



Defence Reserves Association  
Victoria Branch

President: Brigadier Peter D. Alkemade RFD

P.O. Box 7264 Point Cook VIC 3030

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# NEWSLETTER of the Victorian Branch DRA: October 2021

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## President's Message

The August virtual conference was a significant improvement this year with quite a lot of useful information being shared and allowed limited questioning of participants. I would be most happy to hear more comments on both the last conference and the emerging plans for 2022.

In 2022 the conference will be held in Victoria and a project team is already establishing the location and the essential administration elements for the conference. It has been proposed that the arrangements will be similar to this year with both a physical conference held near the CBD and followed by a dinner and a live streamed video conference for remote attendees. One aspect of the planning is understanding how many members are likely to attend in person and the newsletter includes a simple survey to allow members to express interest in either personal attendance, attending the dinner or viewing remotely.

Defence issues have been more prominent in recent months with both the South China Sea and Taiwan receiving significant attention as well as the recent establishment of a Taliban government in Afghanistan. The very recent announcement of AUKUS agreement appears to have been made to address some of these issues although the popular media appear to have focussed on the change of platform for the replacement submarine fleet. The agreement includes access to developing technology and sharing in the development of Cyber, Quantum and Artificial Intelligence capabilities as well as the submarine nuclear propulsion planning. The outcome is likely to be a substantial increase in long range strike and surveillance capabilities and in conjunction with the Australian, Indian, Japanese, USA, Quad arrangements has developed the Indo-Pacific Area of Interest as a focus for broad cooperation. An issue not widely mentioned in the media is the renewed interest in both broader utilisation of the Reserves and on the issues underlying mobilisation planning for credible contingencies.

Domestically the recent COVID lockdown has had a significant impact on our activities, notably the cancellation of our deferred Reserve luncheon. We have booked the regular first Wednesday in June date with the RACV and trust that by then the country will have reached its new normal with the bulk of the population fully vaccinated.

The latest lockdown has helped contain the latest variant of the virus although it hasn't been able to stop the increase in community transmission here in Victoria. One positive outcome has been a surge in vaccinations now approaching the targeted 70% level however it seems public tolerance of the measures have begun to reduce with significant although small demonstrations and revolts breaking out.

I am pleased to be able to say that despite the inability to gather together there are now a number of new options offered by Associations, the RUSI and the MHHV for video conference presentations. Details are included in the Newsletter.

Regards  
Peter Alkemade  
President

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## Secretary's Column

Communication is important in all aspects of life and hopefully this will be our last newsletter before we are able to resume some degree of normality with the lifting of many restrictions allowing relative freedom of movement and gathering. This will allow long overdue get togethers of units, associations and committees, or just old mates. The likes of ZOOM have been invaluable in maintaining contact but there is no substitute of personal contact.

Maintaining communication is a challenge. DRA Victoria Branch currently has 204 members of whom we have no current email address for 42. Some have advised that they do not have email which is fair enough if we know but for most it is just that addresses have changes, often due to change of employment, and we haven't been updated. We are writing to all of these to attempt to regain contact so just a plea to let us know if you change contact details so we can stay in touch.

On this theme our branch has accepted the challenge of re-establishing contact with the Reserve community in Tasmania. Over time the DRA Tasmania Branch stopped operating and we are now re-establishing contact with Life Members, unit commands and associations to explore ways in which we can share contemporary Reserve information.

For retired members without access to the Defence Network it can be challenging to remain up to date with what is happening in Defence and the Reserve in particular. The pace of change has never been more evident impacting organisation, equipment, personnel policies and personalities. There are several open sources for those wishing to remain current. Some links are below:

Navy, Army, Air Force News (fort-nightly)	<a href="https://www.defence.gov.au/Publications/NewsPapers/">https://www.defence.gov.au/Publications/NewsPapers/</a>
Australian Defence Magazine	<a href="https://www.australiandefence.com.au/">https://www.australiandefence.com.au/</a>
APDR	<a href="http://asiapacificdefencereporter.com">asiapacificdefencereporter.com</a>
The Cove	<a href="https://cove.army.gov.au/">https://cove.army.gov.au/</a>
Defence Connect	<a href="https://defenceconnect.com.au">https://defenceconnect.com.au</a>
Australian Defence Business Review	<a href="https://adbr.com.au">https://adbr.com.au</a>
Australian Strategic Policy Institute	<a href="https://www.aspi.org.au/">https://www.aspi.org.au/</a>

Readers will know that I am interested in the recent history of the Reserves in Victoria including former depots. While many are well documented some have disappeared from the records following demolition. This month I am seeking any member who has a photo of the following three former metropolitan depots – I'd love to hear from you:

Landcox Street, Brighton (formerly Artillery and Medical)

McWhae Street, Ripponlea (formerly Commando, OCTU and Medical)

Highbury Grove, Kew (formerly 1 Support Group, WRAAC and MP)

Finally, don't forget to respond to our survey regarding planned attendance at the 2022 National Conference in Melbourne. This information is vital for planning.

Regards,  
Brian Smith  
Secretary

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## Reserve Workforce

The table below from the Defence Annual Report 2020-21 shows the current active strength of the ADF Reserves.

