



REALIGNING THE RSA

PART 2: NATIONAL COUNCIL 107 FEEDBACK

In his book, *After the War: The RSA in New Zealand*, published in 2016 on the 100-year anniversary of the RSA, author Dr Stephen Clarke issued a *challenge*:

“The major question remains, without the RSA, who independently stands up for service personnel and their families in need?” pg. 260.

Report compiled by:

The Constitution Working Group

March 2024

At the opening of
RNZRSA Kaumatua Miki Apiti opened National Council 107,
held in Wellington, on 24th February 2024, with the karakia:

Kia hora te marino
Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana
Hei huarahi mā tātou i te rangi nei
Aroha atu, aroha mai
Tātou i a tātou katoa
Hui e! Tāiki e!

May peace be widespread
May the sea be like greenstone
A pathway for us this day
Let us show respect for each other
For one another
Bind us altogether!

The presentation 'The Way Forward' was underpinned by the whakataukī:

E ngā mana, e ngā reo,
e ngā kārangaranga maha o te wa

All of the people, the language and of the voices of this time.

Let us have the robust conversations, but also work towards a collective
voice for both the benefit of veterans and to protect this special
organisation that we are all a part of.



Acknowledgements

At National Council 107, held on the 24th of February 2024 at Sky Stadium in Wellington, the role of RSAs and their connection to RNZRSA was explored and feedback given.

The Board and Forum are grateful to the RSA and Affiliate representatives and individuals who attended on the day and participated in the workshops.

RNZRSA wishes to thank Greg Allnutt of Pivot & Pace for his facilitation of the workshops. Greg has on a number of occasions been a major contributor to the development of strategy for RNZRSA.

The Board and Forum also wish to acknowledge the Chief Executive Marty Donoghue and his staff who arranged and executed a very successful day at Sky Stadium.

Realigning the RSA

The rationale for change, consultation summary and proposed adaptations into the realignment of the RSA movement is detailed in three reports.

Collectively, these reports will define the transformation required to effect sustainable change and set a new direction for RNZRSA for the foreseeable future.

Report 1: **The Rationale for Change: Drivers and Challenges** summarises the case for change.

Report 2: **National Council 107: Feedback** summarises the workshop feedback and identifies key feedback.

Report 3: **The Constitution Discussion Document** will be delivered in early May and will be the basis for further consultation.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	2
<i>Realigning the RSA</i>	3
Table of Contents	4
Addresses to National Council 107, 24 th February 2024.....	5
Terminology & Usage	6
Executive Summary	7
Key Feedback	7
Introduction	9
Section 1: Summary of Attendees	10
Section 2: Feedback from Workshop Topic 1	11
Support for veterans at the local level	11
Section 3: Feedback from Workshop Topic 2	13
The connection between RSAs and the national body	13
Section 4: Feedback from Workshop Topic 3	14
Veteran input to RSAs and the national body	14
Section 5: Feedback from Workshop Topic 4	16
Difficulties faced by RSAs.....	16
Section 6: Conclusions & Parameters for Realignment	17
Introduction.....	17
Key Feedback	17
Appendices	19
Appendix 1: National President, Tā Wayne Shelford KNZM MBE. Address to National Council 107, Part 2.....	20
Appendix 2: Board Chair, Major General (Rtd), Martyn Dunne CNZM, QSO. Address to National Council 107, Part 2	22
Appendix 3: Attendance Tables	26
Appendix 4: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 1	27
Appendix 5: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 2	32
Appendix 6: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 3	35
Appendix 7: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 4	38

Addresses to National Council 107, 24th February 2024

Opening addresses to Council were made by:

- National President Tā Wayne Shelford KNZM MBE ¹ and
- Board Chair Major General (Rtd) Martyn Dunne CNZM, QSO².

Both speakers put attendees and the wider RSA movement on notice.

The National President issued a caution at the outset of Council by saying: *“There’s a lot of misinformation circulating out there both in the media and in our own ranks”*. He added: **“Today is about looking to that future, and working out how we can modernise and remain a relevant force for veterans in New Zealand.”**

“The RNZRSA has been here for over 108 years, any organisation that has existed that long is **dealing with a legacy of decisions made over time**. For us, those decisions have left us with a governance structure [Board/Forum] that promotes conflict and doesn’t make any real sense”.

Tā Wayne articulated: **“Our current structure also means that Associations are relatively isolated, disconnected from support and the lines of communication just aren’t working. To be a modern organisation we need greater connection, we need to be able to talk to each other, support each other and be unified by a common purpose.”**

Tā Wayne spoke directly to the representatives of the RSAs saying: **“And to be a member of the RNZRSA, to display that badge on your building, or wear the badge on your jacket, means that regardless of the business you operate, or how you connect with your community, the reason we are here, our why, is to support New Zealand’s veterans of military service and their whānau.”**

The Board Chair spoke directly to the veterans at the centre of the organisation by saying: *“We must always remember those who served. It is 25 years this September we deployed into Timor Leste. There are 5,665 veterans who participated in that mission. It is 24 years since we landed in Afghanistan for our longest commitment to a war bar none.”* He added: **“There are 62,000 veterans since 1990 and over 12,000 have seen operational service whether at sea, on land or in the air.”**

In relation to RSAs, Martyn stated: *“For some of our locations, circumstances have changed because, for a variety of reasons - ‘times have changed’.”*

Martyn spoke to reputation and relevance and said: **“To sustain relevance and reputation will require innovative and yet prescriptive solutions.”**

As well, Martyn described the loss of RSA equity across the country by saying: **“The loss of equity, through lack of support, seeking solutions from others, that results in the divesting or dilution of that equity, which once surrendered, is forever lost.”**

¹ See Appendix 1 for a full copy of the address.

² See Appendix 2 for a full copy of the address.

Terminology & Usage

Where appropriate the terms and their usage are based on the RNZRSA Constitution v117.

RNZRSA	Te Ratonga Kahui Morehu a Tu o Aotearoa, Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (RNZRSA).
RSA	Returned and Services' Association (RSA). This term is commonly used in 2 contexts. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Referring to the RSA movement across the country. 2. Referring to "an" RSA, i.e. an individual RSA.
Association	Member Association of RNZRSA. An Association is a Returned and Services' Associations Incorporated in New Zealand or the Cook Islands and meets the requirements to be a full member of RNZRSA.
the Board	The National Board of Governance established pursuant to Clause 6 ("the Board") the members of whom shall be the officers of RNZRSA.
the Forum	The President's Forum including the National President established pursuant to Clause 7 ("the Forum").
National Office	The operational office and staff of RNZRSA, headed by the Chief Executive.
Veteran	RNZRSA defines the term veteran to encompass those who attest to serve in the New Zealand Defence Force. This report adheres to that definition.
CWG	The Constitution Working Group.
Clinics	Veteran Support Clinics are conducted throughout the country by RNZRSA Support Services Team supported by trained district and local support advisors. The purpose of the clinics is to determine support veterans maybe eligible for and commence relevant Veteran Affairs documentation and any other support organisation documentation as required. They may seek assistance from the RSA if the need arises or guided in the direction of other agencies that they may be eligible for support – DHB, MSD, ACC .

Executive Summary

This report, **National Council 107: Feedback**, is report 2 of 3 reports that look at **‘The Realignment of the RSA’**. This report summarises feedback gathered from discussions, question times, and workshops held at National Council 107 on the 24th of February 2024 at Sky Stadium, Wellington. This feedback will inform changes to the foundation documents of the RSA movement. Those documents are the RNZRSA Constitution and Bylaws, the Model Constitution and RSA Rules, and Model Trust Deeds.

