



**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

**National Council**

# **NATIONAL POLICY HANDBOOK**

**14 October 2006**

## **Mission Statement**

To assist all veterans, dependants and their descendants in all matters relating to their health, welfare and well being.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **AP ADVOCACY, PENSIONS AND WELFARE, TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAM**

AP 001 AUTHORISATION of PENSIONS OFFICERS, WELFARE OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES

AP 002 CODE OF ETHICS

AP 003 SUPPORT FOR THE TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAM

AP 004 PENSION AND ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE

### **ED EDUCATION ISSUES**

ED 001 MUSEUMS

ED 002 WEB SITE

### **ET EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES (OTHER THAN TIP)**

ET 001 PAID EMPLOYEES

### **FI FINANCE**

FI 001 COST SHARING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL AND CONGRESS MEETINGS

FI 002 EFFECTIVE DATE FOR CHANGES TO CAPITATION FEES

FI 003 TRAVEL COSTS FOR NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

FI 004 ANNUAL BUDGET

FI 005 PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

FI 006 CAPITATION FEES

### **GE GENERAL ISSUES**

GE 001 THE GOLDEN RULE - THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

GE 002 THE MOTTO

GE 003 APPOINTMENTS TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION

GE 004 COMMUNICATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

GE 005 COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

GE 006 VISITS TO STATES BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

GE 007 NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

GE 008 MOTIONS TO NATIONAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL CONGRESS

GE 009 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

GE 010 SUPPORT OF REUNIONS

GE 011 VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

GE 012 RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

GE 013 CHANGING THE NAME OF THE VVCS

GE 014 THE VVAA POLICY HANDBOOK

GE 015 CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

GE 016 WEARING OF MEDALS

GE 017 CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNMENT, SERVICE AND EX-SERVICE FORUMS  
AND COMMITTEES

GE 018 AWARDS

GE 019 DUAL OFFICE BEARERS

GE 020 THE ASSOCIATION NAME AND BADGE

GE 021 GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT

GE 022 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

GE 023 NATURAL JUSTICE and PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

## **HE HEALTH, INCLUDING CHEMICAL ISSUES AND POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

HE 001 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS ACTIVELY OPPOSED TO  
CHEMICAL USE

HE 002 VVAA DEATH REGISTER

## **ME MEMBERSHIP**

ME 001 LIFE MEMBERSHIP

ME 002 MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

ME 003 MAINTENANCE OF LISTS OF MEMBERS

ME 004 SECOND MEMBERSHIP

ME 005 AFFILIATION

## **VE VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS**

VE 001 SERVICE PENSION FOR SPOUSES

## **WE WELFARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

VACANT

## **AN ANNEXES**

AN 001 NOMINATION FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE  
VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

AN 002 CODE OF ETHICS

AN 003 SUGGESTED UNDERTAKING BY A VVAA WELFARE, PENSIONS OFFICER  
OR ADVOCATE

AN 004 SUGGESTED LETTER OF AUTHORISATION

AN 005 GUIDELINES FOR REPRESENTATIVES

**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

**AP**

**ADVOCACY, PENSIONS AND WELFARE,  
TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAM**

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **AP 001 AUTHORISATION OF PENSIONS OFFICERS, WELFARE OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES**

AUTHORISATION OF PENSIONS OFFICERS, WELFARE OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES  
TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

### **Issue**

Indemnity insurance of Pensions, Advocacy and Welfare officers acting on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia depends on those officers being authorised to act on behalf of the Association.

### **Background**

Insurance indemnity is provided through membership of the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association (VITA). VITA requires that member organisations subscribe to the principles of the Training and Information Program (TIP), do not charge a fee for service (other than a small administrative charge), and authorise practitioners.

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia subscribes to the principles of TIP, and actively supports the program throughout Australia (Policy AP 003 refers). The purpose of the policy is twofold. The first is to protect and maintain the good name of the Association, the second, to protect individuals acting, in good faith, on behalf of the Association and veterans. All actions taken under this policy must support these principles.

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- all pensions officers, welfare officers and advocates must be authorised in writing, by their Sub Branch or State Executive, to give advice or assistance on behalf of the Association in that capacity; and
- a suggested Form of Authorisation is at Annex AN 004 and an Undertaking by a Welfare, Pension Officer and/or Advocate is at Annex AN 003;
- Sub Branch and State Executives must maintain a list of authorised officers, which is to be made available to the Veterans Indemnity and Training Association on demand; and
- authorisation may be revoked or reinstated, without notice, by means of a written resolution of the relevant Sub Branch or State Executive, or by the National Executive.

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## **AP 002 CODE OF ETHICS**

A CODE OF ETHICS FOR AUTHORISED PRACTITIONERS APPOINTED TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION IN WELFARE, PENSION AND ADVOCACY MATTERS

### **Issue**

The VVAA subscribes to the fundamental principles of the Training and Information Program. The Association has a policy of ensuring that all practitioners are trained and authorised to act on behalf of the Association.

### **Background**

All authorised Welfare and/or Pension Officers and Advocates have a responsibility to maintain a high standard of ethics in order to safeguard their own integrity and to protect and promote the interests of the veteran community and the Association.

Our Association enjoys the respect and confidence of other Ex-Service Organisations, Department of Veterans Affairs and/or other jurisdictions because of our pro-active and honest commitment to the welfare of veterans and their dependants.

This policy should be read in conjunction with AP 001 (Authorisation of Pension Officers, Welfare Officers and Advocates)

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- All authorised Welfare and/or Pension Officers and Advocates acting on behalf of the Association shall comply with the VVAA Code of Ethics and;
- Any breaches of the Code must be fully investigated by a panel chosen for this purpose at the Sub Branch or State Executive or by the National Executive and appropriate action taken.
- The Code of Ethics is attached as Annex AN 002

**AP 003**

**SUPPORT FOR THE TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAM**

THE VVAA ACTIVELY SUPPORTS THE TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAM (TIP)

**Issue**

The Association subscribes to the principles and objectives of the Training and Information Program.

**Background**

The TIP is the result of a government initiative announced in the 1994/95 Federal Budget, when a specified expenditure was authorised over a four-year period to train and resource Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) Welfare officers, Pension officers and Advocates.

It is a partnership undertaking between the Department of Veterans Affairs and participating ESO's *to do the right thing, the right way, the first time - together.*

It provides a uniform high standard of training on a coordinated basis across the whole spectrum of Repatriation law and practice to ESO practitioners.

The Association has made a significant contribution to the development of TIP through the creation of several of the Training Modules used to educate ESO practitioners; and continues to provide quality trainers; and encourages the maintenance of professional standards of Skill and Knowledge.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia subscribes to the principles and objectives of the Training and Information Program and actively supports the program throughout Australia.

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## **AP 004 PENSION AND ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE**

VVAA PENSION OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES TO ASSIST ALL VETERANS

### **Issue**

To establish a policy for all Association Welfare Officers, Pension officers, Case Officers and Advocates who provide assistance to all those in the Veteran Community.

### **Background**

It is a normal part of grant and funding agreements with the Department of Veterans Affairs that services be available to all veterans and their dependants.

Many Practitioners authorised to act on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia provide assistance through "Veterans Centres" with the involvement of many Ex-Service Organisations

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Council meeting conducted on 28 May 2000 resolved that:

- Although the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia is an entity of its own, it is policy of the Association that; Advocates, Case Officers, Pension Officers and Welfare Officers, unless there are extenuating circumstances, must be prepared to assist all veterans and their Dependants to pursue their entitlements from normal sources

**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

**ED**

**EDUCATION ISSUES**

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **ED 001 MUSEUMS**

### **ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA STATIC AND MOBILE MUSEUMS**

#### **Issue**

One of the founding purposes of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia was to provide further education about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War. A prime means of furthering this aim is through museums and collections of items and memorabilia.

