



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

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(INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA)

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*Commemorating 20 Years Of The Australian Engineer
Contingent to Namibia, S.W. Africa
(UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG)).*

5th February 2009

**National President's Annual Report,
APPVA National Annual General Meeting,
Sunday, 8th February, 2009,
RAAF Base Laverton, Victoria.**

1. I report to the members of the APPVA of the activities, successes and general overview of the conduct of operations of the APPVA from 3 February 2008 to 5 February 2009.

Overview.

2. The past 12 months has seen a great deal of development within the APPVA in terms of growth of membership; business management; lobbying and Ministerial Submissions presented to the highest levels of Government, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) including the International Deployment Group (IDG).

The APPVA National Younger Veteran Outreach Program.

3. The National Younger Veteran Outreach Program (NYVOP) is gaining a great deal of credibility, including an increasing demand of services upon APPVA practitioners for multi-eligibility of the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA); Safety Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 1988 (MRCA); Military Compensation & Rehabilitation Service (MCRS); Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA); and COMSUPER (Military Superannuation Benefits Scheme (MSBS) & Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB)).

4. The APPVA is increasingly leading the ESO community in multi-eligibility and the ability to provide timely information, guidance and information for exiting and former ADF members. This is also inclusive of Police Peacekeeper Veterans. The success rates have been significant and in many cases our practitioners have been approached by young veterans who have been given poor advice, which has subsequently made the veterans' case unreasonably complicated.

"Looking After Our Own"

5. The APPVA approached the RSL National President Bill Crews in March 2008, insisting on an Accreditation system for practitioners, whether volunteer or paid practitioners. We have simply seen too much damage done to a number of cases of our constituents due to a lack of technical understanding of the Legislation that our members hold eligibility to veteran entitlements.

6. The National Executive made a business decision in July 2008 to terminate the National Younger Veteran Outreach Program Project Officer and the Projects Officer that came under the auspices of paid Part Time Administrative Officer. This was not a slant against the 2 people who were employed with the APPVA, as they were performing well. It was a case that we needed another Veteran Entitlement Practitioner to assist the overwhelming demand on our paid advocate at the Heidelberg Repatriation Veteran Centre.

7. Graham Castles, a former Army WO1 was selected for employment and has done an amicable job in grasping the legislation and is performing well with his training, mentoring and application of his practice. Graham is now multi-eligibility qualified and is looking at further development as a VEA Level 3 Advocate in November 2009.

8. Mick Quinn as the paid full time Pensions Officer has done an outstanding job in his position as the APPVA Advocate working out of the Heidelberg Repatriation Veteran Centre. His case load has an unbelievable number of clients and he also volunteers outside of this to do work within the Victorian Branch of the APPVA. We would not be in the position that we are in Victoria and Nationally, without the dedicated service rendered by Mick.

9. John Wyatt has been very busy with his increasing case load in Albury/Wodonga and is looking at further developing his area of responsibility to the Army Recruit Training Centre (1RTB) in Kapooka and with RAAF Wagga Wagga.

10. Donna Reggett continues to do a fine job in her area of responsibility and it is pleasing to see that she has been in demand on RAAF Amberley.

11. The Minister is very interested in our concept of paid practitioners, of which we have received good support since 2005. The intention is to embed our practitioners in a joint or collaborative working arrangement with ESO such as the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (VVAA)¹, Regional Veteran Centre Project (RVCP) in Victoria, and other joint arrangements in QLD.

12. In short – the APPVA NYVOP has been very successful and is increasing in its demand of which the APPVA will aim to meet this demand with the delivery of these much needed services. However, we must not under-sell ourselves with the amount of work that we do that relates to the Welfare, Well-being and entitlement assistance to our constituents and all veterans.

Lobbying in 2008.

13. The beginning of 2008 commenced with an increased demand on the APPVA in terms

¹ Note: This is not the Vietnam Veteran Federation contempt to embrace our constituents and renaming themselves with "Peacekeepers & Peacemakers."

of re-structuring our approaches toward the Government's Veteran Policy. A large output of documents has been provided to various Ministers, AFP and ADF Chiefs.

