



R S L N S W

Respecting, supporting and remembering
our veterans and their families

Standard Operating Procedure 10

District Councils

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1. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (**SOP**) provides guidance and direction on the operation of District Councils.

Unless otherwise stated, capitalised terms used in this SOP have the meaning set out in Appendix A of the Constitution.

2. Role of District Councils

The RSL NSW sub-Branch network is divided into 23 Districts. The number and geographic extent of Districts may be reviewed and adjusted by the Board from time to time. Each District will be overseen by a District Council that reports to the Board. District Councils perform three overarching and essential services in the operational structure of RSL NSW by providing:

- a) key liaison between the Board and sub-Branches and members in their District;
- b) guidance and support to, and coordination between, sub-Branches in each District; and
- c) submissions, proposals and recommendations, and other information as required from time to time to RSL NSW, through the District Presidents' Council if and when appropriate.

A District Presidents' Council (**DPC**) is also formed comprising each District Council President in accordance with section 14 of the Constitution. The DPC operates under a charter that is provided separately from this SOP.

3. Composition of District Councils

As set out in clauses 13.3 – 13.5 of the Constitution, each District Council comprises District Council Delegates representing each sub-Branch in the District. Two alternate District Council Delegates may also be elected to participate in District Council meetings if Delegates are unable or unwilling to act. District Council Delegates and alternate District Council Delegates must be Service Members.

District Council Delegates are empowered to speak on behalf of their sub-Branch.

4. Roles, functions and responsibilities of District Councils

Each District Council represents sub-Branches in its own District and has the functions and responsibilities set out in clause 13.33 of the Constitution.

5. District Council Executives

Each District Council will have District Council Executives who will hold office in accordance with the provisions of clauses 13.6 – 13.17 the Constitution.

6. Duties and Responsibilities of District Council Executives

6.1. District Council President/Delegate Role at AGM & EGM

A District Council President must, in the absence from the Annual General Meeting (**AGM**) or an RSL NSW Extraordinary General Meeting (**EGM**) of a Delegate from a sub-Branch move any motion from that particular sub-Branch at that meeting, provided that the motion has the endorsement of the District Council and has been approved for inclusion by the Board.

With the approval of chair of the AGM or EGM, a District Council President, or their representative, may explain or provide substance or background in relation to any such motion raised on behalf of a sub-Branch.

A District Council President or their representative must provide a written report to their District Council following the AGM or any EGM. The District Council President must also explain or provide substance or background in relation to any motion raised by the District Council President or their representative with the Board on behalf of a sub-Branch and provide a written report to their District Council following any meeting with the Board for this purpose.

A District Council President, if also elected as the District Council Delegate to an AGM or EGM, may exercise proxy votes if so requested by District sub-Branches as per Appendix C paragraphs 33 – 40 of the Constitution (see item 7 below).

6.2. Executive Roles and Responsibilities

District Councils will have the powers and responsibilities, and perform the functions set out in clauses 13.33 – 13.37 of the Constitution. A District Council President should maintain a close liaison with the Board and the DPC, respond to all reasonable requests, and keep the Board informed of any important matters in the District. A District Council President should attend or remotely participate in DPC meetings.

Each District Council Executive should respond to any reasonable request by a member of a constituent sub-Branch Executive, provide guidance, assistance and mentoring to the sub-Branch Executive member, or to the sub-Branch Executives as a whole, to enable sub-Branches to further the Charitable Purpose.

District Council Executive officers may be called upon to represent the District at constituent sub-Branch functions, commemorative and celebratory events. The costs of attendance of the District Council Executive officer must be borne by the District Council, which should consider the most cost-effective means of attending at such functions. Any District Council Executive should be prepared to represent the District Council when reasonably requested in writing by a constituent sub-Branch.

