

107th NATIONAL COUNCIL of
The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association
Held online livestream on 25 November 2023

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Note: The 107th National Council is being held in two parts, with part one (the RNZRSA AGM) being held online today, and part two (a one day in-person workshop) being held in Wellington on 24 February 2024. The full program of part one (the RNZRSA AGM) is laid out in the 64-page manual emailed out to Delegates.

Opening & Welcome

Following the Karakia by Miki Apiti, the National President and Chair of the National Council, Sir Wayne Shelford welcomed all attendees, called the meeting to order and adopted standing orders.

Adoption of 2022 National Council Minutes

Moved by: Sir Wayne. Seconded by: Tom Cormack. No matters arising. Outcome: Carried.

National President's (NP) Report – Sir Wayne Shelford

The NP presented his report; key points included:

- The RSA is going through major change, and only by working together will we ensure our future.
- The Forum and Board will consult with RSAs as change is implemented.
- Personally represented the RSA on various occasions including: Vietnam Veterans' Day, Le Quesnoy Museum opening and World Military Rugby tournament in France, Invictus Games in Dusseldorf, and meetings with Australian PM Anthony Albanese and Princess Anne.
- Continuing work to ensure modern conflicts are represented in the Hall of Memories.

Board Chair's (BC) Presentation – Martyn Dunne

The BC presented the Board Report, including the Financial Statement for 2022 (see details in manual).

Key points included:

- NC 2022 will be remembered as the turning point for the RSA, when we identified need for change.
- The Board and Forum have spent the last 12 months developing change ideas per 'RSA 2030'.
- RSA 2030 is the blueprint for our future and for the ongoing reputation and relevance of the RSA.
- Everything we do must be driven by our core strategy: R-S-A (Remembrance, Support & Advocacy).
- A successful Poppy 2023 campaign was run, raising over \$2m.
- A pilot Veterans' Employment Service was started with MSD, and National Office is also creating opportunities with ACC and Corrections.
- The National President, Board Chair and Chief Executive have established strong engagement with key government ministers, CDF and service chiefs, and the NZDF Advisory Board.
- We are ready to continue communication with the new, incoming government.
- We must work towards changing the Veteran Support Act (VSA 2014) as it is discriminatory.
- RNZRSA Constitution review aims to renew our core purpose, practices and priorities.
- Our financial position remains strong: small net deficit last year (\$23k), with \$5.2m in net assets.
- Organisation is spending within its means, even as the cost of running National Office increases.
- The MSD contract boosted income, but there is a trend of falling Capitation payments.

Keith Ingram (Affiliates Rep.): Concerned that this remit does not include pre-1974 veterans. Janet Castell (in reply): Will follow up with Keith Ingram separately on this issue.



- Murray Kennett (Devonport RSA): Propose Advisory Group consult widely during this process and investigate when veterans not covered are eligible for certain support from Veterans Affairs.

A vote was then duly taken with 99% of delegates voting **For** the motion.

Outcome: Carried.

General Business

- No items of business from Delegates had been deposited with the Chief Executive for discussion.

Closure of National Council

- Sir Wayne confirmed this NC had a quorum: 112 delegates were required, 118 had registered.
- Miki Apiti (Kaumatua) closed the 107th National Council with a Karakia and prayer.

Meeting closed 11:30am

DRAFT

National President Address for National Council

The last 12 months as your National President have been a steep learning curve for me. Alongside the challenges that come with the role, I have enjoyed the opportunity it provides to get out and meet the membership, represent the organisation at significant commemorations and to be an advocate for our service men and women.

Along with your Presidents' Forum and the Board, I am committed to help lead the change needed within the RSA to ensure we are here for the future generation of our veterans. There is much work to be done, and much of that work is still to be determined. I know many of you have different ideas of what the future could look like for the RSA, and I want to assure you that we will continue to consult you all before final decisions are made. But I want to be very clear that it is only by working together that we will ensure the future of the RSA.

Over the year I have built a much greater appreciation of the strength of our Support Services, and am grateful to have had the opportunity to meet members of the team - from local support advisors right through to the General Manager. The knowledge and dedication shown by our volunteer workforce is incredible, and the direction being provided will ensure our capacity continues to grow, and evolve, to meet the challenges of the future.

As your National President it has been an honour to represent you at a number of significant commemorations. Some of the highlights include the ceremonies held at Pukeahu for Vietnam Veterans' Day, for veterans of Malaya, Malaysia and Borneo, for the Merchant Navy and for a number of visiting heads of state including the likes of Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

I have also been involved in unveiling new Poppy Places, such as Scully Place in Invercargill, and attended the rededication of the Citizens War Memorial in Christchurch where I had the honour of talking with Princess Anne.

I have continued to represent the RSA's interests from my position on the National War Memorial Advisory Council and continue to apply pressure to ensure that modern conflicts are acknowledged in the Hall of Memories.

It was a great honour to be able to attend Rotorua and Hawkes Bay presentations of medals to the whanau of the 28th Maori Battalion members. These were incredibly moving ceremonies and an incredibly important part of making amends for the poor treatment of these servicemen on their return from war.

