



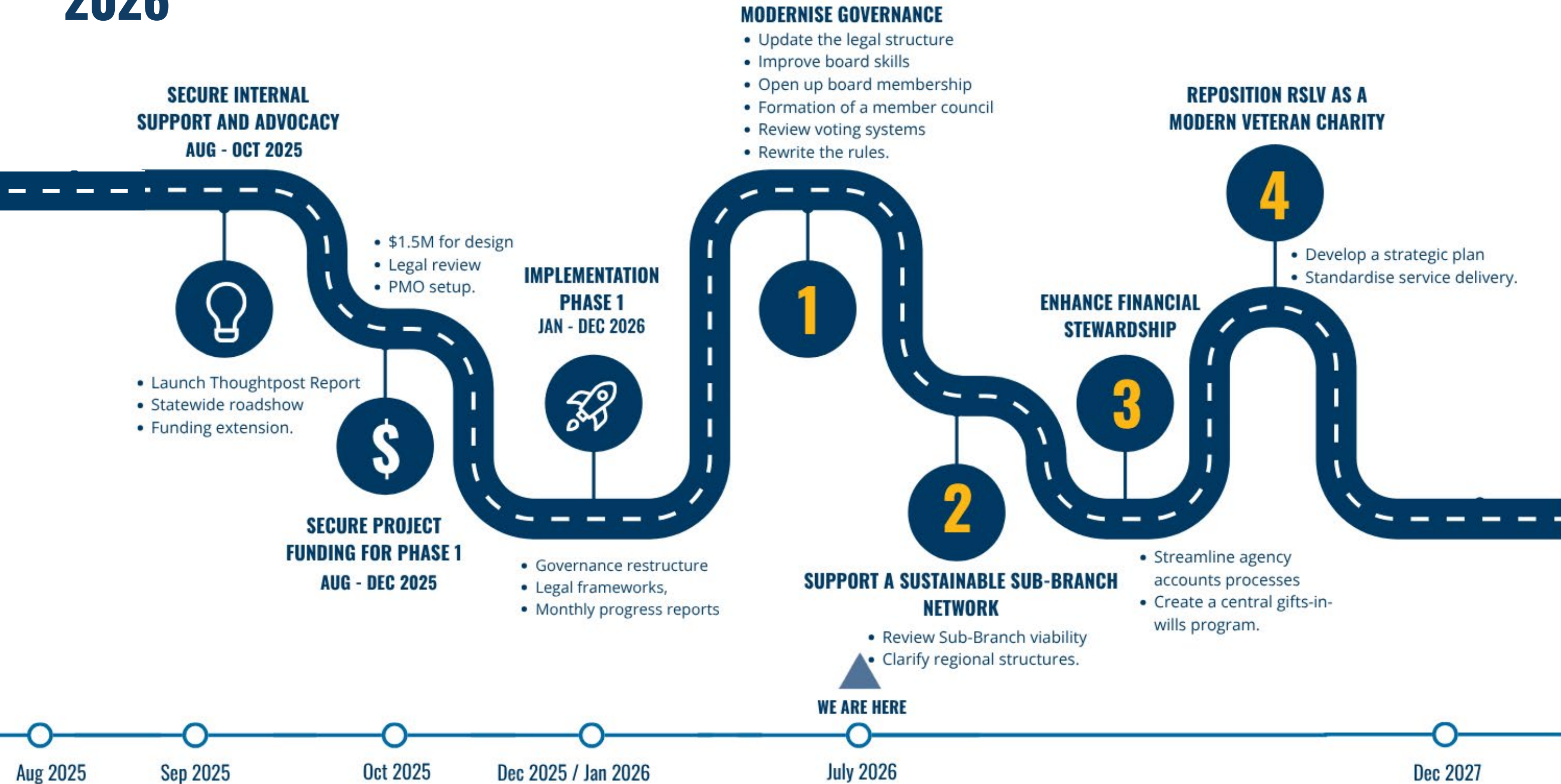
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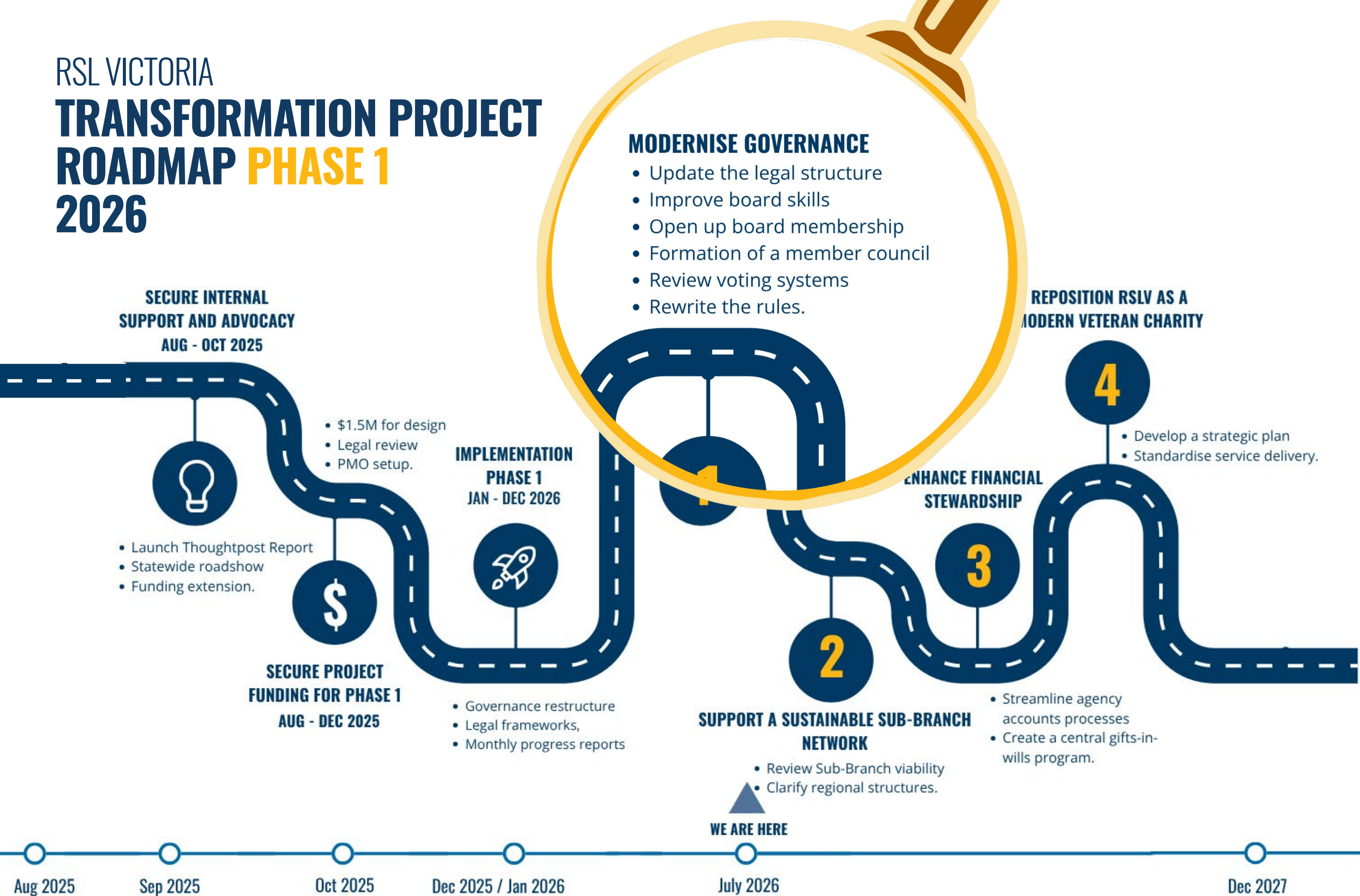
TRANSFORMATION PROJECT BULLETIN

EDITION 09
JULY 2026

RSL VICTORIA TRANSFORMATION PROJECT ROADMAP **PHASE 1** 2026



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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

SUE CATTERMOLLE

Welcome to the July edition of the RSL Victoria Transformation Project Bulletin.