Expenses incurred by a District Council in fulfilling its obligations to meet directions or requests from the Board may be reimbursed by RSL NSW. RSL NSW will reimburse any reasonable District Council expenses for investigations, reports or any activity undertaken at the direction of Board or State Executive. A District Council wishing to receive ongoing District Council Funding as permitted in clause 13.38 of the Constitution must submit a budget to RSL NSW for approval by 31 October each year.

Specific duties associated with some District Council Executive Positions are set out below.

District Council Secretary

The District Council Secretary must:

- a) keep or cause to be kept a record of all minutes of meetings of the District Council and all resolutions passed by the District Council and provide a copy of the minutes and resolutions to the State Secretary;
- b) ensure that the record of all minutes of meetings and resolutions of the District Council are available for inspection by District Council Delegates;
- c) conduct all correspondence on behalf of District Council and report from time to time to District Council; and
- d) when there is no separately appointed District Council Treasurer, perform the following additional duties:
 - i. open a bank account on behalf of the District Council;
 - ii. issue receipts and pay accounts approved by District Council;
 - iii. keep proper records and accounts of all money received and expended by District Council and all property of the District Council;
 - iv. prepare DC 1 and DC 2 on behalf of the District Council if required; and
 - v. pay any affiliation fees due to RSL NSW.

District Council Treasurer

If a District Council resolves to elect a District Council Treasurer (separate from the District Council Secretary) the District Council Treasurer must carry out the roles set out in (d) (i) – (iv) above.

District Council President

A person appointed to be a District Council President must:

- e) have a sound working knowledge of the Constitution;
- f) exercise discretion as to the frequency of official visits to sub-Branches within the District Council area;
- g) represent the Board at official functions as requested from time to time;
- h) when visiting sub-Branches, or representing RSL NSW, proceed by the most economical method of transport;
- i) attend all meetings of the District Council unless leave of absence has been approved or unable to attend due to sickness;
- j) in their capacity as District Council President, chair meetings of the District Council when in attendance;
- k) be responsible to ensure that District Council business is conducted in accordance with the Constitution;
- l) through the District Council promote a better understanding of RSL NSW and the League among members and the general public;
- m) encourage all sub-Branches within the District Council area affiliated with District Council and RSL NSW and if entitled, to be represented at meetings of District Council;
- n) ensure District Council meets at intervals prescribed by the Constitution and as agreed by the District Council;
- o) support and actively encourage sub-Branches within their area to participate in ANZAC House fundraising;

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- p) investigate and bring to notice of the Board any problems, irregularities or contraventions of the Constitution by sub-Branches within his/her area;
 - q) be conversant with problems associated with the sub-Branches;
 - r) encourage sub-Branches to actively pursue membership recruitment on a continuing basis;
 - s) encourage District Council and its sub-Branches to participate in local community projects and affairs;
 - t) maintain a close liaison with RSL NSW on all matters associated with District Council and RSL National;
 - u) ensure that State Secretary is kept fully advised on any sub-Branch property concerns within the District Council area;
 - v) take immediate corrective action on defaulting sub-Branches within the District Council area as notified by RSL NSW from time to time;
 - w) act as RSL NSW liaison officer within the District Council area on matters associated with flood, fire or other disaster requiring RSL NSW support at RSL NSW expense; and
 - x) facilitate an annual visit by the State President or his/her representative to a meeting of District Council. Such a meeting should be arranged to include any necessary ANZAC House Officers to ensure District Council is kept well informed of Board/ANZAC House issues.

District Council Vice President

The District Council Vice President must:

- y) understudy the District Council President and be prepared to act in the District Council President's place should the need arise; and
- z) assist the District Council President with the conduct of their duties and responsibilities and maintain a thorough understanding of the District Council President's duties and responsibilities.

7. District Council Meetings

7.1. Meeting Administration

District Councils will meet when they consider necessary and appropriate, provided that they will meet not less than twice a year at six monthly intervals at a time and place to be agreed by the District Council and as specified in clauses 13.18 – 13.31 of the Constitution.

