

**Report Card for  
The Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans'  
Association, National Executive,  
APPVA National Conference,  
Anglesea Barracks,  
HOBART, TAS,  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2010.**

**1. Introduction to the APPVA.**

1.1 The APPVA was established at the Pine Rivers RSL Sub-Branch in Kalangur, North of Brisbane on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1997. The concept was accepted by five people at the table, of which the Association has now over 1,100 members in every State and Territory in Australia. The Association was then known as the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Association (APPA) – note the missing word of “Veterans.”

1.2 The original intent was to commemorate the service of those who had served on various Peacekeeping and Warlike Service Operations since 1947 to the current. This was at a stage when Australia was beginning to increase its Operational Tempo toward International Peace and Security with operations in Namibia; The Gulf War; Cambodia; Somalia; Rwanda; Western Sahara; Sinai; The Middle East and other Police Peacekeeping Operations in Cambodia, Cyprus and Somalia.

1.3 It became evident in late 1999 to the early 2000's that the APPA had to evolve in order to look after those who had returned from operations in the early 1990's with mental illness, with a range of other health problems. Representation was needed at the highest levels of Government.

1.4 After being branded as “non-veteran” by a DVA staffer, among other members of the ESO Community who did not believe that our constituency fitted into the Veteran Community, it was taken upon to have this rectified by the name change of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA), with a new logo.

1.5 We thank the previous National President of the Viet Nam Veterans' Association (VVAA), Brian McKenzie OAM; and his subsequent successor, Mr Ron Coxon, OAM, for their support toward the APPVA and assisting us in many areas.

**2. What we have achieved.**

- Being able to be recognised as a Primary ESO by DVA for Post 1947 ADF and Police Peacekeeper veterans to the present; those who have served in a range of conflicts and operations from 1989 (Namibia); and Post 1975 ADF Peacetime service.
- Lobbying for the name change from the Viet Nam Veterans' Counselling Service to the Veteran & Veteran Counselling Service (VVCS), under stiff

resistance from some ESO.

- Became a truly national ESO with Branches and Points of Contact in every State and Territory in Australia;
- Having APPVA Representation on DVA and ADF Forums such as:
  - a. The ESO Working Group of the MRCA 2004;
  - b. The National Younger Veteran Consultative Forum;
  - c. The Centre of Military and Veteran Health Think Tank;
  - d. The National Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum;
  - e. The Defence Links Project;
  - f. The Inter-Departmental Working Group;
  - g. The Operational Working Party;
  - h. Younger Veterans in Residential Care Workshop;
  - i. The National Treatment Monitoring Committee;
  - j. The Emerging issues of current ADF members;
  - k. The ESO Round Table;
  - l. The Nature of Service Review;
  - m. The Chief of the Army PROJECT AKESA (“The Hidden Wounded”) of which a number of our outcomes became recommendations in the Report to the CA, which included the concept of MCLO or RCASO;
  - n. East Timor Veteran Family Study; and
  - o. Peacekeeper Mental Health Study.
- The Instigation of the National Peacekeeping Memorial, which is now led by MAJGEN Tim Ford. The APPVA secured an initial grant of \$200,000 toward the project.
- Lobbied for the Recording of our Peacekeeping History, announced by the previous Federal Government;

- Consulted with the Australian War Memorial on Audio Visual presentations for a range of PKO and Iraq Service;
- Lobbied to the DG Defence Health Services (AVM Tony Austin) and the Former DG-Defence Personnel Executive, MAJGEN Mick Slater, as to the emphasis of Rehabilitation, Retraining and Retention of ADF members, particularly those who suffer from Mental Illness for a period of at least 2 years;
- Engaged with the Canadian Forces Peer Support Program;
- Engaged with the Australian Centre of Post Traumatic Mental Health in Melbourne;
- Established two Veteran Centres in Victoria (Heidelberg Repatriation Veteran Centre & Surf Coast Regional Veteran Centre) Other centres are staffed by APPVA practitioners across Australia. These centres have handled over 5,000 veterans, primarily young veterans with veteran entitlement and compensation claims and welfare assistance to the veteran and his/her family;
- Initiated the APPVA National Younger Veteran Outreach Program, which delivers nation-wide network of veteran entitlement services to current and ex-serving members of the ADF and Police Peacekeeper veterans. This is funded with the assistance of the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST). We have an excellent reputation for multiple-eligibility claims and this is due to the paid professional practitioners that the APPVA has obtained through BEST Funding;
- Struck Memorandums of Agreement with the Viet Nam Veterans' Association of Australia (VVAA) and the Korean Veterans' Association of Australia (KVAA);
- Work in mutual support with the Defence Force Welfare Association, The Injured Service Persons Association, The RSL and the Veteran Services Advocacy Support Association in QLD (VSASA), and the Royal Australian Air Force Association in Victoria and the Royal Australian Regiment Association (RARA).
- Providing papers to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Hearings into a range of subjects of interest to our constituents;
- Providing quality submissions to the Defence Honours & Awards Tribunal Inquiries into a range of Medallion recognition for ADF and Police veterans in a range of Hearings, including the Australian Defence Medal; SAS

