



RSL
Victoria

RSL VICTORIA

**TRANSFORMATION
PROJECT BULLETIN**

EDITION 05
MARCH 2026

RSL VICTORIA TRANSFORMATION PROJECT ROADMAP PHASE 1 2026

SECURE INTERNAL SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY AUG - OCT 2025

- Launch Thoughtpost Report
- Statewide roadshow
- Funding extension.



- \$1.5M for design
- Legal review
- PMO setup.



SECURE PROJECT FUNDING FOR PHASE 1 AUG - DEC 2025

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE 1 JAN - DEC 2026



- Governance restructure
- Legal frameworks,
- Monthly progress reports

MODERNISE GOVERNANCE

- Update the legal structure
- Improve board skills
- Open up board membership
- Formation of a member council
- Review voting systems
- Rewrite the rules.



SUPPORT A SUSTAINABLE SUB-BRANCH NETWORK

- Review Sub-Branch viability
- Clarify regional structures.

ENHANCE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



- Streamline agency accounts processes
- Create a central gifts-in-wills program.

REPOSITION RSLV AS A MODERN VETERAN CHARITY



- Develop a strategic plan
- Standardise service delivery.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE PROJECT DIRECTOR SUE CATTERMOLLE

Welcome to the *Bulletin* for March 2026.

The Transformation Project has taken significant steps forward this month, with progress made on the governance reform, key positions filled to deliver on high-priority initiatives in the areas of governance reform, stakeholder engagement, and fundraising.

New team members will play a crucial role in the delivery of the transformation program, and we are now in a stronger position to deliver key reforms and sustainable fundraising into the future.

Also within this *Bulletin* is an update on the finalisation of the *Network Engagement Strategy*, as well as progress reports on our three works streams:

(1) RSL Victoria Financial & Digital Strategy; (2) RSL Victoria Governance Reform; (3) RSL Victoria Service Delivery.

Thank you to all stakeholders for your support, questions, and feedback. Ongoing communication with you is essential to our success.

Warm regards,

Sue Cattermole
Executive Project Director
RSL Victoria

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

We are pleased to present the March highlights of the RSL Victoria's Transformation Project, which include:

- Project work stream updates March 2026
- Welcome to new Transformation Project team members
- The finalisation of the Transformation's *Network Engagement Strategy*
- Transformation Project FAQ updates.



PROJECT WORK STREAM UPDATES – MARCH 2026

We have established three areas of focus for immediate project work. These three areas are called 'work streams' and cover the following:

1. **RSL Victoria Financial & Digital Strategy** – focused on implementing strong financial frameworks, and technology foundations to enhance efficiency, and long-term sustainability.
2. **RSL Victoria Governance Reform** – focused on modernising the State Branch governance model by reviewing the current governing bodies and mechanisms to address the scale and complexity of State Branch responsibilities and to meet modern standards of public accountability. This stream will also re-examine our regional support model and identify areas to support and strengthen Sub-Branch governance.
3. **RSL Victoria Service Delivery** – focused on the realignment of statewide service delivery under a consistent veteran and families' wellbeing model and enhancing RSL Victoria's fundraising capability through the establishment of a centralised Gifts-in-Wills program, and identification of new commercial opportunities.

WORK STREAM 1. RSL VICTORIA FINANCIAL & DIGITAL STRATEGY

Work stream led by RSL Victoria Executive Project Director Sue Cattermole and RSL Victoria Senior Project Manager Ivan Spasic.

March developments include:

Three important foundation documents to guide decision-making and accountabilities were finalised and endorsed in March by the Project Control Board: (1) the Governance Operations Manual, (2) the Terms of Reference, and (3) the Quality Management Plan.

The *Network Engagement Strategy* was finalised (see item elsewhere in this bulletin for more) and key engagement mechanisms were initiated or enhanced, including *STEX Update*, *Transformation Project Bulletin*, and *Transformation Project FAQs*.

Further work is being undertaken to ensure regular communication is available, when appropriate, to external stakeholders and the media.

The review of RSL Victoria's current use of technology platforms to ensure safe and secure data management, improved document control, increased reporting capacity and consistent project management has commenced.

WORK STREAM 2. RSL VICTORIA GOVERNANCE REFORM

Work stream to be led by RSL Victoria Senior Legal Counsel – Governance & Restructuring Jack Whittaker.

