



NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

9 – 10 OCTOBER 2017

ATTENDANCE

Members: Michael von Berg (RARC), Brian Howard (RARC), Trevor Dixon (RARC), Pat McIntosh (RARC), Paul O’Sullivan (RARA NSW), Kel Ryan (RARA QLD), John James (RARA VIC), Rod Graham (RARA SA), Jack Babbage (RARA WA), Stephen Dunn (RARA ACT), Jim Masters (1 RARA), Leo Van De Kamp (2 RARA), Bob Dabinett (3 RARC), Alan Price (4 RARA), Roger Wainwright (5 RARA), Ben McDevitt (6 RARA), Tony Keech (7 RARA), Clive Mitchell-Taylor (8 RARA), Doug McGrath (9 RARA), Phill Wolfenden (8/9 RARA), Steve Brumby (5/7RARA), Max Walker (2/4 RARA), Clem Russell (RARA QLD) and Ted Chitham (RARC).

Observers: Peter Fraser (RARA VIC Admin O), Peter Heeney (RARA WA), Klaus Cimdins (RARA VIC), Bill Williamson (RARA VIC), Ray Martin (RARA QLD)

Guest Speakers: Maj Gen Mark Kelly DVA Repatriation Commissioner and RAR Colonel Commandant, David Jamison Past President (DFWA and ADSO Leader), Lt Col Scott Morris (RAR Deputy Regimental Colonel & CO School of Infantry), Ray Martin (RARA QLD and ADSO national spokesperson on Mefloquine)

Apologies: Mark Keynes (RARA NT), Phil Thompson (RARC Director), Michael O’Brien (7 RARA), Brigadier Justin Ellwood (RAR Regimental Colonel), the Hon. Dan Tehan MP (Minister for Veterans’ Affairs)

ITEM 1 - OPENING

The President, Michael von Berg, welcomed delegates and declared the Meeting open at 10.00 am 9th October 2016.

ITEM 2 – SETTLE THE AGENDA

Settled

ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS NCM (3 – 4 October 2016)

Resolved that that the Minutes of the 2016 NCM be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Carried

ITEM 4 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Resolved that matters arising would be addressed in other Agenda Items.

Carried

ITEM 5 – REPORTS

1. President.

Michael von Berg emphasised the RARA's increasing prominence as a representative of the ex-service community alone and in association with ADSO in advocacy representation to the Government. Both at the State and Federal levels our advice is sought by the politicians. He highlighted our representative roles.

2. Secretary.

He highlighted some items from his report.

3. Associations' Reports - States/Territories and Battalions.

State and Battalion reports were much better than had previously been the case, with a common thread concerning challenges to membership growth, succession planning and financial viability. The close relationship with the parent Battalions was pleasing.

4. National Memorial Walk.

The Walk remains a showpiece and is well maintained by Dads' Army. Diggers Rest is being used as a lunch location for people working within the Barracks.

The heightened security in access to Gallipoli Barracks has adversely affected visits to the Walk.

The recently opened RAR memorial in Ferguson Park Enoggera is a showpiece. The Brisbane City Council has named that portion of the park as The Royal Australian Regiment Place

ITEM 6 – REPORTS: 2017 INFANTRY CORPS CONFERENCE LTCOL SCOTT MORRIS CSC, CO SCHOOL OF INFANTRY

Highlights from his address were:

