

AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER & PEACEMAKER  
VETERANS' ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE



APPVA  
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**Patron**

**Major General Ian Gordon AO (Ret'd)**

*Also assisting Veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan and Peacetime Service*

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**“Commemorating 70 Years of Australian Peacekeeping Operations  
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Thursday, 12 October 2017

National Executive  
National Committee of Management

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
12 SEPTEMBER 2017, CANBERRA**

The year in review, firstly I would like to thank the National Executive and National Committee for their ongoing commitment to the smooth running of the association in 2017. I would like to acknowledge the fine work of individuals who have contributed above and beyond their appointments within the APPVA National group.

**Michael Quinn** the National Vice President has contributed to the association in more ways than one, Michael was a key figure in the instigation of the Working Group seeking a Royal Commission into DVA in March 2016, without his efforts within the group I am of the opinion that the Working Group and its findings would not be before the Parliament today in regards to Veterans' Suicide and Legislative changes that affect current and former soldiers of the Australian Defence Force. In other areas Michael has been instrumental in establishing the Aussie' Opportunity Shop in Boronia, Victoria because of his efforts and the members of the Victorian APPVA, we have seen the Aussie' Opportunity Shop grow to such an extent that they are now self-supportive in providing welfare support to veterans in Victoria. Michael also chairs the Working Group seeking a Royal Commission into DVA, Michael also has contributed 10 long years to the APPVA and I thank him personally for his staunch support as the National Vice President of the APPVA, as I hope to continue this relationship in the years to come as if I am reappointed as the National President of the APPVA.

I would like to thank **Rhonda Copeland** for her relentless efforts in ensuring that we as an association operated within our financial limits, Rhonda over the years has fulfilled the duties as National Treasurer when no one has showed any interest to assume the appointment. I personally would like to acknowledge her contribution firstly as the wife of a veteran and for

*“Looking After Our Own”*

her efficiency and dedication in ensuring that our finance was always squared away. Rhonda has indicated to the National Executive and NATCOM that she will be stepping down from the National Treasurer role in 2017 after 10 years of service to the APPVA. I thank you Rhonda on behalf of the members and the National Executive and NATCOM for your devotion and effortless commitment to the association and wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Kevin Ryan** the National Secretary has been my eyes and ears of the association, his devotion not only to the National Secretary role but also as the Membership Officer has kept not only the National Executive but State Executives with the most up to date list of financial members prior to any QGMs. Kevin continues to provide me with sound advice when needed, his role also extends out to the bookings of major activities within the APPVA such as conferences and sending out letters to visiting dignitaries informing them of their roles as speakers for our AGMs. Kevin is also looking at stepping aside in 2017 as the National Secretary due to health conditions but has advised the National Executives and NATCOM that he would continue his role as the National Membership's Officer. Kevin, I thank you for your ongoing commitment and dedication to the association over the years and hope to continue working with you as the National Membership Officer.

**Paul Copeland**, National Advisor continues to provide submissions on behalf of the association and both State and National levels. Paul is also the Immediate Past National President of the APPVA and has been since he stood down from the National Presidency role in 2011. Paul continues to provide submission in regard to medallic recognition and is currently the National Editing Officer for the Peacekeepers Magazine. Paul has had some health problems of late and will be stepping down from all National Constitutional appointments to pursue his bachelors in Training and Assessment. Paul, we thank you for your service and sacrifice over the decades and your significant contribution to the association, I can openly say as the National President of APPVA that the association would not be where it is today without your input over the decades. We wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Lastly**, I would like to acknowledge the **NATCOM** for their continued support in ensuring that the association was moving in the right direction. Being the only younger Peak Body association, I know that we have gone through one of the hardest times since my appointment as the National President with our membership fluctuating annually because our members are still actively working and aren't able to take on some executive roles within their states. This is a common phenomenon within ESOs nationally. But to change or entice change we now have to look at other alternatives to enhance our membership base in States. I will be asking State President's and executives to be more pro-active with when promoting the association in the years to come. This can be achieved by placing articles in the Peacekeepers Magazine quarterly which goes out to the greater veterans' community and the ADF.

