



MEDIA RELEASE

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RSL denies selling Last Post to phone company

An email circulated by Bundaberg man Bill Gelhaar, both in Australia and New Zealand, has resulted in the veteran community believing that the RSL has sold *The Last Post* to a mobile phone company for use as a ring tone.

The Returned & Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch) would like all former and serving defence force personnel to know that this is not true.

The Last Post was made available, by RSL Queensland, as a ring tone in a two week fund raising campaign leading up to Remembrance Day on November 11, 2009, as part of its annual poppy appeal.

The ring tone was part of a specially created web site promoting Remembrance Day and a new initiative by RSL Queensland - a poppy wallpaper for mobile phones that could be downloaded for a minimum donation of \$2.

Over 250,000 hits were recorded at www.rslpoppy.com with thousands of people donating a minimum of \$2 to the RSL and receiving a poppy as a thank you for their support of the League's vital veteran welfare work, RSL Queensland President Doug Formby said.

"Promotion of the web site and the mobile poppy initiative concluded on Remembrance Day and as a result *The Last Post* can no longer be downloaded," Mr Formby said.

"During the campaign, about 50 people contacted RSL Queensland complaining about *The Last Post* being made available as a ring tone. However, it should be noted that it was the second most popular content to be downloaded after the mobile poppy."

Mr Formby said the limited campaign succeeded in increasing awareness about the commemoration amongst younger generations.

"Crowds at all Remembrance Day services across Queensland were double those of previous years and the RSL's use of digital media attracted the attention of thousands of people both in Australia and overseas," he said.

"It is the young people of today who will be organising the commemorations of the future. If securing their interest in past sacrifices and time-honoured traditions can be achieved by utilising modern means then the RSL must move with the times."

Mr Formby said it was disappointing that some members of the veteran community had recently seen fit to put forward their viewpoint on the issue in emails to RSL Queensland in a hostile and aggressive manner, without knowing the full facts.

"We have also received positive feedback from people saying if they heard *The Last Post* as a ring tone on their mobile phone it would make them remember all veterans," he said.

RSL Queensland will not be making *The Last Post* available as a ring tone during its 2010 Poppy Appeal.

"While everyone will not always agree with the activities of the RSL, the League makes no apology for continuing to investigate methods of engaging with the community as a whole to ensure its relevancy now and into the future, Mr Formby said.

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEWS:

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