14. Our agreed Priority List that was decided at the AGM of Feb 2008 at RAAF Base Richmond has seen some positive successes.

15. **Priority 1 - Veteran Health Study 1990-1995 (Peacekeepers).** I was advised in writing by the Minister that the Intellectual Property issues with the selected Institute to conduct this study have now been resolved and it will soon be progressing. It is envisaged that this Study is to be conducted in the first half of 2009, with a Scientific Advisory Committee, along with a Consultative Group. The APPVA has been specifically selected to be a member of this Consultative Group. We look forward to further involvement with this long awaited study.

16. **Priority 2 – MRCA Anomalies.** Since our involvement with the ESO Working Group on the MRCA Bill, there has not been any further consultative Operational Working Groups with ESO. The APPVA has established a number of anomalies that require resolution. The Minister in our visit on 1 July 2008 indicated that this Review is to be conducted in the coming year. We patiently await this opportunity in order to have a number of disadvantaged Legislation corrected for consistency in the Beneficial Approach toward our veterans.

17. **Priority 3 – Younger Veterans in Residential Care.** This matter continues to be of a concern to the APPVA. Members may be aware of the Bevan Taylor case of 2008, when it took over 5 months to have this incapacitated Gulf War Veteran placed into Residential care at the expense of the Department and not from his TPI or War Service Pension. We had a great win with this case; however there are concerns that there must be pre-designated pathways to treatment and care for these veterans, regardless of the Legislative Act that they are eligible. This matter continues.

18. **Priority 4 – Reclassification of Service – Humanitarian Operations to NWLS.** The APPVA has been aware of the effects, environmental hazards and harm levels to ADF members who have served on a range of Humanitarian or Defence Aid to Civil Community (DACC) Overseas Operations since at least 1986. The intention is to have the Beneficial Approach toward VEA and MRCA with the Reasonable Hypothesis for proof of evidence in determination of claims of which veterans may have incurred from this service. This case has been sent to various Ministers as a Ministerial Submission of which we await a positive outcome.

19. **Priority 5 – Reclassification of Service to Warlike Service of the ADF Contingents to OP ASTUTE Timor Leste.** In the same context as above, however with further evidence that suggests that the service on OP ASTUTE was far more dangerous than that of INTERFET and UNTAET, which were both classified as Warlike Service. There are periods of intensity of which the ADF had to intervene with force, along with exposure to Incurred Danger from a range of belligerents, including “Major” Renaldo’s Militia force that undermined the International Security Force (ISF) presence. These have been receipted by the relevant Ministers and awaiting ADF response.

20. **Priority 6 - Post 1975 Medal Entitlement Review.** The APPVA contributed toward the ADF Honours and Awards review into medals and commendations. This Review was accepted by the Chief of Service Committee (COSC) in March 2008. There has been no indication as to the recommendations that were accepted to date.

21. The APPVA also submitted to the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence – Mike Kelly; Minister Snowdon; Louise Markus and the Opposition Spokesman for Defence, Science and Personnel Bob Baldwin – a comprehensive MINSUB of the APPVA Medal Policy for ADF awards. The Somalia Campaign Medal has been forwarded onto the Defence Honours & Awards Tribunal as it is an identified issue that is to be investigated by the Tribunal. Dr Kelly also indicated that the remainder of our points toward a range of medal anomalies will be made in comparison once the DHA Review Committee findings that were accepted by COSC are made available. We look forward to further development toward this issue.

22. **Priority 7 – ATST-EM Reclassification to Warlike Service.** This matter has been accepted by the previous and incumbent Government. Whilst we are aware that this has been factored into the Budget in May 2008, there is a delay from the ADF in obtaining the names of individuals who served with the ATST-EM. This is causing delays in War Service Pension applications for some members, benefits within the VEA, along with a much anticipated recognition of the service to AASM Clasp EAST TIMOR. I have been advised by Minister Snowdon's Office as of Dec 2008, that the matter is in hand and that we can expect further development of the matter in March 2009.

