



## South Australian Division

### President's report, post AGM, for Council 21<sup>st</sup> of October.

**Meetings and functions.** Mess lunch 18<sup>th</sup> of September; War Veterans Home redevelopment launch by HE Hieu Van Le 20<sup>th</sup>; VHAC meeting re Jamie Larcombe Centre 24<sup>th</sup>; Legacy AGM 26<sup>th</sup>; Partners of Veterans Concert, St Peters Girls 29<sup>th</sup>; ESO reps discussion at P&GRSL on Best Funding inequity, Veteran Wellbeing Centre at the Repat and a disconnect between some "grassroot" ESOs and ESORT 1<sup>st</sup> of October; DEW /TPG management Meeting, am and RAAFASA AGM pm 2<sup>nd</sup> of October; "Hallowed Ground", play on Australian medical women at War, for Legacy, Pulteney Grammar 5<sup>th</sup>; DCG meeting TPG, attended by Warwick Raymont and Arthur Jeeves 9<sup>th</sup>; Mess Lunch 16<sup>th</sup> of October.

**VHAC.** The JLC post occupancy review will need further work as it has failed to address the issue of management of Comorbidities. The Wellbeing Centre at **Repat** will be built around the effective and busy P&G Veterans support Centre. Although many ESO groups have expressed interest their purpose is not clear. We have not elected to join this "hub". \$15m of Federal funds have been allocated for veteran needs, but much will probably be spent on refurbishing buildings. Our feedback from ESORT is via National President. It is obvious that ESORT has not noticed the BEST funding inequity. The DFWA, with Kel Ryan President, is a model in its feedback. I shall ask Dave to report on the DEW meeting, and Arthur with Warwick to report on the DCG.

**AGM Attendance.** It was pleasing that, for the first time in many years a quorum was present, so that the meeting commenced on time. Many of the dependable stalwarts of our Association attended, allowing me to present three significant awards to Allan Burns, Arthur Jeeves OAM and Bruce Newman. Our past, but not our future, was well represented. It was pleasing, nevertheless, to see Warrant Officer David Pyatt, attending, in uniform.

**Constitutional Amendments.** I regard this matter as a regrettable error of judgement, but not just by Arthur. He thought that the Council had agreed. But it had not been discussed as far as I can determine. But should it have gone to the vote I suspect that it would have been defeated. Why amend our constitution to save money? There are surely other means. I heard mutterings along the line of "even our local football club has an auditor".

I have identified from August a Finance Committee (FC) report that referred to a saving that might be achieved by eliminating the need for an auditor. Arthur may have presumed that other members of the FC agreed but then presumed that it had been a Council agreement. Engaging an auditor, in my opinion, is a matter of prudent governance, not a question of what we can do without. The Incorporations Act will be scrutinised, nevertheless. This amendment proposal was submitted to the Secretary, probably in time, that is 21 days before the AGM. It was presented to the five Councillors present at the September Board meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>, at which it appointed auditors for 2019-2020. But we, or I, may also be guilty of an error of judgement. The conduct of Annual General meetings is covered by section 33 of our constitution. We did not, for example, include the names of those who had been nominated for Council positions. It is moot as to whether the full text of the amendment might also be required in the notice of the AGM to be sent to members.

Another amendment proposal, submitted just a few days beforehand, was not received in time and was not included in the agenda. It concerned, I believe, whether, in terms of the quorum



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required for a Council meeting, the offices of President, Secretary etc should be included within the meaning of the word “Councillor”.

**Council Vacancies.** Election of a new Councillor Dr Warwick Raymont is welcome. His wisdom, knowledge and experience will be of great assistance to the Council. We still have vacancies. Recruitment, particularly of younger members would be pleasing. With the election of Arthur to Vice President the office of Assistant Secretary becomes vacant. Council may wish to appoint a member to this post, pending election at the next AGM. I requested, in a recent email, that Greg Weller’s position on Council be clarified and confirmed. All except one have agreed subsequently to accept my ruling at the AGM, that Greg’s nomination for VP was also taken to be one for Ordinary Councillor. Should it not have been he could be appointed at this meeting pursuant to section 35(5). I would also request that the Council appoint a permanent replacement for Bob Macintosh as our representative on the DCG. Warwick Raymont, and Arthur volunteered to attend in my place at its meeting on the 9th.