The current consultation and review process began at National Council 106, 2022. Two key messages were given to the Board and Forum at that 106th Council. They were:

- **Support for veterans and their whānau remains the core purpose of the organisation.**
- **Change is necessary for the RSA movement to have a sustainable future.**

The feedback given on the 24th of February 2024, delivered the following messages.

Key Feedback

RSA representatives provided the following key feedback to be considered included in the development of the RNZRSA Constitution and Bylaws, the Model Constitution and RSA Rules, and Model Trust Deeds.

1. Core Purpose

Feedback showed that core purpose remains at the forefront of our organisation.

At a local level, RSA representatives described things that they do to support veterans in their communities. Clearly many RSAs deliver ‘local acts of kindness’ on a regular basis. Others support veterans with grants. The recipients of these initiatives are most often older veterans and their whānau.

Somewhat concerningly, it is evident that although we have strong representation from male veterans, there is low representation from female veterans within our ranks.

A number of groups saw increased activity, with regards to veteran advocacy, as strengthening links with the veteran community. Advocacy for a review of, and changes to, VSA14 is seen as one way to signal support for veterans by the RSA movement.

Encouragingly, Support Clinics are recognised as being effective and valuable.

Feedback was clear: Alignment with core purpose is valued but can be improved. There is a genuine desire to do so.

2. Veteran Connection with RSAs

Many RSA representatives described efforts to reach the younger cohort of veterans. Some RSAs, especially those located close to military bases or connected to RSA Hubs, do so with some success while others with less connection find there are barriers. Some RSAs are seeking assistance to develop ways to connect.

It was widely recognised that veteran-to-veteran contact is critical to obtaining successful reach into the veteran community.

Feedback was clear: Assistance with finding new ways for RSAs to link with and include post-1990 veterans is sought.

3. RSAs Want to Have a Voice

RSA representatives want to be linked directly in a mutually supportive way to the national body. Attendees appeared to be open as to how this could happen.

Feedback was clear: RSAs want a direct link to the national body and to have improved communications.

4. RSA Links with the National Body

Links with the national body were described as not functioning effectively. Districts and District Presidents (on the whole) are seen as barriers to effective communication and therefore impair the operation of the organisation. Information flow is not getting from National Office or the Board to RSAs. Information and messages from our grassroots are not getting back through the District barriers to National Office or the Board.

Feedback was clear: RSAs want stronger and operationally focused links to the national body.

5. Difficulties Faced by RSAs

It is clear that at the local level RNZRSA is under pressure. There are constantly increasing numbers of RSAs facing difficulties. Many RSA representatives articulated financial stressors, a lack of skilled members, and declining membership, as key issues. There were suggestions made about where assistance could be useful, notably in areas related to training and financial assistance.

Feedback was clear: Increasing numbers of RSAs are struggling and would welcome assistance.

Introduction

This report, **National Council 107: Feedback**, is report 2 of 3 reports that look at **‘The Realignment of the RSA’**. This report summarises feedback gathered from discussions, question times, and workshops held at National Council 107 on the 24th of February 2024 at Sky Stadium, Wellington. This feedback will inform changes to the foundation documents of the RSA movement. Those documents are the RNZRSA Constitution and Bylaws, the Model Constitution and RSA Rules, and Model Trust Deeds.

The current consultation and review process began at National Council 106, 2022. Two key messages were given to the Board and Forum at that 106th Council. They were:

- **Support for veterans and their whānau remains the core purpose of the organisation.**
- **Change is necessary for the RSA movement to have a sustainable future.**

National Council 107 was opened by Kaumatua Miki Apiti and began with addresses from National President, Tā Wayne Shelford KNZM, MBE and Board Chair, Major General (Rtd) Martyn Dunne CNZM, QSO.

Board member Jocelyn Faul, along with the Constitution Working Group, presented on the current circumstances the organisation finds itself in, and provided suggestions for the way forward. This presentation was followed by questions and further discussion.

Greg Allnutt of Pivot & Pace facilitated a series of four workshops. The workshop topics were designed to seek information, understanding, and suggestions.

This report is presented in 6 sections:

Section 1: Summary of Attendees

Section 2: Topic 1: Support for veterans at the local level.

Section 3: Topic 2: The connection between RSAs and the national body.

Section 4: Topic 3: Veteran input to RSAs and the national body.

Section 5: Topic 4: Difficulties faced by RSAs.

Section 6: Conclusions & Parameters for Realignment.

Section 1: Summary of Attendees³

Collectively the attendees represented 41 RSAs and 4 Affiliated organisations from across Aotearoa New Zealand.

A range of people attended from veterans to non-veteran members and from a variety of RSAs. Interestingly, it was recognised that there are “*multiple ways to be an RSA*” and “*multiple ways to connect with veterans*”. One group reported that at their table there were 4 ‘hospo-based’ RSAs, some ‘virtual’ RSAs, and RSAs that had ‘merged’ with other clubs.

While it was heartening to see that at least 73% of attendees were veterans, it was concerning to note that only 6% of veteran attendees were female. Te Arataki reported that “*The make-up of the armed forces is unique, and the veteran population is increasingly diverse. We have a high proportion of Māori and women serving.*”⁴

Some commented anecdotally that there appeared to be an increasing number of attendees in the under-60 age group compared to previous years. The average (mean) age of attendees was 64.

Key Feedback Points

1. Attendees at Council were from 41 RSAs.
2. Six different types of RSAs were represented.
3. 73% of attendees were veterans.
4. Only 6% of the veteran attendees were female.
5. Average workshop group size was 9.6 people.
6. The average age of attendees was 64.

³ For further details and tables see Appendix 3.

⁴ Te Arataki mō te Hauora te ngā Mō` rehu a Tū me ō rātou Whānau The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Section 2: Feedback from Workshop Topic 1

Support for veterans at the local level

Topic 1 sought feedback on support for veterans at the local level. Conference attendees formed nine workshop groups and were asked to share positive stories about what they were doing at the local level to support veterans. They were also asked what other things could be done to support Veterans and what National Office could help with.

Too often negative messages are dominant within the RSA movement, and it was heartening to read about the number of positive initiatives reported by attendees. Feedback did show connection to core purpose and highlighted the role local RSAs play in delivering support to veterans in the area. See Appendix 4 for a summary of the feedback.

Key feedback points are:

- Many RSA representatives were aware of the core purpose of the RSA.
- Many RSAs assist local veterans with every day needs on a regular basis.
- Some RSAs are actively promoting the organisation in an effort to reach veterans.
- Support Services clinics are valued by many.
- The development of Veteran Centres is supported by many.
- The concept of expanding veteran support by developing veteran centres was well supported.
- Some RSA representatives do not understand the relationship between NZDF and RNZRSA.
- Concerns expressed about Poppy Trusts included that they were becoming disconnected from RSAs and our core purpose.

The following points made by workshop groups stand out as significant:

- **Veteran-to-Veteran** contact was seen by 8 groups as the best way to reach into the veteran community.
- **Local acts of kindness and support** were identified by 7 groups as the main way they support the veteran community.
- **Holding veteran functions** was recognised by 5 groups as a way to reach into the veteran community. Other groups recognised that this was something they could do.
- **Working in conjunction with military bases** (where location permits) was noted as an effective way for RSAs to link with current serving personnel.
- **Veteran Centres** was widely supported by 8 of the 9 groups.
- **Support Services Clinics** are valued and recognised as effective. More are wanted.
- **LSAs to DSMs** were seen as conduits to the veteran community.
- **Connection with community groups** is seen as a way to spread the word and connect with veterans.
- **Proactive promotion** targeted to the veteran community was reported by 4 groups. Three other groups felt more could be done.