23. **Priority 8 – Defence Home Loans.** This was raised at the last AGM 2008, however it is felt that this needs to now progress to a higher priority, given that the economic down turn will now be having a severe effect on our veterans, in particular those on TPI. The aim of this is to ensure that the Defence Home Loan is retained as a Veteran Entitlement and is given the appropriate increase commensurate with today's Median Housing Price Index. As it stands, the Defence Service Home Loan, a veteran entitlement has not been indexed in any manner since 1973, which was then \$25,000 and remains this amount today. A significant erosion of a Veteran Entitlement, particularly for our veteran constituency who have not taken the ADF Home Loan Scheme (ADFHLS) and the Defence Force Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DFHOAS 2008).

Soldiers of Peace International Association.

24. During the period 27 May to 3 June 2008, I travelled to the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG), in order to meet with the Soldiers of Peace International Association (SPIA), who are based in Lyon, France.

25. An Agreement of Affiliation was signed between Laurent Attar-Bayrou and me for the SPIA and APPVA to work together, of which the APPVA will establish an Australian Branch of the SPIA. Further work on this matter will be conducted during 2009.

26. The SPIA is a Category 1 NGO with the UN Economic and Social Committee Organisation (UNESCO), which has been contracted to conduct Mine Clearing and Training; Humanitarian development and other contractual work for International Development.

27. This provides the APPVA with an ideal opportunity in terms of paid and volunteer work internationally in a range of projects. All financial members of the APPVA will be also members of SPIA Australia.

28. Further work in obtaining recognition as an NGO by ACFID; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Emergency Management Australia and the ATO is required prior to development and bidding for such contracts. Work may primarily be involved in the S.E. Asia and S.W. Pacific areas; however there may be opportunities to be operating in Africa and the Middle East.

Development of the APPVA Nationally.

29. The past 12 months has seen a significant development of the APPVA in terms of National Growth. Not only has our membership increased over 31% and is now up to 1,000 members, we have functional APPVA Branches operating within their states or jurisdictions. This promises to not only deliver the services of our core business, which is supporting the well-being of ADF, IDG and veterans, but also placing APPVA members onto various State Forums.

- a. The APPVA signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the National VVAA Council in October 2008. This further enhances the sharing of resources, mentoring and working toward common goals in the veteran community. Whilst some members believe that we have amalgamated with the VVAA, this is not true. We have aligned ourselves with the VVAA in terms of collective working arrangements in a mutual understanding.
- b. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will have significant beneficial outcomes for both organisations in the long term. This is a significant strategic approach by both associations.
- c. The Korea Veterans' Association of Australia (KVAA) has also indicated a similar approach, in order for the APPVA to also share resources and work together. An MOA or document will be discussed and with the member's blessing will be developed for 2009.

30. It is essential that the APPVA is represented on a range of State forums, in order to place our member's and constituent's perspective on a range of issues and relevance toward the respective forums. Previously, these forums have been attended by Viet Nam veterans and aged veterans. It is now important to have a younger voice within these forums.

31. 2008 saw the opening of the APPVA Tasmania Branch, led by Phil Pyke. Phil is congratulated for his dedication toward the development of the APPVA in Tasmania and I expect great things coming out of that state. The APPVA Tasmania Branch was officially raised on 6th December 2008, with a fully staffed committee. They will be working with the RSL, TPI Association and the VVAA Tasmanian Branches, which is the way ahead.

APPVA ACT Branch.

32. Unfortunately, the APPVA ACT Branch Office Bearers resigned due to various commitments with their private lives. This has had a significant impact on our ACT membership as they currently do not have a functional Branch.

33. During 2008, I was in discussion with the VVAA ACT Branch President, Peter Ryan; and the President of the Canberra Services Club (CSC), Vince Pannell about the future of the APPVA in the ACT. There is a positive proposal to have our APPVA ACT Branch to be based out of the CSC.

