



WARRAGUL RSL SUB BRANCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



DEDICATION

This Annual Report is dedicated to all those who have served our nation and to the members of our Sub-Branch, particularly those who passed away during the year.



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About this Report

This Annual Report reflects the achievements of the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch throughout 2025.

It was the 2nd year of our Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028 which outlines our strategic objectives and focus for the year.

Our Vision

To be a leader as an inclusive and accessible RSL that provides a welcoming and safe environment for its members and their families.

Our Purpose

To provide support via connection and camaraderie whilst acknowledging and commemorating the traditions and history of our local veterans.





WELCOME

from President Lynn Mizen

On behalf of the Executive and Management Committee of the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2025, which provides us with the opportunity to look back over the last year and reflect on all that has happened and all we have achieved. Looking ahead, the Executive and Management Committee will remain focused on our sustainability, member engagement and ensuring we continue to meet our obligations to all our members and their families.

Our vision and purpose remain as vital as ever and our relevance as a sub-branch is continually reinforced by the positive results and feedback that we have received throughout the year from not just our members, but the broader community. Despite being a modest sized sub-branch with no paid staff, our members and volunteers continued to uphold our core values of the RSL through commemoration, welfare support, and camaraderie.

There is one constant across this report: our volunteers, who have worked amazingly hard to serve our veterans, members and their families. The 2025 Annual Report demonstrates this by highlighting many of those that have volunteered and supported us throughout the year, their dedication and support in giving us their energy and time.

Since becoming the first female President of the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch at the AGM in March 2025, I have been honoured to lead such a shining light as a regional sub-branch of the RSL. I would sincerely like to thank the Executive, Management Committee, volunteers, members and supporters who give their time freely to ensure the sub-branch remains viable and relevant within our community. You are all simply incredible in what you do for our sub-branch.

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous leadership and achievements of our Immediate Past President Ben Vahland, who stepped down as President in 2025.

I was honoured to take over from Ben, who was a fundamental driver in making the Warragul RSL what it is today. I am pleased that Ben has now taken on the role of Manager of our Veterans Centre, and I know that it will become a great success with his leadership.

I would also like to sincerely thank Kylie Sage who stepped down in September as Vice President Welfare after six years. Kylie's dedication and commitment to welfare operations have been simply remarkable. The amount of volunteer hours she contributed over those six years would be astounding. I am pleased that Kylie is still involved by continuing as our Appeals Officer as well as Bar Manager.

Finally, I want to thank you, the members of the Warragul RSL for your support. It is for you that our sub-branch exists, to provide an environment which can support you and your families. Without your continued support in volunteering and patronage of our events and activities we wouldn't be where we are today.

Yours sincerely,

President Warragul RSL

Key highlights during the year included:

- **Successful conduct of ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services**
- **Continued operation of our private members bar for special occasions**
- **Ongoing support and advocacy for veterans and their families**
- **Completion and opening of our own Baw Baw Veterans and Families Centre**
- **Strong volunteer commitment despite limited resources**

OUR LEADERSHIP

Office Bearers



Lynn Mizen
PRESIDENT



Ben Vahland
IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT



Mark Buttner
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
& VICE PRESIDENT
OPERATIONS



Bob Green
VICE PRESIDENT
COMMUNICATIONS



Kylie Sage
VICE PRESIDENT
WELFARE



Louise Gale
VICE PRESIDENT
CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE



David Harrison
SECRETARY



Gerardine Crew
TREASURER

Management Committee

Members



Pete Parish
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER



Rob Brown
OPERATIONS OFFICER



Tom O'Day
GOVERNANCE OFFICER

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Throughout 2025, the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch Committee of Management maintained a strong focus on effective governance and accountability. The Committee met on **12** occasions during the year, with the Executive Committee convening a further two times to address operational and strategic matters.

The Warragul RSL Sub-Branch met all compliance obligations and continued to operate in accordance with its governing Rules, By-Laws, and the requirements of RSL Victoria. Care was taken to remain up to date with regulatory and organisational changes affecting our operations and membership, always ensuring best practice governance.

In April 2025, RSL Victoria issued a revised Branch By Law 15 relating to the management of all firearms and controlled weapons. The Warragul RSL Sub-Branch conducted a full audit and review of all firearms and controlled weapons which includes all bladed weapons and ammunition.