Most recently, while travelling in Europe, I represented the RSA at the opening of the Le Quesnoy Museum in France which honours the incredible actions of New Zealanders during the liberation of their town near the end of World War One. Also at the opening were Dame Patsy Reddy, Sir Don McKinnon and Sir Jerry Mateparae. It was an honour to be a part of something very special. No doubt this museum will be another trip for many New Zealand tourists while on holiday.

I also attended the Invictus Games in Dusseldorf. This is an absolutely incredible event – full of joy and laughter alongside the obvious competitive aspects. It was easy to see how the games contribute to the rehabilitation, health and wellbeing of veterans. In the past, the RSA has supported the NZDF Invictus games team, the largest contributors being Auckland and Christchurch, while other RSA's have supported individual athletes. Having seen the games firsthand, this year I will be recommending that we bring our contributions together so we can be a major sponsor of the NZDF team.

The most enjoyable part of my role is engaging with our membership, and this year I have managed trips to Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Canterbury, Otago and Southland. Last weekend Martyn Dunne presented RSA 2030 to the RSA's within the greater Hawkes Bay area along with myself and CE Marty Donoghue. We still have a number of regions to get to before Xmas. They are Gisborne and all RSA's north of East Coast and a visit to Alexandra and Gore, RSA's.

Another event that I attended as Patron of NZDF rugby while I was overseas was supporting the NZDF rugby Team at the World Military Rugby tournament hosted by France and based in the heart of Brittany. What a great tournament this was. There were 12 participating countries divide into 3 pools of four. Every team was promised 5 games each. NZDF did lose 1 game in first round to Fiji. We came second in our pool and made the fourth position towards the Gold medal. We lost our semi to France 22-15, then played Great Britain, losing to them in the 3rd and 4th playoff for the Military WC.

A disappointing position of 4th to finish the tournament. But I was very proud of the NZDF team. They played some wonderful rugby during the whole tournament, a lot like our Allblacks but with a lot less kicking. Their on field and off field discipline was very, very good. Many of the players also mentioned the sponsorship that came from the RSA's and said to me, can you please pass on our gratitude and thanks for your kind donations for NZDF rugby 2023.

My last event of my trip was in the town of Ypre, Menin Gate. I was asked to do the ode on behalf of the RSA's of NZ. It was a fantastic evening with about 300 people present coming along to watch the last post and ode. An evening that I'll always look back on with fond memories. Thank you, Honorary Captain Freddie De Klerk

In all places, regardless of the event I was attending, I have encountered engaged groups who share a common goal. I have met many Association Executives, members, volunteers and veterans across the country and I hope to meet many more during the next few years of my Presidency.

For now, I want to pass on my sincere thanks to all of you, my District Presidents and the National Vice Presidents – for the hours you volunteer, the support you provide, and the passion you show for the future of the RSA.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa

Board Chair Address to National Council.

National Council 2022 will be remembered as the turning point for the RSA. It is the event where we started to take action to protect the legacy of those who have gone before us, and to ensure there is a viable organisation in place to continue supporting the veterans of the future.

The last 12 months have represented a year of realisation for the RSA. It started with the workshop at National Council where we came together and identified the need for change. Since then, the National President and I, along with the Board and Forum, have advanced the ideas that were discussed at that National Council and developed the concept of RSA 2030.

RSA 2030 is the blueprint for our future. It sets the direction for our organisation and will ensure we remain viable, relevant and that we are delivering on our core purpose – improving the wellbeing of veterans and their whanau. Everything we do must be underpinned by the pillars of remembrance, support and advocacy.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to visit most Districts to present the ideas of RSA 2030, and as we have received feedback from each area, the plan has been further developed. It was great to be challenged on the ideas we presented, and I was encouraged by the fact that many of those who came into the meetings opposed to change, left with open minds once they fully understood the need for a new direction and the outline of what is planned.

It is my clear view that our reputation and relevance is at significant risk and daily we are faced with many challenges to the continuity of the RSA as a viable national organisation with its core purpose of support to Veterans and their families/whanau.

We have a huge challenge ahead of us, and I'm confident that if we work together, we can protect the future of the RSA. It will be challenging and require a paradigm shift in effort, direction and an eventual move to a generational change involving contemporary veterans and their families. There are parallels with the organisations inception and the efforts expended over 100 plus years.

This year the Board and its directors have focused on key strategies that underline our core pillars.

Under the Support Pillar, the Board worked on delivering this year's very successful poppy campaign. The Campaign was made with significant help from Sir Richard Taylor and the team from Weta Workshops and highlighted the changing demographic. The marketing campaign was a finalist in the TVNZ marketing awards. The funds collected during the poppy campaign exceeded last year's total, including an over 17% increase in the total collected through online donations.

The Board provided connections to enable the establishment of the Veterans' Employment Service, which is a pilot programme with the Ministry of Social Development. The programme is proving highly successful and has increased our reach with veterans, in particular those who are transitioning out of the Defence Force into civilian life. While currently only agreed as a trial we will endeavour to keep the concept alive regardless of any changes that might be necessary following the incoming governments budgeting challenges.

Similarly, the Board has created opportunities with ACC, Corrections and NZ Police, which our National Office is progressing.

Under the Advocacy pillar, the Board has continued to develop opportunities to represent the interests of New Zealand's veterans of military service.

