



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC
Governor of New South Wales**

It gives me great pleasure to write to you, as Patron of Returned and Services League of Australia (NSW).

I welcomed the opportunity of catching up via video call on 1 September with President, Ray James OAM. Enjoyable and informative as that meeting was, like our RSL members, I miss the face-to-face interactions that have not been possible during this extended period of COVID-19 restrictions. I am sure we are all looking forward to that chat over a coffee or a beer as we are steered out of lockdown.

Nonetheless, modern technology has played an important role over the last 18 months in keeping us connected. It has enabled members to reach out to veterans in rural, remote and isolated areas to check-in, to see who needs assistance, and to link them with the services they need. Indeed, a simple phone call has been a blessing for many.

We know that the pause on traditional welfare visits, especially to nursing homes, has also impacted on the mental health of members, both those being visited as well as on the welfare officers whose commitment to this work is an important part of the care with which RSL looks after its members. In the meantime, sub-Branches have been doing a wonderful job in delivering food parcels to those unable to leave their homes.

The Auxiliaries are busy making masks and raising funds online for RSL DefenceCare. We can also take heart that during the pandemic five new Auxiliaries have commenced in regional and Sydney metropolitan areas.

There is no doubt that the extended lockdown has been difficult, especially for those members in COVID-19 hotspot areas. Hard decisions have had to be taken, including suspending commemorative services and delaying the State Congress until December. The withdrawal from Afghanistan has added an extra dimension of anxiety and unease, especially among younger veterans. I encourage anyone feeling the weight of this event to contact their RSL sub-Branch or reach out to Open Arms 24-hour support line: 1800 011 046.

This is the time now for everyone to look after themselves follow the latest health advice, get vaccinated and stay safe and well as we look forward to the resumption of activities with the mateship and camaraderie that is at the heart of RSL.

**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC
Governor of New South Wales**