#### **Background**

This activity is directed initially through the Museum Sub Branch, and by other means, as they become available.

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia encourages continuing education and training of Museum Sub Branch members through liaison with the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Archives and similar organisations.

Existing museums include the static museum at San Remo, the artifacts held in the Rocks Museum in Sydney (previously held in the 'Nam Bus), and the mobile museum based at San Remo.

Funding becomes a significant issue for museums. Artifacts and memorabilia must be properly housed and maintained.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

The VVAA supports the establishment, within its means, of static and mobile museums, with the purpose of educating the Australian public in regard to the Vietnam War and its aftermath.

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## **ED 002 WEB SITE**

### **ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INTERNET WEB SITE**

#### **Issue**

One of the founding purposes of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia was to further education about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War. The communication opportunities provided by the internet are a primary means of furthering this aim.

#### **Background**

An initial grant from the Minister for Veterans' affairs in 1997 enabled the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia to establish email communications using the facilities of email and the internet. Internet connection almost invariably incorporates a small disk allocation component, which facilitates establishing a home page for each state.

A vast amount of data is available from the internet, much of which is inaccurate or incomplete. The information that the Association provides should be as complete and accurate as possible, and ethically, should cite sources wherever possible. Where information is re-used, the author should be consulted, if this can be done.

The tone of the site should reflect the attitude of the Association. That is, informative, considered and reasonable. It should avoid confrontation, and, while attracting attention, should be well presented. It should avoid the use of scripts and complex programming which would make material unavailable to average users with less than average computer hardware.

The purpose of the site is to provide information about the Association, about current issues affecting veterans, and to provide educative material in regard to Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, as well as the aftermath of such service.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia is to establish and maintain an internet web site.
- The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia subscribes to the principles of maintaining web site information which is accurate, complete and attributed, wherever possible, to the author; and
- the National Executive is to direct and control the content of the Association web site.

**ET**

**EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND**

**BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

**(OTHER THAN TIP)**

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA<sup>®™</sup>**

## **ET 001 PAID EMPLOYEES**

### **PAID EMPLOYEES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE VVAA NOT ALLOWED TO HOLD EXECUTIVE POSITIONS**

#### **Issue**

The purpose of this policy to establish guidelines regarding the employment of members of the association who occupy executive positions with the VVAA and/or who are seeking to be employed as a salaried officer of the Association.

#### **Background**

Members of an executive committee can be associated with the administration and conduct of business enterprises on behalf of the Association.

A member of the Association if a member of a management committee may be responsible for managing, interviewing and selection and of employees, determining salaries and participating in decisions requiring disciplinary action.

To occupy a position as a salaried officer and an executive member of a committee could give raise to collusion and a conflict of interest

A member who is a paid employee of the Association is often responsible to a management committee of a business enterprise for the proper discharge of their duties.

This policy does not exclude any ordinary members of the Association from being employed as salaried officers working as practitioners in Welfare, Pension and Advocacy areas.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Council meeting conducted on 29 October 2000, resolved that:

No member of any executive committee other than the National secretary can be a salaried officer; and any existing salaried employee wishing to seek election to any executive position within the Association must tender their resignation on being elected.

**FI**

**FINANCE**

**FI 001**  
**COST SHARING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL AND**  
**CONGRESS MEETINGS**

COORDINATION OF THE COST SHARING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL  
AND NATIONAL CONGRESS MEETINGS

**Issue**

To establish consistent standards for travel, cost sharing and other administrative arrangements relating to the conduct of National Council and Congress meetings.

**Background**

1. **Travel**                    The National Secretary is to co-ordinate all travel arrangements, in order to obtain the most advantageous fares.
2. **Accommodation:** The National Secretary is to book and allocate accommodations for all members attending these meetings. Delegates are responsible for arranging to meet their own accommodation costs. State delegate accommodation costs are to be paid by the relevant State. National Executive accommodation costs are to be reimbursed by National, or shared equally where a member of the Executive is also a State delegate. Ancillary costs such as telephone calls are to be paid for by the individual.
3. **Travel Insurance:** Travel Insurance is the responsible of the individual delegate.
4. **Cost Sharing:**                    The National Council is to bear the full cost of travel and accommodation for members of the National Executive, and half the cost of those who are also State Delegates. The amount for travel to be reimbursed to the National Council by State Branches is calculated as follows:  
$$\frac{(\text{Cost of All Travel} - \text{National Executive})}{\text{Number of States, including host state}}$$

The underlying principle behind the cost-sharing arrangement, is that all States are equally represented in all voting, so therefore must bear an equal share of the cost of travel. National Council bears the cost of National Executive travel, and shares the costs of Executive members who are also State delegates, thereby reducing the impost on the States.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- costs of travel for State Delegates to National Congress and National Council meetings are to be shared equally by the States;
- the National Secretary is to be responsible for all travel and accommodation arrangements related to those meetings; and
- the National Executive may relieve any State from the payment of its cost share due to financial hardship, with that share then being born by the National Council.

**FI 002**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR CHANGES TO CAPITATION FEES**

ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE FOR CHANGES TO CAPITATION FEES

**Issue**

Establish the effective date of changes to capitation fees.

**Background**

The purpose of this policy is to establish the date on which changes to capitation fees are made effective.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- changes to the level of capitation fees come into operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of the year following adoption of the resolution.

**FI 003**  
**TRAVEL COSTS FOR NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE**  
**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

ESTABLISH THE EFFECTIVE DATE AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TRAVEL OF NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.

**Issue**

Establish the effective date, and the circumstances under which the National Council accepts responsibility for the travel costs of newly elected members of the National Executive.

**Background**

As a general principle, the National Council bears the costs of travel to and from meetings of the National Council and the National Congress for members of the Executive.

When new members are elected to the National Executive, their travel arrangements to and from the National Congress have already been made, and paid for. Members of the National Executive who stand down, or are not re-elected, have already had their travel arrangements made, and paid for.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 24 May 1998, resolved that:

- The National Executive is responsible for the travel arrangements of newly elected members of the National Executive from the time such members return to their home after the meeting at which they were elected.
- The National Executive is responsible for the travel arrangements of retiring members of the National Executive, up to the time such members return to their home after the meeting at which they were not re-elected.

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **FI 004 ANNUAL BUDGET**

ESTABLISH A PROCESS WHEREBY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE PRESENTS TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL, EACH OCTOBER, A PROPOSED BUDGET FOR EXPENDITURE DURING THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL YEAR.

### **Issue**

In order to manage the finances of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, the National Executive must present to the National Council, for ratification, a planned budget for income and expenditure in the following year.

### **Background**

The fiscal management of an organisation should not be left to chance. It requires planning and forethought. The budget is a planning measure, representing the National Executive's 'best guess' regarding the levels and sources of income and the way in which it will be expended.

Unforeseen events may change the pattern of income and expenditure, but this remains the only way in which the National Council may judge the financial management skills of the Executive.

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 24 October 1998 resolved that:

- the National Executive is to prepare, each year, a budget for income and expenditure of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Incorporated, for the following financial year; and
- the National Council is to review the budget each year at its October meeting, amend it as necessary and approve the budget to provide guidance to the National Executive for its financial management of the Vietnam Veterans' Association, National Council Incorporated during the following financial year.

