



South Australian Division

President's Report to Council 18th of January 2021

Meetings and Functions. AFA Board vidcon 15th of December; Christmas Mess lunch with speaker Peter Brune 16th; Strategic planning meeting 17th; Moonta visit to meet sculptor et al with Greg 4th of January; Executive meeting 6th; AFA office reopens 11th; AF2021 committee telecon 13th.

The Blue Jeans **AFA Board vidcon** the day after our last Council meeting included a few initiatives. Peter McDermott and a small committee is amending the National AFA Ltd **constitution**. It will be an improvement; aims for DGR status with a Foundation under a Deed of Trust; and it acknowledged SA's lead. A committee to promote **Community Engagement** has been formed, to meet in January. Greg has been nominated as our delegate. The subsequent Board meeting was rescheduled to 10/11 February, while I am on leave. It was later changed again, to meet on the 16th. Warwick had offered to deputise. Board representation from NSW is lacking. Involvement of members at the AWM **Last Post Ceremony** is invited. President Carl Schiller in his report commented on the ESORT DVA meeting: noting the IGADF and **Brereton reports** with concern but without prejudgement. He also acknowledged that the **Productivity Commission's** recommendation on Advocacy was being considered along with the Cornall report. Legislative harmonisation has not been addressed. (Nor universal adoption of SoPs, RBB). He has met with the **Interim National Commissioner for Veteran Suicide** Prevention at a round table. He is impressed with Dr Bernadette Boss, a veteran whose PhD is in Law. But there is still no acceptance by some that her appointment is a suitable substitute for a Royal Commission.

The Strategic Planning meeting was well attended though I was late. A revised set of documents has been prepared by Greg with minor but important amendments to our "Plan on a page", mission statement etc. It is hoped that focussing on our "2021 Business Plan" with its four key functions of Advocacy, Assistance, Camaraderie and commemoration, will be of considerable value as we plan for the future.

The trip to **Moonta** on Monday the 4th of January was a great success. Greg and I travelled independently with Josh and Tania. We met the sculptor Tim Thomson with many worthy local citizens including RSL and VVA leaders and Russell Peate, CEO CCCouncil which is very supportive. We visited the sculpture site in Queen's Square and the plaque and bench in the Council depot. Although a Church service is planned, at the Heritage listed Moonta Mines Uniting Church, that Church is some distance out of town. Although donations are tax deductible (to the National Trust of SA, Moonta), this fact has not been widely publicised.

The Executive Meeting on the 6th of January decided on a restructured Council meeting Agenda and recommended that reports for Council meetings be submitted by the preceding Wednesday. It also decided on the final wording of the Employment agreement with Annette (signed by Annette and myself on the 11th); considered the arrangements and invitation list for this evening's SADFO Farewell/Welcome event; recommended purchase of many dozen bottles of (tasted and selected) wines recognising Sir Richard Williams and other "SA Eagles" during AF2021; discussed the wording needed for our DVA grant



South Australian Division

application and further plans to support our long standing quest to have Siam or Thailand recognised on the Anzac Walk pavement. Business cards must be amended to include our mission and to reflect our reversion to AFA.

Later enquiries to DVA indicated that applications **for grants to support younger veterans** do not close until the 5th of February. I have asked that relevant documents be forwarded to Paul Lemar and others in the Association who might assist him. These grants are annual ones. We have an opportunity yet to seek funding for a part time Transition Assistance Officer.

This evening's planned event was discussed subsequently and the list of acceptances noted. Many had failed to reply. Greg has prepared a detailed running sheet of which both the Governor and Premier have been advised.

There appear to have been difficulties associated with booking for the Gathering of Eagles in May during the History Festival Week.

During the interval between meetings two **funerals** of ex-RAAF servicemen have been notified. That for Bomber Command veteran, Doug Leak, tomorrow, has involved an attempt at diplomacy to unscramble misinformation and to help the family in an appropriate and acceptable manner.

Disclosure. I have forwarded to members my strong feelings about the **Repat at Daw Park**. Those views have been modified after two years only in my dismay at the State Government's failure to reactivate the hospital. Whether they represent a conflict of interest is for others to judge.

Robert Black

President Air Force Association SA. 12 January 2021.