



**MINUTES OF A STATE COUNCIL MEETING
OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA,
NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH INC.**

**Conducted Tuesday 12th September 2017
At St Mary's (The Train)**

Opening

1. The President established that a quorum was present and opened the meeting at 11am with a minute's silence. Please remember Terry Blackburn from St Mary's and Grahame Cook from Hunter

Attendance, Apologies and Proxies

2. **Attendance and Proxies:** 2 Proxies from Bathurst

President	Greg Cant
Treasurer	Tony Walker (Delegate for Bathurst)
Secretary	Pam Forsdike OAM
Patron	Gordon(Dutchy)Holland
State Advocate	Ken Foster OAM
Event Coordinator	Carol Ward CSM
St Mary's	Sam Vecchio Andy Forsdike OAM Tony Mullavey
Macarthur	Ray James
Apologies	John Lees Patrick O'Grady

Visitors

John Foeken

Moved: St Mary's **Seconded:** Macarthur that the Attendance, Apologies and Proxies be Accepted

3. Previous Minutes

Moved: Bathurst **Seconded:** Macarthur that Minutes of the previous Meeting be Adopted

4. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

There will be only two meetings per year in March and September plus the AGM in March.

5. Correspondence

All correspondence has been distributed to the sub-branches

Moved: St Mary's **Seconded:** Macarthur Carried

Business Arising from Correspondence:

Nil

Moved: St Mary's **Seconded:** Macarthur that inward correspondence be accepted and outwards correspondence be ratified

Carried

6. Financial Report: Financial Report was emailed to all Sub Branches, our investment matured on 7th September, I have reinvested for a period of 24 months at 2.65%.

Moved: Macarthur **Seconded:** St Mary's that the Financials be accepted

Carried

7. Reports

- a. President's Report is attached.
- b. Secretary's Report Nil
- c. State Advocates Report is attached
- d. Event Coordinator Report is attached
- e. Sub-Branch Reports are attached.

Moved: Macarthur **Seconded:** St Mary's that all reports be accepted

Carried

8. Motions on Notice

Nil

9. Agenda Items:

Nil

10. General Business:

Tony presented a Plaque of Appreciation to Tony Mullavey and Sam Vecchio from St Mary's VVAA for all the support they have given to the VVAA State Branch over a long period of time.

Ken mentioned that a couple of sub branches owed National for Memorabilia. Pam to check with the Sub Branches and let Ken know.

Closing of Sub Branches and State Branch was discussed at length, it was decided to put together a procedure for closure that will be distributed to all Sub Branches.

Moved: St Mary's

Seconded: Macarthur

Carried

Ray James spoke on what was happening at the NSW RSL, in regard to the breaching of the Charitable Act of 1991, as far as their CFN numbers are concerned including how public donations are collected and spent, he said that we might take a look at our own Sub Branches and State Branch to make sure we don't end up in the same position as the NSW RSL.

Once again the subject came up in regard to the new Advocacy Training, Ken again explained what was going on and how Pension Officers need to be trained in the new system to continue doing Pensions work, as far as Welfare Officers are concerned if they only visit hospitals they do not need to do any extra training however they are **not** to give out advice, they should still make sure they are covered by VITA for Insurance and they might have to complete a refresher course under the new rules.

Greg said he received a letter from Dr Charles New in regard to being patron of the NSW Branch saying what a privilege it was to be asked to be patron of the VVAA.

Carol asked the Council should we still have the Vietnam Veterans Day Service at the Cenotaph after 2018, because the numbers of Veterans are declining each year, Greg suggested that after next year Carol coordinate with Sub Branches on a round table and that we move the main service from Sydney to both St Mary's and Macarthur each year. After much discussion it was decided to make 2018 the last year for the Service at the Cenotaph.

Ken asked if the State Council are going to adopt the admin instruction for Advocacy and training put forward by National.

In reply to Ken's question The NSW State Council voted to adopt the Advocacy and Training schedule put out by the National Council.

11. Next Meeting: Tuesday 13th March 2018 at St Mary's Train commencing at 11AM followed by the AGM

12. Closure:

There being no further business the State Council Meeting was closed at 12.35PM

State President

Greg Cant JP

**STATE PRESIDENT
SEPTEMBER REPORT**

The last few months have provided me with the proof (if it was needed) the age that we are all approaching and how final that is.