This month marks an important milestone in the Project's journey, as significant planning and design work begins translating into tangible action across our network.

On 1 July, the new regional service model became operational at the Surf Coast Geelong Veterans and Families Hub. This represents the first stage of a more coordinated approach to supporting veterans and families across the region.

Ex-Service Organisations including Open Arms, Vasey RSL Care, Geelong Legacy, Geelong Vietnam Veterans Association, and Bellarine Veteran Group, together with RSL Sub-Branched – including Geelong, Lara, Ocean Grove-Barwon Heads, and Queenscliff – have contributed to the co-design process. This partnership will be critical to the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the model.

For veterans and families, the new approach is designed to provide a clearer and more consistent pathway to support. For staff, volunteers and service providers, improved coordination, visibility and information sharing will enable more connected and responsive service delivery.

We also saw the commencement of the Mildura District Regional Transformation Pilot, bringing together Mildura RSL Sub-Branch and the Red Cliffs-Irymple, Merbein and Robinvale Sub-Branched amalgamating to strengthen services and support for ex-service people in the Sunraysia region. This pilot provides an important opportunity to test a regional operating model that preserves local identity while enhancing governance, sustainability, and service delivery.

At State Branch, governance arrangements for the Transformation Project continue to mature. The Project Control Board has established a regular monthly meeting cycle. The Operational Project Group has also been established, with RSL Victoria Executive Leadership Team members appointed Stream Sponsors to formalise accountability and oversight across each of the three work streams.

The establishment of these groups provides clear ownership of deliverables and strengthens governance oversight, ensuring that project outcomes remain on track, progress against key milestones are monitored, and emerging risks or resource gaps identified.

Finally, I would like to thank all who attended the 111th RSL Victoria State Annual Conference on 25 July and participated in the afternoon session on the Transformation Project. The level of engagement and thoughtful discussion was encouraging, and the positive feedback received demonstrates growing support for the reform agenda and recognition of the challenges we must address together. A full wrap-up of that session can be found in this Bulletin.

The RSL is the largest ex-service organisation in Victoria. We have a responsibility to ensure that our governance structure and services continue to meet the evolving needs and the expectations of our ex-service people and their families.

Across the state, many Sub-Branched are experiencing increasing administrative, governance and compliance demands. These responsibilities often fall heavily on volunteers, reducing the time available to focus on what matters most: advocacy, wellbeing support, and meaningful connection within local communities.

Ultimately, this is what the Transformation Project is for – to strengthen not just the structures of our organisation but to put our people at the very coalface of the work instead of dealing with issues of compliance and regulatory responsibility.

That is precisely why the Transformation Project exists. Our objective is not simply to reform organisational structures, but to create an environment where our people can focus on supporting veterans and families rather than navigating complex governance and administrative requirements.

As I have said throughout this process, the success of the Transformation Project depends on collaboration across our entire network. Your feedback, ideas and participation remain vital. Together, we can honour the proud legacy of the RSL while building an organisation that is sustainable, resilient, and ready for the future.

Kind regards,

Sue Cattermole
CEO RSL Victoria



BENDIGO VETERANS AND FAMILIES HUB – BUSINESS CASE UNDERWAY

Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch has been successful in the Expression of Interest (EOI) process to establish a Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) funded Veterans’ and Families’ Hub in Bendigo.

Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch has been appointed as the lead agency supported by RSL Victoria, Bendigo Legacy and Central Victoria Vietnam Veterans.