The audit was led by Louise Gale, VP Corporate Governance and all weapons were checked, photographed and listed on a new weapons register which was submitted to RSL Victoria.

Further work was done later in the year to ensure that all firearms were individually wired and tagged to ensure compliance. This included the rearrangement of all weapons and firearms memorabilia displays. It was a significant piece of work to ensure that we were fully compliant with the Branch By Law.

Over the past 12 months, **20** Warragul RSL Sub-Branch policies and procedures were developed and reviewed to strengthen our operational effectiveness, enhance safety, and ensure ongoing legal compliance.

This work reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and responsible management in a changing regulatory environment. One key procedure was the development of our Emergency Management Plan with new evacuation maps produced and now displayed within our building.



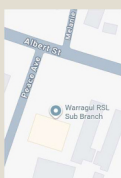
**WARRAGUL RSL
Sub Branch**

Assembly Area:
Warragul RSL Car Park
Secondary Assembly Area:
Corner of Peace Ave and Albert Road
IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 000

- R** REMOVE people from immediate danger
- A** ALERT others, call emergency services 000
- C** CONTAIN or isolate the threat if safe to do so
- E** EVACUATE to the designated evacuation assembly location

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| | Designated Exit | | You are here |
| | Evacuation Path | | Alternative Evacuation Path |
| | Primary Assembly Area | | Fire Blanket |
| | Water Extinguisher | | Powder Extinguisher |
| | Automated External Defibrillator | | First Aid Kit |
| | Gas Main | | Switchboard |



Warragul RSL
Sub Branch
94 Albert Street
0480 257 478

Evacuation Diagram

Date Issued: September 2025
Building Reference: 94 Albert Street Warragul Vic 3820



WELFARE, WELLBEING & ADVOCACY SUPPORT

Baw Baw Veterans and Families Centre

The Warragul RSL Sub-Branch remains firmly committed to the welfare, wellbeing and support of Veterans and their families within our community.

Throughout the year, welfare support was provided to a significant number of Veterans and family members on a strictly confidential basis. Assistance included referrals to advocacy services, both within the Sub-Branch and through external organisations, ensuring members were able to access appropriate and timely support.

Hospital, aged care and home visits were also undertaken where appropriate, reinforcing the Sub-Branch's ongoing commitment to personal connection and care.

A major milestone for the year was the continued development and eventual opening of the Baw Baw Veterans and Families Centre, which officially opened in November.

This achievement represents a significant step forward in enhancing local support services for Veterans and their families.

Advocate recruitment has been very strong, with a total of 13 advocates currently under training. Of these, two are nearing readiness to manage cases, strengthening the Centre's capacity to meet growing demand.

In recognition of privacy and confidentiality requirements, no personal details are recorded.

The Committee acknowledges the increasing complexity of veterans' needs and recognises the importance of collaboration with external stakeholders. Considerable effort is being made to establish and strengthen these relationships to ensure Veterans and their families receive comprehensive, coordinated and effective support.



OUR MEMBERS

The Warragul RSL Sub-Branch membership continues to be the heart of our organisation, reflecting our shared commitment to service, remembrance and mateship.

In 2025, we were pleased to see continued growth in both service and affiliate membership, strengthening our sub-branch and broadening our connection within the community.

Our members remained actively engaged in commemorative activities, welfare support and community connection, ensuring the values of the RSL are upheld and passed on to future generations.

We are proud of the strength, dedication and camaraderie of our membership, and we thank all members for their ongoing support and contribution throughout the year.



WARRAGUL RSL MEMBERSHIP (as at 31st December 2025)