**FI 005  
PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE**

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE TO BE PAID FOR BY ALL STATES ON A PRO RATA BASIS

**Issue**

The VVAA National Council Inc. to adopt a pro rata system of payment of Public Liability Insurance.

**Background**

The Vietnam Veterans Association is required to have public liability insurance as an incorporated body in NSW.

Each state is required to contribute annually to the cost of this insurance.

A method of payment is required that is equitable.

All states pay annual Capitation fees to the National Body for each ordinary member on a pro-rata basis.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 22 May 1998, resolved that:

- Costs towards the Public Liability Insurance be paid by each state on a pro rata basis of equal share per member; and
- is based on the total financial membership of ordinary members of each state as at the end of the financial year.

**FI 006  
CAPITATION FEES**

PAYMENT OF CAPITATIONS FEES TO NATIONAL COUNCIL

**Issue**

There is a statutory requirement for membership information to be held by the Public Officer at national level. While there is a recognised requirement to forward the appropriate membership information and capitations to the national council, there is no formal definition of the requirement, other than requiring outstanding payments to be paid prior to National Congress.

**Background**

Modern methods of funds transfer and transaction tracking mean that no longer is there a need to restrict payments to those made by cheque. As long as payments into the National bank account are accompanied by the appropriate detail, the payment may be made directly.

Regular payments of capitations to the National Council from States Branches will enable a proper cash-flow, while at the same time ensuring that membership details are current.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, at the National Congress conducted on the 25/27 May 2001, resolved that:

- capitations to National Council are to be paid within two calendar months of receipt at the State branch; and
- payment to National Council may be made by any means agreed to by the National Treasurer; and
- are to be accompanied by a statement providing the details of the members for whom payment is made, otherwise the capitation will be deemed not to have been paid.

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**GE**

**GENERAL ISSUES**

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **GE 001**

### **THE GOLDEN RULE - THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

THE PRINCIPLE WHICH UNDERPINS EVERY ACTION UNDERTAKEN BY THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA IS THAT IT MUST BE RELATED TO THE WELFARE OF VIETNAM VETERANS

#### **Issue**

Members holding Executive and Committee positions of the Association at Sub-Branch, State and National level are under continual pressure to make statements in regard to public issues.

#### **Background**

Issues on which opinions are sought include the Republic, the flag, immigration and the 'right to life'. Many of these issues, while emotive, have no link to the welfare of veterans. Many of them are divisive, and there will be a wide range of opinions within the Vietnam veteran community, just as there is in the Australia-wide community.

Should the Association decide to align itself with specific political parties, interest groups or factions, it would quickly lose the credibility it has gained, and the voice that it has within the arena of veterans' interests.

In order to avoid accusations of partisanship, the Association shall deal with all political parties in the same manner. It must recognise that there is a need to have a close Association with a sitting political party, but preserve at all costs, amicable relationships with opposition parties.

This policy must be read in conjunction with: Policy GE 003 Appointments to Act on behalf of the Association; Policy GE 004 Communications with Government; and Policy GE 005 Communications with the Media and Policy GE 017 Contribution to Forums and Committees.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- No office bearer is to make any public statement, or carry out any action on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia that does not directly relate to the welfare of veterans.
- The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia is not aligned with any political party or group, but maintains a working relationship with government, opposition and minor parties at State and National levels.

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## **GE 002 THE MOTTO**

THE MOTTO OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

### **Issue**

The motto of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia must reflect the underlying ethos of the organisation.

### **Background**

The motto was passed to the Association by the Northern Territory Branch, and adopted for use throughout the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy GE 001, the Golden Rule.

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- the motto of the Association shall be "Honour the dead, but fight like hell for the living"

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **GE 003**

### **APPOINTMENTS TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION**

APPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

#### **Issue**

Any individual appointed to represent the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia on a National level in relation to specific issues, must be suitably qualified, and, in the opinion of the National Council be capable of properly representing the views, values and image of the Association.

#### **Background and Conditions for Appointment**

From time to time, circumstances will arise where individuals with particular skills, background or experience may be required to represent the Association. Consideration should also be given to the manner in which the Association is represented, with assurance that the view, values and image of the organisation are maintained.

The National Council shall consider the relative merits and attributes of individuals who may be required to represent the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

This policy must be read in conjunction with: Policy GE 001, the Golden Rule; Policy GE 004, Communications with Government; and Policy GE 005, Communications with the Media, Policy GE 17 Contribution to Government, Service and Ex-service Forums and Committees and GE 022 Project Management.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 25 May 2003, resolved that:

- National Council and the National Congress are the sole authority for the appointment of individuals to represent the Association on specific National issues during specific periods of times.
- Appointment of representatives is to be by a simple majority vote, which may be made by telephone or other means.
- Those so appointed shall adhere to the "Guidelines for Representatives" as detailed in Annex AN 005 of this Handbook, and
- Appointments to represent the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia may be revoked by the National Council or Congress, without notice or reason, by a simple majority vote conducted as above.
- The decisions of the National Council or National Congress in regard to appointment, non-appointment and revocation of appointment shall be final.

**GE 004  
COMMUNICATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT**

**ORDER OF PRECEDENCE FOR DEALING WITH VARIOUS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT  
AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

**Issue**

Communications with elected representatives and government officials must take place at an appropriate level in order to ensure that the aims and intentions of the Association are preserved.

**Background**

There are three levels of government within Australia, Local, State and National. While individuals may have specific contacts within various levels of government, using those contacts may conflict directly with the aims and intentions of the organisation at various levels. Sub-Branches must direct communications with all but local government through their State Branch. Because of the specific knowledge or background which may be involved, the State Branch should consider appointing a Sub-Branch representative to actually conduct the business at hand, making them aware of the State issues which may influence the transaction.

State Branches must direct communications with all but State government through their State Branch. Sub-Branch and State executives must be aware of the implication that there is a need to co-ordinate submissions (for funding and other assistance) at an appropriate level. Where State visits by Federal Government officials have been foreshadowed, State and Sub-Branch Executives should advise the National Executive in order to let them know what local issues are to be discussed, and be notified of any relevant National policy issues.

This policy must be read in conjunction with Policy GE 001, The Golden Rule and Policy GE 005, Communications with the Media.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australian, National Council Inc, at a National Congress on 30 May 1999 resolved that:

- Sub-Branch Executives are authorised to communicate with elected representatives of local government, local government agencies and officers;
- State Executives are authorised to communicate with elected representatives of state government, state government agencies and officers, and the state representatives of Federal Departments.
- The National Executive is authorised to communicate with elected representatives of the federal government, and the federal offices of government agencies and departments.
- The National Executive must brief local Association officers on National policy issues when requested, and may intervene in local and state issues where the integrity or reputation of the Association is at risk and the National Executive may authorise departure from these guidelines

**GE 005  
COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA**

**ORDER OF PRECEDENCE FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA**

**Issue**

Communications with the media must take place at an appropriate level in order to ensure that correct information is delivered to further the aims and intentions of the Association as a whole.

**Background**

In the same way that communications with government must take place at an appropriate level in order to maintain a consistent approach and unity of purpose, media contact must be controlled.

Both Sub-Branches and State Branches have a need to advertise or generate interest in local fund-raising or special-purpose activities, such as recruiting. There is no intention that this policy should interfere with the ability of Sub-Branches or States to communicate with the media about those issues.

The principle of establishing a consistent approach to national issues is paramount. To this end, the National Council has established a means of issuing a 'press kit', comprising media statements, together with possible questions and answers, where this is deemed necessary. State Branches are issued with this material in advance of the release date, so that they may become familiar with it. The material will be accompanied by instructions that relate to the conditions of release.