34. A further proposed project is to link with the VVAA ACT Branch; the CSC and the APPVA ACT Branch in order to submit a joint Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant, looking at paid Full Time Pensions/Advocate Officer and a Part Time Administrative Officer. This adds an exciting dimension in the ACT, as there is a large amount of Young Veterans in the ACT and surrounding NSW areas. The potential for growth

is substantial.

35. I will be in Canberra 17-20 Feb 09 to meet with the CSC and Peter Ryan, along with an AGM for the APPVA ACT Branch and Elections on the night of the 19th February 2009. The future in Canberra looks promising.

APPVA National Executive Branch.

36. The APPVA National Executive Branch has had a very difficult year. The year has been very demanding in terms of development, business structure and accountability. The Membership Secretary has had difficulty with faulty IT equipment and this has caused delays in updating of member database information. The problems have been resolved with quarterly capitation fees being on time, along with monthly updates of member data to the relevant Branches.

37. The National IT Manager has also had a very difficult year in terms of attempting to have all APPVA Branches and National working to a standard Operating Environment. That is compatibility between ourselves with common version software and equipment. This includes the universal use of the APPVA email system, of which it is noted that a number of people have chosen not to use. The APPVA email system is in existence for a particular reason, not only does it market the APPVA, but it also provides us with statistical data so that we are able to provide this data for various grants, particularly toward IT funding.

38. Configuration Management has also been experienced with some difficulty and I cannot understand why some Branches choose not to divulge this information in terms of accountability. If we are audited by DVA, we will need to provide evidence of control and accountability of our equipment. If the Branches do not embark on this approach, then there may be some serious consequences or added stress in locating this equipment for such audit.

39. There have been a number of resignations from the National Executive. The Secretary and Treasurer Positions became vacant. These positions are pivotal to the smooth running and accountability of the APPVA. It was unfortunate that in these resignations that it was a case of personality clashes and some degree of undermining. I am hoping to have this situation changed for 2009, as my household has worn the brunt of this work, of which Rhonda and I have been running the APPVA in addition to our positions within the Executive.

40. The message is quite clear. We need people to step up to the mantle and assist the APPVA National Executive. This includes Branch Committees supporting the APPVA National Executive, without undue criticism and accusations. I am hoping that this year will see the end of such approaches by individuals and that we have a good pool of competent and dedicated individuals helping the APPVA grow.

41. The Treasury is now placing a financial structure toward our accountability in MYOB. We have hired a MYOB and small business advisor in order to get our books into order and have the necessary Taxation rules applicable to our business. This advisor attends us for a couple of hours per fortnight. The system is gradually becoming user friendly in terms of accounting structure, adequate job listings of our grants and accurate acquittals of our grants.

APPVA QLD Branch.

42. I am pleased to note an increase in the activities in the QLD Branch. A number of

practitioners have come onboard and Lofty Evans is congratulated for the hard work that he has done toward this branch in the past 4 years. There are some areas that require attention in NQLD, and Lofty is aware of these matters, to which he has indicated that these will be addressed.

APPVA NSW Branch.

43. The NSW Branch has been a difficult nut to crack in terms of active and dedicated committee members. The stalwart of this Branch has been Peter Matthey, who I thank for his dedication in terms of representation of the APPVA in NSW, liaison with the VVAA NSW Branch, St Marys centre, ISPA, and his ongoing pension work at RAAF Richmond.

44. Bruce Relph has also been a continued member to the NSW Committee and it is pleasing to note that Bruce runs his own business and still has time for the APPVA. This is dedication that is much appreciated, particularly with assisting Peter Matthey with the running of the APPVA NSW Branch.

45. A new member Lucy, has recently come on board as a committee member, of which she is in training for various TIP courses. It is intended that Lucy will be employed by the VVAA NSW Branch and the APPVA to work out of St Marys Centre, under a joint agreement and BEST Application. This is a break through for the APPVA in NSW as we will be in a position to meet the increasing demand of multi-eligibility, delivering our services and growing in membership and perhaps committee members for the 2009 period.

APPVA S.A/NT Branch.

