



R S L N S W

Respecting, supporting and remembering
our veterans and their families

Standard Operating Procedure 9

Ceremonies and Memorabilia

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1. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (**SOP**) is designed to assist District Councils and sub-Branches with the preparation and conduct of commemorations and events, submission of nominations for Honours and Awards and the responsibilities regarding the keeping of Memorabilia.

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

2. Procedure

The protocols and procedures listed in this SOP accord with accepted and required Australian practice and should not be varied unless exceptional circumstances exist.

3. Commemorations and Events

RSL NSW has a proud tradition of excellence in all its undertakings, particularly its respect for the correct use of protocols and procedures. The incorrect use of protocol at commemorations and events can cause severe embarrassment.

Commemorations and events conducted by RSL NSW entities must be carefully planned, coordinated and prepared by the entity concerned. The RSL NSW entity must ensure that the commemoration or event is conducted in accordance with the RSL NSW Protocol Guide (Revised). Particular attention should be paid to the following chapters of the guide:

- a) Invitations;
- b) Order of Precedence;
- c) Briefs to Official Guests;
- d) Seating Arrangements;
- e) Toasts;
- f) Speeches;
- g) Royal and Vice Regal Occasions;
- h) Dress; and
- i) Flag Protocol.

Should doubt exist about a particular aspect of the protocol or procedures contained in this SOP, then clarification must be sought prior to the commencement of the activity. Clarification should be sought from the State Secretary of RSL NSW in each case.

4. Honours and Awards

4.1. Australian Honours System

Like nearly every other country in the world, Australia has a system of honours and awards so its citizens can be recognised for excellence, achievement or meritorious service and contributions to our society. Honours help define, encourage and reinforce national aspirations, ideals and standards by identifying role models.

We give honours to recognise, celebrate and say thank you to those who make a difference, those who achieve their best and those who serve others.

Australian honours are unique in that they were designed for the community to make nominations. The Australian honours system is free of patronage or political influence. Anyone can nominate an Australian citizen for an honour.

Nomination forms for awards can be found at <https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/nomination-form> or by telephoning Government House, Canberra on 02 6283 3604.

4.2. RSL Awards

RSL National has instituted awards to recognise any person or body which has given outstanding service. The Board of RSL NSW is empowered to propose the following awards to the RSL National Executive:

- a) Meritorious Service Medal for Life Members;
- b) Life Membership for Service Members;
- c) Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge for non-Service members;
- d) Certificates of Appreciation; and
- e) ANZAC of the Year.

The Board of RSL NSW may itself award:

- f) 50-year Membership Certificate for members who have held RSL NSW membership for 50 years or more; and
- g) RSL Auxiliary Life Membership.

4.3. Meritorious Service Medal

A nominee is eligible for the RSL Meritorious Service Medal if the nominee:

- h) is a Life Member;
- i) has been a member for at least 30 continuous years; and
- j) has, in the opinion of the Board of RSL NSW, given at least 25 years' outstanding service to the League.

Submissions may be made at any time but must reach RSL NSW prior to 31 August each year.

4.4. Life Membership

A Service Member may be nominated for the RSL National award of Life Membership if the Service Member:

- k) has been a member for at least 15 continuous years; and
- l) has, in the opinion of the Board of RSL NSW, given at least ten years' outstanding service to the League.

Life membership applications will be considered three times per year. The following dates are the deadlines for applications to be received at RSL NSW:

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- m) 22 January (for presentation at ANZAC Day commemoration events).
 - n) 31 May (for presentations at sub-Branch events in September & October).
 - o) 31 August (for presentation at Remembrance Day commemoration events).

4.5. Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge

The highest award that may be made by the League to a person who is not a member is a Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge.

Such an award shall not be made to a person who is eligible to apply to become a Service Member of the League.

Such an award shall only be made to a person if, in the opinion of RSL NSW and RSL National, such person has rendered outstanding service to RSL NSW, ex-service personnel or their dependents.

