. Actively engage younger generations of veterans and their families, and the wider community, through involvement in sub-Branch (charity) and community clubs in social, physical and employment initiatives.

9. Develop and agree on a framework for the selling and leasing of sub-Branch property to clubs, including governance and other matters.

10. Explore opportunities with the media, as well as the NSW and Commonwealth governments, for joint advocacy and action.

11. Explore opportunities for registered clubs to acquire, retain and publicly display military memorabilia at their premises.

12. Investigate the possibility of using club premises as “Veteran Drop-in Centres”, particularly in regional and rural areas.

13. Explore opportunities for registered clubs to contribute to implementing appropriate recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

14. Identify joint sponsorship and partnership opportunities such as the Invictus Games.

15. Explore the opportunity to establish and maintain a dedicated veterans’ cemetery in New South Wales.

PRINCIPLES

- The parties recognise and respect the importance of an RSL presence in smaller towns and regional areas.

Clubs will work cooperatively with RSL NSW and its sub-Branches in the funding and delivery of charitable services to veterans and/or commemorative activities, placing veterans, their families, and the greater community at the heart of what they do.

The parties recognise the autonomy of registered club boards and respect decisions on grants and donations.

The parties recognise and respect the autonomy of RSL NSW sub-Branches’ decisions in pursuit of their charitable purpose.

The parties recognise that registered clubs and RSL NSW sub-Branches should work together to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

The parties will work to strengthen the public’s perceptions and support for the RSL ‘Brand’ and inform the public about the role of clubs as distinct from RSL sub-Branches.

Clubs with an object of promoting veteran welfare strongly consider donation and grant support to RSL branded or related charity to enable beneficiaries to recognise the role of the RSL and clubs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The parties will convene a joint working group in September 2022 to manage the implementation of this MOU.

The initial workstreams for the working group will be aligned to the strategic objectives:

1 Affiliation with RSL NSW:

- a Quantify the current contributions of clubs to veterans and their families (both financial and non-financial).

b Jointly work to ensure that the outcome of supporting veterans and their families is reflected in ClubGRANTS programs and relevant legislation.

c Educate registered clubs and sub-Branches on the opportunities to provide veterans’ services through the Category 1 ClubGRANTS program.

d RSL NSW provide performance information, geographically based on charity delivered support services to veterans and their families funded by donations and grants.

e Determine the feasibility of registered clubs acting as “Veteran Drop-in Centres”.

f Seek to establish a “Joint NSW Parliamentary friends of RSL and Clubs” group, with the NSW Minister for Veterans Affairs as the Patron/Champion.

3 Joint Issues:

- a Communicate to members of the parties about best practice in club/sub-Branch governance matters, as well as jointly identified issues.

b Jointly manage any media, governmental or public policy issues with potential to affect both the RSL brand and clubs with an object of promoting veteran welfare.

c Establish a marketing and education sub-working group to develop communications and marketing collateral that best leverage clubs’ not-for-profit status and the RSL NSW brand, jointly communicating the benefits of the work the parties do, linking this with the veterans’ services provided by RSL LifeCare Veteran Services.

d RSL to promote benefits of club membership and community engagement through clubs.

e Identify opportunities with the media and governments for joint advocacy and action.

2 Governance:

- a Build a detailed understanding of the current state of constitutional and governance arrangements between clubs and sub-Branches in NSW.

b Identify and advocate for measures – both legislative and internal – for clubs to:

i broaden director eligibility to cover a greater proportion of the membership,

ii appoint directors with desired skill sets, and

iii manage conflicts of interest.

c Develop a plan and timeframe to implement and give effect to the measures identified in the previous point.

d Jointly develop agreed best practice guidelines and framework for registered clubs who wish to lease or purchase club premises owned by a sub-Branch.

e Develop optimal metrics to measure the impact of veteran support measures facilitated by clubs, with a view to maximising the effectiveness of club contributions.

4 Younger veterans:

- a Review the operations and services provided by parties to ensure they are appropriate and engaging for younger veterans and their families.

b Work to recruit younger veterans to volunteer and take leadership positions in both organisations.

c Explore ways to package and promote clubs’ physical and social facilities to better engage younger veterans in the local community and support their transition.

d Clubs to foster employment pathways for RSL NSW members and their families where practical, advocating for careers in clubs and the local community, supported by the RSL.

Signed on behalf of each organisation on Monday 29 August 2022:

RAY JAMES, OAM, RSL NSW President

MARGOT SMITH, RSL & SCA CEO

JOSH LANDIS, ClubsNSW CEO