- **Contemporary commemoration** was suggested by 5 groups as being more meaningful to younger veterans and would remove barriers to participation.
- **Strengthening the RNZRSA and NZDF relationship** was suggested by 6 groups as an additional way to provide interaction with veterans.
- **Concerns about Poppy Trusts** and how they operate was expressed by 5 groups. Some are operating independently of the RSA they are linked to. Some Poppy Trust Trustees do not appear to understand the rules for the distribution of funds.
- **Governance and management training** was suggested by 4 groups as being useful.

Section 3: Feedback from Workshop Topic 2

The connection between RSAs and the national body

Topic 2 looked at the connection between RSAs and the national body. Conference attendees formed 9 workshop groups and feedback was sought from RSAs about how they saw their relationship with the national body and how it could be improved. The insights shared by participants provide suggestions about how structure and relationships could be improved to better link RSAs to the national body. See appendix 5 for a summary of the feedback.

Key feedback points are:

- The links between the national body and RSAs are not functioning effectively.
- Communications are problematic and change is required to make this relationship more effective.
- Currently the communication channel to RSAs passes from National Office to the Forum, to the District Presidents, and then to RSAs. Then, RSAs are responsible for distributing this information to their membership.
- Despite frequent information sharing by National Office, RSAs do not appear to be receiving it. The outcomes are:
 - Lack of understanding about what National Office does.
 - Lack of understanding about what the Board does.
 - Lack of understanding about what resources are available to RSAs.
- RSAs are clear that they want a way to be heard by the national body.

The following points made by workshop groups stand out as significant:

- **Problematic communication** was identified by 9 groups and frequently described as “broken”.
- **RSAs want a ‘voice’** in the new structure was clearly stated in 8 groups.
- Seven groups reported that the **District structure is not working**.
- **District Presidents are a barrier to effective communication** was identified by 6 groups.
- **Six groups want direct communication links** to National Office.

Section 4: Feedback from Workshop Topic 3

Veteran input to RSAs and the national body

Topic 3 sought feedback on the influence veterans have at the local RSA level. Additional feedback was sought on ways veteran feedback could be sought and included. Conference attendees formed 9 workshop groups to consider these two issues. Insights were encouraging. Some RSAs appear to be successfully including the 'voice' of the veteran, others indicated it was difficult to connect. Feedback was given on how the veteran 'voice' might be incorporated into a new structure. See appendix 6 for a summary of the feedback.

Key feedback points are:

- In many cases there is relatively little input from veterans into the running of RSAs. However, there appears to be a few who have significant input.
- While the core purpose of veteran support remains a part of the ethos of many RSAs, many veterans are disconnected, especially those from the post-1990 cohort.
- Interaction with Hubs on military bases are viewed as a useful way to interact with veterans.
- The Online RSA is viewed as a potentially valuable way to interact with veterans.
- Advocating for veteran causes was viewed as a way to build credibility with veterans, which could contribute to more active involvement at the local level.
- It was viewed that veterans often felt they wanted to be involved in other ways with the RSA movement rather than through the traditional RSA route.

The following points made by workshop groups stand out as significant:

- **On a local level**, the usual channels of communication were cited as ways to hear the veteran voice. For example, newsletters and emails.
- **Some RSAs** have veteran members on their Executives. One RSA has an officially appointed younger veteran who has responsibility for both reaching into the veteran community as well as providing feedback.
- **Advocacy for core purpose** related issues was seen by 4 groups as a way to build credibility with the veteran community.
- **The Online RSA** was seen by 4 groups as a way to seek feedback from the post-1990 veteran community.
- **Hubs on Military bases** were seen by 4 groups to provide value feedback.
- **Four groups** identified that veterans want different ways to connect to the RSA movement and those ways are not necessarily through RSAs.
- **Four groups** said advocacy for veteran issues like changes to VSA14 would ensure the veteran voice is heard.
- **Support Service** was seen by 4 groups as a way to hear what veterans want.
- **Affiliates** are a key veteran voice.

- **Other suggestions** about what could be done to listen to the veteran voice include:
 - Promotion of RSAs to younger veterans.
 - Adapting RSAs to be more enticing to younger veterans.
 - Improving the image of RSAs.

Section 5: Feedback from Workshop Topic 4

Difficulties faced by RSAs

Topic 4 looked at the ever-increasing list of RSAs in trouble. An understanding of the issues RSAs are facing was sought: where were they successful and what solutions are possible? Conference attendees formed 9 workshop groups and were asked to identify the main issues RSAs are facing and what was being done to manage those situations. They were also asked to identify what assistance or support the RNZRSA and fellow RSAs could provide. See appendix 7 for a summary of the feedback.

Key feedback points are:

- The fact that a significant number of RSAs are struggling was widely accepted by groups.
- There was consensus about the main issues that are causing problems for RSAs.
- The feedback suggests that there are RSAs who would welcome assistance and guidelines around possible mergers.

The following points made by workshop groups stand out as significant:

- **Declining RSA membership** was identified by 8 groups. One group added that the membership was ageing, while another group added there was a lack of trust in their Executive.
- **A lack of suitably skilled people** prepared to go on the Executive Committees was identified by 8 groups as a significant issue, and some six sets of skills shortages were identified. Six groups suggested that training programmes were needed to improve this situation.
- **Poor attendance at AGMs** was cited as problematic by 8 groups.
- **Financial issues** were identified by 6 groups as causing problems. Cash flow issues, increasing business costs, maintenance costs, and being ‘asset rich but cash poor’ were cited as examples of common problems.
- **Mergers** were viewed as problematic by six groups.
- **Personal political agendas and problematic behaviours** are contributing to RSAs in trouble.
- **Assistance and/or advice** from RNZRSA Board members was wanted by a few Associations. Others want assistance from National Office when they are in trouble.
- **A system of “RSAs helping RSAs”** was suggested by 5 groups.

Section 6: Conclusions & Parameters for Realignment

Introduction

The question of how to better align and integrate the national organisation with the respective local Associations, the RSAs, is a challenge that will need to be met if we are to adapt and move forward. It is this pressure that has encouraged both the Board and Forum to address the shortcomings. National Council 107 has provided valuable feedback to inform the realignment process.

National Council 107 reinforced and added to the feedback received National Council 106, 2022 where two key messages were given to the Board and Forum:

- **Support for veterans and their whānau remains the core purpose of the organisation.**
- **Change is necessary for the RSA movement to have a sustainable future.**

Key Feedback

1. *Core Purpose*

Feedback showed that core purpose remains at the forefront of our organisation.

At a local level, RSA representatives described things that they do to support veterans in their communities. Clearly many RSAs deliver ‘local acts of kindness’ on a regular basis. Others support veterans with grants. The recipients of these initiatives are most often older veterans and their whānau.

Somewhat concerningly, it is evident that although we have strong representation from male veterans, there is low representation from female veterans within our ranks.

A number of groups saw increased activity, with regards to veteran advocacy, as strengthening links with the veteran community. Advocacy for a review of, and changes to, VSA14 is seen as one way to signal support for veterans by the RSA movement.

Encouragingly, Support Clinics are recognised as being effective and valuable.

Feedback was clear: Alignment with core purpose is valued but can be improved. There is a genuine desire to do so.

