

CEO's Response to DPC Feedback on Strategic Plan

General Points

The author has advised that the report was compiled from feedback from each DC President (as DPC member.) However, the author further advised he not had an opportunity to attend a member consultation on the plan which may have clarified several issues raised in the detailed feedback.

The format of the draft plan is based upon contemporary experience, and successful business transformations. The feedback author has confused initiatives (broad statements of what needs to be done to help achieve the goal) with outcomes ('what success looks like.') This has led to an interpretation that outcomes are 'sub-goals,' not outcomes as intended.

The author's assumed understanding of the role and organisation of the 'Joint Transition Authority' has led to several comments in relation to several key initiatives. As reported in the Board Communique' I have met with key DoD/ADF and DVA staff including Secretary to find out how the 'ESO' assurance loop will work (see attached diagram from the JTA.) The RSL as a truly national organisation with considerable resources can position as a 'lead' ESO to assist the JTA in its quest to monitor the wellness of veterans. Moreover, the idea of a 'catalogue' of ESO services has been well received by the Govt representatives, perhaps providing an opportunity for future grant funding.

Detailed Responses

The following numbered responses relate to the red number in the box in the DPC's Feedback which is attached.

1. Agreed. Per Initiative 7.16 and outcome 7q.
2. Again per Initiative 7.16 the PMO (Program Management Office) is essential – managing several projects (program = multiple projects and tasks). Several initiatives will be grouped to form a project if the complexity requires it. For a project to be funded the detailed project plan (business case) would have to be approved by the Program's Steering Committee (Which could have suitably experienced member volunteers on). Once approved the project would enter the program and report against milestones (schedule), scope (keeping to agreed outcomes), cost (budget) and risk.
3. Agreed. The COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact.
4. Agreed. See pt. 2 above.
5. Cost estimates by initiative is on the website. The implementation does require centralisation as strategy is about getting benefits to *all* sub-Branches/members – to work as one consistently. The Plan places sub-Branches at the centre of how the RSL goes about its charitable business.
6. Agreed, that is why the plan has the sub-Branch at the centre.
7. 'SWOT' was completed at planning session – the DPC was represented at the workshop.
8. Agreed. This has been quite a common point raised in feedback. Additionally members have agreed that the old model of volunteers being expected to do the training and currency requirement for 'pensions' officer and the tertiary qualifications for 'welfare' officer supports the plan's intention to phase in paid roles (through our delivery partner RSL LifeCare, which includes RSL DefenceCare.)
9. Noted. This is a very tough period, and the final plan will have to consider this impact.
10. This is the past. ANZAC House has been totally transparent, and no examples of mistrust have been raised with me in the last 12 months. The membership has received unprecedented level of information. The detailed cost cost of the strategic plan (by

initiative) has been on the website for the entire consultation period – what has not been transparent? Every consultation session has included a discussion about funding the plan and the future of the RSL. No funding, no plan. I am not sure if the comment refers to the Board or the administration, which I am responsible for?

11. I am not sure how more transparent ANZAC House can be? Suggestions would be welcome.
12. Agreed. There should be annual reviews, and adjustments.
13. That is what the Plan suggests? Clubs stay and work is required. The Veteran Services and Policy Committee has already reviewed the Community Grants program, with suggestions for better alignment identified. Moreover, the Clubs will need to enter into a revised strategic agreement, to support the Plan. The Clubs Assn. is meeting with the Board for this purpose in October.
14. Strong and important point. If the RSL does not start to work together, it will likely fail.
15. Agreed.
16. Regrettably, there is very little evidence of this. Anecdotal, and in one case a sub-Branch 'signed up' a whole cohort of current serving people who have not participated in any activity and not renewed their membership. The challenge – you join the RSL charity to provide support and help others/each other – not to obtain benefits. You join the club for benefits. This has been a strongly debated point during the member consultation.
17. ADSO has not been effective. ESORT is challenging. There is a clear need for an ESO leader. NSW has been advocating for a more effective National RSL organisation, but this is a significant challenge as RSL Qld has the disproportionate influence because of the funding obtained by the Art Union. NSW, if it acted per the Strategic Plan, it would have similar influence.
18. Agreed, see pt. 17.
19. Disagree, that is why the proposed plan puts in place a means to connect to bona fide ESOs.
20. Disagree. I've just seen an email trail (13 Sep) where a sub-Branch executive from a 'wealthy' sub-Branch is seeking favour in the upcoming election – including attaching emails from the past where he *personally* had agreed to send funds to that sub-Branch. The plan suggests transparency so all sub-Branches can be supported to deliver the charitable purpose.
21. Agree, any model would need to be cooperative.
22. Disagree. State Branch since Sep 19 has enforced a contemporary management approach (replacing the 'State Treasurer' model) and an operational surplus reported (adjusted downward with negative property re-valuations) has been reported. I will not comment on previous management/operating model. While significantly downsized and costs cut, without actions outlined in the Strategic Plan, ANZAC House will need sub-Branch financial supplementation, noting the Board has already decided to not 'Tax' sub-Branch fundraising.
23. A member veteran in need of assistance can obtain a benefit – that is the charitable purpose. Camaraderie is a legitimate purpose, but it must be considered more broadly. That is why the plan is suggesting inter-sub-Branch sport and other fun activities. Younger generations do not necessarily align with 'traditional' drinks/meals camaraderie.
24. Agreed. More work required on this. Affiliates are required to fill executive roles where there is no suitable veteran volunteer. Several sub-Branches have many many affiliate members who obtain camaraderie type benefits. This will be a matter for members to decide on.
25. Motto for strategic plan.
26. Disagree. It was pointed out in the DPC feedback to approach this challenge (Strategic Plan) in a military planning sense – 'concentration of force' is also a key principle of war, and most

people understand 'divide and conquer' – 'independence' leads to significant vulnerability and hence the proliferation of 'new' ESOs.