Life Members

3



Service Members

190



Affiliate Members

207



First Responder
Members

22



Social Members

8

Total Membership — 427

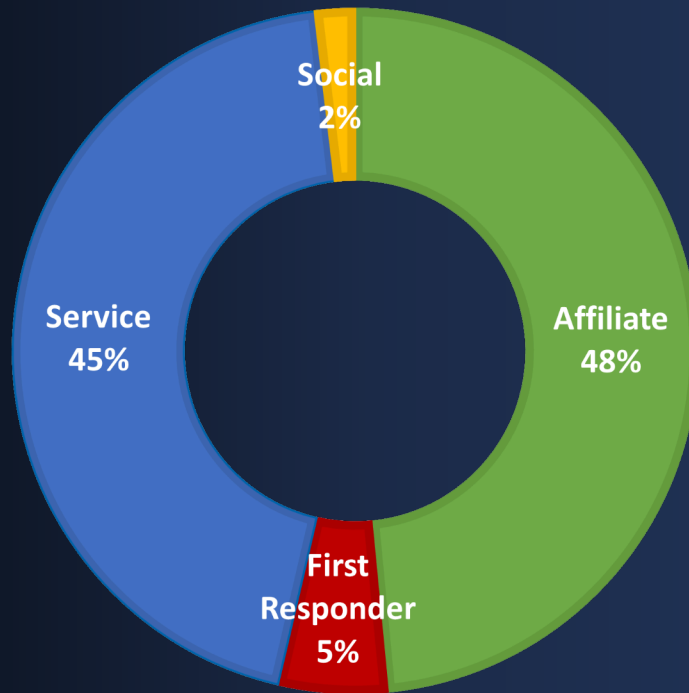
New Members — 73

Male Members — 283

Female Members — 144

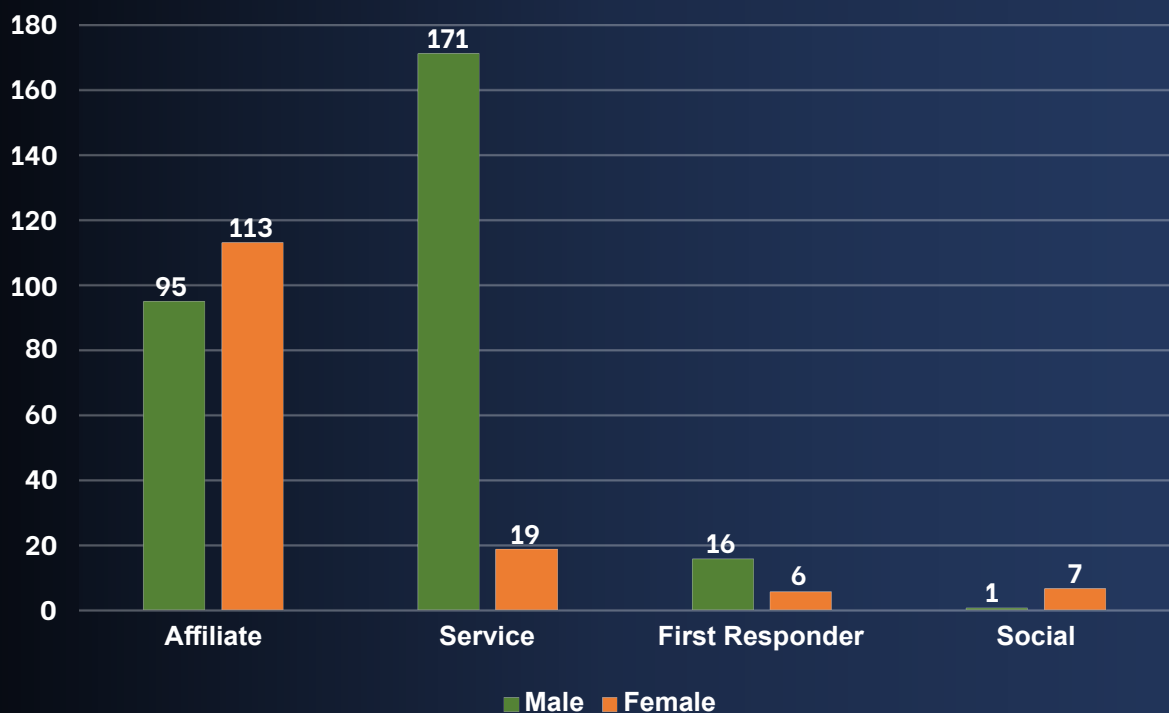
Membership Breakdown

(By Category)



Membership Breakdown

(By Male and Female)



COMMEMORATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Building Remembrance and Education

In 2025 the Warragul RSL held 6 commemorative services including Anzac Day (Dawn and Main Service), Remembrance Day, Vietnam Veterans Day, Australian Peacekeepers Day and Post 75 Veterans. These services are not just about remembering the past; they are also an opportunity to teach future generations about the service and sacrifice of our veterans.