2. *Veteran Connection with RSAs*

Many RSA representatives described efforts to reach the younger cohort of veterans. Some RSAs, especially those located close to military bases or connected to RSA Hubs, do so with some success while others with less connection find there are barriers. Some RSAs are seeking assistance to develop ways to connect.

It was widely recognised that veteran-to-veteran contact is critical to obtaining successful reach into the veteran community.

Feedback was clear: Assistance with finding new ways for RSAs to link with and include post-1990 veterans is sought.

3. RSAs Want to Have a Voice

RSA representatives want to be linked directly in a mutually supportive way to the national body. Attendees appeared to be open as to how this could happen.

Feedback was clear: RSAs want a direct link to the national body and to have improved communications.

4. RSA Links with the National Body

Links with the national body were described as not functioning effectively. Districts and District Presidents (on the whole) are seen as barriers to effective communication and therefore impair the operation of the organisation. Information flow is not getting from National Office or the Board to RSAs. Information and messages from our grassroots are not getting back through the District barriers to National Office or the Board.

Feedback was clear: RSAs want stronger and operationally focused links to the national body.

5. Difficulties Faced by RSAs

It is clear that at the local level RNZRSA is under pressure. There are constantly increasing numbers of RSAs facing difficulties. Many RSA representatives articulated financial stressors, a lack of skilled members, and declining membership, as key issues. There were suggestions made about where assistance could be useful, notably in areas related to training and financial assistance.

Feedback was clear: Increasing numbers of RSAs are struggling and would welcome assistance.

Appendices

Appendix 1: National President Tā Wayne Shelford KNZM MBE. Address to National Council 107, Part 2.

Appendix 2: Board Chair Major General (Rtd) Martyn Dunne CNZM, QSO. Address to National Council 107, Part 2.

Appendix 3: Attendance Tables

Appendix 4: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 1

Appendix 5: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 2

Appendix 6: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 3

Appendix 7: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 4

Appendix 1: National President, Tā Wayne Shelford KNZM MBE. Address to National Council 107, Part 2.

It's great to finally be at the National Council Workshop, after what has felt like a very long road getting here.

We want you to know from the outset that we are here to listen. The whole purpose of this workshop is getting your ideas to help build the RNZRSA of the future.

For of us to get the most out of today, I want you to forget everything you've heard before you walked in the door today. There's a lot of misinformation circulating out there both in the media and in our own ranks, and some of you may have come here today with some preconceived notions of what's being proposed.

We know members of our own organisation are actively trying to undermine this process by sharing misinformation and trying to build a campaign of resistance to any form of change. I want you to park that. Forget it. The conversation starts now.

We are here today because we care about the RSA and we want to see it survive and thrive long into the future.

Today is about looking to that future, and working out how we can modernise and remain a relevant force for veterans in New Zealand. But when we talk about modernizing, and a modernization programme – what are we really talking about?

First and most importantly, the programme of change we are proposing to go through relates to the RNZRSA not individual Associations. The RNZRSA has been here for over 108 years, and any organisation that has existed that long is dealing with a legacy of decisions made over time.

For us, those decisions have left us with a governance structure that promotes conflict and doesn't make any real sense – we've got a Board that controls funding and the over direction of the organisation but no means of implementing their decisions. And we've got a Presidents' Forum that represents the membership but has no financial or legal responsibilities.

To be a modern organisation we need connected leadership – but what does that look like? Let's talk about it and find out.

Our current structure also means that Associations are relatively isolated, disconnected from support and the lines of communication just aren't working. To be a modern organisation we need greater connection, we need to be able to talk to each other, support each other and be unified by a common purpose. What does that look like? Let's talk about it and find out.

I know there are those of you that will still be asking why? Why do we need to change at ? The RNZRSA started back when a single man sat on a hill in Gallipoli looking at the carnage that surrounded him. He saw that those around him would be returning to New Zealand damaged by their experience, both physically and mentally, and that there was no support ready for them when they got home.

108 years later, we have creaking government services that are unable to deliver support to our veterans – wait times of up to two years for the most basic of services. We have a country that doesn't recognise the special nature of military service and the sacrifices it requires, that believe it is

just like any other job.

But we have a country that is still creating veterans every day – over 62000 veterans of military service since 1990. Over 12000 veterans of operational deployments. Right now, over 250 New Zealand Defence Force personnel are deployed around the world. We owe it to them and the sacrifices they make to ensure support is there when they need it.

And to be a member of the RNZRSA, to display that badge on your building, or wear the badge on your jacket, means that regardless of the business you operate, or how you connect with your community, the reason we are here, our why, is to support New Zealand's veterans of military service and their whānau.

As your National President I'm asking you to come together today. Forget your preconceived ideas and get stuck in. We will have different ideas of what a modernised RNZRSA might look like, and that's exactly why we're here, to hear each other out and work together.

Let's make the most of this opportunity, and let's make sure we respect each other. Today, everybody's voice has equal weight – you aren't a President, or a secretary, treasurer, affiliate or member of the Board or Forum. Today we are equal, so I encourage you to speak freely and openly, but I also ask you to owe others to speak. Let's not jump over each other or hold court, we need to nail a way forward today and the only way we can do that is together. Let's roll up our sleeves and get on with it. The future starts today and every single one of you is part of it.

24 February 2024

Appendix 2: Board Chair, Major General (Rtd), Martyn Dunne CNZM, QSO. Address to National Council 107, Part 2.

RSA MODERNISATION

TOWARD 2030

REFLECTIONS

- Thomas Hobbes described life in a state of nature as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” he penned one of the most celebrated sentences in the English Language.
- The 17th Century philosopher asserted that without “a common power to keep them in awe”, human beings fall into a state of nature – a condition of anarchical warfare.
- This might appear pessimistic but paradoxically Hobbes was an optimist. Using their reason he believed, human beings could lift themselves out of conflict. Humankind could in his view enjoy a civilised life of peace, prosperity, and culture through a **social contract**.
- That last statement in my view epitomises the requirement to examine where it is possible the direction, focus and strategy of the RNZRSA/RSA.
- In addition: After many years of internally examining their culture the Canadian Defence Force settled on Trust that must be at their centre-the components of which are;
 - **Benevolence** = I trust you care.
 - **Competence** = I trust you can do it right.
 - **Predictability** = I trust you’ll stick it out.
 - **Integrity** = I trust you will do the right thing.
- From my experiences delivering RSA2030 (Now RNZRSA Modernisation) there were a range of reactions. Some didn’t understand it and were unable to see that the future is potentially finite for the RSA movement without significant reorientation.
- While there were many often silent who privately and individually agreed that something needed to be done and quickly, to reverse the situation or ‘issues’ faced by many.
- Above there is a profound need to refresh the original core purpose of the RNZRSA/RSA.
- Perception internally is always different to those outside any organisation.
- For us that purpose is the prosperity, care and welfare of Veterans and their families. There are now clear options of how that might be achieved. Whether conducted through e.g. a Veteran Support Centre, a Hub or as part of existing RSA configurations.
- Despite some misleading hyperbole in some quarters, this does not signal the end of hospitality or community venues. There are successful examples where both energetic initiatives that match contemporary veterans’ interests combine with community and hospitality-based locations. Many of you come from such locations. We saw some of them in our travels. Attracting them more assuredly to our purpose and where necessary, to assist their needs, is the challenge.
- **Following media-initiated interviews focused on the plight of recent veterans, use of the term ‘Booze barns and its association with the RSA was unfortunate. While trying to colloquially describe an issue, we inadvertently offended a large segment of our community. For that we apologise.**
- The purpose had been to call for modernisation of the RSA movement and the recent presentations highlight the fragile state of many associations.
- The loss of equity through lack of support from others, seeking solutions that divest or dilute that equity, which once surrendered, is forever lost.
- **To sustain relevance and reputation will require innovative and yet prescriptive solutions.**
- Hyperbole and critical, almost acerbic use of language and **personalised criticism** is evidently against the values of the RSA. If so, don’t do it. Recovering reputation is a challenge. Airing views, strongly held, is always best left to internal dialogue.
- For some of our locations, circumstances have changed because, for a variety of reasons - **‘times have changed’**.

