

RSL LifeCare received questions around the number of veterans we service.

Accurate data around this is provided below.

Question:

1. Why has the number of veterans dropped so much? (from 90 per cent in 2006 to just 18 per cent).

Answer:

*The proportion of veterans and their spouses has dropped in RSL LifeCare facilities from about 90 per cent in 2006 to about **40 per cent** today for two reasons:*

- I. *Demographics. World War II veterans have previously been heavily represented in RSL LifeCare facilities owing to their numbers, and age. However, the youngest WWII veteran is now in their 90s, so there are naturally fewer of them alive today than in the past. More than 993,000 Australians served in WWII; there are fewer than 7,000 veterans living in nursing homes in NSW today. The number of veterans from subsequent conflicts do not match those from World War II. In addition, veterans from more contemporary conflicts are not yet old enough to qualify for aged care or retirement living.*
- II. *RSL LifeCare has grown in recent years and acquired some facilities that represent the broader community, rather than being targeted primarily at veterans and their partners. For this reason, there are fewer veterans as a proportion of the overall population. However, in those facilities that have traditionally been devoted to veterans, the proportion remains as high as 70 per cent.*
- III. *In our home-based support services, we support around 1600 people. Around 65% of these people are also veterans and their spouses.*

Question:

2. Is it more profitable for LifeCare to have non-veteran residents?

No. It makes no difference.

Question:

3. Why do you primarily advertise for donations around the fact you provide support for veterans when just 18 per cent of your residents are veterans?

The bulk of fundraising activities in recent years has been for the Homes for Heroes program, devoted to support for younger veterans from conflicts such as Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor. Homes for Heroes is Australia's first residential facility for younger, homeless veterans when they have had nowhere else to turn. Life Care has helped them back on their feet. Younger veterans suffer much higher rates of suicide and other mental illness than the rest of the Australian community.

Homes for Heroes has successfully helped more than 100 ex-service people over the last three years, primarily suffering the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Late last year RSL LifeCare funded a new rehabilitation program at Penrith for an additional 10 young veterans.

Question:

4. Anything else to add?

RSL LifeCare is proud of the care and services it provides around the clock for its 7,500 elderly residents in 24 retirement villages and 26 nursing homes across NSW, including in rural and regional NSW.

Its dedicated staff of 3,000 provides care and support including the delivery of 2.5 million meals a year to residents while also offering home-based care to more than 1,600 older Australians.

Over the past 15 years, RSL LifeCare has invested in its assets and people, updating its sites and buildings, providing better accommodation, communal areas and improving care and services for residents.

It has launched Australia's first residential facility for younger, homeless veterans from recent conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan, called Homes for Heroes, when they have had nowhere else to turn. Life Care has helped them back on their feet.

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RSL LifeCare has provided care to veterans and their families for more than 100 years and takes this Inquiry as an opportunity to continue its commitment to continuous improvement.