In 2025, we piloted the Baw Baw RSL School Ambassador program with Marist Sion College. Selected students had the opportunity to engage in community service by delivering meaningful services to the elderly at four local aged care facilities on the day prior to Anzac Day.

This initiative provided students with the chance to connect with our veterans and senior citizens, demonstrate leadership, practice public speaking as well as honouring the ANZAC spirit. It proved to be so successful with the aged care facilities and the students themselves, that we also ran the program again on the day prior to Remembrance Day. We will further build on the program in 2026.





COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES 2025





Community Engagement

Each year, the through the commemorative services that the Warragul RSL conducts provides a tangible and engaging link for our broader community to acknowledge and show respect for all those that have served and to the sacrifices that we have lost. Our community is engaged through:

- Participation by local schools and community groups in commemoration, parade marches and wreath laying services.
- Attendance by members of the public at the ANZAC day and Remembrance Day services.
- Support from many local organisations and volunteers in the lead up to and during commemorative services.

In 2025, the Warragul RSL initiated the '500 Poppies' Project, inviting local community members to make poppies to create a 'field of remembrance' at the Warragul Cenotaph for Remembrance Day on the 11th November. We thought it would be a 'meaningful and heartfelt' way for the community to remember, honour and thank our local service men and women who lost their lives or suffered in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Poppies could also be dedicated to also honour and remember family members who served.

The response well and truly exceeded our expectations with the community contributing over 3370 lovingly created poppies from 140 different groups and individuals in our community. This resulted in an amazing community tribute laid out at the cenotaph as both a 'field of poppies' and a 'carpet of poppies'. It was a physical reminder that we are all part of one community, and we were truly humbled not only by people's generosity with their time, but also their care, kindness and respect in creating the poppies.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The finances of the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch are represented by five bank accounts:

- 1 Warragul RSL Sub-Branch General Account**
General or Trading account of the Warragul RSL for day to day operations.
- 2 Warragul RSL Hospitality Account**
Hospitality account for bar trading and hospitality operations.
- 3 Warragul RSL Pipes and Drums Account**
Separate account for Pipes and Drums.
- 4 Warragul RSL Sub-Branch Patriotic Fund**
Patriotic Fund for Building and Welfare purposes.
- 5 Warragul RSL Appeals Patriotic Fund**
Appeals Patriotic Fund for Benevolent Welfare purposes as an agency account to the RSL VIC Appeals fund.

The financial position of the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch remains stable despite the completion of a significant investment project in 2025 being the veteran's welfare centre. Our focus continues to be the delivery of services and support to our veterans and members whilst balancing sub-branch operational costs.

Key points for the year:

- **Primary income sources** included hall hire, membership fees, donations, other income, appeals bar operations and meals.
- **Major expenditures** included commemorative events, welfare support, building maintenance and improvements, security system upgrade and operational running costs.
- **The sub-branch** continued to manage its finances conservatively to ensure that we remain financially sustainable.

Our full audited financial statements are available on request.

FUNDRAISING

In 2025, we raised **\$30,697.75** from public donations to the Warragul RSL. This amount includes funds raised during our two major annual appeals, the ANZAC Appeal and the Poppy Appeal. The amounts shown below are the appeal funds retained by the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch after the RSL VIC component was returned.