The Hub would provide a central point of access for veterans and families from across the region and will have joint oversight by the four partners, leveraging the expertise of the RSL Victoria Regional Service Model, already operating in Wodonga, and recently expanded into Surf Coast and Geelong earlier this month.

The proposed Hub would serve veterans and families across a broad catchment, delivering coordinated access to wellbeing, advocacy, employment, social connection, and support services.

JULY BULLETIN HIGHLIGHTS

This month’s Bulletin includes updates on:

- Bendigo Veterans and Families Hub – business case development underway
- Sunraysia District Regional Transformation Pilot
- 111th RSL Victoria State Annual Conference – Transformation Project session recap
- Other key project developments across all work streams
- Quarter 2 financial performance update.





SUNRAYSIA REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION PILOT

The Sunraysia pilot has continued to progress, with Mildura RSL Sub-Branch and the Red Cliffs-Irymple, Merbein and Robinvale Sub-Branches working collaboratively to develop a regional operating model that strengthens governance, financial sustainability and veteran support while preserving local identity and commemorative activities.

The proposed model will build on Mildura RSL Sub-Branch's existing regional veteran support network by formalising shared governance, administrative and financial support arrangements, while enabling each participating Sub-Branch to maintain its local presence and continue delivering ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, and community commemorative activities.

The pilot has also received positive exposure through a successful visit by the RSL Victoria Media team, highlighting the collaborative approach being undertaken across the Sunraysia region and generating strong local support for the initiative.

Click [HERE](#) to watch a video on the Sub-Branches participating in the Mildura District Regional Transformation Pilot.



111TH RSL VICTORIA STATE ANNUAL CONFERENCE – TRANSFORMATION PROJECT SESSION WRAP-UP

At the 111th RSL Victoria State Annual Conference, held 25 July 2026, afternoon proceedings closed with a lengthy afternoon session on RSL Victoria's Transformation Project. Discussion focused on the following key areas:

- Transformation Project – background and vision
- State Branch governance reform
- Sub-Branch governance and statewide service model
- Financial stability
- The importance of collaboration and commitment to work together.

RSL Victoria State President Dr. Mark Schröffle said that “bold and decisive steps forward” were required for the organisation to thrive, emphasising the vital role Sub-Branches play in the transformative process.

Dr. Schröffle said that the transition to a company limited by guarantee (CLG) would provide a new foundation for RSL's governance. Joined by Andrew Donovan Director of Thoughtpost Governance, Dr. Schröffle spoke of an improved, cohesive statewide structure, stronger leadership, greater transparency and capability and ongoing relevance for all veterans were listed as essential elements of the transformative journey, while maintaining the RSL as a “veteran-focused and veteran-led” organisation as being a key to the future.

RSL Victoria CEO Sue Cattermole spoke on the need to update the Rules and By-laws of the RSL and said that proposed governance changes would allow volunteers and Sub-Branches to focus “on what they do best” – serving and supporting the ex-service community unburdened by the complexities of the current structure.

Ms. Cattermole said that better outcomes for veterans and families are the key purpose of RSL Victoria's Transformation Project as well as protecting local Sub-Branches and enabling them to thrive.

Examples of transformative collaboration were presented, with the merger of the Sunraysia RSL Sub-Branches and the Surf Coast Geelong Service Model featured as glimpses of a potential future state of the RSL.

RSL Victoria CFO Jack Crawford spoke about securing the RSL's financial future, stressing the "complex financial environment" the RSL is currently operating under and pointing the way to a need for diversification of revenue streams and other measures to build improved overall financial capability, with financial resilience as the ultimate goal.

Attendees were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback on all aspects of the Transformation Project. Questions on voting for a proposed membership council, Sub-Branch sustainability and other topics were covered during this session.

As the RSL works towards securing a stable and sustainable future, alleviating pressures on Sub-Branches and continuing to support veterans and their families, the State Annual Conference closed with Dr. Schröfel reiterating the importance of the RSL's collaborative efforts, with veterans and families at the center of every decision made and action taken.

