



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

**Conducted Tuesday 13th March 2018
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.

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
NSW State Patron	Gordon (Dutchy) Holland
NSW State Advocate	Ken Foster OAM
St Mary's	Tony Mullavey Sam Vecchio Andy Forsdike OAM
Macarthur	Ray James John Lees Patrick O'Grady
Far North Coast	Sheldon Maher OAM Cathy Maher

3. **Apologies**
Wagga Sub Branch
Carol Ward CSM
Hunter Sub Branch

Jervis Bay Sub Branch

Visitors

Nil

The President welcomed the Far North Coast Branch to their first State Council Meeting.

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

4. Previous Minutes

Moved: Macarthur **Seconded:** St Mary's that Minutes of the previous Meeting be Adopted

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Nil

6. Correspondence

All correspondence has been distributed to the sub-branches

Business Arising from Correspondence:

Nil

Moved: Bathurst **Seconded:** Macarthur that inward correspondence be accepted and outwards correspondence be ratified

Carried

7. Reports: Financial Report was emailed to all Sub Branches

Working Account \$6956.61 Welfare Account \$4799.65 Welfare 23,286.69 Fixed term Account \$11,120.40. Please when you deposit money into the State account let me know by email.

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

Carried

8. Reports

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

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

Carried

9. Motions on Notice:

Nil

10. Agenda Items:

Nil

11. General Business:

Greg mentioned that emails had been going out from ATP asking for people to register for the next level, as far as training is concerned. He also said that he had heard that all people under Level 3 will no longer be able to do VRB's, meaning that you would have to be accredited to level 3 or above to be able to do VRB's. There was discussion on this Ken saying that most of the training is actually done within the ESO, with the experienced people that are there and the mentoring system. Ken said he had not heard of any restriction on who can represent at the VRB, if you represent without having the insurance which comes through the VITA system which will only recognize the previous training you are at risk of litigation.

Sheldon mentioned that it was difficult for people outside the metropolitan area to get assistance and training, and that you needed to have a lot of prior learning knowledge on all the different aspects of the system to be able to assist the Veteran with their claim.

SEATO Nurses push for the Gold Card:

This should be all personal who served under SEATO in Vietnam on the Civil Aid program who have been denied all DVA services right from the word go because they came under the Minister for Foreign Affairs. We are still fighting to get them recognized for their services.

Sub Branch Audits:

There was some discussion on this subject and it was decided to let the Sub Branches decide if they wished to submit and Audit to State. There should be however an independent audit done on any sub branch before it closes.

Coral/Balmoral:

Ken spoke in regard to the Service for Coral/Balmoral at ANZAC Parade the Australian Vietnam War Memorial in Canberra which will commence at 11AM 13th May 2018, from there transport will be provided to the National Convention Centre for those going to the formal reception, at 4PM there will be transport back to the War Memorial for the Last Post services at 5PM which will focus on a Coral Veteran. There will also be another Service on 27th May to recognize a veteran from Balmoral. Townsville will have a full week of commemorative services and events with the battalions up there, there will be major events in Melbourne and Adelaide funded by DVA. Tickets for the reception will be handled through the Associations, at the moment there are 400 going to the reception with about

1300 people wishing to go. Tickets through Ken will be handed out before the event or pick them up from Ken in Canberra on the 13th.

Final Cenotaph Ceremony:

Carol has given a break down as to where she is at the moment, as this is the last ceremony at the Cenotaph in Sydney as well as Little Pattie giving her speech, Greg will be speaking to say goodbye to the Veterans and the State Governor and past State Governor who have supported us there and give a reason why it is the last service.

State Council Meetings and Visits to Sub Branches:

Greg visited the Bathurst Sub Branch last year for their AGM, Greg will be visiting the Far North Coast for their AGM in June, we are the Patrons of 21 Platoon at Kapooka, we have had a request from a Platoon at Singleton to be affiliated with them, we need to speak to Hunter in regard to getting their AGM in line with our visit to Singleton so we can do the visit all at the same time. Andy and Pam go to Wagga to the March outs there, they also go to Jervis Bay so can attend the Meeting for the Sub branch there.