46. Wayne Alexander has been ill for some time and has been incapacitated due to a number of accidents. Despite being not well, Wayne and Jo (Wayne's wife), have strived to keep the APPVA S.A. Branch active. I thank them for their dedication in difficult circumstances.

47. The APPVA S.A. Branch office is now established close to RAAF Edinburgh at the Badcoe VC Club which is owned and run by the S.A. VVAA Branch. This is another example of collective working arrangements and strongly supports the MOA that was signed in October 2008.

48. There is a new member in S.A. that is working with Wayne and looks to be an appropriate candidate in the employment of a paid full time practitioner operating out of the Badcoe VC Club, which will be a timely addition as the 7RAR Battle Group moves to Edinburgh in the coming years. Again, the potential for growth in the APPVA S.A. Branch is significant.

APPVA QLD Branch.

49. The APPVA QLD Branch is relatively new, having been established in late 2007. However, I am pleased to say that in contrast to previous years, this Branch has been very proactive and have a full Committee. This has reinvigorated the APPVA presence in the Brisbane area and I am pleased with the progress of the Branch.

APPVA TAS Branch.

50. As stated previously, the APPVA Tasmania Branch is our newest addition to the APPVA, having been formed on 6 Dec 2008. The APPVA Tasmania Branch has office space at the TPI Tas Association building in Hobart and is already fielding enquiries for assistance which is promising. They are supported also by the RSL and VVAA Tasmanian Branches, which reinforces our collective working approach in the Veteran Community.

APPVA VIC Branch.

51. The largest of our Branches, the Victorian Branch has developed well under the leadership of Matt Burke and his Committee. The presence of the APPVA Victorian Branch at most veteran forums has been exceptional, along with excellent input into various forums by the Branch Committee members.

52. Unfortunately, Matt Burke will not be standing for Branch President after his tenure ceases on 21 Feb 2009. Matt has been a dedicated President for the Victorian Branch and has been involved in the Committee of the Victorian Branch since its inception in 2000. Prior to this Matt was the President of the Albury Wodonga UN Association (AWUNA) for some years prior to coming on board with the APPVA Victorian Branch.

53. Matt was the inaugural Branch Vice President in 2000-2002 and was then elected to Branch President in 2002. He would have completed almost 10 years service to the APPVA in a committee position. Matt is also the Vice Chairman of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project Committee (APMPC), of which he has also done excellent work with that committee. Matt will continue to be on the APMPC for the coming year.

54. Mick Quinn will be Matt's successor, of which Mick has done a substantial job as an Advocate and Office Bearer in the Victorian Branch. I am sure that Mick will continue the legacy of Matt and will be endeavouring to further develop the APPVA in Victoria during his elected term(s).

APPVA W.A Branch.

55. At this stage, David Lee, a former RAAF WOFF Medic is the main Point of contact for the APPVA in W.A. Unfortunately, it has been a difficult year for David, as he deals with his illness and also dedicates himself to the APPVA.

56. David has made some significant in-roads with the RSL and VVAA W.A. Branch. I can see these linkages further developing in the future. However, David cannot do this alone, of which W.A. members are called upon to assist David with this task in the establishment of a functional and Incorporated W.A. Branch of the APPVA.

Australian Peacekeeping Memorial.

57. For those who may not be aware, the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial was an issue raised to the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Mrs Danna Vale, MP in March 2004. The APPVA was influential in obtaining \$200,000 seed funding for the project, however the task of getting the memorial on ANZAC Parade was a daunting one.

58. Thankfully, MAJGEN Tim Ford took the helm of a dynamic committee and has

convinced Government leaders and the Prime Minister to have this memorial as a pride in place next to those who have served before us. This has not been an easy task. The APPVA has 2 members involved with the APMPC. Matt Burke, as previously stated is the Vice Chair and I as the APPVA Representative.

59. The APPVA has had a positive input, particularly in fund-raising. I am confident that we will continue to fund-raise for our memorial to be completed by the end of 2009. Branch Executives must sell the Memorial to its members and the public by awareness, membership and donations.