ANZAC APPEAL FUNDS RAISED

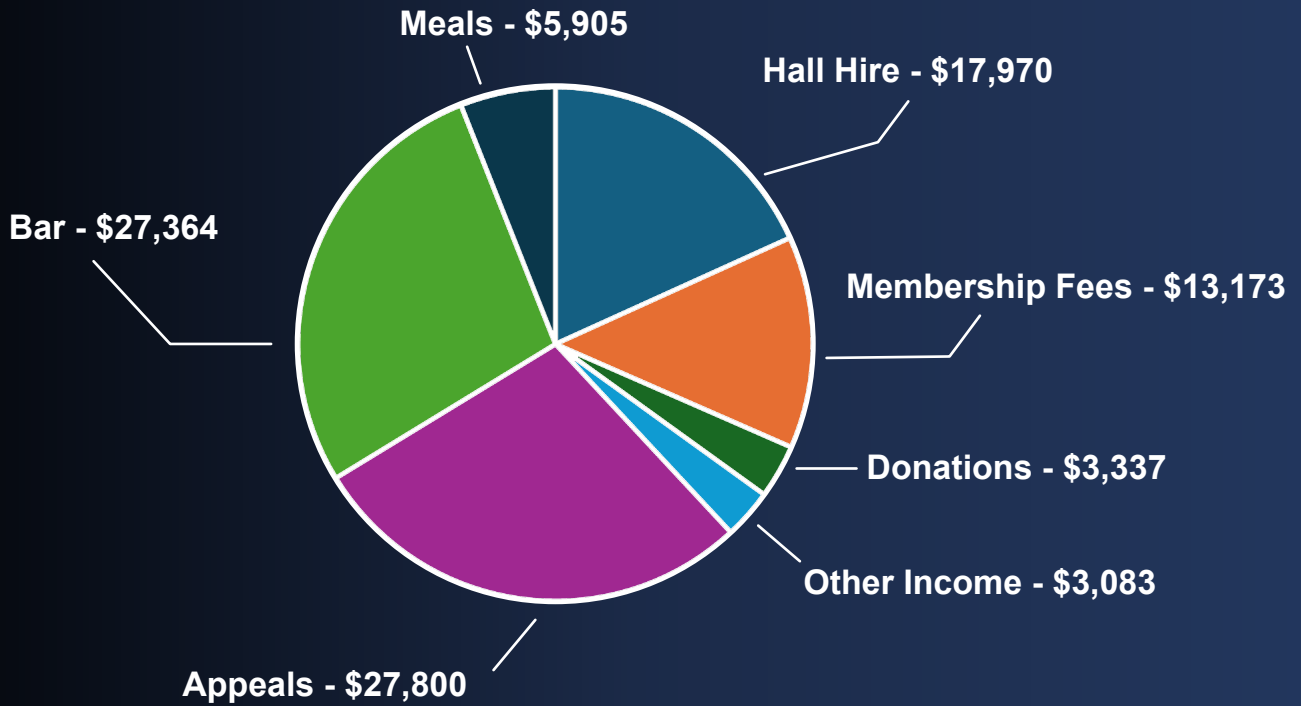
\$14,536.30



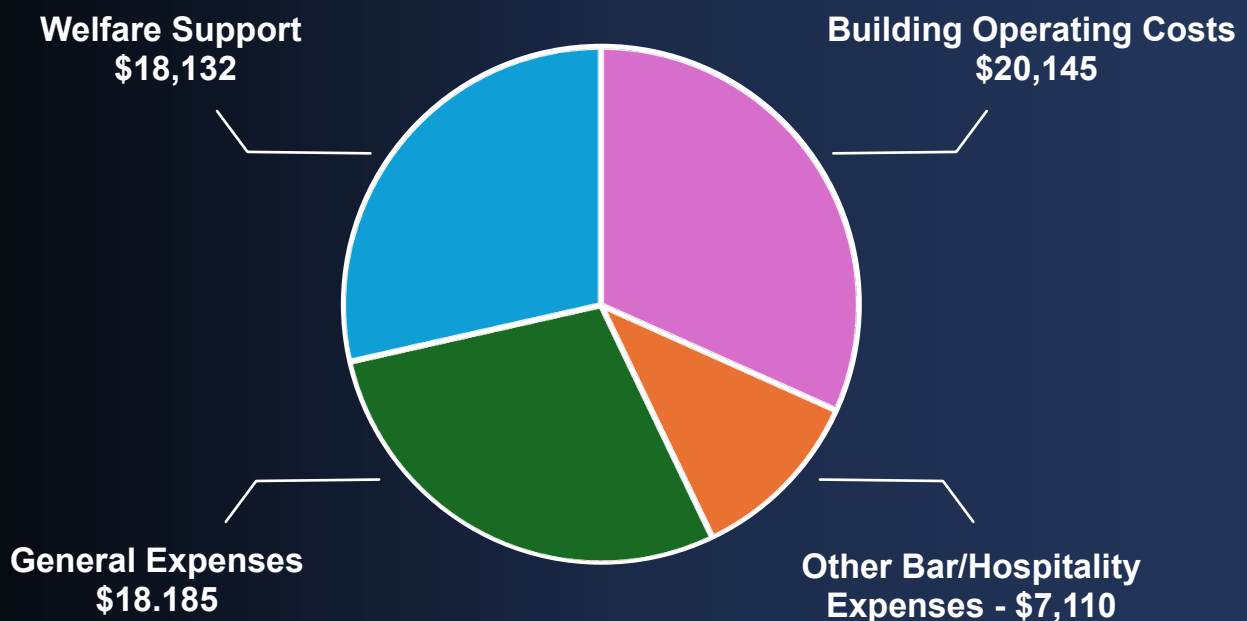
POPPY APPEAL FUNDS RAISED

\$13,264.00

WGL RSL Income Sources 2025 TOTAL = \$98,634



WGL RSL Key Expenses 2025 TOTAL = 63,572



OUR PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

The Warragul RSL prides itself on being engaged with the Veteran community. We believe in inclusiveness, equality and looking after Veterans and their families. At the Warragul RSL we have a diverse range of regular programs and activities that supports social inclusion, mental and physical wellbeing as well as providing opportunities for all our members to meet people and perhaps even learn a new skill!

Regular Programs and Activities

	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans and First Responders Social Group• Monthly Morning Teas• Ales on Albert• Carpet Bowls and Social Catch Up
	REGULAR ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singing Group• Guided Meditation• "Can Do" Art Group• Veterans Models & Diorama Group