Nominations for National:

Ken Foster OAM has been nominated by NSW for National President
Graham Anderson OAM has been nominated by NSW for National Secretary

Moved Macarthur Seconded St Mary's that the nominations for both be ratified

Three Year term for State Executive:

There was discussion on this and a motion was moved by Macarthur Seconded St Mary's. Carried To allow all NSW Executive to be elected for a three year term from 2018 onwards. There was more discussion and it was adopted subject to the confirmation by all Sub Branch

Moved St Mary's Seconded: Bathurst Carried

Executive Council Meeting:

17th April 2018 for any Motions going to the National Congress, 11AM (The Train) all welcome to attend.

Next State Council Meetings: All Meetings will commence at 11AM (The Train)

11th September 2018,
13th November 2018 Post National Council Meeting
12th March 2019 State Council Meeting & AGM

Sheldon spoke on the Veterans Affairs Children Education scheme saying that there needs to be more awareness of the children of Veterans in need of assistance.

Vietnam Veterans Association Badges are available through the National Treasurer.

Melbourne Sub Branch has a Lapel Pin for the 50 Anniversary of the Battle of Coral/Balmoral if anyone is interested. Cost is \$10

12. Next Meeting:

11th September 2018 at St Marys (The Train) Commencing at 11AM.

13. Closure:

There being no further business the State Council Meeting was closed at 12.20PM

State President

Greg Cant

STATE PRESIDENT REPORT 2017-18

Well NSW is in the envious position of actually increasing its overall membership with the members of the Far North Coast Branch changing their allegiance from the VVFA. So I would like to formally welcome the President and Secretary Sheldon and Cathy Maher to our happy little group.

Last year I attended the usual amount of NSW DVA Deputy Commissioner Round Table Conferences, however I think that we can stop this personal expense and waste of time. This round table has become a meeting place for organisations representing the RSL or Young Diggers and it seems that most people at the DVA feel that Vietnam Veterans are finalised as far as claims are concerned. Nothing could be further from the truth as I am currently doing two claims for Vietnam Veterans still working full time although in their seventies. But as all of us are covered by the VEA ACT, there are not going to be any major changes to that, only changes to the SOP's and these are handled at a National level not a state.

I have continued the fight for justice for one of our brothers who has spent 18 months in Long Bay for a crime he admitted to, but the Minister for Immigration the Honourable Peter Dutton has seen fit to keep him incarcerated in the Villawood Detention Centre awaiting deportation to NZ. So far his time in Villawood has been over double of that in Long Bay. Twice the Minister has been taken to the High Court and twice the Minister has been told by the courts that his decision "HAS NO BASIS IN LAW" The Minister staunchly refuses to accept the refers decision however (are we surprised) and wants to send this KIWI (he was 5 years old when his parents migrated but forgot to take out Australian citizenship) who served Australia with distinction in Vietnam being Mentioned in Dispatches.

The implementation of the new ATDP Training system has begun. At this point only "Recognition of Prior Learning" is available however we look forward to the availability of new training in the not too distant future allowing interested practitioners to regain the levels they previously held.

In 2017 I commenced the implementation of the State Executive visiting all sub branches. I attended Bathurst Sub Branch AGM last year and I must admit was given a great reception from a good lot of blokes. I have accepted the invitation from Far North Coast to attend their AGM later this year. Pam and Andy regularly visit both Wagga Wagga and South Coast. If any sub branch feels they could benefit from a visit from the "Old

Grey Haired One” please send me an invitation, I will be only too happy to attend. I was asked at the last AGM why don’t I just go, why wait for an invite. Well:

1. I don’t consider that just because I am State President I can drop in at any time. All sub branches are independent entities.
2. Most sub branches who do issue invitation do so for me or other executive to attend some event or other. An example of this is Wagga Wagga where we are sponsors of 21 Platoon Kapooka and we go down to present the Best in Platoon Award.

