



13 September 2017

MEDIA STATEMENT

Political donations made by RSL LifeCare

For more than a century RSL NSW has prided itself on being a non-partisan and non-sectarian organisation. One of the RSL's roles is to engage with governments of all political stripes to progress public policy aimed at helping veterans and their families, as well as securing Australia's defence needs. For that reason, and the fact that we are a charitable organisation, we do not make political donations or participate in partisan political activities.

Earlier this year, through media reporting, it became clear to the leadership of RSL NSW that RSL LifeCare had made certain political donations to the NSW Liberal Party. RSL LifeCare is a subsidiary organisation, controlled by RSL NSW, chiefly through the right RSL NSW has to appoint or remove directors on the RSL LifeCare board.

The newly elected President of RSL NSW accordingly wrote the attached letter to the NSW Liberal Party and stated:

"Whilst I understand RSL LifeCare has underlined that it followed due process in this instance, I am conscious that we need to guard against even the remotest possibility that the public could perceive RSL NSW, or its subsidiaries, as anything other than non-partisan. With that in mind, I would appreciate if in this instance the NSW Liberal Party could consider refunding the amount of money in question"

The NSW Liberal Party subsequently agreed to refund the donations made by RSL LifeCare. During the conduct of the Bergin Inquiry this past week it was revealed that additional donations had been made by RSL LifeCare. RSL NSW will comment on that revelation during the course of the Inquiry in accordance with the Inquiry process.

RSL NSW and Mr James Brown are not available for further comment.

The Returned and Services League of Australia

(New South Wales Branch)



Patron
His Excellency General The Honourable
David Hurley, AC, DSC (Retd)
Governor of New South Wales

ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9264 8188
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State President: James Brown

Address all correspondence to
The State Secretary and quote:

If telephoning or calling with
Reference to this letter, contact:
Dianne Naylor

16 August 2017

Mr Kent Johns
President
NSW Liberal Party
Locked Bag 2
Kings Cross NSW 1340

Dear Mr Johns,

I am writing to request that the NSW Liberal Party consider refunding \$1,450 paid to it by the charity RSL LifeCare for a breakfast with the NSW Premier and Treasurer that occurred in 2015/16. This payment was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on April 24th this year ("Charity defends donating to the NSW Liberals").

By way of background, I am the newly elected President of RSL NSW, Australia's largest veterans' charity. RSL NSW is the controlling entity of RSL LifeCare.

Since its founding a century ago the RSL has prized being strictly non-partisan and non-sectarian. Whilst I understand RSL LifeCare has underlined that it followed due process in this instance, I am conscious that we need to guard against even the remotest possibility that the public could perceive RSL NSW, or its subsidiaries, as anything other than non-partisan. With that in mind, I would appreciate if in this instance the NSW Liberal Party could consider refunding the amount of money in question.

I appreciate any assistance you can offer here, and can be contacted on 02 9264 8188.

Yours sincerely

James Brown
President
RSL NSW

CC Mr Ron Thompson RSL LifeCare
Ms Lynda Voltz Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs
The Hon. David Elliott MP Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Emergency Services,
Minister for Veterans Affairs

"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"
"Lest We Forget"