



ANNUAL REPORT

2023



SHEPPARTON
RSL



SHEPPARTON
RSL

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WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

The RSL was founded in 1916 to provide comradeship and support to Australia's Veterans and their families.

That core mission has never changed but has continued to evolve to meet the needs of each generation of servicemen and women.

We have a branch network that covers Australia and any veteran who needs help will get it and every serving ADF member and Veteran will be warmly welcomed at their local RSL.

We advocate for the best possible conditions for our serving men and women and for those who have served the nation in the past.

We foster respect and thanks from the nation for all those who have made sacrifices in Australia's name and we will provide a strong voice on issues of national unity and security.

In addition to this, however, we are a community organisation and our community support is wide and varied including:

- Local sporting groups and clubs
- Educational institutions with grants and scholarships
- Emergency services with equipment and funding
- Health and aged care & kindred organisations such as Legacy, Open Arms and others.
- Other mainstream charities doing great work across Victoria.
- **Veteran Services.** Through our Sub Committee Portfolio, **GVVC Inc**, we offer a wide range of services to Ex Veterans and serving members of our ADF, especially with assisting members in making claims to DVA and other Government Departments.
- **Greater Shepparton Veterans Group.** This group is a reformation of the Young Veterans Group. Instead of concentrating on just a younger demographic, the Committee took the view that the reformation of the group should be to all Ex Serving Members including ADF members, Reserves and National Service members (both male and female as well as families). Its aim is one of general camaraderie and good fun. The group meets monthly and is offered discounted drinks, special raffles, snacks and discounts on meals etc. On a three-to-four-month basis, special events such as golf days, trips to the trots or races, BBQs and other fun times will be organised. This is hoped to encourage more service people and families into our club regardless of age, length of service etc. Committee member Dan Gleeson is in charge of this new portfolio and we encourage all members and non-members with a history of service to attend.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Anzac and Remembrance days were once again successful with good crowds in attendance. After the Anzac Day Dawn Service, we turned the clocks back to pre Covid and invited everyone back to the Sub-Branch where they enjoyed egg & bacon rolls (800 were served), together with coffee and tea. We were assisted by Shepparton South Rotary Club and the Shepparton Lions Club, with their BBQ trailers. We look forward to conducting the breakfast again this year.

A special thanks to Paul Blackwell and his team of volunteers at the Goulburn Valley Veterans Centre for their outstanding work in meeting our Veterans and War Widows' needs. They continue to serve a growing list of clientele each year. Paul and his wife Ronnie continually record the most Volunteer Hours within the Sub-Branch, with the GV Veterans Centre volunteers recording 2,908 hours between them for the 2023 year. An office was opened in Seymour late last year to service the growing number of Veterans living in that area, serviced by the centre. At this stage, Paul travels down there one day per week.

Other special thanks to Appeals Team leaders, Bruce and Sandy Davis, and their team of sellers. A total just shy of \$123,000 was raised for both Anzac and Remembrance Day Appeals, not including funds raised from their Raffles, which are growing more popular, with funds directed to our Welfare Account.

I will not mention the financial result for the year and leave that up to our Treasurer Darryl. I will comment that we are in a very sound financial position. Given that next year we will have to service a large debt when our upcoming renovations are completed. Upon completion, we will have the best club facilities in Regional Victoria and I am confident we will have little difficulty in servicing the debt.

The upgrade to the War Memorial was completed in early December and we have some wonderful feedback from members and the public. The cost of the project was just over \$30,000 and we received a \$10,000 Department of Veterans Affairs "Saluting their Service" Grant, with the Sub-Branch meeting the rest of the funding. A major problem we have is that there is no lighting for the rear walls of the Memorial. We currently have a submission to the City of Greater Shepparton to fund the installation of lighting.

Late last year we formed a new group for Service Members called "Greater Shepparton Veterans Group" which encompasses all Service Members, regardless of age. You will have all seen the correspondence or attended the functions to date we have had. I would like to thank Committee Member Daniel Gleeson and General Manager Grant for their work to ensure that these functions have been successful.

A special shout out to Mark Stephens and his Memorabilia team for the work that they have put in throughout the year. Their displays have been outstanding, and they are always available to talk to the younger generation to educate them on the War History of our great country.

You cannot record a sound financial result without a committed General Manager and staff focused on great customer service. I would like to thank Grant for his outstanding personal commitment, ably supported by his hard-working staff. I am always getting great feedback from Members and Visitors about our Staff. We are the number one hospitality venue to visit in the Goulburn Valley.