We have National Congress followed by the Coral and Balmoral 50th Anniversary in Canberra this May. As this will probably be the last formal Canberra Commerations that any of us will get to see as the Federal Government has decided it will only pay for major anniversaries (i.e. 25th, 50th, 75, 100th) I don’t think too many of us will be left about when the next major for us comes that is the 75th Anniversary of Long Tan. So I would hope that other than those heading to Townsville some might make the effort to Canberra and may be even spend a day as an observer at Congress for your Sub Branch and catch up with the State and National Executive for a bite to eat and a beer or two dozen afterwards.

For Now Brothers and Sisters
Stay Safe, Stay Healthy
Greg Cant
NSW Sub Branch President
28th March 2018

STATE ADVOCATES MARCH REPORT

the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) continues to conduct Recognition of Prior Learning assessments and have recently conducted a pilot RPL for Compensation Advocates level 3 (VRB) these will be rolled out during this year and into the future.

A pilot RPL for Compensation Advocates Level 4 (AAT) will be conducted later this year and once confirmed will also be rolled out for interested advocates.

A training session and assessment of volunteer welfare and compensation assessors has been conducted and this will allow trainers to be supported by accredited volunteer assessors when conducting consolidation training for those not doing workplace and mentor supported training at Welfare and Compensation levels one and two. This will also give accredited assessors the ability to conduct RPL of smaller groups and in isolated areas.

Since the introduction of a V.V.A.A. National Advocates authorisation process outlined in the V.V.A.A. Administration Handbook Policy AP001 I have had some concerns at the low level of application, while I realise there are many of our volunteers that have decided the new system is a time to retire and take a break I need to reinforce the fact that individuals or sub branches operating outside of this structure are not covered by the professional indemnity insurance under the V.I.T.A.

I recently had the opportunity to meet the new Principle Member of the Veterans Review Board it appears to be business as usual however there are several options she is looking at to further improve the review system.

The Ex Service Round Table (ESORT) recently adopted a policy that will, if adopted, change the face of military advocacy, this is a work in progress and should be watched with interest, a copy of the proposal is available for those interested.

I have also recently attended two DVA sponsored Legislation Review Workshops and these have produced several changes that are being considered, further opportunities exist in this area and I am open to input from members that see a need for changes in the VEA /MRCA /DRCA legislations.

I would welcome the opportunity to be re-appointed as V.V.A.A. NSW Advocate for a further term.

Ken Foster

Ken Foster OAM JP
VVAA NSW Advocate
13 March 2018

**EVENT COORDINATOR
MARCH REPORT**

Apologies again for my non-attendance, health issues have prevented this.

Planning is underway for the wreath laying service on 18 August.

The request has been submitted to RSM Ceremonial and invitations will be sent in April once the wording is decided for the invitation, this year being our last service at Sydney Cenotaph.

Little Pattie has confirmed that she will attend and give the Address of the Day and also sing a song for us.

As Andy & Pam can't attend this year, I would really appreciate confirmation if Ken and Dutchie are attending and can act as escorts for the Governor and Former Governor.

C A Ward
Event Coordinator
13 Mar 18

**MACARTHUR SUB BRANCH
MARCH REPORT**

Again this past year has been as demanding as the years come and go, we are all getting older, in 2017 we had 125 financial members as of Monday the 12th march 2018 we have 107 financial members that is 18 less than last year some still have to pay their membership however we have lost members in the past year as well, to those who have lost loved ones we again pass on our condolences they will never be forgotten "Lest we Forget.

Our welfare work has again been demanding I thank our team for the work they do its well received by those who find themselves in hospital or at home recovering. I must ask that when

some one is aware of members that are unwell please I again ask people to alert the office or a member of the executive or welfare team so we can offer help.