- **The Future of the Corps.** How does infantry maintain its primacy on the battlefield? There has been no Directorate of Infantry for many years, and consequently no coordinated voice to represent the Corps and so a high risk of being seen as irrelevant.
- 4 RAR has been hived off to Commandos.
- 2 RAR has been downscaled and designated 2 RAR (Amphib) – with tasking as for UK Marines and recognition of training activities with US Marines.
- An expectation that the remaining RAR Battalions will consist of three Rifle Companies, Support and Admin – the latter possibly renamed.
- The current and proposed weapons systems including air and naval support mean that the battalions will retain and perhaps enhance their firepower.
- The proposed introduction of the Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) into a structure of three Battle Groups has become an opportunity for Infantry to regain its primacy.
- The task is to reinforce the central role of Infantry and re-establish it without being based upon specific vehicle, weapons or other platforms, geography or any other variable.
- The vehicles themselves weigh from 38 to 40 tonnes and Infantry is still struggling with how to introduce, maintain and sustain.
- Infantry has put its hand up to crew the IFV, with uncertainty as to what effect this will have on the fighting strength of sections. This will be some combination of Driver/Gunner staying with the vehicle, while the numbers which make up the remainder of the Rifle Section are still under discussion.
- Our electronic night fighting equipment is second to none.
- Increased application of resilience training
- November 2018 will see a major events programme in Canberra to celebrate the 70th birthday of the Royal Australian Regiment. It was suggested that the next year's RARC AGM and National Council Meeting be held in Canberra.

The use of remotely controlled drones at present, and in the future, weapons located in the IFV was discussed. There is increasing concern about the security of the 'internet of things' (IOT) but this wasn't the platform to raise those concerns. Put simply, internet-enabled lights, refrigerators, locks, drones and other things make up the IOT. Most of these items are poorly protected from hacking, and being hacked, could be turned against the owner. It should go without saying that weapon-enabled drones and remote-controlled weapons systems must be very strongly protected.

ITEM 6A – 2017 RAR COUNCIL MEETING

Due to conflicting meetings in Canberra on PMAC, ESORT and the annual Defence Briefing our President was unable to attend the RAR Council meeting. Lt Col Scott Morris presented Mike von Berg's written report to the Council

ITEM 7 – ADVOCACY

ADSO – Reflections on Defence Family Advocacy representation to Government

David Jamison (Past President DFWA and ADSO Leader) reflected upon the success of The Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO) from five ESO pioneer partners (RARA, NAA, RAAFA, SASRA and DFWA) to today's 17 members in obtaining most ESO unity in representation and being recognised by the Parliament as a non-partisan important advocacy voice for the Defence Family and whose advice is sought.

He highlighted:

It is our job to support current and former soldiers in all aspects.

DFWA was tired and unimaginative. It needed to revitalise and focus on current issues. RARC has similarly accepted the challenge to lead advocacy for them.

One of the major issues relates to more than 50 Ex-Service organisations (ESO), with fragmented allegiances and disparate goals, clamouring for money and influence.

The RSL seemed to represent all veterans and ex-Service personnel, but the organisation itself is under siege. We needed to consolidate and focus.

Labor Party saw us as predominantly right wing and didn't care. The Liberal Party saw us as rusted on, so it didn't care either, while the cross benches were irrelevant.

Analysed demographics and found that we reflected the general community standards.

As a national approach, advocated to the government, opposition and cross benches but local volunteers were sought to act and inform locally.

ADSO gained attention quickly and was seen as politically savvy and as an influencer whose messages were clear, consistent and unemotional. As such it became a credible force with access to political influencers.

It has been able to change government and ADF decisions but many issues remain unresolved.

Governments' willingness to pay the cost of deployment, but those costs continue after the troops return.

Australia should have a military covenant, so parliament and citizens understand their obligations in respect of treatment. Believes that 11 Nov 2018, the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 will be the last chance to establish what would be a lasting memorial to all Australian Service Men and Women.

We must continue the collaborative effort and speak with one voice.

Military charities need to get together, cut out duplication, and cover 100% of the spectrum of need.

The President thanked David for his role in leading ADSO to its success.

RSL Defence Personnel & Families Committee – Noted

DVA Consultative Fora: All noted

PMAC

ESORT

YV – Contemporary Needs

OWP. Clem Russell reported on the following:

1. ADVOCACY TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

- The Programme is pushing ahead with focus on current TIP trainers being sought for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and subsequent training as mentors to enable them to conduct On-the-Job training in ESO's.
- Communication is still a concern but plans in place to correct this problem.
- Briefing sessions around country are focussing more on the strategic goals and actions than the nitty gritty required in OJT and conduct of mentoring in the workplace.
- Regardless, it is the only game in town now. We need to get on board and encourage participation in the programme.