March developments include:

Jack Whittaker commenced in his role and will support Sue Cattermole in the structural reform to establish a new model of governance.

One of the Strategic Imperatives highlighted in the independent Thoughtpost Review was the need to establish a fit for purpose governance structure for RSL Victoria.

As per the Review recommendations, State Branch have been investigating the transitioning of the Returned & Services League of Australia (Victoria Branch) Inc. (RSL Victoria) from an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee.

State Executive have recently obtained legal advice from HWLE Lawyers as to the suitability of the company limited by guarantee (CLG) model as the most appropriate future organisational legal structure for RSL Victoria.

HWLE's advice is that RSL Victoria's current incorporated association structure is no longer fit for purpose and the transition to a CLG is the only structural option suitable to an organisation of RSL Victoria's size, significance and complexity.

We have provided a summary of that advice from HWLE [HERE](#), or by scanning the QR Code below.



Scan here for advice from HWLE.

This advice was considered and accepted by the State Executive at the 30 March meeting.

There will be a 12-month timeline to complete the transition, with the expectation of holding of an Extraordinary General Meeting to vote on a new constitution by the end of the 2026, where Sub-Branches will have a direct say in the transition.

In preparation for a new constitution for RSL Victoria, State Executive has started a series of workshops reviewing the following key topics relating to the existing Rules and By-laws:

- Confirming our purpose
- Membership
- Board composition
- Relationship to Sub-Branches.

These workshops are scheduled to run through to the State Annual Conference in July 2026.

The work of the first Advisory Panel will commence before the end of April, with Sub-Branch representatives being asked to provide feedback on aspects of the transition to company by guarantee. All significant proposed changes will be discussed at the State Annual Conference, before a formal vote by the end of the year.

The current Rules and By-laws will remain in place until after that vote.

It is important to note that RSL Victoria's transition to a CLG does not require any Sub-Branch to change how it is incorporated or its governance structure, however it may be an option for those Sub-Branches who also wish to transition.

For more on the transition to a company limited by guarantee, please visit our online [FAQ HERE](#).



WORK STREAM 3. RSL VICTORIA SERVICE DELIVERY

Work stream led by Sue Cattermole, until a further appointment is made.

March developments include:

Realignment of the delivery of RSL Victoria's services to veterans and their families is progressing.

The proposed model will see complex military compensation and well-being support led by State Branch, allowing Sub-Branches to focus on the intake, welfare, social connection, and community development.

State Branch already has oversight of several Veterans and Families Wellbeing Hubs operating across the state. The intention is to expand this model to all regions in collaboration with regional Sub-Branches.

These changes are in line with the implementation of Recommendations 86 and 99 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (DVSRC).

DVSRC Recommendation 99 introduces a new funding model aimed at strengthening the national delivery of free advocacy services through the redesign of the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program. This will be an important future funding stream for the RSL in underpinning the delivery of its free advocacy services.

Funding for DVSRC Recommendation 86 will ensure the continuation and long-term stability of the Victorian Veterans and Families Wellbeing Hubs in Geelong and Wodonga. This will enable RSL Victoria to enhance the delivery of accessible support services for veterans and their families across the Southwest and Northeast regions of Victoria.

It is pleasing to see that RSL engagement with the Federal Government contributed to the Government's decision to fund DVSRC Recommendation 86 and 99.

Discussions continue with RSL Queensland to align our service delivery model to their mature veteran service model, including gaining access to their customer relationship management system (CRMS) for the management of case records.

NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE TRANSFORMATION TEAM

WELCOME JACK WHITTAKER SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL – GOVERNANCE & RESTRUCTURING

Jack Whittaker has joined to lead Work Stream 2 of the Transformation Project (RSL Victoria Governance Reform) as Senior Legal Counsel – Governance & Restructuring.

Jack will focus on the establishment of a modern governance structure for the RSL in Victoria, including both the State Branch and the Sub-Branch Network.

Jack is an experienced legal, governance, risk, compliance and operations manager and a commercially-focused corporate adviser across not-for-profits, retail and private practice.



WELCOME BRETT WEST

ADVISOR - VETERANS & FAMILIES, ENGAGEMENT, CONSULTATION AND EVALUATION



Brett West has been appointed for a two-month role as Advisor - Veterans & Families, Engagement, Consultation and Evaluation.

