



Defence Reserves Association
Victoria Branch

President: Brigadier Peter D. Alkemade RFD

P.O. Box 7264 Point Cook VIC 3030

www.dra.org.au and email to dravic@dra.org.au

NEWSLETTER of the Victorian Branch DRA: July 2021

President's Update

The next Annual Conference (14 Aug) will be similar to last years with streamed presentations available on line for all members and interested parties. The response last year was very positive as only a few many members are able to attend the conference in person due to the travel requirements this was appreciated. This year there may be an actual conference in Adelaide (state government rules permitting) and as the theme of the conference relates to the role of the Reserve component in mobilisation there will be considerable new discussion. I would encourage all members to view the presentations and open forums and to share elements of the material with interested friends. The topic may also encourage new members for the association.

The rising tension in our region and the broad reaction to the Chinese Governments emerging agenda for the future places Australia in a more difficult position than most of the public are comfortable with. It is also focussing public concern closer to home after a long period of having little threat locally and most attention focussed on the Middle East and Terrorism. While the legacy of our recent involvements is still to fully play out there is now a need to restructure and plan for the new challenge emerging in East Asia and our major trading markets. There has been substantial discussion on the potential threats, however this has been overshadowed by the impact of the Pandemic still affection the health and economies of most of the world. Australia has been spared some of the impact of this but our population has still had to make substantial changes in their domestic and business lives and although vaccines are becoming available there is still considerable uncertainty in what the new normal will be for most of us.

Despite the (hopefully) temporary isolation most of us have suffered there has been considerable work done by the committee this year. There have been submissions to the Dept of Veterans Affairs restructuring and the Royal Commission into Suicide and a number of responses relating to conditions of service for the Reserve component arising from the expansion of effort in Support to the Community and the impact of the health emergency on Reserve members and on their training. The association has been encouraged to develop new ways to cooperate and communicate and has largely moved to remote working and video meetings. We still hope that the postponed Reserve Lunch will be able to occur on the 6th of October but have decided that the September AGM will again be streamed rather than be a physical meeting. One innovation recently adopted is that the DRA and RUSI in Victoria having conducted a study of shared membership, have agreed that both organisations should to expand the distribution of messages to members and so in future there will be more items of interest being sent by email.

I would also encourage all members to view the DRA website which after a long gestation is now beginning to fulfil its role of being an active notice board for the Association and its members. From now on all newsletters and reports will be hosted on the site and as it develops we hope to be able to accept questions and publish appropriate questions and answers on a page for the information of all. We particularly welcome feedback on the website and suggestions for its improvement as well as any general feedback for the committee.

As a final comment I'm happy to be able to congratulate Brigadier Doug Laidlaw, recently awarded the AM and currently Directory General Reserves – Army, who has been selected for promotion to Major General to assume the position of Head of Joint Support Services Division in September. JSSD has assumed responsibility for the functions of Reserve and Youth Division as part of Joint Capabilities Group.

Regards
Peter Alkemade
President

Secretary's Column

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran suicide

The Government has announced the commissioners to undertake the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide. The commissioners are:

- Mr Nick Kaldas APM, former Deputy Commissioner of the New South Wales Police Force,
- The Hon James Douglas QC, an esteemed former Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland and respected member of the legal community, and
- Dr Peggy Brown AO, a consultant psychiatrist and national leader in mental health policy with extensive experience in health and mental health service planning, governance and administration.

The Royal Commission will inquire into systemic issues and common themes related to defence and veteran death by suicide, including the possible contribution of pre-service, service, transition, separation and post-service issues, and other matters believed by the Royal Commission to be relevant to its inquiry.

The current interim National Commissioner, Dr Bernadette Boss, CSC will finish her appointment and has been asked to provide a report to government on the work completed on the Independent Review to date. Subject to the passage of legislation, the government will consider the appointment of a National Commissioner once the royal commission either concludes its inquiry, or at an earlier point of time if the royal commission recommends that the National Commissioner be established.

RUSI

The aim of the Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (RUSI of Victoria), which was formed in 1890, is to encourage the discussion of National Security and Defence matters, and to improve public awareness and understanding of such matters.

The main activity is the regular monthly address on an aspect of Defence or National Security by a speaker who is an expert on that subject and often pre-eminent in his or her field of knowledge. These addresses are arranged to cover a variety of interesting topics, both military and civil, pertaining to the land, sea and air environments, with emphasis on the subject chosen, whether it be on policy, equipment, science, strategy, tactics, personnel or perhaps, history. These lecture meetings (12 noon to 2.00 pm), usually on the last Thursday of the month at RSL HQ ANZAC House 4 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000.

RUSI have an excellent Library on Defence and National Security, with about 12,000 publications, many of which are rare or unavailable elsewhere. The Library is fully catalogued using the Dewey system, but is not yet on line. It is located in B Block, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne and is accessible by arrangement. A Newsletter is posted to members weekly. (When on line, their library catalogue address will be www.thecollectingbug.com/rusivictoria/).

