



**AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER & PEACEMAKER
VETERANS' ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

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(INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA)

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Also assisting Veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan and Peacetime Service

*Commemorating 60 Years of The establishment of the United
Nations Command – Korea.
The Korean War – “The Forgotten War”*

1st February 2010

**Subject: National President’s Annual Report to the Annual General Meeting of 5th
February 2010, held at Anglesea Barracks, Hobart, Tasmania.**

Introduction:

1. The past Calendar Year of 2009 has been an extremely challenging year for the National Committee of Management (COM). We have placed up to four submissions to the Defence Honours & Awards Tribunal (DHAT); Veteran Advocacy Review; Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Review; The Clarke Review; six Reclassifications for Conditions of Service Operations and a number of communications between the APPVA and the highest levels in Government.

2. 2009 was hampered by a very few individuals who diverted a lot of man hours and energy, taking our focus off the main task, the operations of the APPVA, and Looking After Our Own. Thankfully, some of these people resigned as members of the APPVA and there is a greater productivity that has emerged as a result.

National Forums.

3. The APPVA continues to be present on a number of National DVA and other Forums. I am pleased to say that the selection of our representatives for a range of DVA Consultative Forums has been highly successful, with those individuals representing the issues that matter most to our constituency through these forums.

4. The APPVA National Forums and those people allocated to those Forums are attached to this report in an Excel Spreadsheet.

Projects.

5. The APPVA has had a significant increase on Projects in 2009, ranging from submissions to the Defence Honours & Awards Tribunal for appropriate Medallic recognition for current and ex-serving ADF and Police Peacekeeping Veterans; to Mental Health Study for Peacekeepers. This shows the diversity of the APPVA of what we are capable of

“Looking After Our Own”

performing in the best interests of our constituency.

6. A list of Projects (not by any means restrictive) is also attached in an Excel Spreadsheet to this report.

APPVA National Younger Veteran Outreach Program (BEST).

7. The APPVA NYVOP is funded by BEST Grants upon application by the end of February annually. Currently, the APPVA has four people employed to assist in the massive task of meeting a high demand in multiple-eligibility of a number of Legislative Acts.

8. There is a Level 3 Advocate practicing in Southern NSW (John Wyatt); Level 4 Advocate practising in Melbourne (Mick Quinn); Level 2 Case Officer practising in Melbourne (Graham Castles); with a Part Time Admin Manager establishing the office of an Administrative Support Officer for the next BEST Grant 12. A Small Business Advisor and Book Keeper have also been engaged with the APPVA.

9. Much work has been achieved with this team over the past 12 months with at least 2,000 cases being undertaken by the paid and volunteer practitioners, with a large volume of inquiries (From 21,320 emails (In and Out), and 4,919 phone calls all relating to veteran matters in the Administration and National President's Office alone).

10. The above demonstrates the large influx of interest of the services that this association is capable of providing. However we are seriously under-reporting ourselves and this may have a long-term effect for funding if this is not rectified in the immediate future. The reporting mechanisms will be discussed at the Workshop on Sunday 7 Feb 2010.

11. Importantly, it is absolutely imperative that all Branches who have BEST Grants and intend to apply for BEST Grants expend the monies as stated, along with ensuring that the Grant Project is separately audited by a licensed and independent Financial Auditor prior to acquittal. We have had some problems from not only National but from three Branches that failed to report according to the Project Agreement.

12. In addition, BEST Activity statements **must** be sent to National on time. These reports are now bi-annually, therefore the period 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009 is **now due** for BEST Activity Statement reporting. For those practitioners and Branches responsible, please ensure that the reports are sent in on time to DVA, with copies to National.

13. The Paid Practitioners must get their BEST Activity Statements to National ASAP, so that we are able to provide timely reporting as agreed within the Grant Deed.

14. The problems that we encountered with poor accounting practices, of which we were not familiar has now receded with all but one Branch now acquitted. The Branch concerned is waiting for the BEST Activity Statement for the Grant FY period from a former paid practitioner. I hope that this is expedited ASAP.

15. I would like to particularly thank Rhonda Copeland and Mitch Edwick for their excellent work in getting these problems sorted in an expeditious manner.

Resignations.

16. It is with regret that we had the following resignations from the APPVA over the past 12 months:

David Vinen – National IT Manager (10 Dec 09);

Mark Elm – ACT Branch President (Aug 09);

Shona Traill – Membership Secretary (Apr 09);

Andrew Reggett – QLD Branch President (Jun 09);

Donna Reggett – QLD Branch Secretary (23 Aug 09) and National Merchandise Officer (Nov 08);

Marcus Bruty – QLD Branch Treasurer (July 09); and

Gordon Traill – National Vice President (Feb 09).

17. I would like to thank those members for their dedication toward the Association and wish them well in their future endeavours. One person will be awarded the National President's Annual Award for their outstanding devotion to the APPVA, which will be announced at the National Conference.

New Office Bearers.

18. Whilst the resignations may appear to be concerning, it was pleasing to see a number of people interested in replacing those who had resigned. These people are:

Margi Phelan – Acting ACT Branch President;

Fiona Quinn – Membership Secretary;

John Burgess – QLD Branch President;

Robert Sumpton – QLD Branch Secretary;

Mitch Edwick – QLD Branch Treasurer;

Dave Penson – National Vice President (President Elect this AGM); and

Graham Castles – National Secretary.