Counter Terrorism and Special Recovery Operations (including other Special Operations), Service in Somalia, service in post-Independence Papua New Guinea, and recognition for Peacekeeping service from 1947 to the current day;

- Placed Submissions to the Nature of Service Review for Reclassifications to Warlike Service for the 5 Arab-Israeli Wars (UNTSO), where Australian Military Observers have been involved; OP HABITAT, which was the 75-strong ADF commitment to OP PROVIDE COMFORT – a NATO Operation to protect the Kurds in Northern Iraq in 1991; OP ASTUTE – to have the service of the State of Siege in Timor Leste from May 2006 – Apr 2008 recognised as warlike service; to have the two Indo-Pakistani wars of which Australian UN Military Observers were involved in Kashmir; and to have the ADF recognised from Peacetime Service to Non-warlike service for a large range of Humanitarian Operations, which affects almost 3,000 ADF veterans.
- Successfully lobbied for the reclassification from non-warlike service to warlike service of the ADF Medical Support Force to the Second UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR II) in Feb 2006;
- Successfully lobbied for the reclassification from peacetime service to warlike service of the Australian Training Support Team in East Timor (ATST-EM) in April 2009. We are still finalizing a positive outcome for the retrospective awarding of the UN Medal with East Timor Ribband, as was approved by the former PM John Howard.
- Established an Affiliation of the APPVA to the Soldiers of Peace International Association (SPIA) on 30 May 2008. SPIA is a Category 1 Non-Government Organisation (NGO) with the UN Economic Social Council (ECOSOC). This Affiliation was made permanent on 29 September 2009. Therefore building relationships and networks with our International comrades.
- The recognition of the Force Communications Unit to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) by the awarding of the Meritorious Unit Citation (MUC) is now a priority with DG Personnel – Army (SO2 Ceremonial). This will also include the addition of the changed conditions of criteria for the Army Combat Badge to those veterans.
- The recognition of the Army Combat Badge to members of Rwanda, along with the recommendation for the MUC and Unit Citation for Gallantry is now underway by this association.
- Established and practice good Corporate Governance, Accounting via MYOB and continual reporting. Our website is the flag ship of the

organisation and continues to present ongoing news to our visitors and members.

- Lastly, the APPVA has a very credible reputation at the highest levels of Government to those individuals who seek assistance from us. This is a position that we have earned through hard work and credible representation.

### **3. Future Issues.**

- Increase the funding for the APPVA National Younger Veteran Outreach Program by having additional paid and professional practitioners who are competent in the various Veteran Entitlement and Compensation Acts and COMSUPER, meeting an ever increasing demand;
- Continue our representation at the highest levels of Government on behalf of our constituents;
- Ensure that veteran entitlement and compensation is not eroded;
- Have COAG and DVA expedite the Younger Veterans in Residential Care as was agreed by COAG in 2008;
- Increase Military COMSUPER to the PBLCI or indexed to the real value in today's terms;
- Increase the paltry \$25,000 Defence Service Home Loan Scheme to be reflective of the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DHOAS), without any cut-off dates. This will allow some of our most incapacitated young veterans and their families to be able to have a discounted interest rate loan for the Australian Median Home Price Index. This is in the spirit of the Defence Homes Act 1918 for returning WWI Soldiers and should never have been allowed to erode to what the value is today by successive Governments;
- Further develop the APPVA's Business management;
- To develop a Training Package in line with the DUNT Review into ADF Suicides, Recommendation 8.2 in order to ensure industry standard training and assessment is conducted for professional Veteran Entitlement Practitioners;
- Ensure that the recognition of the Service, Courage and Sacrifice of our veterans of today and tomorrow continues in terms of Government provision of adequate and appropriate funding toward the National Peacekeeping Memorial.

- Increase the recognition of Peacekeepers/Peacemakers by the Government Declaration of Peacekeeper/Peacemaker Day on 14<sup>th</sup> September annually;

#### **4. Conclusion.**

4.1 Since 2003, the APPVA has had a significant impact on the veteran demographics in Australia. The APPVA has contributed exceptionally in terms of representing the interests of Younger Veterans; having Peacekeepers & Peacemakers being placed into the veteran community as an Identifiable dynamic group; and has placed Young Veterans into the National Federal and State Arenas for consultation of our constituent's needs and issues.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P.A. Copeland', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

**P.A. Copeland, OAM, JP,**  
Immediate Past President.