60. On 19 December 2008, I attended the launch of the Memorial Design in Parliament House and am pleased with the degree of exposure that this project is receiving at the highest levels in Government, along with the ADF and AFP/IDG. Tim Ford and his team are congratulated for getting this project to the stage that it is now. There is some hard work ahead and the APPVA must be prepared to support this project.

Concept of the Military Compensation Liaison Officers.

61. The APPVA approached the Chief of the Army (CA), LTGEN Leahy, after the APPVA placed a significant submission toward "PROJECT AKESA", which was a study on the "Hidden Wounded" within the army. The APPVA was noted as a key contributor to this Project and its recommendations.

62. Within the recommendations, the APPVA proposal to have Reservists serving as specialist Practitioners within the Army was accepted by the CA. This was to provide timely advice and assistance to soldiers and their families in relation to compensation entitlements. These were called Military Compensation Liaison Officers (MCLO).

63. The matter was further passed to the Director General OH&S – COL Steve Rudzki AM. Initial discussions with COL Rudzki indicated a positive approach, however there has been a break in communications.

64. The APPVA also submitted a discussion paper to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston AC, AFC. The CDF has placed this proposal down to the service chiefs for consideration. Follow-up action on this matter is required, in order to brief the three service chiefs on a range of matters pertaining to in-service assistance with entitlements and rehabilitation. It is envisaged that this will occur in 2009.

65. The proposal was also presented to the Minister of Defence, Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, who indicated the same reply from the CDF and was thankful for the input that the APPVA is conducting in our approaches toward the ADF.

Defence Force Transition Support Strategy (aka Integrated People Support Strategy (IPSS)).

66. The Former Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Bruce Billson launched the IPSS in August 2007. The aim of the IPSS was to consolidate the services of multi-eligibility that is provided by a range of ESO, coordinated by the RSL.

67. Two Pilot Programs were conducted in Fleet Base West (HMAS STIRLING); and RAAF Base Edinburgh. Unfortunately, the ESO appeared to have been left out of the loop in terms of updated information and consultation.

68. In December 2008, The National President of the RSL, Bill Crews wrote to selected ESO seeking support toward the Strategy, along with contacting the relevant State Secretaries, CEO or Presidents to advise of the capability that is provided by the particular ESO.

69. The APPVA responded in January 2009, noting a few problems with the IPSS in terms of accreditation of practitioners and the instance of a Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) environment. Other concerns raised that non TIP qualified people were completing primary claim forms or veterans referred to Solicitors. This was an area that we insisted to cease.

70. All RSL and APPVA practitioners and Branches were sent a paper from the National President in late January 2009, advising the main practitioners of each APPVA Branch. The CDF had insisted that all ESO Practitioners must be MRCA qualified. The APPVA prefers to have our practitioners serving the ADF members and veterans to be VEA; SRCA (MCRS); MRCA and COMSUPER skilled.

Dunt Review.

71. In early 2008, the Minister for Defence, Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin commissioned Professor Dunt of Melbourne University to conduct a review into the Transitional arrangements of ADF members, the well-being of these members as well as suicide of ADF members and recently exited ADF members.

72. The APPVA placed a significant document to Prof Dunt, outlining the need for a number of gap areas to be resolved; enhanced rehabilitation (2-3 years), longer retention of medically downgraded members; Transfer of MEC4 or medically unfit ADF members to the Reserve Force in order to retain personal self-esteem and a sense of pride.

73. Additionally, the APPVA suggested the Canadian model in terms of ADF support, which includes a cell of unformed members and volunteers to assist exiting Canadian Forces Personnel. This is known as the Canadian Forces Peer Support Strategy.

74. At the time of writing, it was announced on 5 Feb 09, that the Government had received a briefing from Prof Dunt on his findings and it is expected that the Report will be available shortly.

TGA Review into Homeless Veterans.

75. Sue Grigg is conducting a study into Homeless Veterans. Sue has contacted APPVA members and is endeavouring to capture data to report back to DVA. It is suggested that a large number of young veterans are living in their cars, caravans, tents, with friends, parents or family or homeless in general. These conditions are termed as homeless as the veteran is unable to provide for himself/herself with accommodation.

