



South Australian Division

President's Report to Council 21st of September 2020.

Meetings and Functions. 18th of August, AFA Board vidcon, Vietnam Veteran day; 19th AF 2021; Salisbury meeting with Greg, Bill and Doug Waters; 26th meeting with David Leicester; 31st VHAC at TPG; 2nd of September Battle of Britain (BoB) rehearsal; 6th Dardanelles Cenotaph service; 7th JBSG vidcon; 8th meeting with WOFF David Pyatt; 12th BoB commemoration; 14th vidcon with new shadow Minister, Blair Boyer; 15th AFA Board vidcon, AM Evans funeral; 16th CESM AGM and lunch; VHAC naming subcommittee; 17th interview with Martin Ball, teleconference with DVA Legal advisor re SoPs and DRCA; 20th Loxton ceremony, plaque to recognise four WW2 airmen killed in training accident.

AFA Board. Both meetings noted the need for up to date web sites; a new National one is now to be seen; they pursued the possibility of a NT branch in Katherine (WA sponsored); the ongoing interest of the CAF, WOFF AF; AF2021 progress and need for funds with Moonta sculpture; the firefighters "toxic exposure" claims. I am not convinced that these claims are being properly formulated; there is a need, for example, to define what medical conditions are claimed by how many; Last Post Ceremony at AWM; PC report (SoPs and DRCA).

JBSG. Greg and I both joined the vidcon on the 8th. The main topics were constitutional alignment (SA is doing well with our proposed amendments which were complimented by chairman Jim Campbell at the September Board meeting) and the criteria for various classes of membership, including corporate, social and associate.

AF 2021. Although this committee continues to deal enthusiastically with community involvement next year there remain a few difficulties: funding the Sir Richard Williams sculpture; orders for different banners; the extent of RAAFA involvement; appropriate recognition on Anzac Day and in Vets SA Calendar. A commemoration is envisaged in Salisbury to include a grave of a WW2 airman killed in training. The first event will be a Roy Ae Soc Dinner in December 2020. A brief overview of plans is needed for dissemination.

VHAC. There is considerable concern that services for veterans with "complex needs", viz MH, alcohol, drugs etc. are not well co-ordinated between state and Cwlth agencies etc. This problem was mentioned to the State Shadow Minister at the vidcon on the 14th. He was also made aware of SA's poor share



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of DVA grant funds and of representatives in the National Consultation Framework. My VHAC appointment expires early in 2021. **Naming at the Repat.** The agreed criteria are: significant Defence service; personal association with Repat; SA birth or residence, and inclusive of gender colour etc.

Constitutional Amendments. The various changes suggested to our constitution were finalised some months ago. Council members were asked to report any residual concerns in July. Consequently, what we then agreed will be taken to the AGM for acceptance. Although it looks like a formidable number of changes most are minor: clarification, simplification and alignment with National ideas. Kevin Gogler has diligently provided a list (as circulated to Council) which will be sent to members with the AGM notice. The complete Constitution, with changes, is available, and will be, on request.

Dardanelles Cenotaph Ceremony. This now annual event is a poignant one. The cenotaph was Australia's first WW1 monument, when our soldiers were still on Gallipoli; it was funded largely by SA women; the word ANZAC was not in the lexicon. Veterans SA organised the 7 September ceremony; the War Widows Guild were the "first mourners" and wreath layers. Tanya Kaplan, President of the Turkish Association SA, addressed us and read Ataturk's excruciating "message to the Mothers". If COVID allows a largertendancein 2021 please consider.