Any queries may be addressed to the Secretary, LTCOL Bob Hart, at secretary@rusivic.org.au

Please go to www.rusivic.org.au for a membership application.

The latest RUSI quarterly newsletter is attached.

Upcoming events

National Conference

As earlier advertised the DRA national Conference will be held on Saturday 14 August. It will be conducted as a blended conference in Adelaide for those able to attend in person and virtual attendance via ZOOM. This is a great opportunity for those unable to travel to listen to the key players in the future of the Defence Reserves.

If you will be attending the conference as a virtual attendee, please register via this link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZxVB0DvxTtqcmnkwsV2Kgg

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the webinar.

Branch AGM

The DRA Victorian Branch AGM will be held on Thursday 9 September at 1900 h. Due to the uncertainties regarding gatherings in the short term this meeting will be conducted virtually via ZOOM similar to last year. Details will be forwarded in due course.

Luncheon

A reminder regarding the Annual DRA Victoria Reunion Luncheon which has now been rescheduled to 6 October 2021 at the RACV Club, Bourke St, Melbourne. After the enforced cancellation last year and postponement this year this is a long overdue opportunity to catch up with mates and is open to non-DRA members. If you haven't previously booked, a registration form is attached.

Subscriptions

While the branch runs on a shoestring some administrative overheads are unavoidable and we rely on accumulated life memberships (equivalent to ten years fees) and annual subscriptions to meet these expenses. We also have a liability for an annual payment to DRA National Office as a per capita for annual members.

Current Victorian Branch membership is 113 Life Members and 92 Annual Members. Membership is based on a financial year, so 2021/22 renewals are now due. A renewal form is attached and may be completed online for emailing without the need to print if you prefer.

We recognise that your circumstances can change over time. We have a particular issue remaining in touch when email contact is via a work email account and you retire or change jobs. Don't forget to drop me a quick note with your new contact details. Similarly if you change address, please let us know.

News from Associations and Calendar of Forthcoming Events

Given the COVID-19 situation, please check for changes well beforehand

Military History and Heritage Victoria

- Semut – Secret Australian Operation in WW11 Borneo, presented by Prof. Christine Helliwell: ZOOM presentation on Wednesday 8 September, 7-8pm. Contact <https://www.mhhv.org.au/category/speaker-programs> .
- [The Bloody Beachheads: The Battles of Gona, Buna and Sanananda – One Day Conference](#) on Saturday 25 September (*this is the COVID-postponement update*) 8.30am-4.30pm at East Keilor RSL, 12-22 Hoffmans Rd, Essendon. Cost is MHHV members \$60, non-members \$90. Concession \$70 which includes morning and afternoon tea and lunch. Contact <https://www.trybooking.com/BSRTC>
- Further details are attached.

To contact the MHHV **Email** : info@mhhv.org.au **Mail** : PO Box, 24376, Melbourne Vic 3001
Website : www.mhhv.org.au **Mobile** : 0419 256 681

RVR Association

The Pipes and Drums fundraiser: ***A Touch of Scotland***: will take place at the East Malvern RSL29 Stanley Grose Drive **on Sunday 22 August with Luncheon from 12 noon**. Dress is smart casual and cost \$50. Contact Ben Tosetto, BH0418 380 038 or ben.tosetto@outlook.com . **RSVP 11 August 2021**
RVR Association AGM will be held at East Keilor RSL, on Sunday 5 September, commencing at 1400 hrs.
Infantry Dinner will take place on 12 November.

Associated Organisations desirous of publicity for their programs and activities are invited to contact the Secretary of the Victoria Branch with information.

***** Please Note our postal address: P.O. Box 7264 Point Cook VIC 3030 ******

Planned Newsletter Schedule: Publication months proposed are: ***October January April July.*** If you have news or information or an article for the Newsletter could this be forwarded to the Secretary of the Victorian Branch before the middle of the month of publication.

The below link is to an Opinion article by MAJ Iain Adams (Rt'd) published recently in Defence Connect and titled *Initiate the Mobilisation Base Now*. It presents a view on future options for the Reserve. The views expressed are the authors and it is reproduced here to stimulate discussion.

<https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/blog/8456-initiate-the-mobilisation-base-now>

ARTICLES of INTEREST for Members.

The Editor is always asking for interesting articles about experiences related to Defence and Reserve service, present and past. These are desired by the end of the month preceding publication, that is by the end of March, June, September and December. Please send them to the Secretary of DRA Victoria Branch, PO Box 7624, Point Cook, VIC 3030.

if you know of someone who could join the DRA, you may be able to offer them the form: "Application for Membership" for return to PO Box 7264, Point Cook, VIC 3030.
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