Local enquiries on national issues must be directed to the National Executive, or to the State Executive where a media release has been issued by the National Executive. Local Association officials should also contact the National Executive to discuss National policy issues which may relate to the inquiry.

This policy must be read in conjunction with Policy GE 001, the Golden Rule and Policy GE 004, Communications with Government.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- Public statements and interviews with the media are to be carried out by the National Executive, for all but local, fund-raising and recruiting issues
- The National Executive may devolve media responsibility by issuing press kits and other preparatory material to State Executives.

**GE 006**

**VISITS TO STATES BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS REQUIRED WHEN MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MAKE VISITS TO STATES

**Issue**

Visits by members of the National Executive provide excellent opportunities for State Branch members to meet and brief local members on current issues. Notification of such visits is required as a matter of courtesy, and may greatly assist administration of the visit.

**Background**

Travel and other costs for members of the National Executive travelling on official business for the National Council are to be borne by the National Council.

Travel and other costs for members of the National Executive travelling by invitation of a State are to be borne by the State issuing the invitation. Under some circumstances the National Council will consider taking up some of these costs.

Members of the National Executive travelling under private arrangements accept the cost of travel and accommodation, but should take every opportunity to make themselves available to State and Sub-Branched to disseminate information and meet members.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- Members of the National Executive travelling to States are to notify the State Executive in advance of the visit.
- Members of the National Executive travelling to States are to take every opportunity to make themselves available to meet members and disseminate information on National issues.

**GE 007**

**NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

**Issue**

Ensure that nominees for election to the National Executive are *bona fide* and paid-up members of the Association, and that State Councils/Executives are provided with sufficient information to guide delegates to National Congress in those elections.

**Background**

The Constitution of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia states that individuals nominating for election to the National Executive must do so in writing. This must be accompanied by written confirmation of their financial status and endorsement by the State Branch to which the member belongs. Nominations must be received 60 days in advance of the National Congress.

A written resume or biography is required, to allow each State Council or Executive to evaluate and select the candidates that their delegates will support. The nominee should use this opportunity to present their case for election, but may simply state a list of positions held, or achievements within the veterans' community.

Notwithstanding these requirements, the Constitution permits nominations from the floor under specific circumstances, and if the nominee is present.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- Members eligible to nominate for election to the National Executive should do so in the form attached to this policy document as Annex AN 001.
- Nominations are to be accompanied by a written resume or biography, preferably of one page.
- The written documentation in support of a nomination to the National Executive is to be distributed by the National Secretary as soon as possible after receipt.

**GE 008**

**MOTIONS TO NATIONAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL CONGRESS**

STANDARD FORM OF MOTIONS TO NATIONAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL CONGRESS

**Issue**

Each motion to National Council and National Congress must be accompanied by sufficient information to enable State Councils and delegates to properly evaluate the proposal.

**Background**

Items of business that come before the National Council and National Congress can be grouped under 4 general headings. These are, reports, administrative issues, policy issues and Constitutional changes.

Reports and administrative issues do not require substantive supporting documentation, however some background information and a statement of the actual or required outcome are highly desirable.

Policy issues should be presented in the form used in this policy document. This includes a short title, long title, issues, background and statement of policy.

Constitutional changes should be in the same form, with the addition of a clear statement identifying that portion of the Constitution which is to be changed, the precise amendment to be made, or the new material to be inserted.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association, of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- Motions concerning policies of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia are to be presented in a form which provides short and long titles of the policy, a statement of the issue, background and explanatory material, and a clear statement of the proposed policy or policy amendment.
- Motions concerning changes to the Constitution of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia are to be presented in the same form as policies, and are to include a clear statement identifying that portion of the Constitution that is to be changed, the precise amendments to be made, or the new material to be inserted.

**GE 009  
PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

DISTRIBUTION OF MAILING LISTS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Issue**

Status and classification of personal details and information provided to the Association by members.

**Background**

Members on joining the Association provide personal details and information of a confidential nature. This information is supplied in good faith with the expectation that it is made available only to those authorised to receive it.

There are persons and organisations (external to Association) that may derive benefits by obtaining mailing lists or personal details of our membership. This information may be used to the detriment of a member and/or to the Association.

There are frequent requests by others for information to make contact with members of the Association. In this case, contact is normally made with the member concerned detailing the name, address and telephone number of the inquirer.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- all details and information provided by members of the Association be treated as confidential and is only to be used to satisfy; membership eligibility criteria, incorporation and constitutional requirements and; to distribute correspondence and newsletters to members only, and;
- those officers of the Association who have access to personal details of members and/or information of a confidential nature are bound by the requirements of the Privacy Act 1998 (as amended) and the *Freedom of Information Act*, and must never disclose information to a third person without express consent, and;
- in the case of a 'Request to Contact', details of the inquirer must be passed to the member concerned only.

**GE 010  
SUPPORT OF REUNIONS**

SUPPORT OF REUNIONS BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND STATE BRANCHES

**Issue**

National Council and State Branches does not support National and Corps Reunions conducted on or about the 18 August.

**Background**

All States and Sub-branches of the Association conduct state and local commemorations and/or major annual fund raising activities on or about the 18 August.

These activities give us prominence and standing in the community which when interfered with by large reunions seriously effect attendance, fund raising and sponsorship.

These activities attract Vietnam Veterans and their families to become members of the Association.

Major and Corps reunions attract larger groups whereas "Unit" i.e. Platoon, Company or Battalion size has little effect.

The last three major reunions have lost significant sums of money and the Association's support has created a stigma that has not been easy to avoid although not responsible for the financial management of these events.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 22 May 1998, resolved that;

- the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia does not support the conduct of National, Corps or major unit Reunions on or about the 18 August; and
- The Association does not advertise or assist in the conduct of such reunions.

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **GE 011 VIETNAM VETERANS DAY**

SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM VETERANS REMEMBRANCE DAY CONDUCTED ON THE 18  
AUGUST

### **Issue**

Establish a policy for the observance of Vietnam Veterans Day on the 18 August each year

### **Background**

The 18 August was initially referred to as "Long Tan" Day in recognition of those who paid the supreme sacrifice during the battle of Long Tan in South Vietnam in 1966.

The Prime Minister Bob Hawke formally declared the day 'Vietnam Veterans Day' on 18 August 1988 in recognition of all those that suffered and died as a result of the Vietnam War.

This special day of Commemoration is a result of recommendations of the Evatt Royal Commission, Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service and the 'After March Report' following the Welcome Home Parade in Sydney in 1987

Units and Sub-units are free to commemorate any specific battles and/or engagements as they wish.

The Association does not wish to detract from the extraordinary actions of the men of D Company 6RAR.

There have been a number of attempts to revert back to the previous name of 'Long Tan' Day.

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 22 May 1998, resolved that:

- the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia supports the name of the 18 August being Vietnam Veterans Day

**GE 012  
RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE TO BE ALLOCATED AREAS OF  
RESPONSIBILITY**

**Issue**

Establish a policy whereby the members of the National Executive are allocated areas of responsibility for the shared administration of the Association

**Background**

The Association is the only Vietnam Veteran Organisation that truly represents the needs of the Vietnam Veteran Community on a National basis.

It is important that the workload is distributed to ensure a professional approach in all matters effecting our community.

Training and development of our executive members must always be a priority and assists succession planning

Members of the Executive must be given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- the members of the National executive are to be allocated areas of responsibility for the shared administration of the Association; and
- these responsibilities be resolved by executive discussion following the National Congress each year; and
- the National President is to notify all state branches of all allocated responsibilities or changes.