- Since the RSA2030 presentations that gave an assessment of **only** 53 Associations, there are subsequently now more added almost weekly that require help to survive or redirect their effort. Regardless of the numbers, where we can, we need to assist.
- Failure to preserve equity is a great risk to the cause and RSA movement. Where that is imminent, we collectively should help. Not to take it away from communities but to preserve its value for the use it was intended.
- I'm **now** aware that threats, derision, and varying levels of strife that accompany change are not new. Where change has been attempted there has been too often, muted reaction.
- Yet at times there has been a range of acceptance and sadly more often than is necessary, the avoidance of reality. We can do better.
- As we've said during the RSA2030 there have been thousands who have contributed. Often unnoticed sometimes less focused but nevertheless well intentioned. This grand effort is often by former ex serving and non-serving personnel who have given their time and energy unsolicited and often unrewarded.
- There is a misconception of how reputation and therefore relevance is earned. Much of it is carried over from long years of individual and joint effort and too often focused on **remembrance**. Essential yes, but in 2024 **support** and **advocacy** must also be our champions.
- We must always remember those who served. It is 25 years this September that we deployed into East Timor of which there are 5665 WHO DID, and 24 years since we landed in
- Afghanistan for our longest commitment to a war bar none. Many chapters have and will be written on both. The efforts of the RNZAF and NZSAS at the death throes of our commitment in Afghanistan create yet more recognition of service.
- There are 62,000 veterans since 1990 and over 12,000 have seen operational service whether at sea, on land or in the air.
- If you haven't looked at the recording of the recent Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select committee hearing held last week, the Minister of Veterans Affairs summarised in it several of the issues we discussed with him. The need to review VSA14 and the associated entitlements, the inability of the NZDF and VANZ systems to connect to one another and pass the details of Veterans from one to the other is unfortunate in the digital age that is 2024. He obviously agrees.
- **Let me also explain**, Ministers and Governments need to be reminded that there is a contract like no other employment, between it and its Service personnel. Our recent meeting with the new Minister of Veterans Affairs was an opportunity to do just that. But we need to do so from a position of strength.
- Continued meetings with Service Chiefs have been beneficial to us both as we express concerns for their conditions. Better conditions result in better transition into civilian life coupled with agreed and suitable entitlements.
- The NZDF has embraced the concept of an Armed Forces Day. It will be for them to action, it is not a holiday. It will though, if it becomes a reality, act as recognition for serving and non-serving in the communities in which we live. And also, potentially, for the RSA to support. My recent attendance at the Remembrance service in Warkworth were insightful. A massive turn out from the community, a parade passing the dais with the soon to be Minister of Veterans reviewing the parade. Then being surrounded by the community who were keen to ask questions from decorations to current circumstances.
- As we've travelled throughout the country to 8 venues and delivered 9 presentations the enthusiasm and variety of understanding of our core purpose ranges from strong to mixed.
- We have much to do. Amongst the criticism has been the accusation that we have neglected to mention non-service personnel. I disagree and it was refreshing to observe how the prime purpose of the RSA can invigorate communities throughout NZ and consequently the
- involvement of many. Gore & Milton are such great examples of this. There are many others we didn't see.

- You will hear during the day, as part of discussion, and you will know, of the effort being expended by our Support infrastructure, by the many volunteers and appointed staff. The
- latter includes the efforts of our MSD sponsored Veteran Employment Service trial and the successes achieved which as an initiative, sadly, is likely to become a casualty of the Government's need to find funding for a range of causes. Nevertheless, we have 300+ former Veterans registered, assisted 54 into full-time employment and registered 100+ employers and their intermediaries including the likes of Fonterra, Air NZ, The Warehouse, Fletcher Group and Deloitte. While 20 Veterans are receiving return to work assistance.
- In the margins of today you will hear about the 116 veterans who turned up to an RSA support session in Northland seeking advice and assistance, not a show bag but genuinely looking for help.
- I can't help thinking about the former Infantry Private who recently died jumping off the
- crane into Wellington Harbour, who had served time in prison, used drugs, was homeless, and left three children. And there are evidently 4% of the prison population who are Veterans.
- While we are **not** able to replace government services **and nor should we**, we can navigate for those Veterans in need without creating our own bureaucracy. We can advocate for their welfare. In the first instance they do not need to be members of the RSA.
- To that end we will, at their request and agreement, shortly qualify how we will work with ACC, Corrections and eventually TPK, while they remain willing to collaborate. We should also be able to have similar arrangements with VANZ in a collegial business-like manner with our and their reputation intact.
- Can you visualise a Veteran Support Centre that operates for . Maybe located in bases or existing RSA's. Staffed in part by Veterans but including the large non-veteran membership with other skills.
- **Equally important, we do not only have to look out for those who need help, we should champion those who can achieve, by awarding scholarships, opportunities, and nurturing excellence. They could be role models for other citizens. Helped by the RSA. The effect on our reputation for such action would be palpable.**
- Providing new facilities as part of current structures and activities that encourage participation. As I said to some during the RSA2030 roadshow... Do you have a gym, a creche, a learning centre?
- Rejuvenating the former Online RSA as a strong and necessary National RSA alternative for veterans and supporters **will** with change, become a reality.
- **We can also focus more directly on service women who not just because there are now more of them, but who bring a richness to our cause.**
- Combining community groups and veterans is a rich legacy of commitment and success. Especially in small and interdependent communities.
- of this is possible, but it will not endure, if as Hobbs ably described, the lessons of the
- past are avoided and where they are owed to become divisive and inwardly focused – then eventually self-destructive.
- For those of you who have studied the classics you will rec that **Alexander the Great** to undo the Gordian knot, solved it, not by untying it, but by striking his sword through it. That is the outcome the RNZRSA has been looking for and urgently needs to achieve.
- Today I hope you will enthusiastically embrace options for collective discussion and action that strengthen the RNZRSA/RSA pre-eminent position as the GUARDIANS for Veterans while remaining relevant to the community and champion their involvement.
- To also examine what it means to be accepted as an RSA? What principals do we accept as membership. What if you don't embrace such expectations? What are the consequences of upholding these principals? How do we strengthen the structure while encouraging and preserving participation.

