

MEDIA RELEASE



RSL Victoria not at war with Vasey RSL Care

15 May 2020

Vasey RSL Care Chairman's decision to launch a campaign of opposition targeting RSL Victoria has shocked and saddened the RSL.

Dr Rob Webster OAM, State President RSL Victoria, indicated the initial response to the campaign launch in the lead up to ANZAC Day 2020 was one of surprise. 'The decision taken by the Vasey RSL Care Chairman to publicise false and misleading information about RSL Victoria and the War Widows Guild involvement in a proposed sale of Vasey RSL Care was unexpected and contrary to our relationship. To do it before ANZAC Day was, to say the least, very disappointing.'

RSL Victoria and the War Widows Guild have enjoyed a long and supportive relationship since our organisations established Vasey RSL Care in 2004. The organisation's origins stem from the amalgamation of RSL Victoria and War Widows Guild age care facilities.

In 2012 the governing members of Vasey RSL Care made a decision that the company should be sold. Former State President, Major General David McLachlan AO recalled that "the decision was based on a declining number of veterans at Vasey RSL Care and changing demographic of veterans across Victoria. There was also a need to provide accommodation closer to where veterans and widows live". He also said that later discussions on Vasey RSL Care future centred on the need to accommodate younger veterans".

'The suggestion by the Vasey RSL Care Chairman that we have the power to force their sale is completely false and while there is a long-standing convention that the Presidents of RSL Victoria and the War Widows Guild act as representatives of the governing members of Vasey RSL Care, the power to sell Vasey RSL care facility remains with the Vasey RSL Care governing members.' Dr Webster said.

The campaign's propagation of the suggestion that RSL Victoria would profit from any future sale or use these assets to support commercial operations is unequivocally false. Dr Webster said, 'Vasey RSL Care is a Patriotic Fund, and as such, any assets from a sale of this type of organisation must, by law (Veterans Act 2005 Vic), be invested back into the Victorian veteran community.'

RSL Victoria is concerned about the negative impact the Vasey RSL Care Chairman's public campaign is having on veterans, RSL staff, our volunteers and the broader community. 'We welcome transparency on the historical facts and hope they may allay some of the fear, and misinformation being circulated.' Dr Webster went on to say 'We need to focused on our shared purpose, the care and support of veterans and their families.'

RSL Victoria will continue to work with Vasey RSL Care and the War Widows Guild to ensure residents and clients continue to receive the care and support deserving of our Veterans and their dependents. 'We remain committed to realising the best possible outcome for Veterans and their families across Victoria.' Dr Webster said.

ENDS

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