Bob Wilkie
President

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Over the last 12 months we have achieved an outstanding result with an overall net profit of \$1,608,822. Solid trade throughout the year and growth in all areas of the business contributed to this amazing result. This result is a net increase of \$496,259 on the previous 12-month period (2022).

The year that was 2023 has seen some amazing achievements. Being able to purchase our gaming room in 2022 was the first step, enabling the RSL to control all its gaming related investments during the 2023 year. This not only gave us the flexibility to make informed decisions, but also gave us the opportunity to establish stronger relationships with key stakeholders. The overall result is reflective of the continued investment in product and having greater control over gaming related expenditure, along with recording increases in all key areas of the business, year on year.

The Shepparton RSL is in a strong financial position, with no debt and cash reserves to invest in capital projects in 2024/2025. The key focus for 2023 was accumulation of funds, which has been achieved.

We continue to support our Veterans and their families with our wonderful Volunteers, along with the wider community through donations and sponsorships. We are looking to expand our Veteran support activities through our purpose-built facility, due for completion in late 2024, as part of our re-development.

We continue to work on our Masterplan, with 2024 being an exciting year as we plan to deliver on Stage 1 & Stage 2 of the redevelopment with our new administration, staff facilities and Veterans Centre along with our new gaming room and reception area, to be completed during 2024.

I want to extend a big thank you to all our staff across all departments. We are proud of your commitment and dedication and your continued support of each other has been amazing. We are so lucky to have you all representing the Shepparton RSL!

Personally, I would like to thank our President, Mr Bob Wilkie, and the current Board for their amazing support of our staff, as always.

I would like to acknowledge all our volunteers. Without you, we would not be able to deliver the services all our wider community rely on each year.

To our management team, thank you for your commitment and efforts over the past 12 months. The energy, pride, and dedication you show is amazing and is seen daily.

We look forward to 2024, delivering on many of our projects that have been planned for several years now. This will confirm Shepparton RSL Sub-Branch's standing as the premier entertainment venue in the Goulburn Valley.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to our 10,000 plus financial members and visitors for their patronage and support.

Grant Tarrant
General Manager

SECRETARY'S REPORT

With the effects of Covid and constant lockdowns in the 2021-2022 years now behind us, it was nice to get back to some normality in the 2023 year.

This year, as usual, has been busy year for the Secretaries position. The constant need of more reporting to the Government and other authorities in relation to the running and administration of the Sub-Branch, keeps me somewhat busy in my role. However, I have been assisted and guided in this position by our President Mr Bob Wilkie, our GM Grant Tarrant and his great staff. A special mention to Peter Bustin and our reception staff, not to forget my working mates on the General Committee and my colleagues in the GV Veteran Centre.

The members of the Committee have been kept very busy with their portfolios and additional meetings and tasks throughout the year. The Young Vets have now been reformed under Committee Member Daniel Gleeson, with the name changing to Greater Shepparton Veterans Group. We have RSL Active, a group through RSL Victoria, to assist us and we look forward to future functions and arrangements with this group in the coming year.

This is a non-election year at our Sub-Branch, however, we are always looking at injecting new blood and hopefully younger members into our Committee in an attempt to make us more relevant in the changing times ahead. If you think you can help, please give it some thought for next year's elections.

The RSL State Conference was at the Sandown racecourse on the 15th of July 2023. As you may be aware, RSL Victoria has a new CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole. Sue is an experienced CEO and her role has become more important as the RSL undertakes perhaps the most major restructure for many years. It is hoped this will make the ESO more relevant to serving and ex serving members in the years ahead.

To the families of service members who passed on through the year, our thoughts and prayers go to you all. I must make mention of the passing of **Roger Cruse**, (OAM), Past President and Life member of our Sub-Branch, who passed during this time.

As you are now aware, the club has had another great financial return for 2023, another feather in the cap for Grant and his great staff and all our volunteers and members. This profit will help us on the way with our renovations starting this year. I am sure that all are looking forward to this exciting time in our club, as these renovations will certainly cement us at the top of our field in the Goulburn Valley region.