	REGULAR PROGRAMS INCLUDE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warragul RSL Mateship and Fitness Group• Guitars 4 Vets Meditation• Wellbeing Group• Veterans Hydro

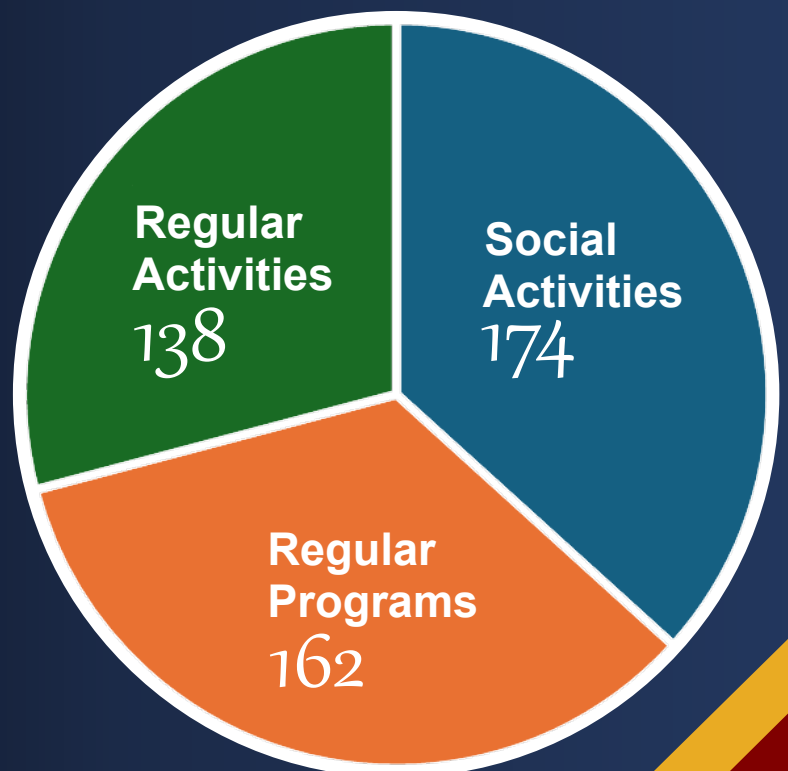
"CAN DO" ART GROUP





Total of 474 various activities and programs in 2025

In 2025, we held a total of 474 various activities and programs evenly spread across the various types for our members and demonstrates that we are committed to ensuring that we provide not just a diverse range of activities, but lots of opportunities for our members to connect with each other.



ALES ON ALBERT MEMBERS BAR



CATERERS AND VOLUNTEERS



SINGING GROUP



WARRAGUL RSL PIPES AND DRUMS CHAPTER



GUITARS FOR VETS



VETERANS MODELS AND DIORAMA GROUP



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers include veterans, veterans' family members, social members and friends. All are inspiring and hardworking individuals who give their time to our RSL sub-branch across a range of roles and activities that deliver a broad range of services and activities. They are the beating heart of the Warragul RSL Sub-Branch.