**GE 013  
CHANGING THE NAME OF THE VVCS**

CONDITIONS TO BE MET BEFORE ANY CHANGE OCCURS IN NAME OF THE VIETNAM  
VETERANS COUNSELLING SERVICE

**Issue**

Proposal to change the name of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS)

**Background**

In 1980 the VVAA initiated the formation of the VVCS by seeking a grant from Government to establish it's own Counselling service, and has fought long and hard to develop the service as it is today by providing direct input into the formulation of policy and the delivery of programs to all eligible veterans and their families.

The VVAA constantly monitors the operations of VVCS to ensure it meets its charter and delivers the very best of service to the veteran community. We do this by either expressing support for VVCS operations or our concerns to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs

**Guidelines**

The VVAA supports a name change under the following conditions:

1. Any change in name of the VVCS be affected by removing the word 'Vietnam' to read 'Veterans Counselling Service' and, that all future letterheads, signage and documentation promoting the service, includes a footer 'formerly Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service' in legible print, and
2. that the VVCS continue to be monitored by the National Advisory Committee to ensure an 'independent accountability' of the service, reporting directly to the Minister for Veterans Affairs, and
3. that prior to any change in title, a formal gifting process be carried out whereby the Vietnam veteran community gift the service to Peacekeepers, Peacemakers and veterans of other conflicts as a way of publicising the extended clientele now eligible to access the service, and
4. that an appropriate "Framed history" be permanently displayed in a prominent position in each VVCS Office throughout Australia, acknowledging the role played by the VVAA, in firstly lobbying government to establish the service and the ongoing contribution made by Vietnam veterans and their families in its development with the Department of Veterans Affairs. A draft history to be provided by the VVAA for consideration and agreement by the Minister, and
5. in the event of an increase in clientele resultant from this change, the necessary resources are provided to ensure that the current and future needs of Vietnam veterans, their Spouses or Partners and Sons and Daughters are addressed, and
6. that the service remains as a government enterprise and not be privatised.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, at a National Congress conducted on 27/29 May 2005, affirmed and resolved that:

- That in the event of a name change to the Vietnam veterans Counselling Service that the conditions listed in points 1 to 6 are to be met by the government.

**GE 014  
THE VVAA POLICY HANDBOOK**

**GUIDELINES FOR THE MAINTENCE OF THE VVAA POLICY HANDBOOK**

**Issue**

The Association must establish guidelines for the maintenance and the content of the Association's Policy Handbook

**Background**

The VVAA National Council is the authority that determines the Policies of the Association.

Motions resolved at a National Congress may become policies that are included in the Handbook.

The National Constitution in conjunction with the Policy Handbook provides the rules, by-laws and guidelines that enables the Association to conduct its business in a professional manner.

The Handbook should never contain those Policies and/or By-Laws that replicate rules already detailed in the Constitution.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that;

- the VVAA Policy Handbook shall be updated annually by a member of the National Executive following the National Congress; and
- those motions resolved at a National Congress be included in the Handbook as agreed by the National Council; and
- such Policies and/or By-Laws shall not be in conflict nor replicated within the rules contained in the VVAA National Constitution.

**GE 015  
CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL**

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

**Issue**

Members of the National Executive and the National Council are often required to receive for information, or comment on items of a confidential nature

**Background**

Items of a confidential nature must be endorsed with a privacy marking

Examples of such privacy markings are IN CONFIDENCE, COMMITTEE IN CONFIDENCE, HONOURS IN CONFIDENCE.

Distribution of such material must be made carefully in order to protect it from inadvertent release.

In order to restrict distribution, State Secretaries/Presidents must advise the National Secretary of a secure mailing address, secure facsimile machine and/or secure email address for their state.

Confidential material must not be distributed to anyone other than the addressee without prior permission of the author/sender.

Items such as media releases may be distributed under a privacy marked cover. A release date for this material will be advised, at which time the privacy-marked cover must be removed, while the remaining material is released.

Filing and storage should take into account the restricted distribution nature of the material.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999 resolved that;

All documents or material of a confidential nature, or restricted distribution raised or received by the VVAA are to be:

- clearly endorsed with an appropriate privacy marking; and
- distributed only to those who have a need to know through post, facsimile or email to a previously secure address; and
- filed in a manner that preserves the integrity of the privacy marking; and
- released for further distribution only after approval by the author or National Executive and removal of the privacy marked cover.

**GE 016  
WEARING OF MEDALS**

WEARING OF NON -ISSUE MEDALS

**Issue**

Establish an Association policy regarding the wearing of non – issue medals

**Background**

The Association disapproves of the wearing of non-issue and/or Commemorative Medals

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc at a National Congress on 30 May 1999 resolved that:

- Commemorative medals are not to be mounted in a group with medals issued or approved for wear by the Australian Government; and
- Medals issued by, or approved for wearing by the Australian Government are to be worn, mounted as a group, on the left breast

**GE 017**  
**CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNMENT, SERVICE AND EX-SERVICE**  
**FORUMS AND COMMITTEES**

PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA TO FORUMS RELATING TO BROADER SERVICE AND EX-SERVICE ISSUES

**Issue**

Notwithstanding the “Golden Rule”, members holding Executive and Committee positions of the Association at Sub-Branch, State and National level are required to take a proper part in broader government, service and ex-service forums, where the issues under discussion are not directly related to the welfare of Vietnam veterans.

**Background**

Issues on which opinions are sought include the administration of currently serving Defence Force members, administration of the Departments of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs, including sub-agencies, aged care issues relating to older veterans and issues that involve members of the ex-service community who are not Vietnam veterans.

Strict interpretation of the “Golden Rule” means that the VVAA cannot contribute to these discussions or forums, and cannot publicly support any other group of veterans, no matter how legitimate their concerns or the issue involved. The VVAA would, for example, be unable to state its support for a nominal roll for Korean veterans or for a Korean memorial on Anzac Drive. Many of its other activities could be seen as marginally compliant with the Golden Rule.

This is plainly counterproductive, and removes the VVAA from forums that are politically important to the Association, particularly as it wishes to be, and to be seen be the most significant contributor to ex-service issues. The specific purpose of this policy is to permit contributions to such committees and forums.

This policy must be read in conjunction with: Policy GE001 The Golden Rule, GE 003 Appointments to Act on behalf of the Association; Policy GE 004 Communications with Government; and Policy GE 005 Communications with the Media.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 27 May 2000, resolved that:

Notwithstanding the Golden Rule, office bearers of the Vietnam Veterans’ Association of Australia may take part in and contribute to discussion, debate, information days and committees that deal with more general veteran and ex-service issues, provided such representatives within that context:

- shall not make any statement, or carry out any action that disadvantages Vietnam veterans; but
- may otherwise support specific activities aimed at improving the lot of a particular group of veterans or all veterans.

## GE 018 AWARDS

### NOMINATION AND/OR SUPPORT FOR AWARDS

#### **Issue**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the nomination and/or support of a nomination of a person for an award that recognises outstanding or meritorious service.

#### **Background**

The Association grants Life Membership and Meritorious Service awards to those that demonstrate outstanding and dedicated service to the association.

Those that assist others in our community should never do so with the intent of seeking any reward or awards other than the satisfaction of making a contribution to the Organisation or by assisting in the welfare of others.

Those of our membership that have an ongoing commitment and continue to make significant contributions to the general and veteran community may be recognised by others that make awards for that level of service.

