



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

P.O. BOX 480, BORONIA, VIC, 3155

(INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA)

ABN 59 558 194 094

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**Patron**

**Major General (Professor) John  
Pearn AO, RFD (Ret'd)**

Telephone: (03) 9761 0468

Mobile: 0432 099 270

Email: [president@peacekeepers.asn.au](mailto:president@peacekeepers.asn.au)

Website: [www.peacekeepers.asn.au](http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au)

*Affiliated with the Soldiers of Peace  
International Association – SPIA  
<http://www.fname.info/aisp/eng/>*

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

*Commemorating 20 Years of The Deployment of the  
Australian Contingent to the United Nations Advance  
Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC)*

15<sup>th</sup> October 2013

APPVA National Executive  
APPVA NATCOM

**National President Annual Report to the Annual General Meeting of 26-27 October  
2013, held at Hobart, Tasmania**

**Introduction**

Firstly, I would like to thank the National Executives and the National Committee for their continued efforts and commitment throughout the past year. In saying that it is very difficult to find people who continually work tirelessly in the background to promote the needs not only for past and current members of the ADF but also their families. Our National Executives perform these arduous tasks without hesitation to senior parliamentary members and senior members of the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, without those people within the senior executives the association would not be where we are today.

To all my other colleagues who continue to provide ongoing support at both National and State levels, I ask that you continue to provide the positive feedback to our members and their families as this is one of our main strengths in providing such a unique service. To our members I thank you for your ongoing support in maintaining your membership annually without your contribution we would not be able to lobby to Government on behalf of Ex-Service Organisations to those political bodies who determine our outcome as past and former members of the Australian Defence Force.

*“Looking After Our Own”*

## National Forums

Since my last National President Annual Report of 2012 we have elected a new team to represent our issues and concerns on national forums, firstly I would like to make mention to your newly formed team who represent the association's interest in the coming financial year and they are:

Phil Pyke	Prime Ministers Advisory Council
Paul Copeland	National Advisory Council
Allan Thomas	Ex-Service Organisation Round Table Meeting
Michael Quinn	Emerging Issues Forum
Rodney Thompson	Operational Working Party
Chris Dawson	National Mental Health Forum

I thank our national representatives for their continued contribution on these national forums, they continue to provide the most up to date information and provide constructive feedback regarding in relation to our most current Annual Action Plan which outlines our goals not only short term but addresses our long term aims aswell. The association revisits our Action Plan annually to bring online the new issues that arise which continually affect our members and their families not forgetting our constituents nationally. For the most up to date summaries of these national forums and state forums please visit:

[http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service\\_organisations/consultation/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service_organisations/consultation/Pages/index.aspx)

## BEST Round 15

In light of the most recent BEST Round 15 Grants the association in general lost a further \$20,000 dollars in funding. Some of the key features of our submission were: IT upgrades for our practitioners, paid practioner funding, postage and general administration costs.

The association has and will continue to discuss funding issues with state ministers and with parliamentary ministers regarding the allocation of funding and the need to further provide such assistance to the APPVA being a much smaller ESO who solely rely on these funding as a means of continuing to provide a unique service to the greater veteran's community.

The argument that the association raises is that we are continually reducing our current remunerative employee's hours to bring into line with BEST allocation as well as reviewing our administrative plan due to the unforeseen shortfall in BEST annually.

The association continues to provide governance at all levels to ensure that we have met all requirements of past and current policies that have been put into place by the government to maintain the kind of funding required to enhance services to veterans and the families of those veterans within the Local Government Areas. The association's main concern is that vital information and the most up to date changes are promulgated to those within the community.

We have always provided this to our constituents through mail outs, promoting it on the association's national website and through various applications which we rely heavily on to support our existence.

In various states the APPVA has been involved in Veterans Centres, some of the problems APPVA has endured since the establishment of these Service Centres was the lack of support from the Centres:

- Improving the efficiency of ESO delivery of pensions, advocacy & welfare services; but this has not been achieved due to certain ESO influences which is controlled by that influence.
- Collaborative approaches and improved communication between ESOs about services to the veteran and defence communities; have been compromised due to control influences imposed by local ESO Sub Branches.
- Shortage of funds has affected the sustainable delivery of ESO pensions, advocacy and welfare operations due to the actions of certain ESO concept whose intent was not to share the responsibilities or provide funding.

