



## South Australian Division

### President's Report to Council Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2022.

**Meetings and Functions.** 18<sup>th</sup> of March Mitcham AGM; 21<sup>st</sup> visit to Caroline Waller; 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting with Mitcham City Councillors; 28<sup>th</sup> Legacy meeting, receipt of RAAF books; 31<sup>st</sup> RAAF Birthday Service (am) and evening function with book launch; 1<sup>st</sup> of April Mitcham committee; 2<sup>nd</sup> Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith Dinner at NMAFC; 4<sup>th</sup> RUSI lunch with address on Space awareness; 6<sup>th</sup> AFA Board meeting re Wings; 8<sup>th</sup> Management meeting with DEW; 14<sup>th</sup> lecture/dinner at NMAFC "Where Eagles Dare", Peter Ingman; 19<sup>th</sup> funeral for Keith Small (Mitcham), 10 am, lecture at State library on Sir Ross Smith 6 pm; 20<sup>th</sup> CESM meeting and AGM 10.00 am; evening dinner with "Friends of 460 SQN"; 21<sup>st</sup> meeting with Minister Brock, plus Bill Denny, Bill Hignett and Ian Smith; 22<sup>nd</sup> Mitcham branch meeting, RBB speaker.

**Mitcham branch AGM.** I offered myself again as President; Jeff Mustard accepted vice-Presidency and Kevin Gogler continues as Secretary. There was no nomination for Treasurer, nor for auditor. Other committee positions were filled. Clem McArdle, WW2 veteran, continues as a committee member, He turns 100 this year. My AGM report for 2021 was forwarded to Division Councillors last month. We have subsequently found an honorary auditor.

**Waller Memorabilia.** Councillors will have seen a list of material that Caroline Waller (WGCDR Gordon Waller's second wife/widow) has offered. A brief biographical summary of Gordon's life is distributed separately. I would like Council, please to debate whether we might be able to keep any item; or if not who might. SAAM is interested in the Italian roundel.

**City of Mitcham** Councillors Moss And Tilley met me and Kevin Gogler to discuss a future, as yet undecided, Council plan for the land around the club rooms and defunct Bowling Greens. They are interested in a community garden and are sympathetic to the branch's limited future. Demolition is not threatened; nor was it when the Council previously undertook a major flood mitigation project to enhance Brownhill creek, nor over a decade ago when Bowls was still being played.

**Gift of books** from estate of RAAF Veteran Ross Henderson, via Graeme Gatley. Bill Chappell expressed no interest for the Division library, which is not utilised, requires stocktake, rationalising and tidying. Mitcham has retained a six volume Pictorial History of WW2. Other books will be offered to SAAM.

**RAAF Birthday** commemorative events and conclusion of Centenary. I shall not comment in detail about these two most successful and enjoyable functions. Greg Weller whose superb planning and organisation with RAAF members has been acknowledged, has written about them on Facebook and sent a full report to "Wings". Thanks also to Gary Petts for photographs. Annette with the CESM also deserves a special thanks. I have seldom heard so many unsolicited comments of praise.

It was an appropriate occasion to present Honorary Membership to Robyn Knight but a pity that Lainie Anderson was unable to attend for hers. She had a Covid contact as did the host AIRCDRE Bender, whose absence was most unfortunate. I have written to him in thanks and sympathy. Numbers were down compared with 2021, but substantially exceeded the small gathering at the NWM in 2020. Parliamentarians were not invited for reasons viral and



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electoral. Those sending apologies may have included the VAC chair, Susan Neuhaus. Veterans SA had booked a VAC meeting in the TTD on the same morning, despite Annette's protests.

**Mealtime addresses.** I have heard interesting addresses at functions and hope that others may take advantage of attending similar ones when informed in sufficient time. Daniel Floreani gave an interesting address, with a legal perspective, on awareness in space at a RUSI lunch; Chris Verco addressed the NMAF Club diners with HE on 75SQN WW2 events; Peter Ingman spoke on his subject of SA WW2 RAAF bases, events and service. His address, which was well received, had previously been postponed by Covid.

**The AFA Board,** despite my and Greg's (SA) misgivings, but with legal advice, has approved two documents in which AFA supports the "Wings" publishers to cover a shortfall of up to \$60,000 pa. Capitation fees of \$10 pp will, it is presumed, produce such financial support. The Secretary Warwick has copies of the two documents.

**DEW Management meeting.** Warwick, Annette and I attended this meeting in the RSL Memorial Hall with representatives of (only) RSL and VVAA. Legacy was not invited; History Trust and VWMA were not represented. Nevertheless it was felt to be a friendly and useful meeting, chaired by Stuart Burns, Program Manager, Heritage Property etc, with David Edwards, Heritage Asset Officer, secretary. Chantelle Bohan of Veterans SA was covid isolated. The Steering Committee report, whose status with the new Government is unknown, was discussed. The AFA complaints were sympathetically received. Councillors will have received my previous observations including the omission of Air Force Memorials; uncertainty as to the role, function and space designated "The Mess" with ignorance of the AFA leased area eg "Memorial Room", an incorrect date for lease renewal (December 2023 not 2022), concern that Veterans SA should be seen as suitable "Governance" committee conveners, an undiscussed term "fiscal sustainability", and the threat that current leaseholders might be "squeezed". Stuart Burns, with previous professional expertise of leases, reassured us that reviews are for the advantage of lease holders. I referred to an Advertiser article from that date suggesting that the National Trust would remain at Ayers House, making the exit of History SA somewhat problematical. The change of Government was discussed. The Environment Minister is Susan Close, Deputy Premier. We noted the fact that Blair Boyer will not be Minister for VA but for Education. Education was another of the five recommendations from the Steering Committee for the "Torrens Commemorative Precinct", a new name, the first recommendation. I was promised to be informed to whom I should write to express my displeasure with the SA report but have not yet learnt. There will be changes in due course to security arrangements, boom gate access and alarms.

**The Thailand post card campaign.** By the date of the election approximately 1,500 had been delivered to the Norwood electoral off of the former Premier; and no doubt 1,500 letters of acknowledgement will have been sent. Our former Minister just did not get it. He still thought that a veteran view should be obtained via the VAC, which met and had the matter on its agenda on the 31<sup>st</sup>. The Labor party shadow Minister had promised that the name Thailand would be added to the pavement pre-election. This promise has been repeated post-election. Our meeting with Minister Brock on the 21<sup>st</sup> will have addressed that matter. It will focus on our perceived dissatisfaction with both VAC and Veterans SA as representing ESO views and feelings; discuss the TCP report and request regular meetings.



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The Ross Smith talk and Friends of 460 SQN. Dinner will be reported on in the hope that veterans such as Ern Milde Howard Hendrick or Don Looker, might attend and be available for an ABC interview with Bill Denny and for Anzac Day.

Robert Black  
President AFA SA Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2022..