When considering nominations it must be established as to whether the level of service of the nominee as being 'over and above the normal call of duty' or 'what could be reasonably be expected from someone in a similar position.' Any submission to the committee should detail why the nominee's service and achievements have been outstanding and worthy of recognition.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 28 May 2000, resolved that:

- the VVAA may nominate and/or endorse a member of the Association or an Australia citizen for any other award that recognises outstanding and/or meritorious service, and
- that a committee be appointed (as required) consisting of two members of the National Executive and two State representatives, one of whom must be from the same state or territory as the nominee to consider such awards

**GE 019  
DUAL OFFICE BEARERS**

HOLDING EXECUTIVE POSITIONS WITH OTHER ESO'S

**Issue**

The purpose of this motion is to establish a policy for Executive members of the Association holding elected executive position with other Ex-Service Organisations and/or providing representation on their behalf.

**Background**

Many members of the VVAA hold dual membership with other ESO's that compliments the aims and objectives of the association.

However on occasions there may be a conflict of interest because of differing politics, policies and constitutional matters. All appointed representatives must express the view and policies of our association to ensure that the philosophy and integrity of the VVAA is maintained.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 28 May 2000, resolved that:

- the VVAA discourages the election of Executive Office bearers, or the appointment of representatives on behalf of the association who occupy similar National Executive positions at the same level with other Ex-Service Organisations other than capping organisations such as the Kindred Organisation Committee and the Australian Veterans and Defence Service Council.

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## **GE 020 THE ASSOCIATION NAME AND BADGE**

### **PERMISSION TO USE THE VVAA NAME AND BADGE**

#### **Issue**

Establish a policy with guidelines for the use of the registered Name and Badge of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

#### **Background**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council was granted a Trademark ownership on the Name and the Badge of the Association in 1998 effective from 1995

The Badge is registered as 'Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia crown device in multiple classes.

The Association has a responsibility to protect the Name and the Badge on behalf of the membership.

State and Sub-branches are authorised to use the Name and the Badge on stationery, newsletters and internet links to the VVAA web site only.

Any unauthorised use of the Name and Badge may be in breach of the relevant copyright laws.

Authorised purposes are not easily defined and will be taken on merit.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, at a National Congress meeting conducted on 28 May 2000, resolved that:

- the Name and Badge of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia may only be used for authorised purposes as determined by the National Executive, and must use an approved version of the Name and Badge, and
- for other than official stationery, newsletters and internet links to the VVAA web site, applications must be made in writing to the National executive seeking permission to use the Name and badge, stating the proposed use and including an illustration of the Name and the badge that is proposed to be used, and
- any authority so given, shall only remain in force whilst the State or Sub Branch remains affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council, and
- under certain circumstances, this authority may be revoked by the National Council.

**GE 021  
GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT**

PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF GRIEVANCES

**Issue**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the effective management of Grievances and to provide a mechanism for the establishment of an independent panel to examine grievances and complaints that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the aggrieved parties.

**Background and Guidelines**

Grievances can often occur due to poor communication and/or failing to adhere to practices and procedures detailed in our Constitution and Policy Handbook. The better approach is to provide an initial mediation process that will resolve issues in house to the satisfaction to all aggrieved parties.

This process should only be enacted when grievances cannot be resolved through normal negotiations and mediation at VVAA State Council and/or Sub-branch level.

1. The Grievance process is to be in two parts; the initial Mediation stage, and an examination of the facts by a panel bought together for this purpose.
2. The initial mediator is to be a member of, and appointed by, the National Executive and shall not be from the state where the grievance exists.
3. The panel should consist of one member of the National Executive (Chairman) and two members of the National Council neither of which shall be from the same state in which the grievance has occurred.
4. The National Council shall appoint members of the panel. This process can be by vote via email, fax or telephone at the request of the National President.
5. A State Council or Sub-branch or individual lodging a grievance notice must do so in writing, with a non refundable administration fee of \$200.00 to the National Secretary. Both parties associated with the grievance should lodge details of the grievance from their perspective with National Secretary in writing within 14 days after notification to do so by the Chairman. The Chairman can extend this period if it is warranted.
6. After consideration of all the facts, the panel is to present their recommendations to the aggrieved parties. If the matter cannot be resolved, then the recommendations are to be presented to the National Executive for inclusion and decision at the next National Council meeting.
7. All participants in this process are to ensure that decisions are in the best interests of the welfare of the veterans community and the Association

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, at a National Council meeting conducted on 29 October 2000, resolved that:

The VVAA may, by agreement of the National Council convene or appoint a Mediator and/or a Grievance panel to settle issues of conflict that may arise at State Council or Sub-branch level in accordance with the above rules 1 to 7.

## GE 022 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

### PROCEDURES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF PROJECTS BY THE VVAA

#### **Issue**

This purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for managing a specific project that may be delegated to a Representative, Sub-committee or a State Branch by the VVAA National Council.

#### **Background**

The VVAA National Council may appoint a representative, a sub-committee or delegate a particular State Branch to carryout a specific Project because they are in the best position or are better resourced to do so.

It is important that there is a clear understanding of responsibilities, boundaries and management protocols to prevent disagreement.

This motion should be read in conjunction with: policy GE 001, the Golden Rule, policy GE 003, Appointments to Act on Behalf of the Association, policy GE 004, Communications with Government, policy GE 005, Communications with the Media and GE 017, Forums and Committees.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Council meeting conducted on 29 October 2001 resolved that:

The VVAA National Council may, by agreement assign a particular Project to a Representative, Sub-committee or State Branch, and in order to manage such assignment the parties must:

- agree the aims, scope and objectives of the project:
- classify the project under a portfolio managed by a member of the National Executive with a clear statement of purpose, scope and specific reporting lines;
- agree with administrative arrangements at the commencement of the project with particular attention to controls, responsibilities, financial arrangements, limitations, time frame and progress reports:
- record these details in full in a document signed by all parties:
- submit these arrangements for annual review: and
- ensure that all documentation received as a representative of the Association is promptly made available to the National Executive and Secretary for distribution.

**GE 023**  
**NATURAL JUSTICE AND PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS**

OBSERVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE AND RULES OF  
PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

**Issue**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process whereby every level of the Association is made aware of the principles of Natural Justice and Rules of procedural fairness when carrying out administration and employing any processes detailed in our Constitutions and this Policy Handbook at Sub-branch, State and National level.

**Background and Guidelines**

The VVAA is expected to act responsibly when dealing with issues of discipline, hearing grievances, carrying out reviews or any Association administrative process detailed in our Constitution and this Policy Handbook.

The Association is to required to conform to relevant state based legislation in which they are incorporated

All members of the Association must be confident that all management practices are within the law.

It is a firmly established principle of Australian Law that no one person should be condemned unheard. The rules of procedural fairness may be summarized as follows:

- The hearing rule requires a decision-maker to give a person whose interests will be adversely affected by the decision, an opportunity to be heard. The bias rule requires a decision-maker to be disinterested or unbiased in the matter to be decided. The no evidence rule requires that a decision by a decision maker be based upon logical probative evidence.

In summary, this means that every respondent to a complaint has the right (where there may be detriment arising from the resolution of that complaint) to be heard; to present evidence and submissions in one's own cause; and the opportunity to be heard by an impartial decision-maker.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with Policy GE 021- Grievance Management and Clause 18, sub-clauses a to e of the Constitution of the VVAA, National Council Incorporated.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Council meeting conducted on 27/29 May 2005, resolved that:

- the Association subscribes to the Principles of Natural Justice and Rules of Procedural Fairness in all matters to do with the management and administration of the Association as detailed in this handbook, the VVAA constitution and all relevant Incorporation Acts as the case may be.