I have seen 5 from my old unit laid to rest in NSW alone, plus here at St Marys in both the Sub Branch and in the Veterans Centre we have lost a number of members. Most recently Terry Blackburn (my fishing companion on the Hawkesbury) Terry had been battling with the results of poorly managed Type 2 Diabetes, which caused the loss of his lower limbs and finally his life last Friday. Terry will be given a suitable send off next Friday at Londonderry Cemetery.

Then yesterday we received the following missive from Hunter Valley Hon Sec John Fraher

Subject: Grahame L J COOK 2781813

I am sorry to inform you that Grahame Cook our Vice President passed away on Saturday morning 9 September after a long battle with illness. At his request there will not be a funeral service or burial service. Cookie served in Vietnam from 7/9/66 to 27/8/67 with the Royal Australian Engineers. Vale Cookie.

Regards

John Fraher

Honorary Secretary

Hunter/Central VVAA Sub Branch

With the advice that Jervis Bay Sub Branch is to close, along with the forced closure of Ryde Eastwood, it my feeling that each sub branch should be looking at contingency plans for either the closure of the sub branch or the reinvention of the sub branch.

It is not necessary for all sub branches to continue on as an active ESO. The prime examples here are Macarthur and Wagga Wagga. Even here at St Marys the Out Post is in the process of redefining itself as two entities. The Out Post which is becoming a Men's Shed come Social Club and the Veterans Centre which is the active ESO.

What is important for all of our sub branches is to

- a) Identify those members still active in pension and welfare work
- b) Have those members give a viable deadline for their working life
- c) Estimate then the life of the ESO.
- d) Define the wishes of the membership regarding a closure of the Sub Branch ie do they just wish to close the ESO, are they happy to see a social style club continue or a full closure and walk away being the preferred option. If this later is the case have all steps been put in place to identify the "Like Organisation" that all funds and equipment etc are to be passed on to. Is an up to date spreadsheet of both monies held in trust and equipment that has not been written of in (accordance with taxation rules) being maintained

All of these steps are of course only relevant to operating Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia sub branches. Where for example at St Marys Out post a separate "Veterans Centre" has been established, this centre has *no relevance* to the VVAA as it should not be covered under the rules of the VVAA. I say this as all Government funds (including BEST) are awarded to the Veteran Centre not to the VVAA Outpost. So that a clear demarcation line between the two establishments needs to be in place prior to the inevitable closure of one or the other.

I have been told this morning that this is not correct that St Mary's VVAA do claim BEST and that St Mary's is then acquitting the BEST funds.

All sub branches have been asked to provide the State Executive with any subjects it wishes the executive to raise at National.

I for one intend to raise again the case of Civilian Aid Workers in Vietnam who have not been given so much as the daggs of a Sheep's Bum in compensation for their work in Vietnam. And personally I don't give a Rabbits Turd of a dam as to who's is responsible, just fix it.

Greg Cant JP
President NSW Sub Branch
VVAA
11/09/2017

**STATE ADVOCATES
SEPTEMBER REPORT**

Advocacy training and in particular recognition of prior learning under the now closed Training Information Program (TIP) continues and recent assessments of prior learning in the Parramatta and St Mary's areas gave those interested another chance to experience the new systems.

Recent incidents interstate resulted in a review of the V.V.A.A. Advocacy authorisation administration process, a discussion paper and draft administrative instruction have been circulated and future procedures will be discussed in detail at the National Council in October.

In the meantime I am prepared, and have already implemented, the proposed procedures to ensure we best protect the association and more importantly the individual advocates.

Ken Foster

Ken Foster OAM JP
VVAA NSW Advocate
12 September 2017

**STATE COORDINATOR
SEPTEMBER REPORT**

Our event at the Sydney Cenotaph went off very well and was supported again by the 6 Avn Regt and the Australian Army Band.

In attendance was the Governor's Secretary COL Mike Miller as the Governor had to attend a state funeral.

Professor Dame Marie Bashir,
MPs Natasha Maclean- Jones, David Coleman, Linda Burney and Lynda Voltz,
Major General Mark Kelly,
LTCOL Doug Humphreys & Ms Katrina Harry and representatives of the forces and associations were also in attendance.

Andy Forsdike OAM gave the Address of the Day and Dinah Lee read a poem.

The numbers were down this year, certainly on the veterans' side, the organisations are starting to drop off, some don't even respond to the invitation any more.

C A Ward CSM
Event Coordinator
12 Sep 17

ST MARYS OUTPOST SEPTEMBER REPORT

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY, AUGUST 18th 2017

The 45 kilometre Westerly winds certainly took a toll on our VV Day planned activities, nonetheless, I am pleased to say that every able bodied person pitched in to do an ultra-fast relocation once the decision was made. The RSL Club Limited also did a quick re-organisation of their facilities; many thanks to all involved. I also received many thankful comments about the service being moved indoors.