Brett's role is to strengthen RSL Victoria's engagement with the broader veteran community and recommend ways to improve how we connect our services to veterans and their families.

Brett's focus will be on observing and evaluating our current approach and reporting to State Executive on:

- Creating guiding principles for a consistent statewide model
- Increasing engagement with young veterans and underrepresented groups
- Strengthening connections with government, ADF bases, ESOs and Sub-Branches
- Establishing veteran and family Advisory Panels to support long-term community engagement.

Brett will be known to many across the Sub-Branch network as a member of the Veteran Affairs Sub-Committee, ANZAC Day ambassador and the developmental support for the RSL Vic Reconciliation Action Plan.

To read more about Brett West please click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code below.



Scan here to learn more about Brett West.

WELCOME KYLIE DICK

FUNDRAISING LEAD



Kylie will play a key role in implementing strategies for sustainable growth in fundraising income, strengthening relationships with RSL supporters, leading the development of a new Gifts-in-Wills program, and engaging supporters through our annual Appeals.

Kylie brings more than two decades of experience across the corporate and not-for-profit sectors, most recently with Vasey RSL Care.

NETWORK ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FINALISED

The *Network Engagement Strategy* has been designed to ensure regular, timely and transparent two-way communication with Sub-Branches and other stakeholders who need to stay informed about the progress of the Transformation Program.

The strategy seeks to increase engagement with stakeholders and their understanding of the goals of the project and improve decision-making.

To read the full *Network Engagement Strategy* please click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code on the right.

Scan here for *Network Engagement Strategy*.





FAQ UPDATE

QUESTION

In the Service Delivery phase, which looks at Sub-Branch viability, what will be the determining factors for the survival of smaller Sub-Branches?

Will they include:

- A required minimum number of veterans in the Sub-Branch
- The capability and willingness of veterans to fill Sub-Branch Committee positions
- A required minimum of veteran welfare work, as opposed to commemorative work.

[Also] if RSL Victoria is to transform its operations to meet its first objective - 'Deliver, lead and facilitate high-quality veteran services' - then Sub-Branches need to move most of their time and effort to veteran welfare work. This will be contrary to what many members joined for. Smaller towns will still want their RSL members to run local commemorative events, which suggests that a methodology to get non-RSL people to run parts of commemorative activities might be required.

ANSWER

RSL Victoria acknowledges that this is the most challenging part of our Transformation work and one that will require ongoing consultation with Sub-Branches before arriving at a long-term solution.

The clear message within Thoughtpost's *Independent Review* was that our smaller Sub-Branches want the opportunity to retain a presence within the RSL network, and where possible have an active role in their communities. They also acknowledged that a new way of operating would be needed to reduce the regulatory burden imposed on Sub-Branches, as well as the challenges in finding volunteers willing to act as Sub-Branch office holders.

(Answer continues on the next page)

We are investigating the options to address these challenges and will consult with the Sub-Branch network before any decisions are made.

Although the model has not yet been developed, it is understood that a key feature will be to allow smaller groups that can no longer continue operating as RSL Sub-Branches to retain their local identities and, within the scope of agreed RSL activities, continue to represent the RSL in areas such as fellowship, commemoration, advocacy referrals, and fundraising.

QUESTION

There are many cultural issues that seem to need addressing in the transformation. How will these be tackled?

ANSWER

RSL Victoria recognises that there are cultural challenges in the way the organisation currently operates that must be addressed to successfully navigate its future. While this is a continuous process, work is already underway, with agreed actions focused on:

- Establishing clear behavioural standards that reinforce respect for, and the value of, membership.
- Increasing engagement with younger veterans and groups that have been historically underrepresented.
- Fostering a culture of openness and transparency in how we communicate and engage with stakeholders
- Building stronger partnerships with contemporary ex-service organisations to ensure relevance and connection.

These actions form an important foundation for cultural change and will continue to be embedded as the transformation progresses.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

As part of RSL Victoria's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, we want to provide you with the opportunity to seek feedback on questions or concerns about the project.

Gathering your questions centrally will help us:

- Produce an FAQs section featured on the [RSL Victoria Transformation Project webpage](#) (launching February 2026) and assist others with similar questions
- Improve the content and communication of project updates including Bulletins.

If you have any questions regarding the project please ask them by completing the form [HERE](#).

Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to access the form.



Scan here for
FAQ form.