27. See points in introduction about approach.
28. There is work underway to better understand what sub-branches do to deliver charitable purpose. This is being scoped now as part of the roll-out of the common membership 'system.'
29. See above about JTA.
30. This is not the case. This is the key role of the RSL and sets it apart from other ESOs. Members are trained as 'veteran sponsor' (name might change as a consequence of member feedback) to connect veterans in need to the services they might require – and then stay in contact to make sure they are being assisted. I never hinge a plan on 'hope.' We need to produce a catalogue – see comment about grant funding.
31. The idea is to 'capture' all transitioning veterans – the challenge is to engage them to stay connected and participate in fun activities.
32. I am not sure you need 5000 'buddies' – I note that several current 'pension officers' are 'managing' over 70 veterans and the role envisaged as a sponsor is just connecting people to services?
33. Incorrect about 'veteran sponsor.' JTA are providing a transition *coach*. Different role. I did a consultation in Wauchope – they loved the idea that their sub-Branch will be the 'duty' sub-Branch for 24 hours on X Date. Valuable volunteer work.
34. Agree – critical role for National, and we need to effectively resource the function at both State and national level. The world of lobbying has changed since social media has come in.
35. Agree with many comments and points – aligns to the purpose of the initiative.
36. Agree about on-line presence – hence the need for a plan AND resources to fix it.
37. I am a 1980 veteran and am a 'Xer?'
38. As discussed at each consultation session. The RSL is absent on bases or is 'represented' by multiple uncoordinated and in many cases competing sub-Branches. We need to 'fly' the RSL flag at all community, family, and similar events.
39. Agree, that is why the funding model is proposed.
40. I need to better understand this suggestion.
41. Agreed, imagine the boost by providing common professional resources to support all sub-Branches? As per the plan if we adopt a 'pooled' approach.
42. Agreed, hence called out in the case for change.
43. Agreed, ambitious initiative.
44. Agreed, I have noticed that despite numerous communications, many members do not understand why RSL DefenceCare moved from RSL WBI to RSL LifeCare. More work required, but I have noticed that the proliferation of 'furphys' is quite prominent in the League!
45. Agreed. The July 20 ANZAC House structure has this role envisaged but is currently unfunded. (see org on website)
46. Agreed. Similar experience. It should be noted that lettered items are not initiatives to support the goal, they are a brief description of what success would look like if the initiative(s) were implemented. See general comments in intro.
47. This initiative has not been well supported by the membership; it might not make it through to the final plan.
48. Agreed. The Board's consideration of operating model, and why a decentralised approach cannot be supported is on the website. <https://www.rslnsw.org.au/news/outcome-from-board-strategy-day-6-february-2020>

49. As per 48. This work has been done.
50. Agreed. This is critical – delivery must be local.
51. Noted, the question should be ‘how can we support the funding model so we can make the changes to realise a strong future for the RSL.’ Doing nothing is not an option if members want the RSL to remain relevant. Sure, the draft plan was written before COVID 19, so adjustments might have to be made, and the ‘pool’ not drained. What about extra fundraising for local ‘charitable’ fundraising as per the proposed plan?
52. As per opening statement, the ‘business case’ process occurs when the initiative undergoes detailed planning. Also see point 2.
53. The previous ‘promise’ was about rolling out the WBI (subsequently) RSL NSW ‘Microsoft Navision’ – a corporate software that would require accounting qualifications (not bookkeeping) skills to use. It is not a suitable software for the intended purpose at sub-Branches. You would need to be an experienced accountant to use it. XERO or similar is used as an example and member feedback has been positive – so have sub-Branch treasurers.
54. 7b and 7e are not goals.
55. Yes, not cheap. But I note that you also say in the feedback that ANZAC House needs to get out and train sub-Branch office holders. This is exactly what this initiative is.
56. I will need to seek a clarification on this feedback. Veteran Sponsors connect veterans in need to services – ‘Centres’ if rolled out can support Veteran Sponsors and veterans may access centres directly.
57. The ‘agreed’ Terms of Reference is critical. DPC’s role is consistent with Constitution.
58. Agreed, lots of work required to realise outcome sought.
59. Interesting. Without exception – over 90 sub-Branch consultations, not one has suggested separating from the clubs. Closer collaboration along with explaining difference between the charity and club is required.
60. The funding concept is being assessed by a working group set up by the DPC. However, similarly, to the Working Group, an assumption has been made that ANZAC House would be managing the funds, which is *incorrect*. This misunderstanding has not been the case in sub-Branch consultations and is very misleading. The interpretation about risk and expertise is also misleading.