19. I am also very pleased to announce that the APPVA ACT Branch now has an inaugural Patron. Major General Ian Gordon, AO (Retd), is the Branch Patron for APPVA ACT. I welcome him to the APPVA and we are very fortunate to have such a distinguished and eminent person joining the APPVA ACT Branch team.

Branches.

20. I announce some bad news, of which comes to a shock to a few of us. The S.A/NT APPVA Branch has closed its Bank Account and placed the Incorporation in trust with the S.A. Office of Fair Trading as of 25 Jan 2010. This, as I understand, was not taken lightly, as the Branch suffered from no BEST Grants for 2-3 years due to various reasons and the Committee were funding themselves to keep the Branch operational.

21. It is also disappointing to learn that APPVA S.A/NT. Members were not supportive toward the Committee in a range of fund-raising activities and that it was left to a very few to do the hard work.

22. The APPVA S.A/NT. Branch is still an entity in S.A. with a Point of Contact (Wayne Alexander), however will not be functioning as an Incorporated body until some people are willing to assist the Committee and get fund-raising initiatives operational, with the support that is needed.

23. The APPVA S.A/NT. POC will continue to operate from the VVAA Badcoe VC Club adjacent RAAF Edinburgh. Should anyone wish to seek assistance in Compensation Entitlement and support the APPVA S.A/NT. Branch, please do not hesitate in contacting Wayne Alexander on 0408 278 207, or 08 8258 1970.

24. Some good news is that the APPVA National Executive intends to visit Adelaide and Darwin in the early part of this year to meet with as many APPVA SA/NT members in order to resurrect the situation and have the Branch back as an Incorporated and operational entity.

25. Further good news that I have been advised is the APPVA ACT Branch is now registered for Incorporation. This is a positive step forward for that Branch and I wish them well in assisting our people in the ACT Region.

N.B. NQLD Branch President, Lofty Evans was awarded the OAM on the Australia Day Honours List and I pass on my heartfelt congratulations to him for his selfless and dedicated work to the veteran community in North QLD. A new Committee will be elected for the NQLD Branch this week.

Achievements for 2009.

26. Whilst 2009 may have been a difficult year in a number of areas, I am pleased to report that we achieved a number of our APPVA National Priorities from 2008-2009. These are the following:

Successful lobbying for the Peacekeeper Mental Health Study;

Successful Lobbying for a Review into the Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) anomalies, including multiple eligibility problems with MRCA, the Veteran Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA); and the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA).

Submissions of Reclassification of the Conditions of Service and Nature of Service to a number of Operations.

The successful outcome of the Australian Training Support Team – East Timor (ATST-EM), which were reclassified from Peacetime to Warlike Service in March 2009, after intensive lobbying from the APPVA.

Post 1975 Medal Entitlement Review, which have successfully been lobbied to Government and have now been referred to the Defence Honours & Awards Tribunal (DHAT).

Future Issues for 2010.

27. Whilst the issues above have been successful, there are a number of matters that require resolution by the Government. Of these that hold importance in priority are:

- a. Our Veteran Health and Well-Being;
- b. Non-Erosion of Veteran Entitlements or Compensation; and
- c. Ongoing Recognition of the service, courage and sacrifice of our constituents.

28. There are some matter that I feel require further resolution. These are:

Younger Veterans in Residential Care.

Improved Pathways to Care for Younger Veterans.

Veteran and Veteran Families Counselling Service (VVCS) to allow services to be extended to Peacetime Ex-Service members, including Police.

Ensure that ADF members are given the best opportunities for Rehabilitation, Retraining and Retention over a two-year period.

The severely eroded Defence Service Home Loan of \$25,000 (not changed since 1973), to be commensurate with the Australian Median Home Price Index, to allow our Young Veterans the opportunity to have discounted interest home loans as was the case in 1918.

COMSUPER (DFRDB & MSBS) Indexation issues. Currently at CPI, which really needs to be appropriately adjusted to the Public Beneficiary Cost of Living Index (PBLCI).

Police Compensation Legislation for those who serve on Operations and to retain the Beneficial Approach as was previously available under the VEA.

Commemorations – further Government funding toward the National Peacekeeping Memorial on ANZAC Avenue in Canberra.

Conclusion.

29. As it is quite apparent, 2009 has been an extraordinarily busy year for the APPVA at the National Level. The APPVA continues to represent our constituent's matters of concern to the highest levels in Government and Defence in order to seek appropriate resolution of these issues.

30. The APPVA has made an impact in 2009 and will potentially make a more significant impact in 2010, as we develop our business strategies, increase our membership and delivery of services.

31. This being my last National President's Report to you, due to my completion of three 2-year tenures (plus 1-year as Intermediate National President), I would like to personally thank all those who helped in keeping the APPVA going, being my sounding-board, your dedication, support and more importantly friendship over the past 7-years in my role as National President.

32. Lastly, and most importantly, to Rhonda and daughter Jasmine, I thank you for your patience, understanding and sacrifice of quality family time during my terms as National President. The support that you have both given me has kept me going and focussed on the APPVA. I can now relax a little bit and give back what you have both missed out in the past 7 years.

33. For those interested, I will be working on the Soldiers of Peace International Association (SPIA) as the Australian President and the Oceania Representative. I have also been asked to remain on the Committee as the APPVA Projects Officer or Research Officer. I will have the official capacity as Immediate Past President and retain "Past President" status.

34. Good luck to all of you and may the APPVA prosper in the years to come.

Yours Sincerely,



P.A. Copeland, OAM, JP,
National President 2002-2010.