RSL Victoria thanks all Sub-Branch delegates and observers for joining us at the 111th State Annual Conference as we future plan and strive to continue providing the best possible support and advocacy for Victorian veterans and their families.



To read the Transformation Project documents attendees were presented at State Annual Conference (*The RSL Victoria Transformation Project Explanatory Note* and *RSL Victoria's Governance Upgrade*), please scan the QR code below.

To read the full wrap-up of the 111th State Annual Conference, please click [HERE](#).



OTHER KEY PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

JULY 2026

WORK STREAM 1: RSL VICTORIA FINANCIAL & DIGITAL STRATEGY

- ANZAC House Financial Sustainability Review – a Request for Proposal (RFP) document was completed and is out to market to qualified vendors, with an on-site briefing and building tour conducted 16 July. A project timeframe has been developed, with a Final Report target by the successful consultant set for October 2026
- Investment strategy – development of a pooled investment model to generate additional returns for the network is underway. RFP documentation is complete, with a shortlist of Fund Managers to be part of the RFP process commencing shortly
- Raechel Gleeson commenced in the role of Fundraising Lead, bringing a strong background in professional fundraising and development to RSL Victoria. Her role will support the development of a Fundraising strategy including the launch of Gifts in Wills program, major giving, and development of suite of analytics to increase insights into current performance
- Updates to the business case and planning documentation for the Central Data Repository (CDR) are underway for this project, which will create a single, secure location for RSL Victoria data
- Automation of Veteran Family Service reporting is progressing, reducing manual effort, and improving accuracy. Delivery will follow a phased approach, starting with data consolidation and standardisation.

WORK STREAM 2: STATE BRANCH GOVERNANCE REFORM

- Proposed Transformation Project reforms were tabled and discussed with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) in an initial meeting held Wednesday 8 July
- Continued focus was placed on resolving governance structure and drafting of the proposed CLG constitution – with a membership council, company limited by guarantee (CLG) board and voting process for election of office bearers included
- Legal testing of an updated and modernised "Purpose" for RSL Victoria to be included as part of the proposed CLG constitution has begun. Testing will ensure this newly defined "Purpose" allows for public benevolent institutions (PBI) registration with the Australian Tax Office and deductible gift recipients (DGR) charitable status endorsement with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission for the proposed RSL CLG entity. The new "Purpose" definition will be tested with the Stream 2 Advisory Panel and as part of STEX Workshop 5.

WORK STREAM 3: RSL VICTORIA SERVICE DELIVERY

- Ongoing discussions are taking place with DVA regarding Recommendation 86 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, specifically operational funding for the Wodonga and Surf Coast Geelong Veterans and Families Hubs from 1 July 2026. All requested data has now been submitted
- The Department of Veterans' Affairs new [Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency](#) opened on 1 July 2026 and is expected to begin referring clients to Veterans and Families Hubs. In anticipation of this demand, recruitment has been completed for the enhanced staffing model at both the Wodonga and Surf Coast Geelong Hubs, including an Operational Lead and a Service Navigator at each site, despite final funding arrangements yet to be confirmed.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE NETWORK

RSL Victoria remains committed to transparent, inclusive, and meaningful engagement with our Sub-Branch network and stakeholders throughout the Transformation Project.

Any future governance or structural changes will be subject to consultation, regulatory approval, and member endorsement. We will continue to provide regular updates, opportunities for feedback, and forums for discussion as the project progresses.

Our focus remains clear: strengthening the organisation so we can continue delivering exceptional support, advocacy and connection for veterans, their families, and the broader ex-service community for generations to come.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

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 RSL Victoria's Transformation 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 Transformation Project updates including Bulletins.

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

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

If your question is in the broader interest of the RSL Victoria network, it will be featured anonymously in the FAQs section on the Transformation Project webpage.

There are no new questions for this month.



SCAN HERE FOR FAQs



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