76. In September 2008, I sent out a research form to all Branch Presidents, in order to assist with this data capture. I am not sure how this has proceeded, however I would appreciate if all Branch Presidents are able to complete this questionnaire with their entitlement practitioners and welfare officers.

Consultative and Working Relationships with the ADF and IDG.

77. During 2008, the APPVA worked on improving our working relationships with the ADF and the IDG. Visits to the Head Defence Personnel Executive – MAJGEN Mick Slater and the IDG located at Majura in Canberra proved to be fruitful. The aim is to provide an awareness of the relevance of the APPVA in terms of assisting both ADF and IDG members with a range of our services and membership. The awareness has taken hold and recently the RAAF, through Peter Matthey, held its WOFF Conference in RAAF Base Townsville in November 2008.

78. It will appear that this approach is beginning to bear fruit and is having an effect of the inclusivity of the APPVA in a range of areas within the ADF and IDG.

National ESO Consultative Forums.

79. The APPVA has representation on the following National Forums:

- a. Prime Minister's Advisory Council (PMAC), consisting of Phil Pyke, Donna Reggett and Anne Pahl;
- b. The National Younger Veteran Consultative Forum, representation by Mick Quinn;
- c. The National Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum, represented by Rheana Nation;
- d. The National Treatment Monitoring Committee (NATMOC) by Donna Reggett; and
- e. The Viet Nam Veterans' Family Study – Consultative Forum, of which I am a member of the Consultative Forum.

Sponsorship of 36 Platoon.

80. The APPVA continues to sponsor the "Peacekeeper's Platoon", which is 36 Platoon, Delta Company of the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC). Matt Burke has been instrumental in getting this organised and we continue to watch the march-out parades and make our presence known to the Recruits.

81. The APPVA has also approached the RAAF in relation to sponsoring a Recruit Flight at the Recruit Training Unit (RTU) at RAAF Wagga Wagga (Forest Hill).

APPVA Business Management.

82. There have been a number of changes over the past 12 months as the APPVA works to improve our business operations. We have had no choice but to move down this pathway as our finances increase, with added responsibility for best practice in accountability for these finances, salaries and expenditure.

83. On the business front, we have had no choice but to acquire the services of a professional book keeper and small business advisor, who is providing a great deal of guidance for the National Treasurer (Rhonda Copeland).

84. Matters like employee contracts, tax, GST application, Business Activity Statements (BAS) to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) are complicated and we are ensuring that our business is compliant with these rules.

85. The Merchandise continues to raise a small degree of income, however it is perhaps more of a marketing tool for the APPVA. This has been an area that requires ongoing innovation and active management.

86. Our Marketing has not been a very active area, however with assistance from DVA, we will soon be distributing roll-ups, posters and information leaflets to our Branches. This is envisaged to occur mid-late 2009.

87. The APPVA Magazine has had to change hands from our previous publisher Classic Publishing. We are now venturing off shore, with Gordon Traill preparing and organising a system for the magazine, which will have potential to provide income for the APPVA.

Income Tax Exempt Charity.

88. Income Tax Exempt Charity (ITEC), is probably one of the most important of our business areas in order for our sponsors and those who wish to donate to our good cause and provide them with Tax Deductibility as a reward for their generosity.

Vietnam Veteran Federation Problem.

89. The issue of the Vietnam Veteran Federation of Australia (VVF), who have superimposed the words "Peacekeepers and Peacemakers" or words thereof, is currently being represented by a pro-bono Legal firm in Melbourne. Due to the sensitivities of the case, we cannot disclose the details until such time we are permitted.

Harmonious Working Relationships with each other.

90. I want to comment on the turbulent events of the latter half of 2008 within our organisation. There have been a small minority that have not adhered to a number of warnings of email protocol and respect for others within the APPVA.

91. It must be reminded to these people that we are the future of the ESO landscape in Australia and the behaviour that has been observed last year, the dissention, the derision and lack of respect for people who volunteer their precious time to assist this organisation will not be tolerated.