We have, alongside the National President, re-established our critical relationships with Ministers and enjoyed regular meetings with the Ministers for both Veterans and Defence.

These meetings have focused on demonstrating our relevance to the veteran population and has resulted in some significant acknowledgements. On several occasions, the Minister of veterans publicly acknowledged our core role in the delivery of Te Arataki – The veteran, family, whānau mental health and wellbeing policy framework, and increased our annual grant over the next 3 years.

And recently the Minister of Defence (albeit he has now left Government) launched the Defence policy noting our pivotal role in supporting those who serve and highlighting that in future remuneration reviews the views of the RSA would be sought.

While these relationships were established with the outgoing government, we are ready to continue these conversations with the new ministers. As you have seen we are off to a good start with the incoming PM agreeing to speak at the AGM.

The National President, the Chief Executive and I have spent a significant amount of effort and time with the leaders of the NZDF. Regular meetings with the Chief of Defence Force have been reinstated and we were invited to present to the NZDF Advisory Board which is chaired by Dame Paula Rebstock.

We were subsequently invited by the Advisory Board to brief the Defence Review Board, led by Sir Brain Roche, to provide input into the review of conditions of service. We see this as a critical part of our role in advocating for those who serve.

Our regular meetings with CN have continued and have allowed us to remain connected and influential on matters impacting on veterans. These meetings are free and frank and are building a solid respect.

I have also had the opportunity to be briefed by Veterans Affairs on their organisation, and while I recognise the important role, they have in delivering services to veterans, alongside my colleagues in the Forum, we must focus on changing the Veteran Support Act which continues to discriminate, particularly those veterans with service post 1974.

Members of the Board and Forum have also been working together to develop options for the new RNZRSA constitution. A lot of work has been done and I know that we are all looking forward to seeing the options presented at the National Council Workshop being held in February next year. The constitution review is a critical piece of work that will contribute significantly to the future of the RNZRSA. There is great opportunity ahead to reinvigorate the core purpose of the RSA, its practices, and priorities.

I will now turn my attention to the RNZRSA consolidated financial reports for 2023. (Slides to accompany this section)

The consolidated financial statements show a net deficit for the year of just over \$23,000, with a strong net asset position of \$5.2m. The organisation is spending within its means to avoid using our cash reserves, however the costs of running national office are increasing. This is not only due to inflation, but also due to the increasing needs from our veteran community. Hence as part of RSA 2030, increasing our income must be a key theme, and we may need to accept dipping into our reserves to deliver some of our strategic priorities if this is required to deliver the future increases in income.

As you can see from the summary of income on screen, capitation is slowly decreasing as a proportion of our total income. Grant income was high in 2021 and 2022 as a result of Covid grants provided by the Government, but these were due to exceptional circumstances and will not be repeated. You can see that income was boosted this year through the MSD contract, and this shows the need to increase work with Government partners and other grant providers to fill the gap of capitation.

It's also important to note that the Poppy Appeal raised over \$2m,

Costs remained at a similar level to the previous year, with our most significant spending on National Office Staff, Support Services and Projects. Further analysis of the project and support services cost are provided on screen for review.

Finally let me thank you for the support this year, we will need it in the coming year as we work towards delivering what our veteran community expects.

Let me finish with a quote from Carl Von Clausewitz.

‘Everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult...
As the difficulties accumulate and end by producing as a kind of friction’

Let's ensure we can overcome any friction, and with clarity look to a bright future, all focused with renewed vigour, and sense of purpose.

Nga mihi

Tungia te ururoa whakaritorito

Te tutu o te harakeke

Set the overgrown bush alight and the new flax shoots will spring up

This year has been another active year for National Office, this year we:

- Initiated a major partnership with MSD
- Continued with the ongoing development of our support capability
- Provided support to weather events impacting Auckland and the East Coast
- Undertook some major advocacy work
- Commenced project work with others to enhance our relevancy and reputation focusing on VSA 14, the RSA Poppy, increasing our responsiveness, supported the WoF, accommodation projects, and the constitution working group.
- Undertook running some major event including hosting the veterans support organisations at Linton Camp.
- Worked to ensure that veterans were navigated to services through an increasingly unresponsive VA system
- Delivered a very successful Poppy campaign in conjunction with Walsh and Beck and Weta Workshops.

The highlight for this year has been our signing of a pilot programme with MSD, the results speak to themselves:

- We have close to 300 veterans registered for the service
- Over 40 veterans into employment, some of whom have been unemployed for some time
- And more importantly over 90 employers, wanting to provide support
- We have six veteran employment advisors covering the country

The veteran employment service team is led by Dave Benfell and with his small team of six they have produced amazing results

Like every new initiative we have learnt some valuable insights

- Signing up Employer Partners to assist with placing veterans and their whanau into employment has been extremely successful. The challenge is building on the relationships, keeping them fresh and providing value.
- Our rate of conversion from registration to full time employment is 1:10, which is higher than industry standard.
- Our age spread shows good representation across the age ranges with the lowest uptake in the 65+ age bracket which is to be expected.
- The service within the Manawatu area has the most representation.