Submissions for the Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge must reach RSL NSW by 31 July each year.

4.6. Certificate of Appreciation

A sub-Branch may recommend that a Certificate of Appreciation be awarded to any person or corporation considered to be worthy of special recognition for services rendered to the League .

Submissions for the award of the Certificate of Appreciation may be submitted to the RSL NSW State Secretary for approval at any time

4.7. 50 Year Membership Certificate

A Service Member or Life Member who has given not less than 50 years' cumulative service as a member of RSL National may be granted a 50 Year Membership Certificate by RSL National.

4.8. RSL Auxiliary Life Membership

An Auxiliary Member is eligible and may be nominated by their sub-Branch and/or the RSL Auxiliary Coordinator for an RSL Auxiliary Life Membership award in recognition of outstanding services rendered if they:

- p) have rendered continuous outstanding service in an honorary capacity for at least ten years; and
- q) have had continuous membership either within the RSL Auxiliary movement, as an Auxiliary Member, or a combination of both for at least 15 years.

4.9. Nomination Forms

Nomination forms for each type of award can be found on the RSL NSW website or by contacting the Sub-Branch & Member Support Unit at support@rslnsw.org.au or 1300 679 775.

5. Memorabilia

Every year thousands of Australians are deeply moved while viewing the national Roll of Honour and the museum displays at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Yet reminders of Australia's participation in

war are also in our local communities – honour rolls, war memorials, firearm displays and memorial halls. Smaller, more fragile items such as photographs and documents relating to Australia’s experience of war are preserved and exhibited in many Returned and Services League (RSL) meeting rooms as well as in local museums and state archives. Much material is also in private hands.

To give future generations the opportunity to understand and appreciate Australia’s war heritage at a national, state and local level, as much of this material as possible needs to be preserved. There are many instances of individuals, communities and organisations responding to this challenge in imaginative ways. Local government is also very aware of its responsibilities towards major municipal memorials and these are usually well maintained.

Sadly, there have also been worrying instances of the loss of war heritage items such as memorial honour rolls being souvenired or offered for sale. Personal papers and diaries have been known to turn up on the local tip. For many years that generation of Australians who directly experienced the world wars valued and cared for this material. Recently, in both metropolitan and regional areas, economic and social change has resulted in the removal or demolition of memorial halls and schools. The result has been the loss of historically significant honour rolls, photographs, letters, medals and other items.

Other important material, however, relating to Australia’s participation or subsequent commemoration of war has survived. Some remains in the private possessions of veterans, their immediate family or descendants. With the death of a veteran, family members are often unaware of the significance, both for themselves and the community, of medals, papers and other memorabilia. Other material is scattered in a number of locations in the community – in RSL clubs, local halls, churches and local museums. As much of it as possible needs to be identified, assessed and preserved.

RSL NSW members can play a significant part in educating the public in the need for the preservation of this memorabilia during their many interactions with their local community.

Managing the display of memorabilia collections can be an exhausting task depending on the size and scope of the display. To assist RSL NSW members who may wish to or are undertaking this task, the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries may assist. These standards can be found at: http://www.magsq.com.au/dbase_upl/NSFAMG_v1.5_2016.pdf

6. Display of Firearms and Prohibited Weapons in New South Wales

To display firearms or prohibited weapons in NSW an organisation must possess a permit issued by the New South Wales Police Force. The Firearms Registry can be contacted by telephone at 1300 362 562 for all advice related to seeking a permit.

Firearms or weapons on display must be secured in such a manner as would reasonably prevent their removal other than by the permit holder or an authorised employee.

No firearms or weapons can be displayed unless reasonable precautions have been taken to secure the firearms or weapons to prevent them from being lost, stolen or coming into the possession of an unauthorised person.

7. References & Resources

Legislation, standards, etc.

RSL NSW Protocol Guide (Revised)
Government House

<https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/nomination-forms>

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries

http://www.magsq.com.au/dbase_upl/NSFAMG_v1.5_2016.pdf