Table 6.7: ADF Reserve paid strength (Service Categories 5, 4 and 3), 2019–20 and 2020–21<sup>1,2</sup>

	2019–20 Actual: days served (members paid)	2020–21 Budget estimate <sup>2</sup> : days served (members paid)	2020–21 Revised estimate <sup>4</sup> : days served (members paid)	2020–21 Actual: days served (members paid) <sup>5</sup>	Variation: days served (members paid)	Percentage variation days served (members paid)
Navy	112,514	120,000	120,000	118,135	-1,865	-1.6%
	(1,823)	(1,850)	(1,850)	(1,757)	-(93)	-(5.0%)
Army	775,012	775,000	775,000	798,640	23,640	3.1%
	(15,721)	(15,750)	(15,750)	(15,949)	(199)	(1.3%)
Air Force	233,323	238,037	238,037	252,086	14,049	5.9%
	(3,645)	(3,461)	(3,461)	(3,739)	(278)	(8.0%)
<b>Total paid Reserves</b>	<b>1,120,849</b>	<b>1,133,037</b>	<b>1,133,037</b>	<b>1,168,861</b>	<b>35,824</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
	<b>(21,189)</b>	<b>(21,061)</b>	<b>(21,061)</b>	<b>(21,445)</b>	<b>(384)</b>	<b>(1.8%)</b>

**Notes:**

1. Because the number of days or hours worked by Reserve members can vary greatly, figures in this table show the total number of days' service rendered, with a headcount of members rendering paid service in brackets.

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## A Request of our Members

With the DRA National Conference being planned for a Saturday in August 2022, it is planned to conduct it in both physical and virtual environments. To assist in planning an estimate of attendance is needed. Therefore, your response to these questions will be most helpful:

Q1. I would be interested in physically attending the 2022 National Conference. Yes / No

Q2. I would be interested in attending the Conference dinner on Saturday evening. Yes / No

*If possible, please reply before Thursday 4 November by email, otherwise by mail.*

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## RESERVISTS REUNION LUNCHEON - reminder

As advised earlier, this has now been postponed until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022. Refunds of payments can be made by EFT for which your Bank BSB and Account Number needs to be provided. Alternately, to confirm carry-over of payment and reservation please contact the Lunch Administration Officer (for which details are on the original Luncheon information sheet).

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**Victorian Branch AGM**

The 2021 Branch AGM was held virtually via ZOOM on 9 Sep 21 with 23 members attending. Proceedings were abbreviated due to the format and covered essential governance issues. Key outcomes were:

- Existing committee members were re-elected for another year unopposed and GPCAPT Coy was confirmed as Vice President Air Force after filling a casual vacancy during the year. The President and other Voce Presidents serve two year terms and were not up for re-election until 2022.
- The Treasurers Report showed that the Branch is financially sound with Cash at Bank on 30 June of \$18,507.93 in the operating account and \$10,845.73 in a Term Deposit.

## **News from Associations and Calendar of Forthcoming Events**

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

### **Military History and Heritage Victoria**

- **Leadership in Crisis: Blamey at War**, an MHHV Zoom Speaker event, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 7.00-8.00pm. Presenter is Brent Taylor.  
Contact: <https://www.mhhv.org.au/category/speaker-programs>
- **The Bloody Beachheads: The Battles of Gona, Buna and Sanananda – One Day Conference** on Saturday 12 November (*the COVID-postponement update*) 8.30am-4.30pm at Keilor East RSL, 12-22 Hoffmans Rd, Essendon. Cost is MHHV members \$60, non-members \$90. Concession \$70. It includes morning and afternoon tea and lunch. Contact <https://www.trybooking.com/BSRTC>
- Call for papers for: **4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Two-Day Conference: Hard Fought: Australia in the Mediterranean Theatre 1940-1945**, to be held on 9-10 April 2022 at Waverley RSL. Proposals and queries to [hardfought@mhhv.org.au](mailto:hardfought@mhhv.org.au)

**To contact MHHV Email: [info@mhhv.org.au](mailto:info@mhhv.org.au) Mail: PO Box, 24376, Melbourne 3001  
Website : [www.mhhv.org.au](http://www.mhhv.org.au) Mobile : 0419 256 681**

### **RVR Association**

With the COVID situation, and hopefully, changes to lockdown and so on, these plans may change again, but currently these are the re-scheduled events:

RVR Annual General Meeting:	Wednesday 10 November 2021 ( <b><i><u>On-line event</u></i></b> )
Pipes and Drums: Touch of Scotland	Sunday 30 January 2022
Infantry Dinner	Friday 27 February 2022

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An Update: & a Name Change: from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

**DCO (Defence Community Organisation) → DMFS (Defence Member and Family Support)**

*But this will not impact any existing program and service  
to Defence members and their families.*

This includes Transition support, Job Search Preparation workshops, Transition for Employment, and ADF Member and Family Transition programs, for which there are Veterans Support officers.

***Times are changing:*** while DRA members and Reservists may query the inclusion of this information, given the changes and opportunities which can involve currently-serving Reservists, awareness of these facilities and the opportunities may be of value.

***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 \*\*\*\***

A MASK is better  
than a ventilator.  
HOME is better than ICU.  
PREVENTION is better  
than treatment.  
It's not curfew.  
It's CARE FOR U.



Quote From RVR Association

**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.

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**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.

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*From the Department of Veterans Affairs.*

**If you need to speak to someone, help is available.**

Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week on 1800 011 046.

Or reach out to Safe Zone, which is free, anonymous, confidential and available 24/7 for current and former serving Australian defence personnel on 1800 142 072.

For all current ADF members and their families, the Defence all-hours Support Line is a confidential phone and online service and is available on 1800 628 036. Families of serving personnel can also contact the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

There is also a range of support available through Ex-Service Organisations, to find one near you visit <https://www.dva.gov.au/civil.../find-ex-service-organisation>

Please check in with your mates and reach out if you need help.

**Stay safe,**  
Stay well  
Stay in contact with your family and friends.

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**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.**

AND,

if you renew your subscription annually, and need to do so this year, please don't forget!