This initiative has proven that we can be a front door for the delivery of government services. As an NGO we are able to work quicker and adopt best practices ensuring that services to veterans are delivered efficiently but more importantly by veterans to veterans. Our service delivery isn't by numbers and ensures that we navigate veterans to a wide range of support available. Discussions

are ongoing with ACC, Corrections and TPK to develop support services contracted through government.

Further professionalising of our support services has seen the employment of two District Support Managers. One in the Waikato Tricia Hague, and the other in Otago Southland District, Niall Shephard. We are very grateful for the partnership arrangements to employ the DSM in the South and we are only able to do this through the Dunedin Welfare trust and the Gore RSA.

New DSMs have been appointed to Auckland, Tony Millar NZ Bravery Decoration recently retired from the New Zealand Police, Wellington Colonel (retired) Bede Fahey and the Nelson and the West Coast Steve Cox, and we have also created a DSM position to lead our RSA Hubs on NZDF Camps this appointment is held by Major (retired) Tania Good. Finally, we were able to replace the support manager position within National Office with the recruitment of Colonel Andrew Brown recently retired from NZDF.

We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing work of all our support volunteers and I would like to acknowledge the great work of all our DSM and NVP Janet Castell, particularly in her role of continuing to train our volunteers and lead our veterans clinics.

Advocacy has been a focus over the last 12 months. We have been supporting members of the forum in the development of the strategy to have the VSA 14 substantially reviewed. This highly discriminatory piece of legislation impacts on scheme 2 veterans and those who have served since 1974, without operational service, adversely. The NoM presented today is part of our ongoing advocacy. We have supported veterans in their reviews and been supporting Major (Retired) Ross Himona in his advocacy work regarding Tā Wira Gardiner, this significant work when resolved has the potential to be of significant benefit to veterans.

Our work with VA is ongoing. We always have the veteran at the centre of what we are doing and therefore strive to work collegially with VA, I must admit this year has been extremely challenging, with wait times experienced by veterans now at an unacceptable level and service delivery from VA being a significant issue for the veterans we advocate for. While tactically we have developed escalation processes, we need to be working with the new government to focus their efforts on improving service delivery from all government departments to veterans.

The next 12 months will be extremely challenging as we work on the opportunity to deliver core government services to veterans, better. I am extremely grateful to the team at National office for their dedication and support.

Poppy Trust Report 2023

I now present the National Poppy Trust Report for the period July 2022 to June 2023.

As Chair of the Trust, I would firstly like to sincerely thank the Trustees, Murray Hobson, Robin Klitscher, Tammy Hurst, Sam Hood and Allister Baker. They have been very proactive in making themselves available, often at short notice, to ensure that any application is considered as quickly as possible. I also thank Danny Nelson for his administration support and often providing extra context to the applications.

The Trust committed to improving the process for receiving, considering and making decisions on the applications to the National Poppy Trust and I believe we have achieved that aim. When applications are submitted, Danny collates them and arranges an on-line meeting of the Trustees to consider them, therefore the process is very efficient.

The RNZRSA National Poppy Trust Outcomes are;

- To improve the lives of Veterans and their families
- To improve the protection of Poppy Funds

The Trust approved 26 applications and approved 24. The breakdown of the applications are;

Gender – Male (15) and Female (11)

Service – Army (21), Navy (2) RNZAF (1) and other (2)

Ethnicity – NZ European (15), Māori (8) and Asian (3)

Age – Under 30 (1), 30 – 39 (5), 40 -49 (5), 50 – 59 (5), 60 -69 (6), 70 – 79 (3), 80 – 89 (1)

Applications were submitted by – RNZRSA (24), Wairarapa /Hawkes Bay/ East Coast (1), Wellington / Whanganui / Central / Taranaki (1)

Applications received by category and amount requested / paid

Education – 1 application \$534 / \$534

Employment- 1 application \$3,000 / \$3,000

Hardship – 13 applications totalling \$29,432.78c / \$ 24,629.37

Housing – 1 application \$1014.30 / \$1014.30

Mental health- 4 applications totalling \$12,114.96 / \$ 3,300.82

Physical health- 2 applications totalling \$1732.00 / \$1483.60

Social health – 3 applications totalling \$5978.82 / \$5,768.62

Transport – application \$585.00 / \$538.00

Application totals

Applied - 26 applications totalling \$54,391.86

Paid – 24 applications totalling 51,266.86

The Trustees have become very concerned at the number of applications and the amounts being requested under the hardship category. Whilst we have genuine sympathy for those struggling financially, the reality is the Trust cannot sustain supporting these applications at the level being requested. Therefore we are having to develop a separate guiding policy specifically for hardship applications.

The Trustees request that any application being submitted to the Trust has as much supporting information as possible which will assist the Trustees when considering them, also please ensure that the application meets the Trusts operating criteria.

The issue remains that the Trust is unlike RSA Poppy Trusts, in that it does not get replenished on a regular basis therefore its main source of income is from its capital investment earnings. The funds are invested under the guidance of JB Ware however even with their astute investments; we all know that the interest rates continue to slide, and the returns are therefore severely reduced compared with the past. So, to maintain and for sustainability, the Trust reserves some of the interest in order to grow the Fund, to do otherwise would be the demise of the Trust. In addition the Trust looks to the RNZRSA national office to raise funds from the annual Poppy Collection.