**Vice President Elections.** It will not surprise you that I was disappointed that my nominee, Greg Weller, was not elected. But it was a democratic process. In view of the demographic of those in attendance perhaps Greg’s non-election was inevitable. His daily work for us on Facebook, background work for commemorations, involvement in the EFC, preparation for RAAF 2021 etc will not have been seen and appreciated by many. Although our constitution does not require it, many clubs or associations will publish biographical notes on candidates for election. My suggestion at the AGM, that each might speak on their qualifications and vision was not taken up. It was, perhaps, too much to expect. But when did our AGM last need a vote to determine Council positions?

Bill and Arthur are worthy Vice Presidents for 2019. But a vice- anything is a deputy for, and a successor to, -something or someone, eg the President. Please consider who will succeed me in a few years. In terms of deputising, Bill and Arthur have already volunteered to deputise for me during my absence from 19 October to 2 November.

**High Eagle and Heads of Agreement.** The National Board of AFA Ltd. is aiming to prepare for the future; not just our Associations’ future prosperity, but whether it has a future at all. Parts of the HofA have evinced concern in the Council, particularly in reference to Victorian Law Courts. That has been explained. National President Carl Schiller has offered to answer any further questions. I believe that he has not been questioned subsequently by anyone from our Council. The steps in the process of Division harmonisation, (whose meaning I have explained) will be done after recommendations from a Joint Board Steering Committee JBSG. Before that body meets, with our representative Greg Weller, it is necessary to fund its activities. That is the first question that I ask the Council to answer. A motion to that effect has been submitted to Bill Chappell as Deputy Chairman. It may, can, and should, be debated in my absence.

**Unfinished Business.** Regrettably we have not yet welcomed a permanent **RAAF serving member** to attend our Council meetings as an **observer**. It is particularly disappointing, as SQN LDR Keane had been nominated and had accepted, but has not yet been invited to attend. We agreed on this initiative in May, despite objections, on account of constitutional assertions. In June this decision was again queried, on the ground that it had not been agreed upon previously. In my view this idea cannot be progressed until we resolve the matter of a



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### **Conflict of Interest policy.**

It has been my wish, and it was a request from the Executive, that Bill and John might meet Greg to form a consensus view, with a single document for discussion at Council, following the impasse created in September when we were confronted, after several weeks delay, with a second document presented as an amendment. Arthur did not accept my request to meet and discuss the matter. I am not confident of an amicable agreement and consensus.

In my view our management of conflicts should be benign restrictions on what individuals may speak on rather than mandatory gags or evictions, unless there is an obvious, major conflict, for example a pecuniary interest. There was a clause in the “amended” document that recommended that a person with a perceived or potential conflict must refrain from speaking etc. It was not given such an imperative instruction in the original document, nor do I believe that it is a requirement of ACNC. Is such a policy workable? How may a member know that someone perceives his conflict? Must Council debate every time, for example when RAAF involvement at a Commemoration is discussed, whether Greg should remain silent? Acceptance of that part of the policy might seriously diminish the help and co-operation that we currently enjoy from RAAF Edinburgh.

Members may be interested to know that, at present, the Board of AFA Ltd does not have a Conflict of Interest Policy. One wonders whether other State/Territory Divisions do. Bill Chappell might like to ask when he deputises for me at the AFA Board teleconference on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Remembrance Day and Related events.** There are several commemorative events and services on this day to which we are usually invited. At the date of writing we have been invited to services at the Repat and the Jamie Larcombe Centre. Invitations to North Terrace and the West Terrace Cemetery events are anticipated. The RSL Breakfast (6 November) and Road Home Breakfast (8 November) precede this date. I have arranged a table for the former. Vacancies exist. The Edinburgh Air Show follows on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. We should be represented on both days. Free tickets are still available. We have a full quorum of four for the 14<sup>th</sup> at GH.

I shall not be present to discuss, defend or debate, at next Council’s meeting, any of the matters in this post-AGM report. If you disagree with any of my assertions above, please discuss, but refer also to the Minutes, the Constitution or other authoritative documents.  
Robert Black. 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2019.