The Board must be provided with a schedule of when and where meetings will be held. The Board, its nominated Director/s or representatives of RSL NSW management, may attend District Council meetings upon the giving of reasonable notice to the District Council. A District President may invite Board members, representatives of RSL NSW management, and other persons appropriate to District Council business to attend.

A District Council extraordinary general meeting may be called by the District Council President on giving reasonable notice to each District Council Delegate; or a majority of District Council Delegates requesting the President convene a District Council meeting in which case the President must convene a meeting at a time and place convenient to the majority of District Council Delegates.

The District Council President must require the District Council Secretary to provide notice of a meeting, which may be given by any reasonable means of communication to each sub-Branch for District Council Delegates. Each District Council Delegate has one vote and matters for decision by the District Council will be determined by resolution passed by a majority of votes cast at the meeting.

The quorum for a District Council meeting is a majority of District Council Delegates, excluding those who have been granted a leave of absence.

The District Council may hold its meetings by using any technology (such as video or teleconferencing) that has previously been agreed to by all of the District Council Delegates, which agreement may be a standing (ongoing) one.

A District Council may pass a written resolution without a meeting being held and such a resolution will be valid as if passed at a meeting if all District Council Delegates entitled to receive notice of a meeting and to vote on the resolution receive notice of the resolution; and the resolution is signed by a majority of District Council Delegates who are entitled to vote. District Council Delegates may sign a single document setting out the resolution and containing a statement that they agree to the resolution; or separate copies of that document, if the wording of the resolution is identical in each copy.

The chair may send a resolution by email to the District Council Delegates and the District Council Delegates may vote on or abstain from voting on the resolution by sending a reply email indicating their vote or abstention. A written resolution is passed when a majority of District Council Delegates signs or otherwise agrees to the resolution.

A District Council must provide a copy of the minutes of each District Council meeting to the Board and to the DPC.

7.2. Motions and Resolutions

Motions and resolutions for District Council meetings can be provided in writing through the District Council Secretary at least 7 days prior to a meeting, or they can be raised from the floor.

Once a motion and an amendment is proposed and seconded, no further amendment shall be received until one of the former has been disposed of. However, members may indicate further amendments before existing amendment has been disposed of.

The proposer of a motion shall be limited to four minutes or such time as may be decided, in which to introduce the subject and two minutes to the proposer of a motion in which to reply. Extensions of time may be granted by vote at the meeting without debate.

The seconder of a motion and all other speakers shall be limited to three minutes each, but a time extension may be granted by a vote without debate. When a timekeeper has been appointed, he/she shall, for the purposes of determining the time limits, stop the clock whenever the proposer, seconder or other speaker is interrupted and restart the clock when the interruption has ceased. No Delegate shall speak more than once to any question before chair except by way of personal explanation or with consent of meeting. Such consent shall be given by vote of majority of members present and question shall be put without debate.

Motions discussed and voted upon shall not be reconsidered at same meeting unless with consent of not less than 3/4 majority of those present. The President or chair of the meeting shall have a deliberative vote only. Should there be an equality of votes the motion shall be declared in the negative.

Any member may move a motion of dissent from ruling of chair. On the motion of dissent being seconded, the chair shall forthwith leave chair and debate on the original question then before the chair shall be suspended. Another chair shall then be appointed by meeting.

The delegate who moved the motion of dissent shall then state his reason for such dissent. The former chair shall then give his reasons for so ruling and there shall be no other debate on the subject. The matter shall then be put to the vote of the meeting and decided. The former chair shall then resume chair and debate on original question shall be proceeded with as if same had not been suspended.

The chair of any meeting may, with consent of the meeting, adjourn meeting from time to time and from place to place. Every delegate shall have a deliberative vote only. All voting in the first instance at a meeting shall be by the manner declared by the chair at the commencement of the meeting. Should a division be called for, it shall be taken in such a manner as the meeting may determine.