Ongoing costs running the Trust are accounting, audit, review and investment management fees.

Opening balance	\$1,446,688
Surplus for year	\$32,254
Total accumulated funds	\$1,478,942

The National Poppy Trust has approximately \$1.4 million however it should be pointed out that approximately \$1.1 million of that was gifted by the Wellington South RSA for the benefit of discharged servicemen/women resident in the Wellington provincial district.

I once again thank the Trustees and Danny for their valuable voluntary contribution to the Trust and commend the report and the financial statements of the National Poppy Trust to you as part of the consolidated financial statements.

BJ Clark
Chair
National Poppy Trust

RNZRSA National Poppy Trust



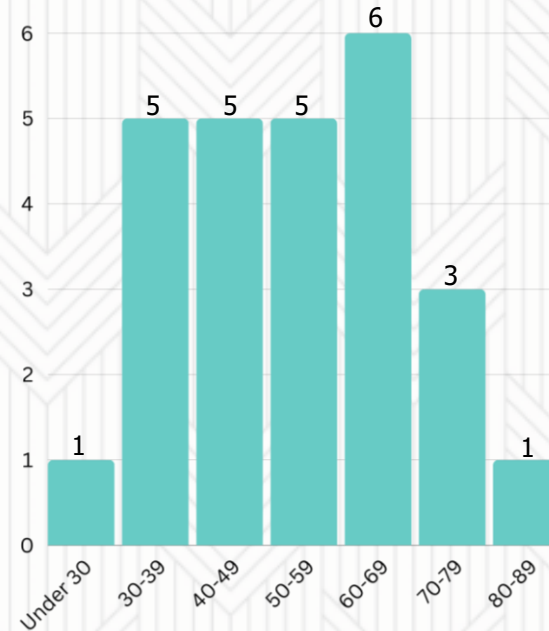
RNZRSA National Poppy Trust

26 applications (July 2022 | June 2023)

Gender

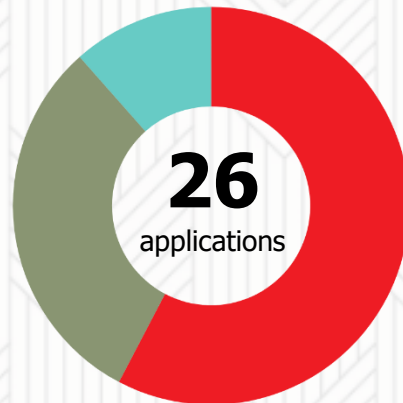


Age



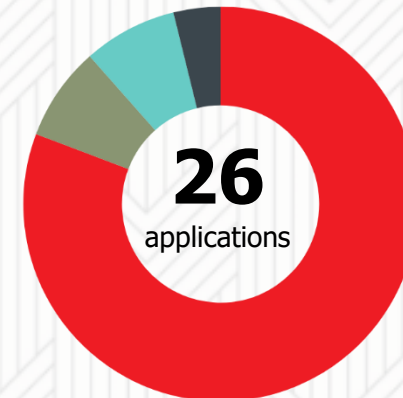
Ethnicity

- 58% NZ European (15)
- 31% Maori (8)
- 11% Asian (3)