2. ASBESTOS

- Concerns with number of rejected claims raised on social media – mainly from WA.
- We have liaised with DVA to express concern and undertaken to determine the extent of the problem and get back with our findings.
- Efforts to obtain sample group of examples are currently underway.

3. ADVOCACY SUPPORT

- He is now providing advocacy support for serving members at Gallipoli Barracks Enoggera two mornings a week.
- Big response – especially those transitioning. Handling cases nationally via ESO Portal and word of mouth.
- He is now also authorised to act on behalf of DFWA (QLD) to assist as required.

ITEM 8 – ADVOCACY

DISCUSSION ON CURRENT “HOT” ISSUES

Mike von Berg chaired an open discussion with subject briefings from those persons responsible for monitoring the subject.

ADF and Veterans’ Suicide is recognised as a major issue that is being be addressed with preventative studies and service delivery programs under development not only through the primary health network but also specific to veterans with supplementary programs from veterans organisations under consideration for funding through DVA’s Supporting Younger Veterans Program

The President reported that the transition from military service to civilian life was an anxious one high intensity of withdrawal systems for the loss of the mates (family), self-esteem and protection of the Service.

There was a need to make the transition a smooth one without process anxiety. The President referred to the following books The Tribe by Sebastian Junger and After War (on moral injuries) by Nancy Sherman

Mefloquine RARC endorses the Campaign to have the Government recognise the harm from its use and to provide an Outreach support Program for those who are suffering from the East Timor trial of this drug on the five RAR Battalions who served there (1 RAR, 2 RAR,3 RAR, 4 RAR and 5/7 RAR). The video presentation addressed the problem and sought a Senate Enquiry or an independent medical examination. Tony Keech (7 RARA) asked that a Brief be prepared as a Q & A in a public campaign – Noted that ADSO was working with the Mefloquine Group’s public campaign.

Homelessness Pat McIntosh briefed on developments through ESORT and importantly an RSL Qld initiative with RSL Care (now Bolton/Clarke) and the Salvation Army. This could be a model for national application

ADF Transition Defence have been effective with actions to overcome what has been a major problem: such as involvement of meaningful engagement with Lifestyle Consultants . DCO, Rehabilitation Consultants, and employment related translation of military experience and skills to civilian related equivalents.

DVA Transformation. DVA has been successful in increasing its presence and access to those leaving the Service through its On Base presence and its Operation Lighthouse Program of a sure and simple claims process and access to the My Service Account Additionally its culture change from claims orientation to customer centric is working.

ITEM 9 – ESO COLLABORATION

Mike von Berg and Ted Chitham briefed on the subject.

At the CDF's Defence Review in August 2016, the ESO members were exhorted to greater collaboration in providing assistance to veterans to counter the increasing incidence of veterans' suicide and self-harm.

Two Groups emerged, Firstly, the National Collaboration Project sponsored by DVA and led by Sir Angus Huston AC. RSL, Legacy, Mates4Mates, Soldier On and consultants and secondly the ESORT Collaboration Working Group. Both Groups have separately embarked on a review of the matter to decide on solutions to the objective.

ESORT's Terms of Reference were to:-

1. Determine the segmentation of all Ex Service Organisations (ESO) and Veteran Support Organisations (VSO) to better understand the nature and scope of services currently provided and their delivery and the potential for collaboration between them.
2. Determine the critical assistance services gaps in the Defence Family (DVA and Department of Defence funded) services that are provided by ESOs and VSOs. e.g. First response, homelessness, employment, advocacy, mental health etc.
3. Identify those ESOs and VSO's who are capable, have the capacity and willingness to provide and service the identified gaps.
4. Arising from TOR 3, consider the governance, structure and support options to collaborate effectively and provide better and more targeted services for the Defence Family

The Vision is that by November 2018 the ESO/VSO Community will deliver to Government its key recommendations for a co-ordinated approach that meets the needs of the Defence Family.