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**HE**

**HEALTH,**

**INCLUDING CHEMICAL ISSUES AND POST**

**TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

**HE 001  
COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS ACTIVELY  
OPPOSED TO CHEMICAL USE**

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS ACTIVELY FIGHTING THE USE OF  
CHEMICALS THAT ENTER THE FOOD CHAIN

**Issue**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia must work with other credible organisations opposing the use of chemicals that enter the food chain, in order to gain, or disseminate additional knowledge regarding their use.

**Background**

Credible organisations that are not members of the ex-service community are actively opposing the use of chemicals that enter the food chain. They undertake research, seek publicity and generally try to bring the dangers of chemical use to the notice of the public.

These organisations may hold knowledge that the Vietnam veteran community needs. The Association may be able to provide these organisations with addition information, contacts or support that will heighten awareness.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- the Association seeks cooperation or information, wherever possible, with credible organisations that are actively opposing the use of chemicals where it is in the best interests of the Association.

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## **HE 002 VVAA DEATH REGISTER**

### **MAINTENANCE OF A RECORD OF THE DEATHS OF VIETNAM VETERANS**

#### **Issue**

Maintaining a record of the deaths of Vietnam veterans in as complete and accurate a form as possible.

#### **Background**

Unit Associations are often the first points of contact for families when a Vietnam veteran dies. The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Returned and Services are also sources of information. The Association should encourage relationships with these organisations to ensure that all deaths are reported and registered.

Information which the Association collects should be verified wherever possible, and made available to States and other authorities, particularly in relation to the discussion of the health and welfare of veterans.

Sub-Branched and State Branches are requested to provide details of the death of Vietnam veterans as they come to hand. Multiple reporting is far preferable to no reporting at all.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- the National Secretary of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia is to maintain a register of the deaths of Vietnam veterans, in as complete and accurate a form as possible; and
- the Register of Deaths of Vietnam veterans is to be made available to State and Sub-Branched on request.

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**ME**

**MEMBERSHIP**

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **ME 001 LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

### **AWARD AND REVOCATION OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION AT SUB-BRANCH, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL.**

#### **Issue**

Life membership is a means of visibly rewarding those who have contributed to the Association, through long and meritorious service. Life Membership applies at three levels, Sub-Branch, State and National.

#### **Background, Conditions of Award and Revocation**

Life Membership takes precedence immediately after the Association Meritorious Service Award. (Policy ME 002 refers)

A life member at any level retains all the rights of an ordinary member and may stand for election to executive positions at Sub-branch, State and National Levels

The appropriate service for award of Life Membership at Sub-Branch level is as determined by the Sub-Branch. By awarding Life Membership, the Sub-Branch accepts responsibility for payment of capitations in regard to the members. The Sub-Branch Secretary must maintain a register of Life Members.

The appropriate service for award of Life Membership at State level is as determined by the State Branch. By awarding Life Membership, the State Branch accepts responsibility for payment of capitations in regard to the members. The State Secretary must maintain a register of Life Members.

The National Council may decide on the appropriate service for award of National Life Membership, although it must relate to activities conducted on a national level. The National Congress must ratify the nomination.

Certificates of Life Membership are obtainable only from the National Secretary. State and National Secretaries are to maintain, respectively, registers of State and National Life Members.

Life Membership Badges are to incorporate space to endorse Sub-Branch, State or National identification - eg Brisbane North, Victoria or National.

The Award of Life Membership may be revoked if a Life member takes action that is considered to be detrimental to the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, or to Vietnam or other veterans. Complaints concerning the actions of Life Members are to be made in writing to the National Secretary, who is to request the Life Member to respond in writing. The National Secretary is to place all information before the National Council, for consideration.

#### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, and amended on 29 October 2000 resolved that:

- the Association institutes the award of Life Membership at Sub-Branch, State and National level; and the executive at each level shall have the authority to revoke an award of Life Membership.

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **ME 002 MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, OR TO THE VIETNAM VETERANS' COMMUNITY

### **Issue**

Service that continues after the award of Life Membership is not, as at June 1998, recognised or rewarded by the Association.

### **Background**

Community service including that as a member of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia may result in the award of an Australian honour. (Policy ME XXX refers)

Distinguished service within the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia may be rewarded through the award of Life Membership, at Sub-Branch, State or National level. (Policy ME 001 refers).

A Meritorious Service Award should have an order of precedence above Life Membership. It may be awarded to non-members who have made a significant contribution to the Vietnam veteran community. To this end, it is necessary to establish and preserve standards of achievement leading to presentation of the award.

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc at a National Congress conducted on 24 October 1998, resolved that; the Association institute a Meritorious Service Award under the following conditions:

1. A Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia nominee must already be in receipt of Life Membership at any level and have continued to make significant contribution to the Association and the Vietnam veterans' community within Australia;
2. A non- Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia nominee must have made a very significant contribution to the Vietnam veteran community within Australia; and
3. Each nomination must be unanimously approved by a committee consisting of two members of the National Executive and two State Presidents, one of whom should be from the same state or territory as the nominee.
4. The Meritorious Service Award may be withdrawn by the unanimous vote of National Council of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

**ME 003  
MAINTENANCE OF LISTS OF MEMBERS**

MAINTENANCE OF LISTS OF MEMBERS BY STATE AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVES TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE APPLICABLE INCORPORATIONS ACTS

**Issue**

The legislation, under which the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia is incorporated in New South Wales, requires the Public Officer of the Association to maintain a current list of members. Incorporation articles for each State and Territory Branch includes the same requirement.

**Background**

There is a legislative requirement for the Public Officers at State and National level to maintain a list of current members.

Recent history has demonstrated the vulnerability of both State and National Public Officers to potential breaches of the relevant Acts. In addition to this, the disaffection of particular individuals may result in the loss of this information.

The purpose of this policy is to fulfil the legislative requirements, and to ensure that the Association is not vulnerable to the actions of individuals.

Sub-Branch, State and National Secretaries are responsible to preserve the security of lists of members, to ensure that membership lists are not used for improper purposes, and to preserve the privacy of members.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- Capitation payments to State Branches and the National Council must be accompanied by a list of all Sub Branch members for whom payment is made.

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## **ME 004 SECOND MEMBERSHIP**

FINANCIAL MEMBERS OF A SUB-BRANCH CAN TAKE OUT A SECOND MEMBERSHIP  
OF ANOTHER SUB-BRANCH

### **Issue**

To assist in controlling mailing lists and to allow members to join a second sub-branch of the Association.

### **Background**

This policy will allow a degree of flexibility and mobility with membership

It will assist to controlling mailing lists for Debrief and other correspondence to members initiated by State and National Council

### **Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress meeting conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that:

- a financial member of a sub-branch may take out Second Membership of another Sub-branch at a fee set within the state to which a capitation is not paid; and
- the sub-branch and/or state secretary must be advised or in the case over a state border the state secretary of that state; and
- those members holding a 'second' membership are entitled to vote only at the Sub-branch or State Branch for which capitation fees are paid and
- members can only be elected onto the Executive of a Sub Branch or State Branch where the person pays their capitation fees.

**ME005  
AFFILIATION**

**AFFILIATION OF LIKE GROUPS WITH SIMILAR OBJECTS**

**Issue**

To establish a policy to enable Ex-service and other organisations with similar objectives to become affiliated with the VVAA.

**Background**

There are a number of Associations with a membership comprising Vietnam veterans, and other interested parties who may wish to establish formal dialog including affiliation with the VVAA

These associations may wish to retain their autonomy but wish to discuss issues and share information for mutual benefit.