Our commemorative services and social functions were well attended during 2017, and again I'd expect our members to support those events again in 2018.

The executive in particular our Honorary Secretary John and Honorary treasurer Bryan their hard work and busy schedule keeps the Sub branch solid, also Vice Presidents Patrick and Ray's support during the year strengthen the executive team as does the management committee members, hard work and dedication by John (Janos) our trusty office manager, is well appreciated.

Our usual band of volunteers who each month set up and then pack up after the monthly Bunnings BBQ's is much appreciated this fund raising activity brings in much needed funds.

As other sub branches are also experiencing our membership is declining for various reasons, we as members need to encourage new members to join our organisation we are only as strong as our membership.

Just a reminder that this year 2018 will be the 50th Anniversary of Battles Coral/Balmoral (Vietnam May/June 1968) and again as the Previous 5 years there will be a commemorative service commencing at 1030 hrs on Wednesday 16th May,2018 at Ingleburn RSL Sub Branch Memorial garden 70 Chester Rd. Ingleburn all are welcome.

I look forward to again working with you all remember we look after all veterans and their family members that's our core business.

Lest We Forget

Ray James JP MAICD
President
VVAA Macarthur Sub branch

ST MARYS OUTPOST MARCH REPORT

Our AGM was held on Sunday 25th February 2018, all positions were declared vacant and apart from the Vice Presidents positions were filled un-opposed, an election was conducted for Two Vice Presidents from the four nominations; elected were George Perrin and Uwe Schoenherr.

We, as a Veterans Welfare Organisation have a collective duty of care, to ensure that we remain viable for the benefit of all existing and future veterans and their families. The point I am making is that we will need to look deeper into the future of the Train and its Welfare Operations. One very good idea is the grouping of different associations under their individual banners, but having their HQ's located at the Train.

ATDP... (Advocacy Training and Development Program)

Last year I expressed my concerns about the uncertainty surrounding a new pension and welfare system that was to come into effect on July 1st 2017. This was introduced by a member of the ATDP/DVA; unfortunately the many questions and answers that followed did nothing to alleviate the concerns of our membership.

By understanding that the requirements of the ATDP was in fact a “*Fait Accompli*”, our highly regarded and greatly experienced Pension and Welfare Officers took up the challenge and explored all the ATDP requirements to get accreditation for existing staff and future recruits.

Due to their timely actions, the conversion and accreditation of former TIP qualified pension and welfare officers has proceeded without any problems; If any member is of a mind to become a pension or welfare officer, please be aware that it is a simple online process under the guidance of a mentor.

Portal...

I am happy to report that our pension officers increased usage of the DVA electronic portal, has had the effect of speeding the submission of claims and subsequent acceptance of some claims within a 24 hour period. The portal also automatically collates information that is required, and necessary, for our BEST FUND submissions. Currently, we are still preparing some claims long hand, which are quite slow by comparison to using the electronic portal, paper submissions which are dependent on the postal service, and, the DVA's subsequent handling of inbox paper submissions, is obviously the much slower option. This long hand method also affects the submission of our BEST FUND account as it requires a manual collation of data, which then has to be added to the portal data for a combined submission.

I offer my congratulations to our Pension and Welfare team for their dedication and professionalism, in what for them, was a trying year.

My sincere thanks go out to all members for your continuing support in all things relevant to the Trains Successful Operation.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended the AGM and re-elected most of last year's executive unopposed, it was in effect, a show of hands in favour of the harmony and enthusiasm that is quite evident within our ranks.

Tony Mullavey

President

BATHURST MARCH REPORT

13/3/2018

Bathurst has had their AGM, committee remains the same, with no changes.

We have also taken out our own insurance with ELDERS, rather than the complicated insurance purchased by National, we got a much better coverage and at a cheaper price.

Our Membership numbers remain the same, we are still unable to attract new and younger Veterans.

We are still in the process of adopting the State constitution with amendments.

Tony Walker