The department have only recently been made aware of the actions carried out by some ESOs whose influence have solely been the demise of the Centres not achieving an equal outcome by not supporting younger veterans working in various established centres.

For states, there is a lot of grants available for activities or purchasing of equipment to suit state needs for further information and requirements on applying for these grants please visit:

[http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service\\_organisations/grants/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service_organisations/grants/Pages/index.aspx)

### **APPVA National Younger Veteran Outreach Program**

It is disappointing that this initiative has not been supportive by the DVA through BEST funding, the APPVA have continued to lobby government regarding funding issues pertaining to those post 1975 cohorts, we as an association have taken a lead role in providing a unique service to veterans and their families within local government areas with minimum funding from government.

Our percentage of claims have decreased a little but our representation at the Veterans Review Board and the Administration Appeals Tribunal has increased as a consequence of claims failing at the primary level. This is due to lack of knowledge of some practitioners from ESOs not having a good understanding of legislation. We are now seeing a lot of claims from clients requesting our intervention with their claims.

Currently the association has a large percentage of volunteers who continue to provide a unique service to veterans and their families which most of the time incurs an out of pocket expense, the APPVA are in constant consultation with DVA and Australian Parliament House Ministers to acquire funding to meet these shortfalls to assist our volunteers with out of pocket expenditure.

## **Future of Advocacy**

Recently, association delegates Allan Thomas National President, Mick Quinn National Vice President, Paul Copeland National Advisor and Rod Thompson National Entitlements Officer attended a meeting with delegates of DVA and discussed the Future of Advocacy Services, this went on for about 2 and half hours with very positive outcomes, a further consultation with DVA is yet to be established due to commitments by both executives of DVA and the association.

The association views that the only alternative for consistency nationally is to form a one stop shop were a Compensation and Welfare Cell is attached to area Veterans 'Affairs Network (VAN) offices where funding can be controlled by DVA and those who provide the service be provided the necessary funding to provide such a unique service.

The accountability of money would then be more easily managed by the department. This also forms the basis for good mentoring and a firm base for practitioners within that Local Government Area (LGA).

## **Unveiling of Peacekeepers Names on the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial**

On Friday the 30 August 2013, the National President, National Vice President, National Advisor, Victorian Treasurer, National Editor, NSW President and the Tasmanian President of APPVA not forgetting the National APPVA photographer who attended the unveiling.

We were not privy to the initial opening address but were able to admire the great feats of our past executives who worked tirelessly over many years to have those names erected on the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial. But a great day had by all, once again I would like to thank those individuals who took the time to be there it meant a lot more to the families of the fallen peacekeepers to see the association there from start to finish.

## **Review of Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2004**

The association was/ and still is heavily involved in the initial stages of the Review of the current Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2004, since then we have seen some recent recommendation changes to the Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2004 which came into effect 10 July 2013, one of the significant changes was that if an ADF member had a pre-existing injury/condition accepted under the VEA and had an aggravation whilst serving on or after the 1 July 2004 he or she could have that injury/condition aggravation moved to his VEA period. This only applies to the VEA not SRCA, as of the 10 December 2013 white cards will be issued under SRCA for injuries/illness that have a stable diagnosis.

A great achievement by the association, to see this happen, I thank Michael Quinn for his efforts in ensuring that some of the association's issues were addressed. We are in constant consultation with DVA and APH ministers regarding issues such as the service differentials under MRCA as this leads to differences when we talk about payments to a depend on death of a service member.

The delegation in its Annual Action Plan will continue to address these issues and provide feedback to our members and their families not forgetting our constituents nationally who continue to visit the APPVA Website.