- It is then the challenge to imbue your colleagues to step up. They did in part in 2022. We need to do so again in 2024 but this time map the future, agree on it, and actively participate in it.
- Despite some acerbic rhetoric over the past few days there has been an often silent but increasingly large number who seek change and if we're open to it we will meet the expectations of those who currently might look forlornly on the RSA. Misinformation causes angst and division. Valid informed debate is the foundation for advancing change where it is necessary. The RNZRSA is open to dialogue and a contest of ideas.
- On recently hearing the Ode recited, I reflected on those who have gone before us and what they would think of the RSA in 2024? They, veterans, and non-veterans served for a clear purpose and so, such sentiment must remain.
- My past twelve months have been insightful and like initiations impressionable, but my previous experiences in uniform and out of it, can best be useful for several **binding lessons**.
- Often hard won and **if ignored**, then a salutary lesson. These include; **Unity of Purpose, Unity of Effort combined with a sense of duty and service. At its core for us is the ambition to exercise sound leadership at levels**
- I simply ask that you participate today with an open mind, looking for the chance to set us on a path that uses the past that is the RSA/RNZRSA and **where necessary** reshape the organisation to demonstrate an open minded innovative and resolute champion that is focused on its core purpose and above can achieve its full potential, sustain its reputation and relevance within the communities in which we live.
- For those that can't, we will need to embrace, explain, and assist in closing the gap to a better future. Joined in a common purpose with trust and commitment.
- Finally, May I conclude by thanking the **Board** and staff of RNZRSA.
- To the **staff**, I do not know how you manage the extraordinary workload and demands with our limited services. We owe it to you to improve our systems, communication, and funding.
- This challenge we accept in kind and reality. Without an active arrowhead driven by its shaft, advised by its legions makes it difficult to achieve purpose, relevance and then reputation.

Nga Mihi

Kia ora Tatou...

24 February 2024

Appendix 3: Attendance Tables

Attendees	
Registered	99
No shows	4
Total Attendees	95

Gender	
Female	20
Male	75
Total Attendees	95

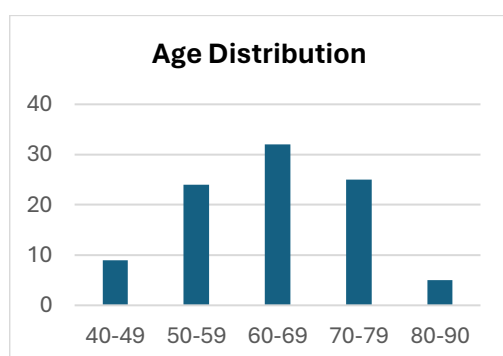
Veterans/Non-veterans	
Veterans	73%
Non-veterans	27%

Attendees	
Life Members	2
RSA's representatives	70
Board members	6
Forum members	11
Staff	4
Others	2
Total	95

Categories of RSAs⁵	
Hospitality	45%
Fellowship based	18%
Merged	13%
Affiliates	11%
Virtual	7%
Veteran Centres/focused	4%

Workshop Groups	
No of Groups	9
Group sizes	
11	1
10	4
9	3
8	1
Av group size	9.6

Workshop Participants⁶	
Groups Participants	86
Observers	4
Consultant	1
Total participants	91



⁵ Rounding has occurred.

⁶ Staff did not participate.

Appendix 4: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 1

Workshop Topic 1: How can your RSA better support veterans in your community?

Question 1a: Give us examples of what your RSA does now?

Matters Raised	Consistent Comments
<p>Veteran to veteran contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 8 of 9 groups. Also mentioned in response to other questions. 	<p>Widely recognised as the key method to contact veterans and share information about RSAs and Support Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using current RSA members was seen as a way to drive this. Expanding the connection to partners and families was also seen as useful. Expanding on Hubs on bases. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Personal network to identify ex-service personal in area & offer assistance.” “Actively seek out veterans in our community”. “Veterans talking to veterans”. “One stop support facility”. Hubs... “embeds RSA support in camps to get them to transition from base to hubs.”
<p>Local acts of kindness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 7 of 9 groups. 	<p>Many described local level support initiatives.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything from, firewood to hospital visits. One RSA gives “winter grants of \$250” to veterans. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Shopping, visits.” “Visit rest homes.” “Welfare visits, firewood”. “check living conditions”
<p>Functions for Veterans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 5 of 9 groups. 	<p>Seen as means of connection and camaraderie.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Veterans lunches (includes widows and families.” “Run veteran get togethers”. “Veteran dinners.”
<p>Local Support Advisors (LSA) & Welfare Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<p>Local Support Advisors (LSA) & Welfare Officers were seen as useful at the local level.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Welfare Officers offer support and networks to contact new personal in the area.” “Active welfare officer/s.”
<p>Proactive promotion</p>	<p>Initiatives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands at “Farmers Markets”.

Matters Raised	Consistent Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Brochures for distribution” to Doctors rooms. “Emails to veterans.” “Push ‘you are a veteran’ message”.
Providing funding/grants to veterans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	While this was identified by 3 groups as a positive thing. Quotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Provide funding”. “shopping vouchers, funeral costs” “Winter grants”
Links to youth groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	Initiatives included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Cadets” “Schools” Other youth groups e.g., sporting groups, school groups.
Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	Social media was listed as a means of connection and promotion. Quotes: “Focusing on not just our club...via social media”.
Other initiatives Include:	
Collaboration with other RSAs in the area: “Spread to other RSAs...to allocate and raise funds”.	
“Links with local Māori...offer medical support, treatment, transport and connections”.	
Focusing on a wider audience: “non-members, non-financial members”	
Te Aroha has appointed a leader to represent contemporary veterans: “their voice...connects them to the RSA...they didn't previously feel relevant.”	

Workshop Topic 1: How can your RSA better support veterans in your community?

Question 1b: What other things could your RSA do?

Matters Raised	Consistent Comments
Veteran Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 8 of 9 groups. 	Widely recognised as a good way to better connect with the veteran community. One group suggested this could be “a joint venture with VA”. Quotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “District wellness & support centres.” “Build a Veterans Clinic [Centre]”. “Veterans centre”.
Promotion of Veterans Clinics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 7 of 9 groups. 	Increased levels of promotion for Clinics. More clinics. Quotes:

Matters Raised	Consistent Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“RSA Clinics are awesome”.</i> • <i>“Increase mental health support”.</i>
Community connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 6 of 9 groups.</i> • <i>Also mentioned in response to other questions.</i> 	<p>Connection with and promotion through other community groups was seen as a way to reach into the Veteran community.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“bring people together around active participation”.</i> • <i>“helping out with community initiatives...being visible in the community”.</i> • <i>“Washing our linen in public”</i> stated by 2 groups as having negative impact on perception.
Contemporary commemoration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 5 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Seen as relevant and a way to connect with veterans.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Contemporary veterans support & commemoration.”</i> • <i>“recognising “eras” one size does not fit ”.</i> • <i>“Old barriers are introducing issues (dress + badges)”.</i> • <i>“Raise profile of...”Timor, Solomons, Bosnia, Afghanistan (videos, TV programmes).”</i>
Veterans’ functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 4 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Functions specially for veterans was seen a way to connect with the veteran community.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“recruit service people”</i> by holding veteran events. • <i>“hold veteran functions”.</i> <p><i>“Run veteran get togethers”.</i></p>
Veterans Affairs (VA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 4 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Seen as a barrier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to contact. • Forms are difficult to fill in. • Don’t answer the phone. • RSA is sometimes confused with VA.
Poppy Trustees performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 5 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Poppy Trusts/Trustees need better guidance around grants procedures.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Poor understanding of how Poppy Trusts work”.</i> • <i>“Rules for how to spend charity (dollars)”.</i>
Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 4 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p><i>“Social media”</i> was listed as a means to connect & promote.</p> <p>For example, Facebook.</p>
Promotion suggestions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 3 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures for distribution to <i>“DRs, Hearing Clinics, CAB, and Podiatrists”</i>

⁷ Referring to different deployments over time.