Michael von Berg represents the ESORT Group at the National Collaboration Project. He provided an insight into the progress in both Groups.

ITEM 10 – ADDRESS BY MARK KELLY AO DSC, REPATRIATION COMMISSIONER AND RAR COLONEL COMMANDANT

As the Repatriation Commissioner Major General Kelly gave a detailed briefing on DVA's progress and budgetary achievements with its Transformation and Transition Programs:

- No Liability Health Care for a number of non-pre-existing health conditions with extensions to the whole family through VVCS
- Veterans' Employment Programs

- Veteran Centric Reforms
- Mental Health Studies –Senate Enquiry and Australian Institute Health & Welfare

DVA Minister's Statements had made it clear that DVA will remain as a stand-alone Department and that the Minister urges the Defence Family to represent itself as One Voice to the government. Refer to the [Ministerial Statement on Veterans and Their Families](#)

As the RAR Colonel Commandant he briefed on the RAR Foundation and coming commemorative events:

- Coral/Balmoral - in Canberra on 13th May and Townsville # RAR Colours Parade
- 65th Anniversary Samichon 2 RAR The Hook 27th July
- 70th Anniversary RAR celebrated in Canberra on 23rd November at the AWM with all Colours present

He will continue as Colonel Commandant into 2018.

ITEM 11 - FUTURE DIRECTIONS RARC STRATEGIC PLANNING 2017-2025

Pat McIntosh led an enthusiastic discussion on the RARA Service Development Road Map 2017-2025 using the three horizons for growth framework that had been developed by the Strategic Review Team (Pat McIntosh, Phil Thompson, Stephen Dunn, Roger Wainwright, Trevor Dixon and Ted Chitham)

Decision

The Development Road Map and growth framework was accepted. Changes to the content were approved, Action notes are to be added and the Enabler worksheet to be amended.

The completed Road Map will be distributed separately

The President thanked Pat and his Team and all delegates for their contribution

ITEM 11A – COMMUNICATIONS

Following on from Item 11, Trevor Dixon briefed the meeting on the importance of common communications message especially not to lose sight of using traditional means such as newsletters and email whilst adopting, facebook, twitter and other social media platforms to integrate with our websites.

Donations and other funding can be done digitally through our sites but should conform to ACNC obligations.

Trevor offered to assist the Associations in guiding them into the world of electronic communications

ITEM 12 – RARC ASSISTANCE SUPPORT

It was noted that RARC continues as an active supporter of Trojans Trek, RAR Overwatch (Australia) and Dane Christison’s Survive to Thrive Application Program.

Trevor Dixon briefed the meeting with a show and tell browse through the Survive to Thrive website.

Additional detail was given on, the clinical review and depth of our submission to DVA to seek funding through the Supporting Younger Veterans program. It was explained how we had reviewed the shortcomings in our first application and believed we had put in a comprehensive application that met all of the selection criteria with detailed supporting documentation.

Confirmed that RARC will continue to support these programs.

ITEM 13 - ITEMS FOR RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION 1

THE RAR NATIONAL MEMORIAL WALK FUNDING

That to maintain the NMW’s financial viability an annual subscription be levied on all RAR Battalions and RAR Associations of the following amounts \$500 and \$250 respectively

Moved: Kel Ryan (RARA QLD)

Seconded: Alan Price (4 RARA)

CARRIED

RESOLUTION – 2

THE RAR NATIONAL MEMORIAL WALK SPREADING ASHES

That the current approved policy of spreading the ashes of RAR deceased servicemen within the NMW be unmarked, now be extended in principle to allow the person to be named on a small plaque in another location external to the “Trees” in an appropriate place and manner

Moved: Kel Ryan (RARA QLD)

Seconded: Phill Wolfenden (8/9 RARA)

CARRIED

RESOLUTION 3 – MEFLOQUINE

Ray Martin the ADSO national spokesperson on this subject was invited to present the current situation with the Government.