We had encouraging turnouts for both services on Anzac Day and other Commemorative days held throughout the year. A special mention to President Bob, who took on the difficult task of organising the refurbishment of the Cenotaph which is now complete except for some lighting, which is expected to be fitted before Anzac 2024. I am sure all who have seen the re-furbished memorial would be more than impressed by the results, and I am sure that the new updated Cenotaph will do justice to these special occasions in the future.

I look forward to the next exciting phase of our Sub-Branch and club and hope to catch up with you around the club.

Monthly Committee Meetings

Position:	Name:	Portfolios	Attendance:
President:	Robert Wilkie	Finance/Region 9	10/12
Snr Vice President:	Brian McInnery	Finance/Funerals	8/12
J /Vice President:	Bruce Davis	Appeals	10/12
Secretary:	Ted Ball	Secretary/Finance GV Vets Centre	11/12
Treasurer:	Darryl Butcher	Treasurer/Finance	11/12
Committee:	Sandy Davis	Welfare Officer	10/12
	Stan Whitford	OH & S/Finance	8/12
	Daniel Gleeson <i>(Elected AGM 2023)</i>	GV & Shepparton Veterans	8/9
	Mark Stephens	Memorabilia	8/9
	Tom Lipscombe <i>(Elected AGM 2023, resigned Aug 2023)</i>	Committee	2/4
	Graeme Bailey <i>(did not stand at AGM)</i>	Committee	2/2

Note: The attendance figures include normal and special Committee meeting **however exclude** House and Finance, General Meetings or any other Sub-Committee or External Meetings and Special functions in relation with RSL related matters.

Volunteer Hours

The Volunteer Register computerised system introduced in 2017 is providing a good and useful information as to the activities of the Sub – Branch. As time progresses this information becomes more useful.

The 2023 year saw the commitment of volunteers as the following shows:

	<u>Hours</u>
1. Administration/Management	896.00
2. Heritage, Commemorations & Memorabilia	864.50
3. Veteran Support GVVC	5919.08
4. Welfare	233.75
5. Appeals	1496.00
6. National Service Association	74.50
7. Shepparton & GV Veterans Group	13.00
Total	9487.33

The Committee deeply appreciates the efforts of all volunteers and their commitment to the cause.

Membership

Membership:	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Membership Classification		
Life:	9	7
Service:	483	492
Affiliate:	390	395
Social:	8896	9756
Community:	117	48
TOTAL :	9895	10698

Email, addresses and phone numbers of members:

*We advise members of the importance of keeping your contact details up to date.
Please ensure reception is advised of any changes.*

Ted Ball
Honorary Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

The club's performance for 2023 exceeded expectations with a record turnover of approximately \$11m resulting in a record profit in excess of \$1.6m. All areas of the business performed above budget while a tight reign on expenses was maintained.

The result places us in a strong cash position with available funds of approximately \$4m whilst, at the same time, we have maintained our commitment to the welfare of veterans and played our role as a corporate citizen through the support of local service clubs, sporting organisations and other community groups.

The result places us in a great position as we move into the much-anticipated club redevelopment and should allow us to achieve all the areas for upgrade as identified in our master plan.

We would not have been able to achieve this result without the strong leadership of President, Bob Wilkie, and the other members of the Sub-Branch Committee along with the excellent support of General Manager, Grant Tarrant, and his dedicated and committed staff.

I wish to also recognise and acknowledge the support of our Administration Manager, Peter Bustin, who was always available to help me undertake my duties as Treasurer.

Darryl Butcher
Treasurer

WELFARE REPORT

Welfare has been going at a steady pace throughout 2023 with a total of \$59,706,14 expended on our Veterans.

Welfare has expended monies in the following areas throughout 2023.

1. *Lawn mowing*
2. *Haircuts*
3. *Vaccinations*
4. *Service Luncheons x 2*
5. *Vehicle Hire (eg, Anzac and Remembrance Campaigns & bus hire (trips for Veterans and their partners eg; Shrine)*
6. *Medical aids*
7. *Service trips to Canberra*
8. *Financial assistance*
9. *Hospital visits*
10. *Fuel*
11. *Postage*
12. *Sundries*
13. *Laundry for hospital patients*

Volunteer hours for campaigns such as Anzac and Remembrance Days is more than 800, and this does not include mine or Bruce's hours.

A big thank you to all our wonderful Volunteers and Welfare Committee members. You all make our job in Welfare a lot easier. We look forward to your ongoing support through 2024.

Just in closing, I would remind all Veterans that if they need financial assistance, RSL Victoria now requires us to provide a Financial Statement (assets, bank account details etc), for any Veterans applying before anyone can be considered for assistance.

