



South Australian Division

President's Report to Divisional Council, Monday the 16th of August 2021

Meetings and Functions. 21st of July, Mess lunch cancelled; VWM lunch 6 August, AF 2021 meeting and Boyer meeting all postponed; 22nd third Covid test!; 23rd Premier's dinner to farewell Governor postponed to 3rd of November; 25th Wellbeing Centre at Repat naming ceremony cancelled (Warwick, deputy); 29th virtual meetings with AFA Board and Cathedral service planners ; 30th Mitcham committee, letter re Boothby candidacy; 4th of August AF 2021 meeting postponed and beginning of Anzac Highway emails; 5th Legacy lunch with speakers from MESHA; 9th funeral of Laurel Leak, widow of Bomber Command veteran; 13th RAAF Centenary Cathedral service cancelled.

The State lockdown, following the so-called Modbury cluster, resulted in many meetings and events being cancelled or postponed. These discussions have required telephone hook-ups or email conversations.

The decision on the 29th of July to cancel the **Cathedral service** was a disappointing but realistic one. It was realised that it could only occur, if not prohibited by authorities, with restricted attendance, the wearing of masks, and without congregational hymn singing, (though a single Army vocalist might have accompanied the band). An attempt to notify, by letter or email, all invitees of the cancellation may not have been complete. Queries from Doug Waters and Kevin Gogler suggest that some emails may have gone astray.

The AFA Board videoconference included the controversial decision to support the publishers of "Wings" by a capitation fee. I had circulated my thoughts about this decision soon after the meeting. The decision should be discussed in Council as the necessary funds will be payable by Division, not by a fee for individual members.

MESHA. The Military and Emergency Services Health Association is the latest name for "The Road Home", formerly aka The Repat Foundation. It has been supported in the past by the Hospital Research Foundation. A unit within it, Invictus Program rents a room within our lease; its printed material is displayed outside AFA offices. It has for some years referred to Post traumatic stress instead of PTSD. I had previously supported it as chairman of its grant committee. But this omission of the D is misleading and unhelpful. It may have started with Prince Harry. This incorrect language persisted at the Legacy presentation. I shall attend its Remembrance Day breakfast with a Legacy group but am not asking others to consider attending.



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On the other hand, I would encourage Councillors to join me at the **Quiz Night** organized by FSGT Terence Youill on Friday the 24th of September in the Drill Hall. The AFA supported him and his family when he underwent treatment for a brain cancer. I regard this event as part of his rehabilitation. All proceeds will go to the Neurosurgical Research Foundation.

Others may also wish to attend the annual “**Don’t forget me Cobber!**” luncheon at the Oval for the Virtual War Memorial on the 26th of November. The speaker is always good.

The Anzac Highway has had four **signs** erected since the underpass of South Road was constructed. They represent the Navy, Army, Air Force and New Zealand armed forces and are already falling into disrepair. Keith Harrison had written to DPTI and to Veterans SA some months ago, without any reaction. This neglect will have been brought to the Premier’s attention by Cheryl Cates and Ian Smith at a meeting planned for last Thursday the 12th of August. The second agenda item will have been the planned changes to the **Drill Hall** and other parts of the Training Depot. Please see the Sunday Mail article from the 8th and my correspondence. In email correspondence member ESOs of the Consortium have supported the RSL in its protestations to the Premier. It is probable that the Premier will hear that ESOs are unhappy with the way that his veteran hub or Military Heritage Precinct is being marketed and that the **VAC** in its current formation is not fulfilling its task to present to the Minister matters of veteran concern.

Keith Harrison, RSL, has drawn attention to two other matters. The first is that a collection of brass plaques had been removed from Anzac Highway and fixed to walls on the first-floor landing of the TTD. Twenty one were applied outside the AFA entrance a few months ago by Veterans SA staff and twenty one applied opposite the RSL’s. There was no discussion nor notification. The plaques represent various unit or squadron associations or ESOs. They commemorated Adelaide Legacy’s 70th anniversary in 1998. Legacy may be unaware. As it will shortly move to the TTD I have written to inform its Director Mark Matthews.

Keith also told me about a “missing WAAF flag”. It was in fact an Australian National Flag and has been replaced. Secretary Warwick will explain.



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Robert Black.

AFA SA President, 16 August 2021.