After discussion *it was resolved that The RARA National Council*

- *recognises that over 2 000 of RAR personnel were administered the anti-malarial drugs Mefloquine and Tafenquine during ADF Drug Trials while on operations in East Timor during 2000-2002*
- *recognises that several hundred of those personnel may be effected by those drugs*
- *notes that the Quinolone Veterans and Families Association has requested it to assist it by lobbying for:*
 - *Recognition*
 - *Effective diagnosis, treatment and support*
 - *A dedicated Outreach Program and Funded Research*
 - *An independent Enquiry*
 - *The cessation of human drug trials in the ADF*
- *Agrees to fully support the QVFA as requested in lobbying , passing information throughout our network and supporting our effected personnel*

Moved: President

Seconded: Jack Babbage (RARA WA)

CARRIED

ITEM 14 - GENERAL BUSINESS

TONY FLAHERTY

President 8 RARA, Clive Mitchell-Taylor reports that a former 8 RAR AACC Sergeant has presented publicly his service in Vietnam as involving command of an infantry platoon and a Liaison appointment. His claim has been challenged. Flaherty has initiated legal defamation action against members of the RAR Association in South Australia. Being aware that his claims have been the subject of a number of Statutory Declarations by former NCOs of C Company 8 RAR, I move:

That the Royal Australian Regiment Corporation do what is necessary to identify the facts concerning claims of Vietnam leadership and command by Anthony John Flaherty.

Seconded: John James (RARA VIC)

CARRIED

REGIMENTAL SQUARE SYDNEY

Paul O'Sullivan (RARA NSW) briefed on the completed refurbishment

MIA KOREA

Roger Wainwright reported on developments to identify through DNA sampling human remains from the War held by the US Army that may be Australians and diplomatic actions to hopefully recover remains fi North Korea

KIA MEDALS FOR MOTHERS

Rod Graham (RARA SA) our champion for this recognition such as The Canadian Medal of Sacrifice believes to progress this matter requires a champion in higher places. Rod will circulate a brief to Council members

ADF - AFGANISTAN WAR CRIMES

Jack Babbage (RARA WA) commented on recent media reports and questioned the application of the presumption of innocence by the media

The President advised that it was under high level investigation

ITEM 15 – NEXT MEETING

To be determined. Townsville or Canberra (to coincide with the RAR 70th Anniversary)

ITEM 16 – CLOSURE

The President thanked the delegates for their contribution to the Meeting's success and support to the RARA and RAR Corporation. He wished their Associations continued growth wellbeing and success.

He thanked the Department of Veterans Affairs for their continuing financial support with a Grant –In – Aid of \$10,000 to fund the AGM and NCM expenses

Mike thanked the RARA VIC Team of President John James, Peter Fraser (Admin officer) and Klaus Cimdins for hosting our very successful meetings and asked that they pass our appreciation on to the RSL for the use of their facilities.

The Meeting closed at noon 10th October 2017

Michael von Berg
Chairman
27th October 2017

Ted Chitham
Director & Public Officer
27th October 2017

1. **The Board cease further action on its WIP Communications and Marketing Strategies until after the RAR Future Plan has been approved.**

ITEM 14 – GENERAL BUSINESS

NIL

ITEM 15 – NEXT MEETING

RARA VIC will host the 2017 Meeting in Melbourne at a date to be determined.

ITEM 16 – CLOSURE

DUTY FIRST

Michael von Berg

Ted Chitham

Chairman

Director & National Secretary

Date October 2016

Date October 2016

Distribution: *Members, Observers, Apologists, Proxies & Others by exception.*