Our volunteers assist with commemorative events, raise funds through our appeals, organise events and activities, staff our bar, provide catering for our monthly dinners and events as well as answering the call for help at working bees. They give their time generously without fanfare and provide such a positive impact.

We will always be committed to supporting, celebrating and remaining ever thankful for our vital volunteer force because without them, the work simply couldn't happen.

NUMBER OF ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS: **80**

NUMBER OF HOURS VOLUNTEERED: **5,200+**



We are proud to acknowledge and highlight the extraordinary efforts of all our volunteers in 2025. Our work could not continue without them.



OUR COMMUNICATIONS

As a volunteer-led organisation, clear, consistent and timely communication remains fundamental to our effectiveness. Our communications strategy continues to focus on ensuring members are informed, engaged and heard.

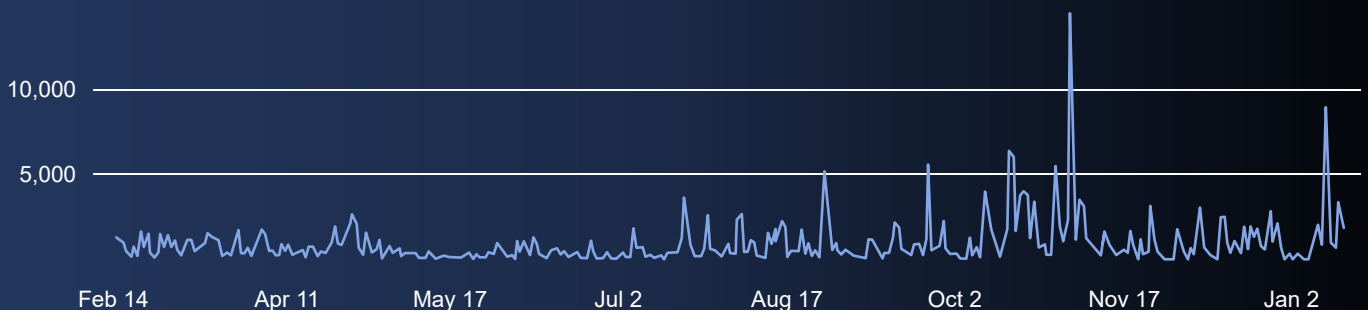
Communication Channels

Throughout 2025–2026, we utilised a range of platforms to ensure broad and inclusive communication:

- The introduction of a condensed monthly President’s Newsletter, replacing the former quarterly edition
- The WRS� website, supported by targeted email and SMS messaging
- Direct mail via Australia Post for members without digital access
- Social media, particularly Facebook, where engagement continues to grow strongly

FACEBOOK

339,976 views from February 2025 - February 2026



FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

In the 366 days to February 2026, WRS� Facebook posts received 339,976 views.

Two significant spikes occurred in November and February, with post views reaching 14,995 and 9,203 respectively.

These peaks related to the announcement of the passing of well-known local Vietnam veteran Keith Anderson, and an update on new veterans’ medical services available at the Baw Baw Veterans and Families Centre.

This level of engagement reflects strong community interest in WRS� activities and highlights the growing importance of our digital presence.

Highlights

A major achievement during the past year has been our collaboration with the Warragul and Drouin Gazette to produce a series of eleven veteran podcasts. This initiative received overwhelmingly positive feedback and contributed to the Gazette team receiving a prestigious regional journalism award.

To date, ten podcasts have been recorded and published. The eleventh—featuring the experiences of two widows of Vietnam Veterans—will be released shortly.

The podcast initiative has provided an important platform to preserve local veteran stories and strengthen community awareness of service and sacrifice. We anticipate continuing the series thanks to the outstanding support extended to WRSL by Gazette Editor Yvette Brand and journalists Bonnie Collings and Nicholas Duck.

We would also like to acknowledge the significant contributions of WRSL members Gavan Kearney and Shane Keppel, who are part of our Media and Communications Team. Their technical expertise continues to enhance our digital capability and has proven invaluable across a number of initiatives.

The Operations Team's Senior Vice President, Mark Buttner, assisted by Operations Officer Rob Brown, have worked tirelessly to ensure the timely distribution of emails and SMS messages to members, and to maintain accurate and up-to-date information on the WRSL website. Their efforts assist us to ensure our communications remain open, reliable and effective.

We remain committed to improving our communication practices in the future and welcome feedback and suggestions.

