

## **RSL NSW Uses Centenary to Highlight the Dark Side of Returning Home**

*Calls on people of NSW to look out for signs of PTSD*

**SYDNEY, NSW – 21 APRIL 2016** – RSL New South Wales is celebrating its Centenary in 2016, marking 100 years of committed care, as the largest supporter of Australia’s serving and ex-serving personnel in the state.

The centenary – which aligns with ANZAC Day – serves as a reminder of the critical, charitable services provided by RSL NSW. It is also a time to call on the public for their support in working with RSL NSW on care initiatives for serving and ex-serving personnel for often serious conditions incurred, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

“In the last year alone, we have seen and supported at least two new cases of PTSD a week. This is a staggering and very saddening figure,” said Glenn Kolomeitz, CEO of RSL NSW. “Not only can PTSD manifest itself in depression and blame but it can also result in domestic violence and self-destructive behaviour.”

“Whilst RSL NSW provides a high level of support for those diagnosed, it’s important to remember that there are still many people who are not receiving support. This could be for a number of reasons including the fact that the signs – such as reliving the event, being overly alert or wound up or feeling emotionally numb – are not recognised, or that the personnel don’t want to declare it for fear of being discharged from their services.”

RSL NSW plays a key role in supporting serving and ex-serving personnel known to be suffering from PTSD via psychological counselling and financial support, as well as providing tools and support to the sufferers’ families to better assist and facilitate their recovery.

Upon returning home, many personnel face other, individual difficulties in adjusting to life – whether homelessness, drug addiction, or preparing to return to the workforce - vastly different to the regimented life they have become accustomed to - and participate as an active member of the local community again.

To facilitate and assist with the transition, RSL NSW provides support to current and former service members and their families in many forms. This includes financial, educational, clinical and emotional support amongst many other kinds. Funding for this care is provided directly by RSL NSW, as well as through affiliated organisations and associations, including RSL DefenceCare and Adaptive Sports in partnership with the Australian Defence Force.

Offering assistance in the transition phase as serving personnel return home is a key part of RSL NSW’s work. This is an area that RSL NSW is known for, pays great attention to and puts key resources behind, to ensure that the right support is there

## RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH



[www.rslnsw.org.au](http://www.rslnsw.org.au)

from first contact. This includes a particular focus on education initiatives and support in re-entering society.

“As we celebrate 100 years of operation in NSW, we are grateful for the support that state’s public continues to provide to serving and ex-serving personnel. But there is always more to be done.

“We are able to operate and return the funding to the veteran community through donations from sub-branches, external donations, member fees, as well as Federal and State Government grants. This funding goes direct to initiatives such as RSL DefenceCare, and to financial and psychological counselling,” said Kolomeitz.

“With the nation continuing to celebrate the Centenary of ANZAC, we strive to stay true to our mission of providing effective and compassionate support for our serving and ex-serving personnel. We hope that the local community continues to support us on this initiative.”

**ENDS**

For more information on RSL NSW, visit the website: <http://rslnsw.org.au/>

Rod White, State President and Glenn Kolomeitz, CEO at RSL NSW are available for interview and can speak with authority about the ANZAC spirit, the issues facing returning service members, and the lives changed by the services of RSL NSW over the last 100 years.

To speak with Rod or Glenn, please contact Helen Reiher at Hill+Knowlton Strategies on 0408 774 766 or via email – [Helen.reiher@hkstrategies.com](mailto:Helen.reiher@hkstrategies.com).