92. To those that this message is applicable, take heed. We need unity, not fighting among each other. I cannot describe to these people as just how much time has been wasted from our focus in attempting to referee or defend various accusations. This behaviour will stop.

Looking out for our Mates.

93. Whilst we are busy in our private lives and with the organisation, I ask that you spare a few minutes each week to make contact with one of our veterans that may not be travelling well. Contact with these people during their darkest times brings a ray of hope to them and reminds them that they are still part of the APPVA family.

Succession Planning.

94. At this point in time, succession planning for the National Executive has been difficult. I will be definitely stepping down from the position as National President as of the next AGM/Elections in Feb 2010.

95. Inclusive of my standing down, will be the requirement to identify individuals by our members, candidates to be nominated for the positions of National President, National Vice President, National Secretary and National Treasurer.

96. Please identify any potential member within your own branches that may wish to nominate for these important positions.

Future Tasks and Intentions.

97. I will be brief with the future tasks and intentions, as we would have already agreed on our Priority List for the Calendar Year of 2009.

98. 2009 promises to be our best year ever. We must develop the APPVA further, particularly in W.A. and the ACT. NSW needs people to step up to the mantle and assist Peter Matthey and Bruce Relph who have been doing a great job, with little support from the membership. It is important that our less involved Branches are boosted with the support of the respective members and volunteers to assist in anyway possible.

99. My intention prior to standing down in Feb 2010, is to have the ACT and the W.A. APPVA Branches operational. This will almost complete the APPVA in every state and territory, with the exception of an independent branch in NT.

100. There are critical areas that require our expertise that is multi-eligibility Entitlement Legislation. This is a huge growth area that many ESO are simply not prepared, nor have the depth of experience. The APPVA is taking the lead in this important area, as the APPVA National Younger Veteran Outreach Program develops.

101. Paid Full Time or Part Time professionals who are fluent in the various Compensation Entitlements, along with the effects of Military Superannuation is important to the current and ex-serving members of the ADF. So too, is this knowledge with Police Veterans, as they increase their numbers on operations overseas.

102. Therefore, we need talented people identified to be able to take on this very important role of delivering a quality service to all veterans within our community.

Summary.

103. In summary, the past 12 months has been the busiest and most demanding that I have experienced in my service to the APPVA since our inception in 1997. This is a sign that we are growing and require best practice management policy to take on the increase in membership and the number of anomalies to the Government that matter to our people.

104. The amount of paperwork generated has been significant as the new ALP Government progresses with a very ambitious veteran plan. The APPVA has so far met every challenge by the Government in providing quality consultative submissions to their requests.

105. In addition to providing submissions to the ALP Government, the APPVA has also worked hard with the Minister for Defence, Science and Personnel (Warren Snowdon) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The Minister wants to continue an open dialogue with the APPVA as he views the objectives of our organisation as very relevant toward his portfolio. We have enjoyed a good working relationship with the CDF and other Senior ADF officers in 2008.

106. The APPVA has also enjoyed an open door policy with the International Deployment Group (IDG), based in Majura ACT; the Police Federation of Australia (PFA); Minister Bob Debus (Minister for Home Security) and the AFP Commissioner. There are some areas that require ongoing liaison, of which our National Police Liaison Officer, Dale Potter is working hard in producing a number of papers and consultative approaches.

107. Last year also saw the success of our lobbying for the reclassification of the Australian Training Support Team – East Timor (ATST-EM). ATST-EM deployed under Peacetime Conditions of Service and Veteran Entitlements. In 2006, the APPVA approached Government and the Director General of the Nature of Service Review with this matter as it was deemed unfair that ADF members serving in a given classified Warlike service zone are not eligible nor classified as such. This matter has been pursued and we await official answer from the Minister in relation to the reclassification to warlike service for ATST-EM.

108. I would like to thank everyone who has played a part in getting the APPVA onto the Veteran scene within their given state/territory. It is important that this ESO continues to consult at the respective levels of Government, working together with other ESO (e.g. VVAA) and encouraging membership.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Copeland, OAM, JP,
National President.