### **APPVA National Appointments FY 2016/2017**

As the association goes into a transitional period with its members, I would like to acknowledge State members on their national appointments:

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|---|------------------|
| • National Police Liaison Officer                           | Robert Woods     |
| • National Merchandise Officer                              | Elizabeth Hill   |
| • National Events Manager<br>May 2017 to September 2017     | Lucy Masson      |
| • National Younger Veterans' Forum<br>Representative 2017   | Coralee Goedhart |
| • National Operational Working Party<br>Representative 2017 | Trevor Plymin    |

The APPVA has come some way since it's instigation in 1997, we are now well established in Victoria thanks to the State Executives who now have an Advocacy Cell working directly out of the establishment.

We have seen the emergence of a Veterans' Advocacy Centre in Alstonville, thanks to the founders Allan Thomas, Elizabeth Hill and Pauline Maczkowiack, the establishment was raised in September 2015. Since then we have seen a massive influx of veterans and their families using the facility to gain some advice in regard to entitlements and welfare needs.

In Queensland, we operate out of Kenmore RSL Sub Branch, and the Northern Part of Brisbane where the State President Randall New and Coralee work from. We have facilities now situated between Mackay and Rockhampton and work out of Jacks Place in Townsville.

We also have Graham working out of Tasmania in a Community of Practice, the APPVA hope to expand its practices in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. We may not have a headquarters in these states but will be looking at a collaborative approach with other ESOs, this will ensure that our advocates are put in a continuous professional environment that will provide them with the necessary resources to enhance their knowledge and application during their time as an advocate in either Welfare or Compensation.

### **Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP)**

After considerable consultation and numerous submission since 2004, the DVA have now realised that advocacy needed to be recognised nationally and not in the past form of a certificate of attendance. The Minister of Veterans' Affairs in consultation with the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table that has representation of National Presidents of Ex-Service Organisations agreed that we needed to move to a model of advocacy where advocates will be provided with a Nationally Recognised Accreditation for courses under the ATDP.

This is a joint initiative by DVA, Defence and ESOs, which will be overseen by another overarching organisation being the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Courses have been constructed by a contracted Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Major Training Services. The ATDP being a program within the DVA will deliver the courses on behalf of the RTO.

The APPVA will move now to ensure that all advocates that operate under the APPVA will now only be endorsed by the APPVA if they complete or show an Expression of Interest (EOI) to attend an ATDP course, I would just like to reiterate that all endorsement will only be done by National as of 1 January 2018. Those applicants who complete and EOI will have to complete the course within 6 months of the EOI, so they will only receive a temporary endorsement from the association until such time they complete an ATDP course.

We have some people within the association who have completed a milestone by undertaking positions on national and state executive committees. This year I will be acknowledging these people by presenting them with life memberships for their achievements. Without there dedicated time and effort the association would not be where they are today.

### **Honorary Internal Checker – APPVA**

This year the APPVA has seen Rob Fry who I am hoping to see appointed as the Honorary Internal Checker for the association. Rob has completed a full audit of the NSW-ACT APPVA and is now being tasked to do the same with the Victorian APPVA in 2018 followed by Qld.

I welcome Rob Fry's auditing advice as we move forward as an association, in ensuring that we are in compliance with the ACNC corporate governance guidelines.

### **Key Issues**

The association over the past 12 months have been instrumental in terms of raising awareness about younger veterans' issues, to date we have and will continue to support the Working Group seeking a Royal Commission into the DVA. What we must not do is loose focus on what we need to be addressing over the next 12 months, which I feel are:

- Taxation provisions for those in receipt of validity pensions.
- Remits, (Honours and Awards)
- Drafting of New Veteran Specific Legislation - DRCA
- Funding
- Membership

I would like to finish off my report by stating that we as an association need to be mindful that there is a need to start succession planning for the years ahead for those who will be transitioning out of national and state committee positions. We need to now focus on likeminded people within states, regions that have a desire to take up positions to ensure that the association continues the good work that has been put in place and continues to produce positive outcomes on behalf of veterans well into the future.

That concludes my report and I look forward to working with committees at the national and state levels if elected again as your National President.

Yours Sincerely,

*Allan Thomas*

**Allan Thomas JP  
National President**