## **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)**

It is important that State Presidents become conversant and register themselves with the ACNC but before doing so please ensure that you have a working constitution that reflects your association's characteristics as a not-for-profit entity. For more information on the ACNC please visit:

[http://www.acnc.gov.au/ACNC/Pblctns/FAQ/ACNC/FAQs/FAQ\\_ACNCregister.aspx](http://www.acnc.gov.au/ACNC/Pblctns/FAQ/ACNC/FAQs/FAQ_ACNCregister.aspx)

## **Resignations**

To all those who fulfilled executive positions at state level, I thank you all for your contribution and dedication during that time. I wish you and your families all the best in your future endeavours.

Our Queensland members have seen a significant change in the way they operate, this is due to the amalgamation of the two states that being Nth Qld and Sth Qld to form one current incorporated body that being the Qld APPVA.

The Qld APPVA will be the responsible body who will now administer the whole state. Members of Qld will now be able to liaise with one incorporated body and seek the relevant advice they need in order to obtain entitlements under welfare or compensation or matters pertaining to the state by having nominated bodies appointed by the state members of the association who will represent them at Deputy Commissioners Forum meeting which is held quarterly and other forums held within Qld.

In order to obtain the most relevant information on your state as a member of the association you can either visit the following websites:

[www.peacekeepers.asn.au](http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au), or

[http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service\\_organisations/consultation/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service_organisations/consultation/Pages/index.aspx)

## **New Office Bearers**

In wishing those who have just recently resigned all the best in their future endeavours, it was pleasing to invite some new faces back into those vacated positions and I thank all those who have chosen to fulfil those state positions, and they are:

Lucy Masson	-	National Merchandise Officer of APPVA (2013)
Peter Matthey	-	NSW/ACT State President of APPVA (2013)
Bruce Relph	-	NSW/ACT State Vice President of APPVA (2013)
Peter Vidler	-	NSW/ACT State Treasurer of APPVA (2013)
Alanna Luvisi	-	NSW/ACT State Secretary of APPVA (2013)
Anthony Luvisi	-	NSW/ACT Assistant State Secretary of APPVA (2013)

Chris Dawson	-	Qld State President of APPVA (2013)
Kim Dempsey	-	Qld State Vice President of APPVA (2013)
Rod Thompson	-	Qld State Treasurer of APPVA (2013)
Andrew Black	-	Qld State Secretary of APPVA (2013)

I wish all new office bearers all the best in their newly appointed positions, the positions that are now bestowed on you require you to act in a manner that will allow you as a senior executive to achieve good outcomes not only for your state members but to all members of the association nationally.

We have always put the our members and their families matters at the forefront of what we do, we take their concerns to the highest levels to achieve the most convenient outcome not only for them but for all our members who may fall under similar circumstances.

This is what we do and we do this to the best our ability. So if you are appointed to a representative position, there is a requirement for you to provide feedback, communication is imperative to the associations progress, now and into the future.

We have seen some significant changes in the way we operate, in Victoria the APPVA has moved to Boronia and are now self-sufficient in providing resources to their members within the state.

In Qld they have amalgamated to provide more personnel to state executive positions to provide a more efficient service to their members.

NSW/ACT are networking with ESOs to achieve a more sustainable outcome for veterans, members and former members of the ADF as well as their families in matters of entitlement and welfare as they have a significant number of practitioners trained under TIP to provide such services.

### **Achievements for 2013**

The achievements of the association through constant consultation with departmental/parliamentary dignitaries are as follows:

Introduction of the White Card under SRCA which is due to be released 10 December 2013.

Changes to the Review of the Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act of 2004.

Direct Gift Recipient Status given to the National Peacekeepers Memorial 2013.

Unveiling of Peacekeepers Names on the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial.

These significant achievements have been well acknowledged by the public and the social media, members of the association, families of the deceased and our constituents nationally, this is a credit to all those within the association who have worked tirelessly over the years to see these achievements unfold.

