



South Australian Division

President's report to Division Council 16th of September 2019.

Meetings and Functions. Meeting with Hon Tony Piccolo 20th of August; Mess lunch and RAH Research presentation 21st of August; Opening of Memorial plaque at Mitcham Memorial Library 23rd August; Peacekeepers Glenelg fund raising 24th August; VHAC at War Vets' Home 26th; Tour de Legacy Film 28th; Launch of "Born to Fly" at SAAM 31st; Legacy week 2nd to 7th of September; Bob Macintosh's funeral 9th; Interview with journalist re Jamie Larcombe Centre 10th; Bitu Paka, Naval Association, Commemoration 11th; Battle of Britain commemoration 14th; UN Peacekeepers Day 15th. Two other (Legacy) funerals, and two other book launches, one Medical Military and one Legal Military, made for a busy month.

There was an excellent RAAFA membership attendance at our **Vice President's funeral**. It was well supported also by the RAAF. Air Commodore Gordon delivered the principal eulogy of Bob's outstanding Air Force career. Serving members as pall bearers carried the casket splendidly on shoulders. Bob's wonderful life of service was recounted and most appropriately acknowledged.

The ESO meeting with the opposition spokesman **Tony Piccolo** on the 20th of August dealt predominantly with concern about the Productivity Commission report on Veteran Rehabilitation and Compensation. The consolidated ESO response written by Bill Hignett and Bill Denny was agreed to be excellent. It had been praised previously by the Federal Minister.

The Mitcham branch has had a close relationship with the City Council. As the **Mitcham Memorial Library** has been redeveloped, and opened earlier this year, Treasurer Don Hawking OAM has urged that the library's War Memorial status should be formally acknowledged. The Council agreed with his proposal; a DVA grant was obtained, and the bronze plaque, appropriately worded and embellished with the badges of all three services, was officially installed on the 27th of August.

At the **VHAC meeting** the most pressing agenda items were the post occupancy evaluation of the Jamie Larcombe Centre (JLC), and a recent Newspaper article "Code of silence at War Vets' facility". The former will be discussed at a future meeting for its specific purpose. The latter led to my having an interview on the 10th of September with journalist Craig Cook, author of the above and of a similar "scandal" article in May, suggesting ill treatment of veterans at JLC and in Ward 17 at RGH Daw Park. He wished to discuss a letter, written by Warren Jones and myself in August 2018, critical of management of co-morbidities at JLC. Councillors have seen my recollection of this interview.

The **Dardanelles Cenotaph**, for Australasian Soldiers, now more prominently placed on Anzac Walk, was the site of a commemorative event that has become a regular one. Is it the first WW1 memorial in the World? It certainly is Australia's first, dedicated on "Wattle Day" September the 8th 1915, before the names Gallipoli or Anzac were in the lexicon. It had been funded by the women of SA. Widows, as chief mourners, laid early tributes. Uniformed "WW1 soldiers and nurses" attended.

Bitu Paka is another name not widely recognised, but now regularly commemorated by the Naval Association. It was not a large gathering, but this place, near Rabaul is site of the first battle, a successful one, several months before Gallipoli, in which we suffered our first battle casualties, AB Billy Williams and Captain Brian Pockley AAMC, Medical Officer. It was also Australia's first "nine eleven", 87 years before that date in USA.

There will have been four **book launches** during the last month. "**Born to Fly**", a biography of Harry Butler, launched at SAAM, is written and illustrated for young children, but is good for their parents.



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“Blood Sweat and Fears III”, launched by Sir Peter Cosgrove, is a biographical collection of all SA MOs in WW2, nearly 300 of them. There are some disappointing gaps in the entries for some of the RAAF MO entries.

“Victor Windeyer’s Legacy”, edited by Bruce Debelle AO QC, is a collection of papers and addresses by a WW2 Brigade Commander, later Major General and High Court Judge. He was an extraordinary soldier, jurist, historical scholar and master of the English language. **“Spitfire Leader”**, launched following the Battle of Britain commemoration is of the heroic and tragic life of Robert Bungey DFC, whose photo, medals and biographical outline is framed and hung in our mess.

Robert Black, 16th of September 2019.