The formalities of the evening went off quite well; this year's theme was The 50th Anniversary of the Battle of **SUOI CHAU PHA**, and in particular the remembrance of the six Australians who died in this Battle on 6th August 1967.



As a first for the St Marys Outpost, Vietnamese Community Members played an active part in our service and expressed sincere gratitude at the recognition that was given to the ARVN Association.

Our guest speaker Colonel Vo Dai Ton, formally of The Army of the Republic of Vietnam, gave a very emotion charged speech that had the entire audience hanging off his every word. At the conclusion of his speech he was given a hero's acclamation. During Colonel Vo's speech two Vietnamese Ladies in colourful traditional Au Dai's stood by the ANF and the SVN flags.

His wife Mrs Tuyet Mai Vo assisted with the lighting of the ceremonial candles and in timing with the sounding of Rouse; Mr Al Houng, VP ARVN Association raised the SVN Flag whilst Mr Kenneth Ward representing 7RAR raised the Australian National Flag.

The Catafalque Party were turned out well and did an excellent job, standing still for an hour as you all know, is no easy feat. –Well done!

On The Social Side

The ST MARYS RSL auditorium was filled to capacity and buzzing with cross talk, the buffet was well organised with no shortage of food, our auditorium co-ordinators Frank Lawton, John Foeken, Reno Ciantar and Geoff Perry did a splendid job of controlling the tables and conducting a very well supported raffle. Many thanks go to the anonymous raffle prize donors, and, to the Management of the (RSL) Fortune Restaurant. The Suoi Chau Pha place mats had the desired sobering affect, people were asking for extra copies to keep as mementoes.

Thanks must go The Band of the 1st /15th RNSW Lancers who as usual did a great job, we are also thankful to the Sunset Singers for their repertoire and professionalism.

Thanks also go to the ARVN Association for loan of the “Cyclo” and the various owners of the Ex-Military and other display vehicles.

This year Veterans Day Celebrations carried over into the 19th and 20th, on Saturday 19th We were well represented at the NSW Premier’s Luncheon, unfortunately the winds were still prevalent; consequently the guests were crowded into the ball room for the formalities, then out into the garden for ample drinks and nibbles.

Sunday 20th George Perrin represented the Train at an ARVN wreath laying ceremony and Kenneth and Betty Ward represented the Train at the ARVN dinner.

On a sad note:

Vale; Terry Blackburn, one of our long time members, train washer and fisherman. RIP Terry.

In closing, my sincere thanks go to all who make this great place function.

Tony Mullavey
President

MACARTHUR SEPTEMBER REPORT

We at Macarthur have been busy since the March meeting, welfare visits to our members and their families have been ongoing with an ageing membership this is to be expected.

Vietnam Veterans Day service on the 18th August at Mawson Park Campbelltown was held in very strong windy conditions with wreaths blowing everywhere. The crowd was in the vicinity of 200 plus.

Again this shows the significance the commemorative service has in the Macarthur region, Local schools again were well represented with both primary and high schools in attendance, 15 schools in total, the local Vietnamese community were well represented and again the ladies wore their traditional dress.

Local, State and Federal members of parliament were also in attendance and after the service all attended the function at the Campbelltown RSL club where the local Vietnamese community members made a presentation to the Sub Branch along with a cake which was well received.

Our fundraising BBQ's at Bunnings are again providing us with much needed funds to cover ongoing costs to help our members who need assistance. Without the help of the regular members to work these BBQ's we would struggle. The executive and committee thank those members for always being available.

I also attended both the Springwood and St Mary's Vietnam Veterans commemorative services and it was very pleasing to see the large numbers in attendance at both services, again the large numbers of school students participating at these services is very encouraging.

Ray James
President VVAA
Macarthur Sub Branch

BATHURST SEPTEMBER REPORT



Bathurst has been very busy getting ready for the Bathurst 1000 race weekend.

The guys have been out bush cutting tons and tons of firewood.

Membership is still at a reasonable figure, with 2 new members this month, unfortunately we lost one of them rather suddenly within a couple of weeks.

The dry weather conditions have seen all the grassed area of the park very bare and dry,

Which in a way is a good thing as it has reduced the risk of fire.

The new sign has finally been assembled and erected on the corner of the Park facing the Highway.

The guys had a gigantic job moving and assembling it.

