

V.V.A.A. National President's Notes 1 July 2014

In early June I was asked to provide input into the re-design of DVA's website. I was asked to comment on what worked, what didn't and how information on the DVA website should be accessed and how it should look. Hopefully a revised layout will be of benefit to the veteran community.

Following the release of the Queen's birthday honours list I took the opportunity to phone and then write to Mr Bob Elworthy AM and congratulate him on his appointment as a Member of the order of Australia, Bob has been a key member of the VVAA as a long serving President of the Victoria Branch, a worthy recognition of his service to the veteran community.

Considering the government announcement of the federal budget and following discussion within the national executive and feedback from members I have distributed a media release and written to the Prime Minister and Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs expressing concerns at the proposed changes to pension and compensation indexation in 2017, there is a strong feeling that the proposed changes will be detrimental to veterans entitlements and should be strongly opposed. My thanks to National Vice President Max Ball for his contribution to our stand on this subject.

On 11 June 2014 I was interviewed on the ABC AM program as a lead into a discussion with the Minister for Veterans Affairs regarding proposed improvements to services to service men and women.

During the last month the Repatriation Commissioner, Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC released an update on the Vietnam Veterans' Family Study which has been distributed to all state branches, copies are available if you need them through your sub branch secretaries.

I have written a letter of congratulations to Mr Shane Carmody following his appointment as Chief Operating Officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs from 16 June 2014.

On 15 July I attended a commemorative service in Cabramatta NSW conducted by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) veterans

association, the service is related to ARVN Day which is 19 June each year and commemorates the service and sacrifices of the South Vietnamese armed forces, that evening I also represent the V.V.A.A. at a commemorative dinner.

I attended a function at the offices of Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) where I am the VVAA appointed director and deputy chairman, the event was to recognise those organisations that fund scholarships for children and grandchildren of veterans, for more information on AVCAT have a look at their website on www.avcat.org.au

Late in June I received advice that a new Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs had been appointed, I have sent a letter of welcome and congratulations to the Hon David Feeney MP and a thank you letter to the outgoing Shadow Minister who is leaving the senate