PODCASTS

The image displays a grid of 13 podcast covers. Each cover is for a 'WARRAGUL RSL PODCAST' in association with 'The Gazette'. The covers are organized as follows:

- Row 1 (Army):**
 - Cover 1: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 1 Episode 1, Terry Gleeson.
 - Cover 2: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 2 Episode 2, Alan Eade.
 - Cover 3: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 1 Episode 3, Keith Anderson.
 - Cover 4: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 1 Episode 4, Lynton Malley.
- Row 2 (Navy):**
 - Cover 5: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 2 Episode 1, John Grace.
 - Cover 6: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 2 Episode 2, Mike Letimer.
 - Cover 7: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 2 Episode 3, Ivan Standen.
 - Cover 8: "MY SERVICE MY STORY" VIETNAM, Series 2 Episode 4, Rod McNab.
- Row 3 (Special Editions):**
 - Cover 9: "HIS SERVICE OUR STORY" VIETNAM, SPECIAL EDITION, Maggie and Hans Rehorn.
 - Cover 10: "HIS SERVICE OUR STORY" VIETNAM, SPECIAL EDITION, "Those Left Behind", Coral Slegers and Marlene Sutton.
 - Cover 11: "MY SERVICE, MY STORY" HARRY MILNE, SPECIAL EDITION Part: 1, FROM UK TO AUSTRALIA.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we head into year 3 of our Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028 our priorities for the coming year include:

- Providing welfare, wellbeing and advocacy services to veterans and their families through our Baw Baw Veterans and Families Centre.
- Maintaining a broad range of activities and programs for all our members.
- Maintaining strong commemorative standards and events.
- Continuing to share our member stories of service with the community through the podcast initiative.
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Sub-Branch.



WARRAGUL RSL Sub-Branch

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2028

VISION

To be a leader as an inclusive and accessible RSL that provides a welcoming and safe environment for its members and their families.

PURPOSE

To provide support via connection and camaraderie whilst acknowledging and commemorating the traditions and history of our local veterans.

PILLARS



Support

Advocacy, welfare and wellbeing



Camaraderie

Connection, activities and programs



Commemoration

Acknowledgement of traditions and history



Organisation

Adaptive, accountable and sustainable

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Develop and refine our veteran and family services.
2. Protect and support by providing a safe and supportive environment.
3. Maintain a high standard or community facing appeals and support.
4. Increase revenue to fund welfare support.

1. Maintain activities and programs that suit the needs of our membership.
2. Identify opportunities to engage with other community groups to assist with veterans transition.
3. Promote activities via various platforms to attract members of all ages and abilities.

1. Maintain high standards of acknowledging historical events and traditions.
2. Continue research to expand commemorative events to remain relevant to a changing community.
3. Sharing of our stories of service and transition with the community.

1. Provide a high level of governance and compliance with policies and procedures.
2. Implement a succession plan incorporating assistant roles.
3. Provide training and education to develop future leaders
4. Being agile and capable with technology.
5. Sustainably grow our membership.

VALUES



Respect



Accountability



Integrity



Mateship



Tradition



Compassion



Empathy

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS & PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

We acknowledge our Community Supporters and Partner Organisations.
Their continued support enables us to carry out our work.



WARRAGUL
LIONS



WARRAGUL
ROTARY



CCG
Community
College
Gippsland



Monacellars
Liquor Specialists





Branch Directory

Warragul RSL Duty Phone

0480 257 478

Veteran Centre Duty Phone

0451 340 220

President

Lynn Mizen | 0457 410 060

Senior Vice President | Operations

Mark Buttner | 0434 280 231

Vice President | Governance

Lou Brown | 0408 142 296

Vice President | Communications

Bob Green | 0408 124 558

Secretary

David Harrison | dmharrison121@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Gerardine Crew | 0410 414 703

Veterans Centre Manager

Ben Vahland | 0451 340 220

Membership Officer

Peter Parish | 0407 808 305

Ales on Albert Bar Manager

Kylie Sage | 0418 512 130

Pipes & Drums (Pipe Major)

Richard Harris | 0400 103 071

Wellbeing Group Facilitator

David Baker | 0421 614 937

Scale Models Group Facilitator

Brent Wilson | 0439 911 118

Can Do Art Facilitator

Jill Harris | 0490 389 379





warragulrsl.com.au