Closure to terminate debate and bring a matter to vote, shall be in the form of a motion "That the question be now put" (**Closure Motion**). The chair has discretion as to acceptance of motion of closure and may put the motion without seconding, providing the matter has been reasonably discussed and minority view been heard. The closure may be moved while another person is speaking. The Closure Motion may not be moved or seconded by a person who has already moved, seconded, or spoken to the main motion or any amendment. No further statement and/or submissions, with the exception of right-of-reply by the original mover, shall be permitted once the closure motion has been confirmed.

A vote shall then be taken on the original motion or amendment, as the case may be. If a meeting determines to "go into Committee" only official delegates to the meeting and those persons essential to the conduct of the meeting shall be present at such meeting.

With a majority approval of meeting the chair may invite any person to address that meeting without any debate. An amendment proposed but not seconded, shall not be entertained nor entered in minutes.

8. District Council Delegate to an RSL NSW EGM or AGM

8.1. Representation

Each District Council is entitled to have a non-voting Delegate at an AGM or EGM, with a nominated Alternate Delegate. The President of the District Council would normally be the District Council Delegate. The District Council Delegate and Alternate Delegate shall be elected in accordance with the Constitution.

The Alternate Delegate may not be heard on motions before State Congress except when the Delegate is not present on the floor of State Congress. The District Council Delegate is entitled to speak and move or second motions on behalf of their District at State Congress but does not have an entitlement to exercise a vote. The District Council Delegate may exercise proxy votes on behalf of District sub-Branched, if so requested, in accordance with Appendix C, clauses 33 – 40 of the Constitution.

The District Council Delegate should ensure that, where appropriate, any views expressed by the District Council which he/she represents, are conveyed to State Congress, irrespective of his/her personal opinion. However, where new information, evidence or arguments are presented a District Council Delegate has the latitude to exercise judgment and express alternative views, reporting back to the District Council at the first opportunity.

8.2. Guidance for Delegates Presenting or Speaking

Delegates to State Congress that are required to present or speak to a motion on behalf of a District Council shall proceed to a microphone and wait to be acknowledged by the chair. On being acknowledged, the Delegate is to state his name and the District Council he/she represents. The Delegate is to then say, "I move the motion as printed in the Agenda".

The Delegate is then to await the motion being seconded. Once seconded, the Delegate will be then directed by the chair to proceed to speak in favour of the motion. He is to do this in his own words. For expedience sake, the Delegate is not to read the already printed supporting statement but is to amplify, enhance and/or justify the intent of the motion. He may speak for up to four (4) minutes.

The seconder of the motion may speak immediately after being offered the opportunity by the chair OR he may reserve his right to speak until prior to the proposer of the motion exercising his “Right of Reply”. He may speak for three (3) minutes.

Speakers ‘FOR’ or ‘AGAINST’ the motion are to move to a microphone and wait to be acknowledged by the chair. On being acknowledged, the Delegate is to state his name, the District Council or sub-Branch he represents and state whether he is speaking “FOR” or “AGAINST” the motion. The chair will ensure that both speakers in favour of the motion and those opposing the motion will be heard equally. Delegates are advised that not all speakers will therefore be heard. Speakers are limited to speak for three (3) minutes.

Speakers are to address all communication through the chair. To conclude debate and if there have been speakers “Against” the motion, the proposer of the motion may exercise his “Right of Reply”. He may speak for two (2) minutes in further support of the motion. Immediately on conclusion of debate, the chair shall put the matter to the vote.

At the completion of the AGM or EGM the District Council Delegate shall provide the District Council Secretary a written report to be included in the agenda at the next general meeting of the District Council.

9. District Council Election Procedures

9.1. Term of Appointment

A member of a District Council Executive will hold office for the term set out in clauses 13.9 – 13.15 of the Constitution.

If a District Council Executive ceases to hold office during the term of their appointment, the procedure in clauses 13.16 – 13.17 of the Constitution applies, and a new member of the District Council Executive must be elected.