Sandra Davis JP
Welfare Officer

APPEALS REPORT

In 2023, across both the Anzac and Poppy Appeals, we were able to raise a total of \$122,709, a tremendous result.

This money goes to Veterans in need of financial assistance. This includes medical aids, emergency accommodation, education for children plus general home maintenance and haircuts.

I encourage all veterans that need help in time of trouble to reach out. The community thank you for your service to Australia.

We wouldn't have been able to raise such a substantial amount of money without the support from our incredible team of volunteers and to the public, who dug deep for such a worthy cause.

Thank you to our local businesses, hotels, post offices, schools and the larger stores for allowing us into their business houses for each campaign.

To the President, committee, Grant and all staff, thank you all for your on-going support. We are a great team!

Special mention to Jacko and his team at Kensington Gardens, the residents of Lifestyle Villages, Kreskas Brothers and Kiwanis Early Risers for your ongoing support.

Last but not least, a big shout out to Jose and Tin Tin for the wonderful catering they provide for our Anzac Day and Volunteers Luncheons.

Bruce Davis
Appeals Officer

MEMORABILIA REPORT

The Memorabilia team has had a very successful and productive 12 months.

Cataloguing, boxing and moving items outside into the memorabilia's new container has taken a lot of the team's time. The donation of the container from the Kreskas family has been an excellent catch. The team cannot thank Arthur and the Kreskas Family enough for the donation and delivery of the container to the RSL. Chris Gleeson contributed to the project with the excellent paintwork while Barry Nankervis installed the air spinners on top of the container.

The year commenced with the team setting up a couple of tables at the Shepparton Small Arms Show to sell off some of our overstocked library in preparation for the new extensions. From the show, the RSL purchased a WW2 Owen Gun for our collection.

We had a small display set up in the Shepparton Heritage Museum which was well received by visitors to the Museum. We continue to assist the Shepparton Heritage Museum whenever we are called upon.

The team's window displays have provided a lot of interest from visitors to the RSL. We are still trying to change the display every 3 months with a new theme each time. The Roman Legionnaire and the Fusilier Soldier were certainly eye openers in our last display.

We have purchased our new printer and can now order stationery as required. This has removed the need of a team member constantly annoying the staff working at the front desk.

Donations of memorabilia keep coming in. We try to assess the items as they arrive, and only keep the good articles. Sounds selfish, but we have sufficient supply of some donations, like old newspaper clippings, RSL badges, buttons and books.

Memorabilia has communicated with the Australian War Memorial for literature and guidance for the team's new adventure of attending schools or having Grade 5 or 6 students attend the RSL for information sessions on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

The 7.62mm GPMG M60, which the Memorabilia Team ordered in October '23, should arrive on Tuesday 12 March, 2024. The weapon has been built from scratch and will be a major display item for the RSL. Once the M60 arrives we can hopefully then order a WW2 303 Bran Gun. (WOW)

The team greatly appreciates the constructive feedback we receive from the visitors and members of the RSL. It makes the task we do worth doing.

In finishing I must mention the continued support from the General Manger, all his staff and all Board Members which has been nothing but outstanding.

Mark Stephens OAM
RSL Memorabilia Coordinator

GV VETERANS CENTRE

In 2023, when dealing with Department of Veteran Affairs, a lot of things have changed, and I must say not for the better. Joint Health Command have changed the way they receive Veterans Documentation which means it takes 3 times longer to locate Veteran's information and if they are still serving, it takes 3 to 4 months or longer for the Veteran to get his/her documentation.

We have learnt in recent times that when a serving member visits the Commonwealth Medical Officer on Base, they are referred to BUPA, who then send that Veteran onto a specialist or whatever the requirement needed. Sometimes these Veterans must travel long distances because of the lack of availability of BUPA accepted providers. I have been advised this is an Australia wide procedure.

The staff of the centre volunteered a total of 5,705 hours for the year looking after Veterans from all over the Goulburn Valley, Tocumwal, Melbourne, Yea, Nathalia and numerous other locations including interstate Veterans.

Thanks to Seymour and Shepparton RSL's, we were able to re-open Seymour Veterans Centre on 14 September, 2023. Originally planned for one day per fortnight, due to the number of Veterans requesting assistance, within 3 weeks we had to open on a weekly basis. From February 2024, we will be open 2 days per week. During this period we have seen 50 clients, a number of whom are still serving.

