



Definition of Welfare

23 March 2018

On 8 March State Council resolved to approve the definition of welfare as follows:

Welfare is the provision of or access to services for veterans and their families who are socially disadvantaged or in need. It involves supporting social, emotional and physical needs, as well as helping with the basic needs of shelter, food, medical care and education.

(R-180307-8)

Items that are classified as welfare

Expenditure associated with any of these activities can be classed as welfare.

- Providing reasonable food and essentials such as shelter and education where veterans or their families are in need or at risk.
- Undertaking hospital, nursing home and home visits to check on veterans and their families, provide support and companionship. Visits can be once-off, semi regular or regular depending on the needs of the individual.
- Providing transport to members, veterans and their families to help them connect with others or attend meetings and functions (including commemorative events) when they would otherwise be unable to attend.
- Providing a reasonable snack or meal for members, veterans and their families at a club or similar venue as part of or in conjunction with a sub-branch meeting or social gathering.
- Meeting with veterans and their families, assessing their needs and provide support to assist them address issues such as family conflict, unemployment, emotional or substance abuse issues
- Advocating on behalf of veterans and their families in their dealings with government departments, other ex-service organisations or community organisations to ensure access and appropriate levels of service, including assisting them to lodge appeals or complaints.
- Offer advice and/or support in relation to:
 - DVA claims and advocacy
 - Centrelink
 - Medicare
 - Aged Care
 - Concession Cards
 - Counselling or referrals to VVCS, Lifeline and other similar services
 - Work carried out as part of a grant such as BEST grants



- Bereavement Assistance
 - Treatment and Transport
 - Respite Care
 - War Graves & VAN offices
 - Carer Support
 - Domestic Violence
 - Legal Advice
 - Community Information Service
 - Rural Services
 - Disability Services
- Providing assistance or transport to support veterans and their families in attending relevant appointments when they are unable to afford the transport or are infirm or otherwise unable to arrange transport.
 - Supplying welfare and health information to the veteran community either individually or collectively (such as through information stalls at Defence family days).
 - Liaising with other ESO's to ensure the veteran and their families receives holistic assistance to meet their needs.
 - Compiling, updating & maintaining information on veterans and their families as required.
 - Liaising for and conducting funeral tributes.
 - Liaising with Funeral directors to assist veterans or their families at times of loss.
 - Referring veterans and their families to appropriate community organisations or specialist services.
 - Networking and maintenance of close links within the ex-service and local communities.
 - Accessing and maintenance of information relating to health and community services.
 - Informing and educating the community about the needs of veterans and their families.
 - Financial assistance to veterans and their families in need (demonstrated by collecting information on the family's financial situation and assessing their ability to pay and the retaining of this information in a secure place).
 - Training of sub-branch members in relevant topics to assist their welfare activities (such as ATDP, community support training, mental health first aid, suicide awareness).
 - Wreaths, poppies and Australian flags when provided to families at funerals.
 - Reasonable medical expenses of veterans and their family members who would otherwise be unable to afford the cost (demonstrated by collecting information on the family's financial situation and assessing their ability to pay and the retaining of this information in a secure place).
 - Assistance for veterans and their family members to source and obtain employment.
 - Activities to assist the reintegration of veterans and their families into community activities and civilian life.
 - Activities promoting socialisation and social connectedness for veterans and their families.



Items that are not welfare – Administration and Surplus

- Repairing or maintenance of property such as musical instruments, community halls, PA systems, computers, projectors and the like.
- Sub-branch administration such as telephone costs (except for calls in relation to welfare matters as above), postage, stationery.
- Outgoings such as council rates, rent, electricity and other bills associated with sub-branch property.
- Payment of RSL NSW membership fees.
- Trips (such as to the Australian War Memorial) by members and their family members/carers except if the members are unable to afford the trip and this can be substantiated by collection of financial information and an assessment of the member's ability to pay is made (the financial information and assessment must be documented and retained in a secure place).
- RSL branded clothing including all aspects of the purchase and/or manufacture of the clothing including any associated travel costs.
- Donations to other organisations such as Legacy, RSL DefenceCare – these are donations, but cannot be classified as welfare activities of the sub-branch.
- Fundraising expenses including if volunteering for another organisation such as RSL DefenceCare.
- Training courses that are unrelated to welfare type activities (such as compliance or governance training).
- Christmas and other functions excluding payment for members and their families who would otherwise be unable to attend (the financial information and assessment must be documented and retained in a secure place).
- Wreaths, flags and other items for commemorative events.
- Trips to overseas commemorative sites.
- District Council meetings or dinners.

Background

Welfare is one of the four key areas of RSL NSW's current purpose.

It is clear from the 2017 fundraising survey that there isn't a common understanding amongst sub-branches about the definition of welfare. There is a need for RSL NSW's understanding of welfare to align with the general community and regulatory authorities.

Sub-branch examples of welfare activities include administration, property and equipment repairs, functions and trips (the latter would be classified as welfare if participants were unable to afford the cost and the trip provided valuable social interactions).

By defining welfare and providing guidance for sub-branches, RSL NSW will minimise the risks of non-compliance and assist members to better understand the organisation's purpose. RSL NSW's expenditure on welfare is vital for its charity status. Without a clear definition of welfare and expenditure guidelines, the organisation risks misalignment of expenditure with our purpose and ultimately this could compromise its charity status.



The definition of welfare referred to content on the ACNC website, traditional definitions (that tend to focus on shelter, education and food), as well as the more modern understanding of the importance of social factors like social connectedness that contribute to health and wellbeing.

Consideration was also given to the unique and high-risk nature of Defence employment and its impact on families. Expenses associated with providing food and drink at commemorative events have been included in the definition of welfare in recognition of the important role commemoration plays in connecting those affected by service in the Defence force and/or family members.

Assumptions

- Commemorative activities by their nature of bringing people together with shared experiences to grieve and commemorate mates and family members, contain a strong welfare component that is related to social connectedness and well-being.
- Welfare activities are reasonably consistent across NSW and whilst each veteran and their family may have individual needs, the categories are designed to cater for a range of activities that collectively can be classed as welfare.