



South Australian Division

President's report to Division Council Monday, the 19th of July 2021

Meetings and Functions. Meeting with DEW, Bev Voigt/Stuart Burns and Catherine Walsh/Chantelle Bohan, Veterans SA, 22nd of June; AFA Board teleconference 22 June pm; Opposition spokesman Blair Boyer meeting (W R deputy) and Mitcham committee 25th; Premier round table 1st of June (W R); Robert Bungey DFC plaque ceremony (W R deputy, GW also present); Ron Biddell AFC funeral (wake at Mitcham club rooms) 6th of February; visit to AFA WA Bull Creek, Aviation Heritage Museum, retirement villages etc 9th of July; VHAC 12TH OF July; Mitcham branch meeting 16th of July.

Thank you most sincerely for those who deputised for me and did various tasks during my recreation leave, a Kimberley Coastal cruise with energetic Zodiac excursions, for two weeks from the end of June.

Our meeting on the 22nd, with Dave, Greg and Warwick, was interesting and informative. **Veterans SA** is a new chum when it comes to TTD/TPG management; nor, we learnt, does it plan to relocate here. Yet it chairs meetings and wishes to make decisions about us. That may be the Premier's intention in his idea for a busy veteran hub at **"Torrens"**. Those who met him on 1 July may wish to comment. But we and the other tenants, (leaseholders/stakeholders) have had difficulty dealing with previous (DPTI) and current (DEW) Lessors over management documents that are out of date and neither strategically nor operationally helpful. Despite a co-operative and cordial relationship with TPG manager Jacek Gniadek, the parking imbroglio continues. We do not accept that the TPG should be regarded purely as a revenue raising asset. The AFA Division Council view along those lines was expressed as a motion last month. I stated it at the meeting. Ms Walsh asked what might make us soften our attitude. I responded that, as Greg has repeatedly requested, we wish to see a Strategic Plan and/or to help in its preparation. A further meeting is planned with DEW and Vets SA and the other lessees or stakeholders on Tuesday the 20th.

The AFA Board teleconference in the afternoon held no particular surprises. The Alumni project, the development of a Foundation, the need for volunteers to join working groups (Community engagement, JBSG) and success in the fight for compensation for firefighters were discussed. VP Peter McDermott reported on progress with Constitutional amendments and the Board heard that our Constitution had at last been acknowledged by the ACNC.



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In my absence two important ceremonies were conducted commemorating the lives and service of two decorated former RAAF pilots, Robert Bungey DFC and **Ron Biddell AFC**. I greatly regretted missing the events as I had known Ron well, delivering him his Distinguished Service Award at Mount Barker on the 13th of June.

I had also met Richard Bungey and collaborated with him and Bill Denny in their negotiations with Holdfast Bay Council. I have had a report that the commemoration went well and that Greg Weller spoke splendidly about **Robert Bungey DFC** and his service.

I shall leave it to Warwick and Greg to add further comments about the above two events and to report on the **Premier's Round Table** on the 1st of July, and on Blair Boyer's meeting on the 25th of June.

At the end of my period of leave I had nearly two days in Perth. Having met **AFA WA** President Clive Robartson and CEO John Murray at the National Board and Ian Craig, another professional officer, at our recent Aboriginal Veterans' service I arranged to visit the AFA Retirement Homes, RAAFA Club, Bowling green and **Aviation Heritage Museum at Bull Creek** on the morning of Friday the 9th. Both gentlemen kindly met me to show me around, had coffee with the WA AFA Advocate, Geoff Brand, to share thoughts on veteran legislation and introduced the Museum Manager Trevor Fettis. It certainly rivals SAAM. Apart from the Lancaster and other aircraft it has a decommissioned link trainer but a working Virtual Reality Macchi trainer guided by a senior Flying Instructor at Pearce Air Base. WA has a Battle of Britain lace with a display problem, like us. It kindly presented us with a document on the history of the lace a few months ago. The WA colleagues have been most courteous and generous. Its funding foundation is large enough to buy the remainder of AFA Australia-wide.

The VHAC has a new Chairman or Presiding member, Ilona Horan, currently a Reserve Army Officer and CO of the University Regiment. Five newer members were present, including a RAAF Reserve MO, a Naval Senior Nursing Officer and an Army Officer concerned with Rehab. It retains the service of Psychiatrist Prof Sandy McFarlane, Darren Renshaw SA Health advocate and former RGH liaison officer and Nathan Klinge, CEO RSL Care. It gains Justin Brown from JLC hub and Adam Monkhouse SA Health. It seems well placed to report, for example, to the Royal Commission on suicide and to the Minister Mr Wade on the State's anticipated programs on veteran suicide.



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I shall send a few comments on this subject to National President, Carl Schiller, for his AFA submission. The meeting was held in HMAS Australia room opposite the Veteran Wellbeing Centre at the Repat.

An ongoing problem for VHAC has been an inability to gain **data on health services** (or prison incarceration, for example) provided for veterans. Neither DVA nor SA Health has a complete picture as the former does not “see” Public Hospital admissions; the latter does not have data from Private Hospitals (or, for example, private Mental Health facilities). Furthermore “veterans” are likely to be identified only if they possess a Gold or White treatment card.

There will be a **Repat Commemorative naming** event at the Repat Health Precinct on Sunday the 25th of July. I have Church commitments and have sent apologies. Warwick will kindly deputise for me. I expect that both names, illustrations and summaries will be seen on a screen and perhaps in booklets. I recommend collecting a few. I understand that four former AFA members are among those whose names will be perpetuated: Lloyd Wiggins DSO DFC, Bob Cowper DFC and bar OAM, Bob Macintosh AFC OAM and Guy Bowering OAM.

The AFA National Board had an extra videoconference on Tuesday the 13th to discuss financial matters concerning the **publication of “Wings”** magazine. It has been provided free with our subscription as it is available on-line. But without extra advertisement contributions it needs more. Most feel that it is a quality journal and that members would find it worth an extra \$5-10 per year to receive it. Our “capitation fee has been static for several years. Expect it, or some other part of our subscription, to increase.

Robert Black.

President SA Division, 19th of July 2021.