



21 May 2016

Guy Barnett, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

RSL State Congress – government support for RSL to continue in upcoming budget

Today I was pleased to address the 101st Annual State Congress of RSL (Tasmania) on behalf of the Premier, and to confirm that the Government will provide over \$350,000 to support the RSL and Tasmania's veterans community in the upcoming budget.

The Returned and Services League is Tasmania's leading support and representative organisation for members of the veteran and ex-serving community, with more than 40 sub-branches located around the State.

This year the RSL nationally celebrates its 100th anniversary, representing a centenary of supporting and advocating on behalf of veterans — a fitting tribute in this Centenary of ANZAC period.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is a strong supporter of the veteran and ex-serving community in Tasmania, and I am pleased to say that additional funding of \$100,000 on top of the existing recurrent funding of \$100,000 already provided to the Tasmanian RSL will continue through the 2016-17 financial year.

To recognise the important work that RSL clubs carry out in communities across the State, the Liberal Government established the Teddy Sheean Memorial Grants Program. This Program will continue through the 2016-17 financial year, providing \$100 000 a year in small grants to RSL sub-branches and other ex-serving organisations for minor capital works and upgrades.

Already this program has helped RSL clubs and other veterans' organisations across the State perform minor upgrades to amenities and facilities to help support ex-servicemen and women.

The Tasmanian Government is also providing \$50,000 annually until 2018 to projects that commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC in Tasmania through the Centenary of ANZAC Grants Program.

These grants have been accessed by RSL clubs, veterans and community organisations across the State, and are an important part of retaining local history and remembering the sacrifice that was made by Tasmanian communities during the Great War and other conflicts.

Some of the projects include the Tasmanian Headstone Project, a Battle of Britain Commemoration, providing a plaque for the Sorell RSL Sub Branch Memorial Wall, and the development of a Walk of Remembrance at the Claremont Military Training Camp.

Tasmania has a long and proud military history with our servicemen and women being involved in every major campaign from the Boer War to Afghanistan. In fact, of the 100 Victoria Crosses granted to Australians, 14 have gone to Tasmanians—a tremendous record.

This year's 101st Annual State Congress brings together delegates from sub-branches around the State to discuss issues of mutual interest, to remember their fallen colleagues and plan for the organisation into the future. Fittingly, it is being held in Launceston, whose RSL sub-branch is one of the oldest in the country—founded 100 years ago in 1916.

The RSL also has an increasingly important role in supporting and understanding the needs of members of the Australian Defence Force who are leaving, or who have left in recent years to take part in overseas operations in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Our veterans have given great sacrifice and service to our country and leave an example of courage that is an inspiration to many young Tasmanians.

I commend the Tasmanian Branch of the RSL for its sterling service to our veterans and ex-serving members over the years.