Battle of Britain Commemoration. A smaller but excellent service was held at the Air Force Memorial TPG, attended by the Governor and Mrs Le, by the Premier, Lord Mayor, parliamentarians, ESOs, veterans and others. RAAF members did splendidly, as anticipated, with an excellent address by WGCDR Harrison CO, 1RSU, about one of the "Few", who was later AM Ron Lees; the catafalque party, MC, Chaplain, bugler (Army) etc. all directed, organised and choreographed superbly by Greg Weller. "High Flight", the posthumously published poem by PLTOFF J G Magee RCAF was most appropriately and feelingly read by LTCOL Andree Labossiere RCAF. We, the association, were flattered to be acknowledged as "hosts". Shadow Minister Blair Boyer sent his congratulations and thanks for such an "excellent and professional event". That evening AIRCDRE Rogers hosted a formal dinner at the NMAF Club. Special guest was Richard Bungey, son of Robert Bungey DFC, one of "The Few".

CESM AGM, our Relationship with it and the MOU. Discussion on our relationship with the Mess has not revealed a unanimous view. Some have



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seen the CESM as independent (which it is) and of no real concern to our purposes, despite it providing a programme of events, including monthly lunches, with camaraderie an essential element. Some have seen it as a drain on our finances, yet it has in fact, regularly injected funds to our benefit; from over \$400 a month in past years when it was busier, to just several hundred dollars a year more recently. The fact that it has not paid a commercial based rental for the parts of our leased area has not cost us money; its occupancy is not therefore a financial detriment. Not charging the Mess for its occupancy has been a matter of agreement between us in a MOU, twice written and now due for renewal. When we do so we shall look more closely at the power use of CESM activities and whether its current rate of reimbursement is reasonable. Former Council members have argued many times over these differences of opinions; have agreed to accept a MOU and have rejected the idea of a sub-lease or commercial rental agreement. In reviewing these matters I have become aware that previous Councils have had an annual agenda item to appoint the CESM chairman and our RAAFA members of the CESM committee. But these appointments were all made last Wednesday at the CESM AGM.

Council Membership Changes. Our Treasurer, former Secretary, and both Vice-Presidents have not nominated to continue serving in the Division Council. Our Council will thus lose several decades of Corporate knowledge with their retirement. I would hope that they will maintain ongoing interest in our affairs. **Dave Helman** has certainly made just such an offer: to assist and advise at any time. That is greatly appreciated. After such long service none has needed to give reasons for stepping down and I have not asked for any.

John Stapleton, a Councillor since 2012, stepped into the Treasurer's shoes three years ago with the sudden death of his predecessor and has led us with great competence and with due reference to our mission and charitable purposes. I hope that he will be able to hand over the "books" to nominee Laurence Ng with appropriate guidance and without undue difficulty. I hope also that with his expertise in another field, John will be able to continue as web site co-ordinator.

Bill Chappell, I am delighted to know, has indicated that he is willing to continue as editor for "Plane Connections". That is very pleasing. He has been medically advised to reduce his workload. As Bill has ongoing commitments to two other branches, I am most grateful that he is prepared to continue this



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important service. Seventeen years as Councillor and Editor and ten as Vice President is a pretty good innings, Bill. And you are still “not out” as Editor.

Arthur Jeeves and I have had many differences of opinion; we have, in the main however, reconciled them. His criticism in many instances has been against past decisions by previous Councils. However, our Council has been most usefully advised from time to time by Arthur’s observation of an error or breach in our practices. The latest examples have been the identification of the absence of an appropriate employment agreement with Annette, and the large sum of money inappropriately charged by our former investment management firm. He has identified regulations and agencies for our attention with respect to governance, privacy, conflict of interest and other matters. Future constructive advice will always be welcome.

I shall not attempt to encapsulate **Dave’s service** over more than two decades. In most of that time he has been essentially the State’s leader and Secretary, hardest working servant and guide for our direction. His working relationship with Annette has been the cornerstone of RAAFA SA. It will be wonderful to have his advice from time to time, even if not from within the Council.

At our AGM we may well have unfilled Council vacancies. We have identified members elsewhere who might fill them subsequently. Should our constitutional amendments pass, and there seems little reason to be pessimistic, the Council will be able to ensure a full complement of Councillors by appointment outside an AGM or SGM.

Robert Black.

President RAAF Association SA, 21st of September 2020.