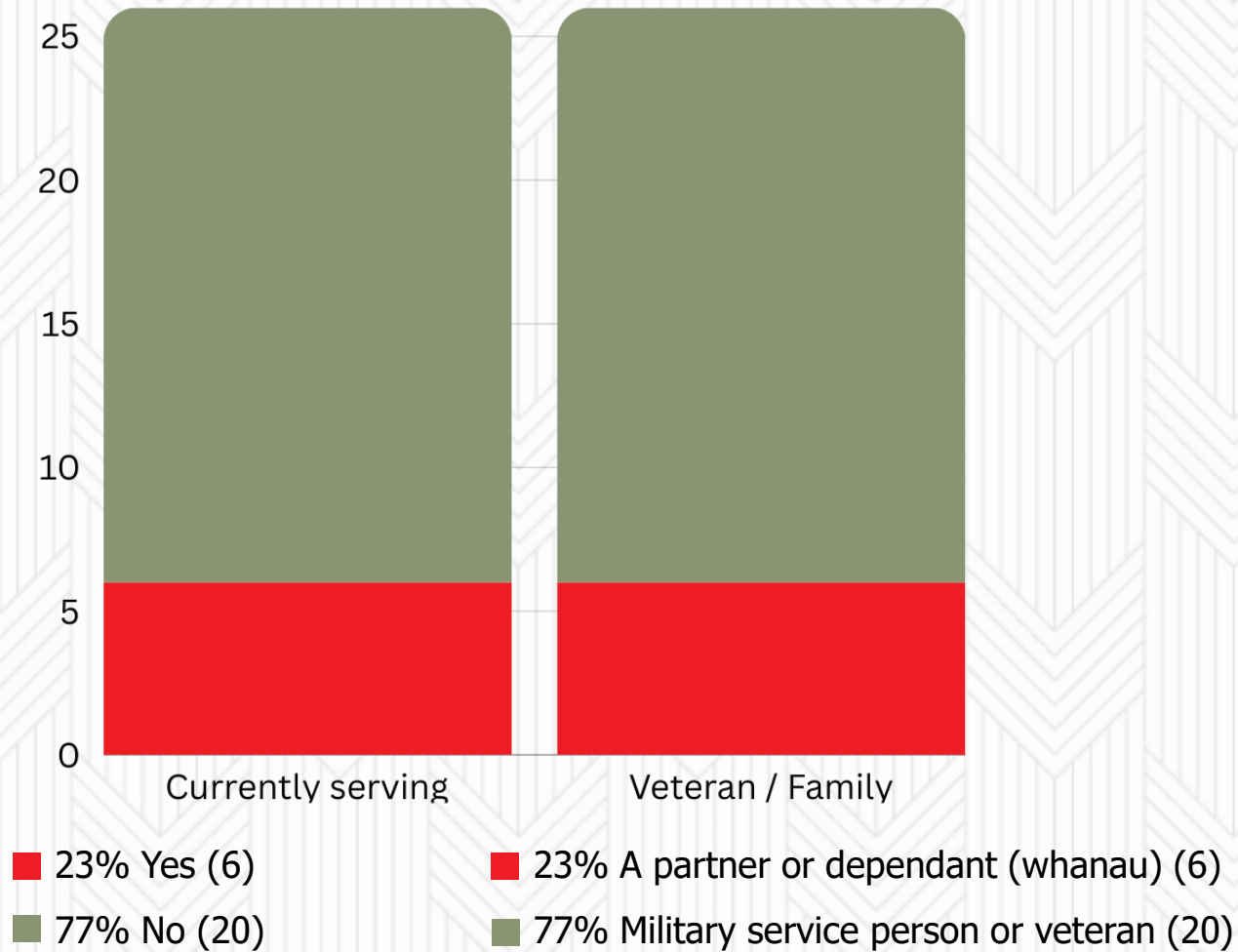
Service

- 81% Army (21)
- 8% Other (2)
- 7% RNZN (2)
- 4% RNZAF (1)

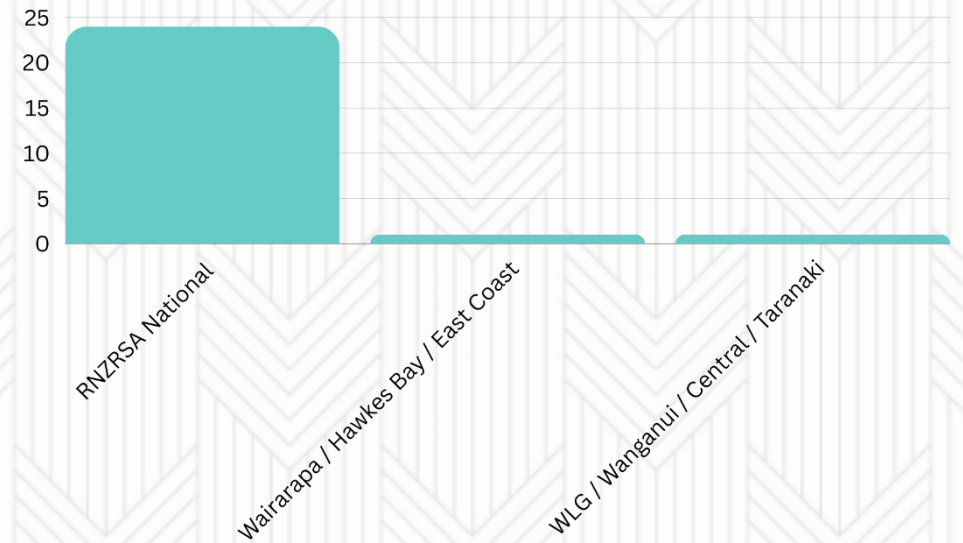


RNZRSA National Poppy Trust

26 applications (July 2022 | June 2023)



