



Warragul RLS Sub-Branch

94 Albert Road, Warragul, VIC, 3820

Warragul RSL Submission to the Royal Commission for Defence Personnel and Veteran Suicide

Executive Summary

Commissioners,

This submission to the Royal Commission for Defence Personnel and Veteran suicide (RC) captures the circumstances concerning the management of Veterans at a regional Victoria RSL sub-branch. The submission, whilst an adjunct to the original RSL Victoria (RSL Vic) submission,¹ is necessary due to the pressures upon and the services provided by the sub-branch.

The RSL and its local activities are well respected in the community however as a result of a lack of health services in the district the RSL self manages an array of Veterans who have significant health challenges due to service. These health challenges have placed such a burden on the Warragul RSL Committee that is unsustainable for us to manage in the medium term¹.

The historic theme with Veteran health management is that Defence Personnel and Veteran suicide and suicidality is not a recent phenomenon. Warragul RSL believes that poor Veteran health is directly related to military service. One hundred (100)¹ years of local history and knowledge supported and confirmed by evidence¹ from the RC shows that military service causes injury.

The submission details activities, treatment, and omissions relating to Veteran health. At the micro level the submission will detail remediation necessary to relieve the pressure on volunteers. At the macro and strategic level, it will detail solutions designed to provide lifelong Veteran related support.

The submission is of six (6) parts;

- Part 1 Introduction Preface Warragul RSL overview Issues Addressed by the Interim Report of the Royal Commission;
- Part 2 ADF TOR's;
- Part 3 DVA TOR's;
- Part 4 ESO's TOR's;
- Part 5 Transition;
- Part 6 Recommendations and Summary; and
- Attachments.

Warragul RSL is not the repository of all Veteran health-related knowledge, but its experience demonstrates that we have been successful in keeping Veterans alive and relatively happy in difficult circumstances.

Warragul RSL believes that military service should not penalise a Veteran's ability to achieve a quality of life commensurate with the civilian counterpart. If service delivers health impairments the veteran and their family must be provided with the appropriately mandated Government support. Further, Warragul RSL provides a century of evidence that organisations responsible for Defence Personnel and Veteran health; the Government, ADF and DVA are not structured physically or culturally or financially to provide appropriate Veteran health management.

The plethora of reports relating to Veteran health produced over the past two decades clearly demonstrates that "tinkering at the edges" of defence personnel and Veteran health doesn't and hasn't worked.

Departmental and force restructure with appropriate authority empowered by revolution, not evolution is required, and our recommendations will reflect that philosophy.

Submission forwarded for your consideration, and we look forward to giving our public evidence to the Commissioners.

Respectfully,

Ben Vahland

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President

Warragul RSL

Bill Westhead

Bill Westhead

Past President

Warragul RSL

Annexes:

A: Army Physical Standards

Folio 1: RSL Correspondence

Folio 2: DVA Correspondence