Matters Raised	Consistent Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails to veterans.
Other initiatives include:	
More seminars/workshops.	
Clear on core purpose.	
Jail programme for veteran inmates.	
Promotion of the Hubs.	
Creating Public awareness.	
Reach out to other veteran groups: <i>“support special interest groups”</i>	
<i>“RSAs without borders”</i>	
<i>“Animals at war needs more work”.</i>	

Workshop Topic 1: How can your RSA better support veterans in your community?

Question 1c: What help do you need from National Office to do this better?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
<p>Better communications material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Identified by 7 of 8 groups.</i> 	<p>Provision of promotion material would help RSAs get the message out there. Pamphlets required for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material <i>“suitable for the families of veterans”</i>. Doctor’s waiting rooms. <p>Provide <i>“Stories suitable for RSA use”</i> :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Campaigns”</i> <i>“Current veterans”</i> <i>“RSAs.”</i> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance to <i>“appeal for volunteers”</i>. <i>“Increase the numbers of people on the Comms team.”</i>
<p>RNZRSA & NZDF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Identified by 6 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>National Office could ask NZDF to connect RSAs with veterans as they leave the service. Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Office could <i>“make NZDF more aware of what RSAs do.”</i> <i>“NZDF Aren’t aware of [RSA] Support” programmes.</i>
<p>Poppy Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Identified by 4 of 9 groups.</i> <i>Also mentioned in response to other questions.</i> 	<p>Concerns were expressed about the Trustees of Poppy Trusts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance to better define rules for Poppy Trusts. Some RSAs consider there is a disconnect between the RSA and the Poppy Trusts.

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
Support Clinics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	Support Services Clinics were recognised as valuable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More are needed. “Support needed for more support [Clinic] days”.
Training provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	Training assistance was seen as a solution to the lack of skills at RSA level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Governance” training is required. “Communications” training is required. “Management tools” and training is required. Use “of a drop box” as a means of sharing the material.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other initiatives include: 	
Assistance to update Cenotaphs.	
Welcome packs for veterans.	
Promote different ways to be an RSA.	
“Promote Online RSA”	
Ongoing promotion of the RSA view of who a veteran is.	
“Armed Services personnel receive a free RSA ID card.”	
Look at different ways to belong to the RSA movement.	

Appendix 5: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 2

Workshop Topic 2: In the new structure we want to ensure the voices of individual RSAs can be heard by the national body.

Note: The responses to Topic 2 have been assessed in a collective manner. There were common themes across question areas.

Question 2a: Give examples of ways the views of your RSAs are heard by National Office/RNZRSA now?

Question 2b:

- What could be done either by:
 - your RSA to make this happen better?
 - National Office/RNZRSA to make this happen better?

Question 2c: What support do you need to make that happen?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
<p>Communication problematic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by all 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Communication between National Office and Associations were frequently described as “broken”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Not answering emails”.</i> • <i>“Seems tokenism”</i> • <i>“confirm coms [communication] lines”.</i> • <i>Want...“better regular communications from Nat Office”.</i>
<p>RSAs want a way to be heard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 8 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>It was made very clear that RSAs want to have a method to be heard, “to have a voice” in the new structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some RSAs go directly to Nat Office now. • Almost RSAs wanted improved 2-way communication. <p>Quotes: <i>“We still need a ‘voice’ of the people”.</i></p>
<p>Identified communication channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Some or all channels identified by 7 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>The following National Office communication channels were consistently identified.</p> <p>By most:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Newsletters • Website <p>By some:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • AGM • Workshops
<p>District structure not working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 7 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Under current structure Districts via DPs are the conduit between Associations and RNZRSA. Many consider that the District structure is not working.</p>

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Districts were considered to be “too big”. Many questioned the value of the District structure. DPs do not always attend RSA AGMs. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Is District level of value?” “Do RSAs need to fix this relationship”. “Ineffective district leadership skills...means ineffective representation at National level.” “Is the structure right”. “breaks down if DP doesn’t attend [Association] AGM”. District model needs change”
<p>DPs are a barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 6 of 9 groups. 	<p>The DP based system is a barrier to effective communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSAs are not getting current info. Some [DPs] are not sharing information, i.e., forwarding emails. Feedback not getting back to National Office or the Board. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “cascading [DP forwarded emails] emails are not working”. Want...”direct emails”. “DPs need to have set expectations” and a Job Description. “re-set selection process”
<p>Direct connection with Nat Office desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 6 of 9 groups. 	<p>It was considered that direct connection with National Office could improve communications. It was suggested that dedicated resource in National Office might improve the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “National Office to become the comms”...channel to RSAs. “District reps [DPs] in Nat Office”. Working closely with Nat Office.
<p>Issues with National Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<p>National Office does not have the capacity to deal with direct communication.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “more staff in Nat Office”. “phones not answered”. “emails not answered”. “Resource someone full-time to communicate with Associations”
<p>Improve the comms channel between RSAs and the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<p>It was identified that RSAs want to ensure they are heard by the Board. Some did not understand the role of the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with the Board sought. Board’s role not well understood. Improving understanding of the Board.

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
DPS as an ongoing part of the structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	While 3 groups stated they wanted the DP structure to continue little reason was given in support of this approach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some support the DP structure. Some Districts were cited as well run.
District structure working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 2 of 9 groups. 	Some DPs are an effective comms conduit to and from RSAs. Quote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Hardworking DPs”
RSA Execs not passing on info to their members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 2 of 9 groups. 	Interestingly 2 groups identified that there was a further barrier to comms at the RSA level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Roadblocks at local club Exec level in some cases”. “Each RSA needs to have a person who is responsible for ensuring comms are shared and updated”.
AGM & Workshops are valued. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 groups discussed this in their responses. Feedback since Conference strongly supports the Workshop approach.
Other suggestions include:	
Affiliates to have direct comms with Nat Office.	
Lack of clarity about current structure. Roles and responsibilities not clear.	
<i>Comms that reaches into communities.</i>	
Website needs update.	
<i>“Governance training to include Charitable Trust law.”</i> Could also be useful for Poppy Trusts most of which are Charitable Trusts.	
DPs become Advisory Group.	
District representation should be funded by Associations.	
RSA Leadership attending (or not) District meetings.	

Appendix 6: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 3

Workshop Topic 3: Is the veteran voice heard in your RSA?

Question 3.a: How could RNZRSA ensure that the veterans voice is better heard in the new structure?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments/Suggestions
<p>Through military bases – providing feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	<p>Hubs providing feedback to RSAs in the area.</p> <p>Quote:</p> <p><i>“Veterans and recent retirees can get in contact and give feedback.”</i></p>
<p>Use the Online RSA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. Also mentioned in response to other questions. 	<p>The Online RSA could provide a way to belong that is more relevant to younger veterans.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The online organisation is <i>“more relevant to younger veterans”</i>. Could provide <i>“multiple pathways ways for veterans to belong”</i>. <i>“Online is more important to younger vets, e.g. ‘RSA without borders”</i>.
<p>Veterans could have their own ways to belong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<p>Multiple ways were identified. Notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veterans meet up in other places like cafes. Veterans and Armed Forces Day. Automatic RSA membership for veterans. <p>Quote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A <i>“way to show that veteran’s matter”</i> to the RNZRSA. <i>“Recognise NZDF ID as proof of membership”</i>. <i>“more about RSA spirit”</i>.
<p>Recognise NZDF ID as membership proof.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	<p>veterans are automatically members of the RSA movement.</p> <p>Quote:</p> <p><i>“Recognise NZDF ID”</i></p>
<p>Advocacy for core purpose related issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<p>Use RNZRSA advocacy strength for changes to the Veterans Act & definition of veteran.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update <i>“the official definition of veteran”</i>. Advocacy for legislative changes. <p>Quotes:</p> <p><i>“advocacy to resolve the discrimination”</i> in relation to VSA14.</p>
<p>Community connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<p>Spreading the word through the community.</p> <p>Using veteran to veteran community connection.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Spreading the message to veterans and whānau that they are members of the RSA community, not just older/returned vets.”</i> <i>“Community engagement needs to start at the top”</i>.