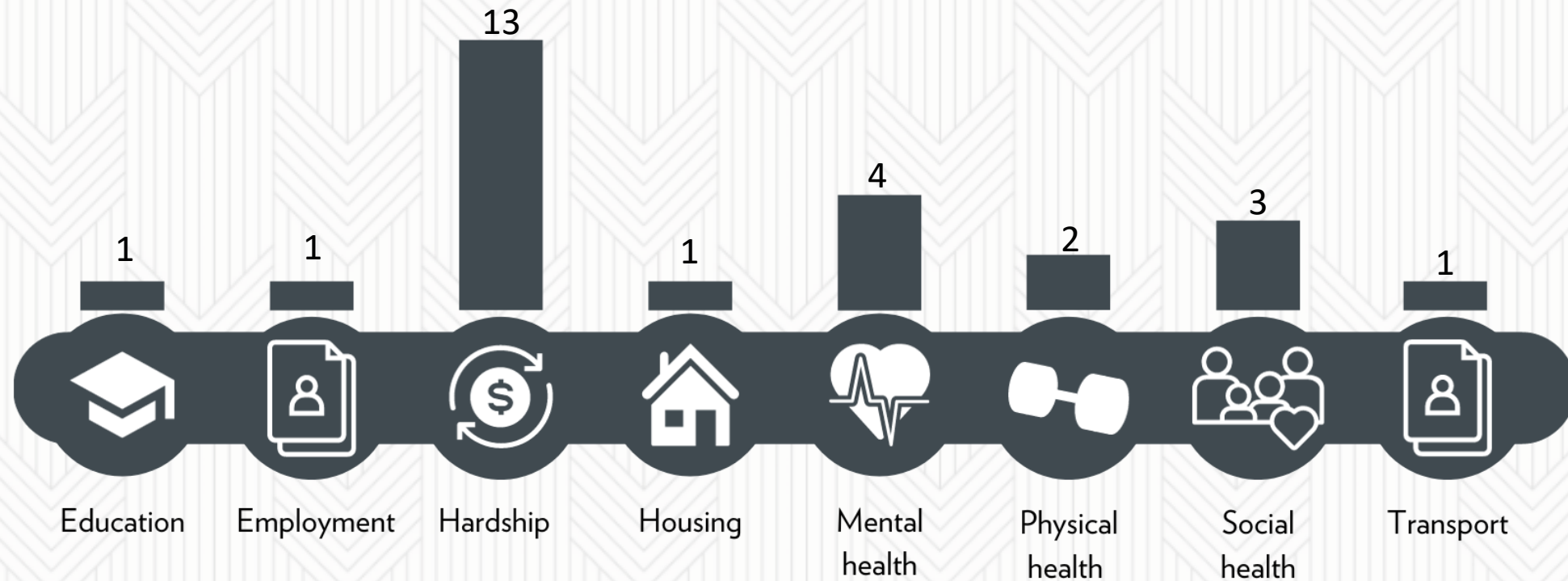
RSA District



RNZRSA National	24
Wairarapa / Hawkes Bay / East Coast	1
WLG / Wanganui / Central / Taranaki	1

RNZRSA National Poppy Trust

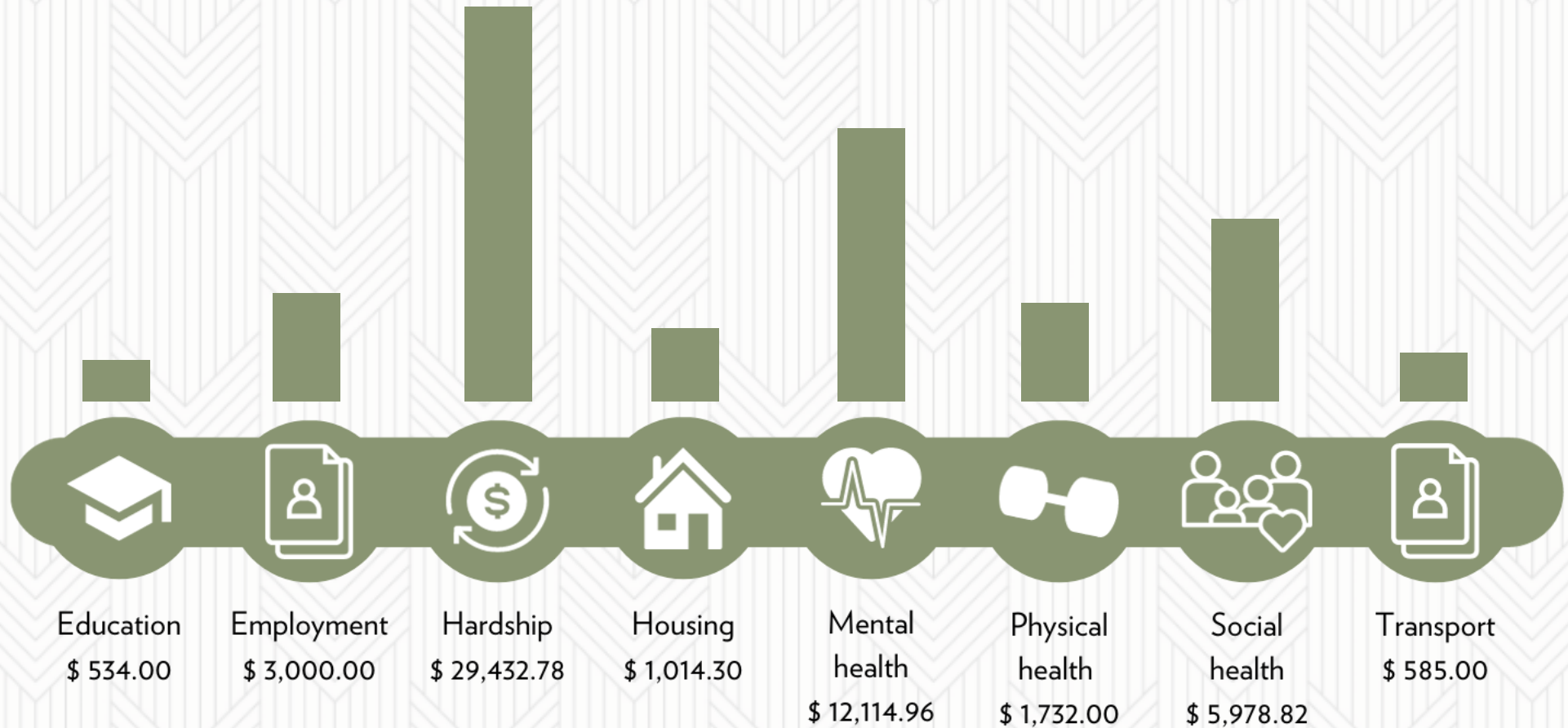
26 applications (July 2022 | June 2023)