9.2. Nominations for District Council Executive

Nominations for a position on the District Council Executive will be made verbally from the floor at any District Council meeting and seconded, whether convened specifically for the purpose of filling a District Council Executive vacancy or otherwise.

Nominees can only be a District Council Delegate, who has accepted the nomination.

The District Council Secretary will record each nomination received by the District Council and the time and date received, in the minutes of the annual general meeting. Only District Council Delegates are entitled to vote.

9.3. District Council Returning Officer and Scrutineers

For any election of persons to the District Council Executive, the District Council Delegates present at the meeting must endorse a returning officer. The returning officer is responsible for the proper administration and facilitation of the election and must not be a nominee for a position in the election or scrutineer. The returning officer will usually be the District Council Secretary unless the secretary is nominating for a position on the District Council Executive.

Any nominee for a position on the District Council Executive may appoint a scrutineer to observe the proper procedure of the election on their behalf. The scrutineer must not be a nominee for a position on the District

Council Executive. The scrutineers are to assist the returning officer in the conducting of the election of District Council Officers and Committee.

The District Council Secretary will provide to the returning officer and scrutineers the register of District Council Delegates.

A challenge to the proper conduct of the election may only be raised by the scrutineer. In the event of such challenge, the returning officer must make a determination which determination is final and binding.

9.4. Conduct of Election to District Council Executive

The District Council Secretary must record each nomination received by the District Council in the minutes of the meeting.

The election of District Council positions will be conducted in the following order:

- a) President;
- b) one or more Vice President(s);
- c) Secretary (or Secretary/Treasurer); and then
- d) Treasurer.

Where there are two or more nominees for a position on the District Council Executive, the election will be conducted by secret ballot.

The returning officer will declare any ballot an informal vote where a ballot paper has not been filled in, in accordance with the returning officer's directions.

The nominee who receives the highest number of votes will be elected to the office they nominated for and accept. If two or more nominees for the same position record the same number of votes the position will be determined by the returning officer drawing one of the nominees' names out of a suitable container.

If only one District Council Delegate is nominated to fill a position on the District Council Executive, then they may be elected to the position if their nomination is seconded by a District Council Delegate entitled to vote. Once votes are counted, or if position is filled, the returning officer must declare the name of each nominee elected and the position to which they have been elected at the general meeting of the District Council.

The election of a District Council Delegate to the District Council Executive will take immediate effect.

9.5. Eligibility to Participate in Election

Only District Council Delegates who are financial members in accordance with Appendix B of the Constitution can participate in elections whether by nominating, standing for nomination, voting or election.

10. Election of District Council Executives

At a general meeting of a District Council held preceding the third annual general meeting the District Council will appoint a returning officer for the District Council election; and also appoint a scrutineer. Any person nominating for a position as a District Council Executive must not be appointed as the returning officer or scrutineer.

The District Council Secretary will provide to the returning officer and scrutineer the register of District Council Delegates. The scrutineers are to assist the returning officer in the conducting of the election of District Council Executives.

Nominations for positions of District Council Executives will be made verbally from the floor and seconded at the third District Council annual general meeting. A candidate must be a District Council Delegate.

The District Council Secretary will record each nomination received by the District Council and the time and date received, in the minutes of the annual general meeting. Only District Council Delegates in attendance are entitled to vote.

Where there are two or more nominees for a position, the election of the District Council Executives will be conducted by secret ballot and the returning officer will distribute ballot papers to District Council Delegates in attendance.

The returning officer will declare any ballot an informal vote where the Ballot Paper has not been completed in accordance with any instructions given by the returning officer.

The nominee who receives the highest number of votes for the particular office for which they were nominated will be appointed to that office subject to their acceptance of the nomination. If two or more candidates record the same number of votes the position will be determined by the returning officer drawing one of the nominees' names out of a hat.

The returning officer of the annual general meeting must declare the name of each nominee successfully elected to the District Council Executive and the position to which they have been elected at the third annual general meeting of the District Council.

The appointments of the elected District Council Executives will take immediate effect.