Matters raised	Consistent Comments/Suggestions
Support Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Services were seen as an important point of connection for veterans to the RSA movement. Having DSAs and LSAs on local RSA Execs was seen as one way to ensure the veteran voice is heard at the local level.
Barriers to the veteran voice being heard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	Associate Members dominate Executives. Quotes: “Most committees seem to be dominated by non-service people”.
Other Veterans Forums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	There are multiple veteran forums belonging to the Affiliates group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A communication channel to encourage veterans to join RSAs. Affiliates are veterans.
Flatter governance structure for the veteran voice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 2 of 9 groups. 	Creating more straight forward pathways for veteran communication with RNZRSA.
Other notable comments/suggestions include:	
Change of name for RSA to something more relevant to younger veterans.	
<i>“If a veteran has a bad experience they walk away from both VA and RSA”</i>	
<i>Classes of RSA membership are unclear.</i>	
Ensuring veteran feedback is fed up the communications structure	
Improve the RSA image	

Workshop Topic 3: Is the veteran voice heard in your RSA?

Question 3.b: How does your Executive/Management ensure that veterans have a voice in what happens at your RSA?

The responses are reported as a list.

List of different ways RSA Executives ensure they hear the voice of the veteran.	
Camaraderie at different venues	Notifying veterans of gatherings in the local areas.
Communication pathways	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AGM EGM Newsletters Emails

List of different ways RSA Executives ensure they hear the voice of the veteran.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poppy Trust • Welfare
Support Networks	Local knowledge and veteran to veteran channels
Veteran Representation	Veterans on the Executive <i>“including contemporary veterans”</i> .
Membership	Welcome veterans when they join.
Formal Process	<i>“Welfare/veteran issues”</i> are an Agenda item.
Lack of formal process	One RSA said – they have no <i>“formal structure for veterans’ voices”</i> .

Workshop Topic 3: Is the veteran voice heard in your RSA?

3.c Do you have other ideas about how this might happen?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
<p>Promote RSAs to younger veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 4 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Make younger veterans more aware of the RSA movement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote RSAs at veteran events. • Promote at veteran clinics. • More relevant Newsletter content. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Free membership for currently serving”</i>. • Recruit at <i>“basic training”</i>. • <i>“More PR.”</i> • <i>“Greater use of Veterans Clinics”</i>
<p>Adapting RSAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified by 4 of 9 groups.</i> 	<p>Many said RSAs need to be more attractive to younger veterans.</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become <i>“family friendly”</i>. • <i>“More attractive to younger veterans”</i>. • <i>“more enticing to veterans”</i>.
Other notable comments/suggestions include:	
Using the Model Constitution, mandate for a number of veterans to be on Executives.	
Have veterans on the Executives.	
Use census questions to provide data to feedback to RNZRSA.	
<i>“Improve the RSA image (friendly and supportive).”</i>	

Appendix 7: Summary of Feedback Workshop Topic 4

Workshop Topic 4: There is an ever-increasing list of RSAs in trouble. Thinking about your RSA and its future well-being.

Question 4a: What are the things that concern you most?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
<p>Declining membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 8 of 9 groups. 	<p>The pre-workshop presentation showed the membership numbers declining across the organisation. RSAs representatives also noted this at a local level.</p> <p><i>“Aging membership “declining membership” “collapse of own RSA” Declining “hospo patronage”</i></p>
<p>Membership of RSAs often lack skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 8 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of suitably skilled people for committees. Lack of trust in Executive committee. Lack of selection process guidelines for Exec members. Lack of attendance at local AGM. Lack of succession planning. Lack of understanding of liability for exec members and Trustees. Lack of management skills (volunteers often lack necessary skills). Lack of business skills. Lack of awareness of financial situation. Lack of understanding of cash flow. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“poor skills...small candidate pool”</i> <i>“power tripping”</i> <i>“biased against true role of RSA.”</i> <i>“lack of trust in committee”.</i> <i>“same people on committees for years.”</i>
<p>Financial issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 6 of 9 groups. 	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit costs. Fraud Business costs Building maintenance costs. Rates increasing <i>“Asset rich cash poor”</i>

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
Loss of Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 6 of 9 groups. 	The loss and security of assets. No merger guidelines, e.g., “Bowls Club”. Protect against mergers with community clubs. Quotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “assets disappearing into community assets”. “loss of equity, assets, memorabilia”. Protection of “assets from ill-conceived mergers”.
Personal “political’ agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	Personal agendas appear to be hindering the performance of the RSA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive members who are not here for the veteran cause. Quotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “hidden agendas”
Public Perceptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	The public have a poor perception of the RSA movement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of community support and recognition.
Lack of volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	People do not volunteer the way they used to. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fraud is a volunteer risk.
Rising costs of compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	“Liquor and gaming compliance costs”

Workshop Topic 4: There is an ever-increasing list of RSAs in trouble. Thinking about your RSA and its future well-being.

Question 4b: Give examples of what you are doing to address those issues?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
Promoting membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 6 of 9 groups. 	Initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community events Working to attract membership. Trying to remain “relevant and viable”.
Enforcement of standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	Clubs NZ helpful. Financial controls. “Strict compliance with Constitution, gaming, liquor, H&S, etc.”
Cost controls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost cutting. Professional management of investments. Rates rebates.
Other notable comments/suggestions include:	
Income generation	

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
Committee selection process	
Induction programme	
Community open days	
Encouraging succession	
Training new committee members.	
Developing an RSA strategy.	
Looking for grants funding	
Looking to local businesses for assistance	

Workshop Topic 4: There is seems to be an ever-increasing list of RSAs in trouble. Thinking about your RSA and its future well-being.

Question 4c: What areas do you need help with?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 6 of 9 groups. 	Areas where training is required are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to run a business. Governance Financial How to run a meeting. Advice on setting up Trusts
Image improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 5 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing A younger look. Quotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Run profiles on younger vets serving on committees” in media. “PR resources.”
Executive skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 4 of 9 groups. 	Job Descriptions for Exec members Quotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Job descriptions for committee members”
Bulk purchasing deals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 2 of 9 groups. 	Negotiate bulk purchasing deals for RSAs.
Other notable comments/suggestions include:	
2 RSAs wanted advice from Board	
Assistance when getting into trouble	
2 suggested increasing capitation	

Workshop Topic 4: There is seems to be an ever-increasing list of RSAs in trouble. Thinking about your RSA and its future well-being.

Question 4d: How could you help other RSAs?

Matters raised	Consistent Comments
<p>Closer links to other RSAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 5 of 9 groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSAs helping RSAs. Share resources including money. Shared expertise. <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “brainstorm and discuss [how] to help each other”.
<p>Poppy Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 3 of 9 groups. 	<p>“RSAs without borders”</p>
<p>Amalgamate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by 2 of 9 groups. 	<p>Join with other RSAs</p>
<p>Other notable suggestions include:</p>	
<p>Build a “yellow pages’ of members with skills and qualifications.”</p>	