RNZRSA National Poppy Trust

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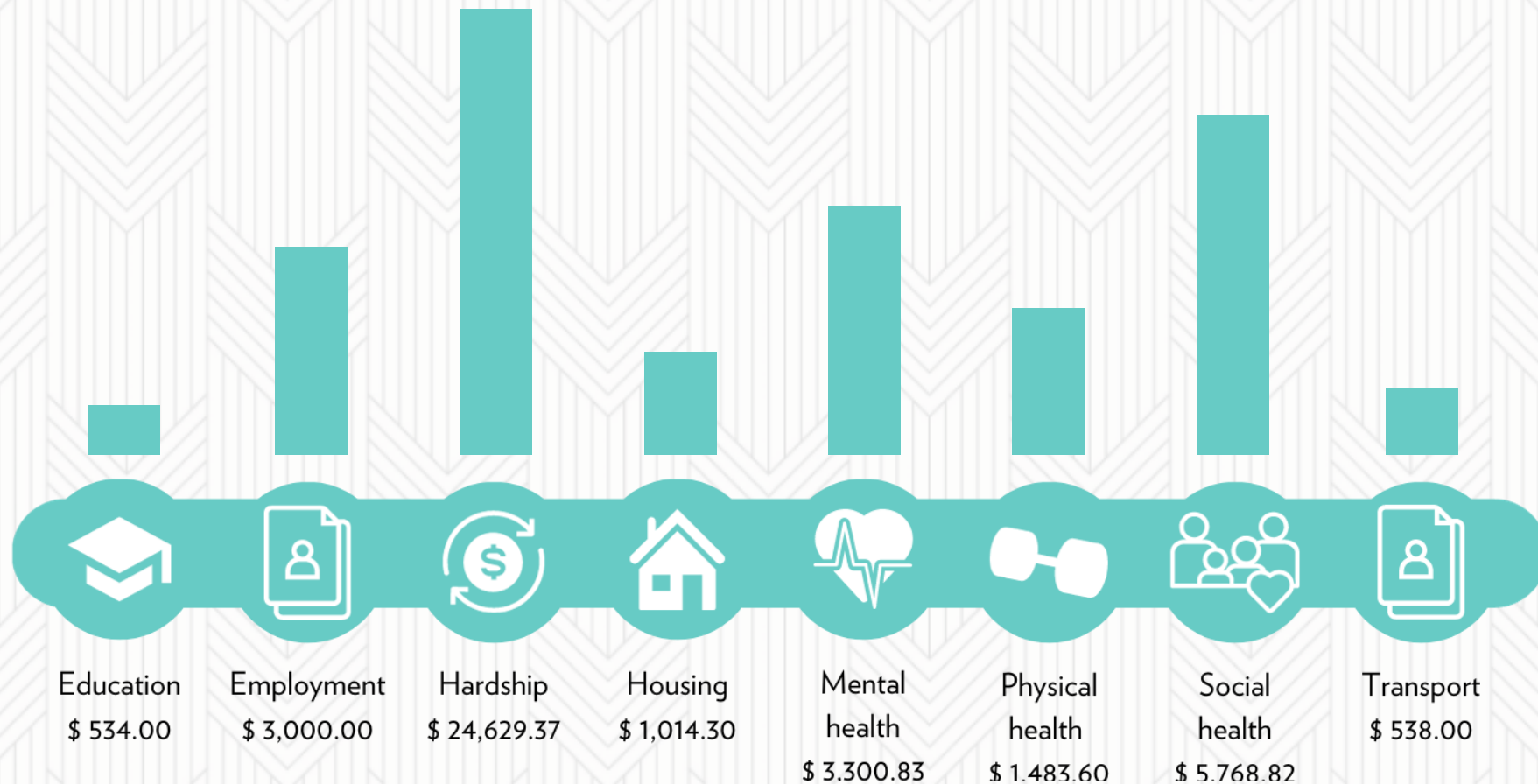
Total \$ **54,391.86**



RNZRSA National Poppy Trust - Paid

24 applications (July 2022 | June 2023)

Total \$ **40,268.92**



RNZRSA National Poppy Trust

Request \$ **54,391.86**

Total paid (June 2023) \$ **40,320.03**

Education \$ 534.00

Administration \$ 51.11

Employment \$ 3,000.00

Education \$ 534.00

Hardship \$ 29,432.78

Employment \$ 3,000.00

Housing \$ 1,014.30

Hardship \$ 29,032.78

Mental health \$ 12,114.96

Housing \$ 1,014.30

Physical health \$ 1,732.00

Mental health \$ 9,389.96

Social health \$ 5,978.82

Physical health \$ 1,732.00

Transport \$ 585.00

Social health \$ 5,978.82

Transport \$ 585.00

Remaining \$



RSA