Overall, the centre, during the 2023 year, has processed the following:

- 600 new claims (this does not include multiple claims)
- 596 general enquiries,
- 435 walk-ins to the centre
- 80 new clients who we have never seen before,
- given various talks to RSL's in Regions 9
- also visit Tocumwal RSL every 3 weeks

The good thing with DVA is that the claims process has improved and the processing time has reduced. The only department running behind now is Permanent Impairment and DVA is putting staff into that department and is confident they will have caught up on all outstanding claims by March 2024.

I personally feel the Veteran's Centre has had a very productive year and would like to thank all the staff for their efforts in maintaining the reputation and good name that we have.

Paul Blackwell

Chairperson

Goulburn Valley Veterans Service

GREATER SHEPPARTON VETERANS GROUP

September 2023 saw a change in direction about how the Shepparton Returned & Services League (RSL) interacts with their current service members.

The board identified that there were numerous Veterans' groups located throughout the Greater Shepparton area and that we wanted to be able to bring all groups together, under the one banner.

Hence, Greater Shepparton Veterans Group was formed.

Currently we have established a monthly catch up on the last Friday evening of the month. The evening consists of:

- 20 % off Veteran's happy hour (17:00 - 19:00)
- Veterans-only monthly raffle (must be there to collect) prizes e.g. corporate box at the footy, RSL bistro voucher, meat trays etc
- 20% discount for Veterans in the bistro
- Veterans & their dependants to receive free soft drink/coffee
- Finger food platters provided during happy hour
- Entertainment

The purpose of this is to:

- Offer Veterans a sense of purpose and belonging
- Engaging with other Veterans to form social interaction through face-to-face events
- Create peer support networks for Veterans and their families
- Improve overall health and wellbeing through social outings and events
- Provide an opportunity for Veterans to have a voice that is heard

Thus far the evenings have been a huge success. We have had a minimum of 40 service members attend most nights (most with partners/families), with new faces each time. Feedback has been extremely positive with the evening bringing Veterans of all ages together.

Greater Shepparton Veterans Group also reached out to RSL Active. RSL active is a statewide program which aims to actively support younger Veterans (no age limits), reduce social isolation, and continue the objectives of the RSL.

Utilising RSL active, Greater Shepparton Veterans Group held an inaugural Golf Day which once again received an overwhelming positive response with Veterans coming from all over the state to attend.

Looking forward, the Greater Shepparton Veterans Group has many exciting events in the works with the next one being a race day (in conjunction with the Jane McGrath Foundation) which will help raise funds for cancer research.

The Greater Shepparton Veterans Group would like to thank the Shepparton RSL committee, Grant Tarrant (GM) and all RSL staff for their unwavering support and guidance.

Dan Gleeson
Committee

VALES

It is with reverence and respect that we advise the passing of the following **Service Members** in the **2023 year**:

V72449	K.Castles	Army	
14697	K.Moore	Army	
VX145689	O.Meloury	Army	
VX127023	R.Cruse (OAM)	Army	<i>(Past President, Life Member)</i>
3801149	T.Watson-Smith	Army	
1091176	W.Oliver	Army	
V37264	B.Reeves	Army	
R48266	D.Webb	Navy	
3789433	E.Pilling	Army	
TX6357	B.Edwards		
3/740305	D.Baldwin	Army	

LIFE MEMBERS

The following members are recipients of Life Membership of both the League and the Shepparton Sub - Branch over a many of years.

E.C. Burness. (D)	R. B. McKay (D)	B. W Arthur (D)	J. Christoe (D)
N. A Munro (D)	F. Blake (D)	P. Q. Clayton (D)	G.L. Myers (D)
E. R. Cruse OBE (D)	W. L. Ford (D)	N. G. Doncon (D)	S. E. Perry (D)
K. Heenan	P. Doyle (D)	S. A. Phillips	W. Hudson (D)
A. Edwards (D)	W.K. Ritchie (D)	P. Blackwell	P. McPhee OAM JP (D)
J. Thewlis	K. Sackley (D)	N. P. Haymes (D)	F. J. Clarke (D)
W. Hickey (D)	R. A Wright Jnr. (D)	A. Cox (D)	R. Wilkie
L Shard	P. W Martin RFD		



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FINANCIAL PAPERS FOR THE 2023 YEAR

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