



## RSL State Conference

This year's State Conference was again well attended by delegates from across the state and was officially opened by the National President. The outcomes from the Agenda items are printed in the Conference Minutes on pages 27 to 29 of this issue of *Mufti*.

The existing Branch Officers were returned to office after this year's ballot, and a newly elected State Executive for a further two years was announced. Of particular note

was the extensive number of awards presented for long service and meritorious service on the part of many RSL members. This was great to see, along with three Victorian ANZAC Award recipients who were presented with their award by the National President.

A large proportion of the motions passed by this year's State Conference were practical measures that the Victorian State Government has been asked to consider to improve the quality of life and public transport access and usage concessions for our older veterans. Let us hope they are all implemented. We look forward to the 100th State Conference of the Victorian Branch of the League in 2015.

## Centenary of the commencement of World War I

Over the month of August, a series of occasions marked the fateful commencement of World War I, which for Australia began when Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. The Shrine of Remembrance conducted a commemorative service on Monday 4 August and that evening the Victorian Government's ANZAC Centenary Committee conducted a recreation of the Patriotic Concert that took place at the Melbourne Town Hall, 100 years ago. The State President addressed the attendees on the significance of the occasion.

The following day, on 5 August 2014, a commemorative event occurred at Point Nepean where the coastal artillery had fired the first shot of the British Empire in 1914, to prevent the German steamer SS *Pfalz* from escaping Port Phillip Bay to open seas. This significant occasion was very well supported by the local Sorrento/Portsea RSL Sub-Branch and the President John Prentice played a key role on the organising committee.

On the other side of Port Phillip Bay, the Queenscliff/Point Lonsdale Sub-Branch assisted in the conduct of commemoration at Fort Queenscliff. Here, the wireless station which received the message that war had broken out, relayed instructions to the coastal gun emplacements. The Sub-Branch at Queenscliff also supported a conference on the outbreak of World War I conducted by Military Heritage Victoria over the weekend of 2–3 August.

A number of Sub-Branches around the State also conducted memorial services to mark the war's outbreak. A significant event occurred at Horsham, where local community members have identified forebears in the recently found photographs of Diggers taken in the village of Vignacourt in France in 1917. A delegation of students from Vignacourt has recently visited Horsham and this, combined with an official ceremony, has been a great example of establishing those connections that Ted Baillieu, Chair of the Victorian ANZAC Centenary Committee, has been encouraging us all to do. I would encourage you to find out more on how to do this at: [www.anzacentenary.vic.gov.au](http://www.anzacentenary.vic.gov.au).

## RSL centenary publications

As previously advised, to mark the RSL's Centenary in 2016, three publications are planned, with the first due to be released later this year. Two soft cover publications based on the stories of RSL members from World War I and World War II are in the process of being compiled, based chiefly on the archived material found in the membership magazines published by most State Branches since the 1920s. For example, all the archived copies of *Mufti* have been digitally scanned in recent times to facilitate this process. In 2016, the third publication, a history of the RSL 1916–2016, with images of ANZAC Day commemoration from early days to 2015, will be published.

The World War I RSL publication is now nearing final proof and will be published by HarperCollins. The book, which will appear in bookshops and online at the end of 2014, promises to be a source of unique information on the experience of our World War I members and has never before been published in this format.

The World War II edition is currently under preparation and has also been largely based on archival material from Branch publications, but unlike World War I we still have World War II veterans within our Sub-Branches – and they may have anecdotes or stories that they wish to have considered for inclusion in the publication.

Please canvas your World War II veteran members to identify anyone who is interested in providing material to Richard Landels of Acumen Publishing, or arrange with him for the conduct of an interview about their wartime experience. Sub-Branches are requested to provide me with contact details for interested veterans by the middle of September and the State Branch will facilitate contact from there.

## Membership/*Mufti* information

Members are again reminded to check your membership data at your local Sub-Branch. The Sub-Branches are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the information that is on the Branch Membership database for their members. Particularly this includes any military service details, your address and other contact details, and your *Mufti* delivery details. Please let us know whether you want one or multiple copies of *Mufti* per household, if more than one Service/Affiliate members lives at the same address.

Please help us maintain accurate data and minimise wastage and duplication by checking your details at your Sub-Branch.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Annett'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

**Michael Annett**