This type of affiliation will have positive outcomes and be beneficial when dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Government and other service providers.

Some affiliations may involve the establishment of ESO Support Centres for Pension/Welfare work or joint committee for the common good of stakeholders.

**Policy**

It was ratified at the National Congress on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2002 that:

The VVAA may cross affiliate with other like organisations with similar objects at a National and State level providing there is no compromising with any rule or objects contained in the VVAA National Constitution or Policy Handbook, with financial details, fees and rules of operation agreed to by the affiliating parties, and any decisions with National implications made in the course of any such affiliation or meeting must be resolved or ratified by the National Council.

**VE**

**VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS**

**VE 001  
SERVICE PENSION FOR SPOUSES**

ENTITLEMENT OF SPOUSES AND/OR PARTNERS UNDER 50 YEARS OF AGE TO A  
SERVICE PENSION

**Issue**

Entitlement of the Service Pension to Spouse or Partner whom is a full time carer of a Veteran

**Background**

Legislation was introduced in 1995 and discriminates against some spouses or partners (under 50 years of age) of veterans by taking away their entitlement to a service pension.

The Spouse or Partner of a veteran in receipt of a pension at the Special Rate (TPI) is eligible.

Veterans and Partners (under 50) with dependant children also qualify.

If the veteran is in receipt of a pension at a lessor rate and/or is Totally and Permanently incapacitated due to a disability that is non war-caused the spouse or Partner is required to apply via Centrelink.

Centrelink regards disability pensions awarded to veterans as income and decreases payments accordingly.

**Policy**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council Inc, at a National Congress conducted on 30 May 1999, resolved that

- the Association requests the Federal government restores (the pre 1995) eligibility for service pension to spouses under 50 years of age who are full time carers of veterans including those veterans who are Totally and Permanently Incapacitated for other reasons other than war caused disabilities.

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**WE**

**WELFARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

**AN**

**ANNEXES**

**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

**AN 001  
NOMINATION FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name Sub/State Branch Name

hereby nominate for election to the position of \_\_\_\_\_  
Title

at the National Congress to be held on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Date

A copy of my resume or biography is enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

I certify that the nominee is currently a financial member of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, and will be at the date of the election.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Position ( Secretary or Treasurer) Date

This nomination was endorsed by a meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_  
State Branch Name

held at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Position (President or Secretary) Date

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **AN 002 CODE OF ETHICS**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia subscribes to the Fundamental principles of the Training and Information Program (TIP). The Association has a policy of ensuring that all practitioners are trained and given authorisation to act on behalf of the Association.

All authorised Welfare and/or Pension Officers and Advocates have a responsibility to maintain a high standard of ethics in order to safeguard their own integrity and to protect and promote the interests of the Veteran Community and the Association.

Those Practitioners authorised by the VVAA shall:

- give full, accurate and truthful information to veterans and their families in relation to pensions, benefits and services and, when asked, will provide an honest assessment of the prospects of success of a claim based on their knowledge and experience;
- encourage veterans, their families and others to give full, accurate, truthful and relevant information when applying for pensions, benefits and services;
- act only on the veteran's or dependant's instructions in relation to action to be taken in respect of a claim or application for pension or benefits, or access to services;
- not seek remuneration of any type from veterans and their families, or charge a fee for service;
- ensure that all contact with members of the veteran community, staff of government agencies, providers of services and the general community is conducted in a professional manner;
- ensure that all available relevant details and documents are submitted with claims and applications for pensions, benefits and services;
- only undertake work to the level at which they have been trained and have demonstrated competence;
- maintain and expand their knowledge base by further training and by seeking advice from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or other service providers;
- recognise that Commonwealth Government employees are bound by the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act* and *Privacy Act*, in providing access to information about veterans and their families, and act in a manner that does not compromise this responsibility;
- keep personal information secure and not disclose such information to others without express consent; and
- promote the interests of the veteran community by communicating openly and honestly with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and other service providers, and by complying with requests for information.

# VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™

## AN 003 SUGGESTED UNDERTAKING BY A VAAA WELFARE, PENSIONS OFFICER OR ADVOCATE

I (add Name) of (add Address) being a person authorised to act on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (Add Sub-Branch Name) in providing Welfare, Pensions or Advocacy Services to veterans and/or their dependants hereby state that I will;

- \* give full, accurate and truthful information to veterans and their families in relation to pensions, benefits and services and, when asked, will provide an honest assessment of the prospects of success of a claim based on their knowledge and experience;
- \* encourage veterans, their families and others to give full, accurate, truthful and relevant information when applying for pensions, benefits and services;
- \* act only on the veteran's or dependant's instructions in relation to action to be taken in respect of a claim or application for pension or benefits, or access to services;
- \* not seek remuneration of any type from veterans and their families, or charge a fee for service;
- \* ensure that all contact with members of the veteran community, staff of government agencies, providers of services and the general community is conducted in a professional manner;
- \* ensure that all available relevant details and documents are submitted with claims and applications for pensions, benefits and services;
- \* only undertake work to the level at which they have been trained and have demonstrated competence;
- \* maintain and expand their knowledge base by further training and by seeking advice from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or other service providers;
- \* recognise that Commonwealth Government employees are bound by the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act* and *Privacy Act*, in providing access to information about veterans and their families, and act in a manner that does not compromise this responsibility;
- \* keep personal information secure and not disclose such information to others without express consent; and
- \* promote the interests of the veteran community by communicating openly and honestly with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and other service providers, and by complying with requests for information.

I make this commitment with the full understanding that I have legal responsibilities to the Association, the Veteran Community and to various Acts and Jurisdictions.

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Authorised Person

Witnessed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sub Branch President

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **AN 004 SUGGESTED LETTER OF AUTHORISATION**

### **To whom it may concern**

This is to certify that (Name) of (Address) is authorised to act on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, (Sub-branch name) to provide assistance and advice to the Veteran and Ex-Service Community in (insert Welfare and/or Pension Claims and/or Advocacy) matters

Mr (Name) has completed the necessary training and has the acquired the necessary knowledge and skills as a (insert).

This authorisation is provided from (date) to (date) with the realisation that it can be revoked or reinstated, without notice, by means of a written resolution of the Sub-Branch or State Executive of the Association.

Yours sincerely.

State/Sub-Branch President

Telephone: (number)

# **VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®™**

## **AN 005 GUIDELINES FOR REPRESENTATIVES**

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, National Council appoints representatives under policy GE 003 - Appointments to Act on Behalf of the Association. Those so appointed are required to:

- represent the views and policy of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and where specifically requested represent the National President.
- ensure that in the course of any representation that the rules and Policies contained in the VVAA National Constitution and Policy Handbook are not contravened in any way.
- ensure that wherever possible that neither Vietnam Veterans nor the VVAA are disadvantaged through decisions taken in the course of any representation.
- provide a written annual report to the National Congress.
- ensure that a single page 'Briefing Note' and minutes of meetings attended on behalf of the Association are made available to the National Secretary for distribution to the members of the National Council within 21 days after publication, or
- in the case of confidential minutes and documents or those with a restricted distribution, the representative will need to make a 'personal decision' to meet such requests, or as normal , provide copies to the National President only and notify the author.
- all correspondence or discussion papers relating to any representation must be sanctioned by the National Council and privacy markings determined together with the level of distribution (Policy GE008 refers).
- Any personal expenses incurred in the course of any representation will be reimburse providing prior approved has been received from the National Executive and receipts and summary sheet submitted for payment.
- Where no policy or view is held on an issue, a representative should seek guidance from the National President or express no view at all.