## **Future Issues for 2013-2014**

Whilst the association has had some significant achievements, there are some pending issues that still require further consultation with government to attain some resolution that are important to the association achieving its future plans. Some significant issues that are currently in process are:

### ***Health Issues***

Has the Department identified key issues that have come out of the most recent Vietnam Veterans and Timor Leste Health Studies? and does the findings identified in the past health studies identify the indifferences on operations such as warlike and one that has deployed on non-warlike operations, what type/form of rehabilitation will be needed to cater for members or past members of the ADF under MRCA under the three categories warlike, non-warlike and peacetime. Is there a need to change the current process in place or does it require more services, this requires the APPVA delegation to conduct more consultation with both department bodies and parliamentary ministers.

The Australian Peacekeepers Health Study in which the APPVA have been heavily involved with is soon to be released, as the outcomes of the Health Study unfold we will include this in our Peacekeepers Magazine.

### ***Matters of Entitlement***

The APPVA will be constantly consulting DVA/APH on issues of entitlement which will require extensive review and scrutiny by the finance deregulation department, the process that the association will require the DVA/APH to consider is proper indexation of current superannuation's and to diminish the offset factors under MRCA and the current superannuation and to provide a path for veterans who are totally incapacitated to access their superannuation.

### ***Medallic Issues***

APPVA will continue to consult DVA/APH regarding the recognition for those ADF members who have served in UN Peacekeeping missions by awarding an Australian Peacekeeping Service Medal (APSM).

Other medallic issues that are still current and will require further consultation are:

Recognition of ADF and other Australian Agencies conducting Border Protection Operations

Recognition of ADF Humanitarian Operations, Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal (HOSM)

Dag Hammarskjold Medal for those ADF Peacekeepers who have died on UN Peacekeeping Operations

CCSR Clasp for 1 CDO Regiment

### ***National Peacekeeping Memorial***

Now that National Peacekeeping Memorial Council has obtained DGR Status, we will now be looking at obtaining sponsors within the private sector to provide funding to construct the Peacekeepers monument in Canberra as soon as practicable.

### **Unresolved Issues**

There are issues that have been at the forefront of the associations Action Plan which will require immediate resolution:

Younger veterans that are severely incapacitated, will require residential care facilities to cater for their needs, and the need to promote pathways to care for the post 1975 cohorts and the need to push for a Younger Veterans Forum that identifies the needs of the post 1 July 2004 cohorts.

### **Conclusion**

The 2012-13 has seen the APPVA excel to another level with its achievements, to date we provide items for discussion and raise these issues within our annual action plan. To date the issues raised are normally addressed with an achievement rate annually of 80%. The other 20% is unresolvable because it requires approval by the finance deregulation department which requires significant consultation and further submission outlining our contention and facts.

This has always been a focus of the APPVA as we continue to represent our members and families concerns at the highest levels in Government and Defence in order to seek appropriate resolution of current issues within our Action Plan and anything that may arise that could have a detrimental effect on our post 1975 cohorts.

Our presence at higher levels of Government are more prominent now as we have a brand that is recognisable to all Government Agencies and Defence establishments nationally.

The APPVA will continue to operate under the tight budgetary constraints in order to maintain its effectiveness and efficiency at all levels to deliver the best outcomes for our members and their families nationally.

For me personally, I thank all those who I have been involved with over the past year, in particular Michael Quinn the National Vice President who has provided me with advice regarding key legislative issues that have emerged and Paul Copeland for his knowledge and advice regarding emerging issues and medallic issues.

A special thanks to Kevin Ryan our National Secretary for his prompt notifications of events and issues that concern the association, to our Treasurer Rhonda Copeland for her efforts in maintaining all accounts and keeping us informed of any changes that may affect the association financially.

Rod Thompson a special thanks in maintaining our Facebook advocates online service which is a credit to the way we operate now and into the future, when dealing with clients, to Phil Pyke a special thanks to the way you perform your duty as the national editor, the information has been greatly acknowledged by our members nationally and especially by other ESOs.

To the National Committee which comprises of all our state presidents your input is of most valuable without your feedback and passing on of information to your state members the association would not be where we are today.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our up and coming AGM/QGM in Tasmania on the last weekend of October 2013.

Regards

**Allan Thomas JP**  
National President