



DFWA SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH



Insert for *CAMARADERIE* July 2015

EDITORIAL

Annual Fund-raiding Raffle

The DFWA raffle will be drawn later this year. Again we ask for your support to fund branch operations including the cost of mailing *Camaraderie*. Details are enclosed. We are most grateful for your support.

Why Join the DFWA?

In the Insert accompanying the March edition of *Camaraderie* I stressed the need for us to regenerate our membership. It is my intention to write to every ADF member based in South Australia to encourage them to join our Branch. In reflecting on the contents of the letter I asked myself, "Why did I join DFWA in the early 1970s. Are things different today and is membership relevant to today's serving men and women?"

I joined the DFWA around 1973. At that time several factors motivated me to join what was and still is the most effective professional association for serving and ex-serving members of the ADF. These included:

- Defence salaries were languishing at very low levels and no other ex-service organisation was lobbying for increases. Some of my soldiers had to seek welfare to help them make ends meet.
- Following the withdrawal of Australian Forces from South Vietnam, defence expenditure was drastically cut and conditions of service became an opportunity for the government to make budget savings.
- A government review of defence superannuation was stagnating and, with the exception of politicians such as John Jess MP, there was very little motivation to provide ADF members with a decent scheme.

I was against joining anything like a union, but, facing the situation that no other body spoke up on our behalf, the DFWA, largely comprising serving members, represented the only effective organisation that would lobby for us. In time, DFWA agitation achieved reasonable pay increases and pressured politicians and defence chiefs to agree to an improved superannuation scheme. I have never regretted my membership.

Have things changed? Is a professional association for serving and ex-serving members of the ADF required today? Absolutely! It's largely been through the

efforts of the DFWA and organisations under the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO) that single ADF members retained their right to a return air fare to visit their families each year. Pressure on the government by DFWA/ADSO through the media, representations to ministers and as your advocate in the DFRT, succeeded in achieving the ADF pay increase of 2%. Your professional association also played the major role in convincing the government to fairly index defence superannuation under the DFRB and DFRDB schemes, although there is still a lot of work to do to make the systems fair for all. Presently, among other issues, DFWA/ADSO is lobbying the government in regards to the new ADF Superannuation Scheme.

Can we always rely on the government to make the best decisions in respect of serving and ex-serving members of the ADF? The answer, unfortunately, is in the negative. The federal government faces many demands and priorities and defence is only one of these. History proves that in Australia, as well as overseas, men and women who serve in the Armed Forces need an effective professional association to represent them.

Airline pilots, engineers, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, firefighters and para-medics all have their own professional associations. Given the nature of ADF employment where members have a legal obligation in respect of their service, but the government has no such obligation, it is essential that serving and ex-serving ADF members have their own professional association. The DFWA, working with its ADSO partners is that body. **That's why you should join the DFWA now!** When the current generation of Vietnam era veterans pass on, who will represent serving members and other veterans?

John Wilson
President, South Australia Branch

SA Branch Patron

The Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Hieu Van Le AO, has very kindly agreed to be the Patron of the SA Branch. His Excellency has a long history of association with veterans groups in SA. His first function as Patron was to open the DFWA National Executive meeting (NATEX) in Adelaide on 19 May.

The Future of the Repat, Daw Park

Your Branch is playing a major role in responding to the state government's proposals contained in *Transforming Health* program, in particular on the

future of the Repat at Daw Park. The situation with regard to the proposed new mental health ED to replace Ward 17 is in the hands of an expert panel which is due to report its findings and proposals at the end of August. As far as the future of the Daw Park campus, I sent you a copy of a letter from Minister for Veterans' Affairs and local member for the Daw Park area, the Hon. Martin Hamilton-Smith regarding expressions of interest from private hospitals, NGOs and private firms to develop the site. The minister advised that the veteran community will be consulted on the proposals with a final government decision due next year.

Sponsorship

The major sponsor for the DFWA is Invocare, represented in South Australia by Blackwell Funerals. The management of Blackwell Funerals has indicated a very generous sponsorship offer, details of which will be communicated to you shortly. We are most grateful for the support provided by our sponsor. Blackwell Funerals is offering \$500 discount on services and pre-paid funerals for serving and ex-serving members of the ADF. Details of this offer are enclosed.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 16 October 2015 at Blackwell Funerals, 120 Henley Beach Road, Torrensville at 12.00 for 12.30 p.m. A luncheon will be provided at 12.30 p.m. to which we will be inviting our Patron, His Excellency Hieu Van Le AO, Governor of South Australia. The AGM will commence at 2.00 p.m. **Please put this important event in your diary.**

New Members

Welcome SQNLDR David Woerner, RAAF who has transferred from NT (QLD Branch) to the SA Branch.

Donations

Many thanks to Jon Barlow for his kind and generous donation.

If you wish to make a donation (tax deductible) please send a cheque to Ian Smith (PO Box 573, Stirling, SA, 5152) or make an online payment to:

Defence Bank: **BSB:** 803-205

Account No. 20374231

Account Name: SA Branch DFWA

When making an online payment please ensure that you quote your surname and postcode.

Defence Department Advice Relating to the 'Mr Fluffy' Home Insulation Issue

You may have read of concern regarding the ACT Government's Asbestos Response Taskforce and the residences affected by Mr Fluffy Insulation (loose-fill asbestos insulation). The Defence Department has written to DFWA asking that the information below be given wide dissemination:

Defence News and Media

Defence response to Mr Fluffy home insulation

3 July 2015 | Media Release

On 1 July 2015 the ACT Government Asbestos Response Taskforce released a register of residential addresses in the ACT affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation (also known as Mr Fluffy insulation).

Current and former Defence personnel who resided in Canberra in the 1970s and 1980s may be concerned the home they occupied during this time was insulated with loose fill asbestos.

Current and former Defence personnel who suspect they may have been exposed to asbestos as a result of their employment with Defence can participate by calling 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362) and asking to be put through to the Defence Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme (DAEES), or by visiting <http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ohsc/programs/Asbestos/>.

Anyone who believes they may have lived in a Canberra home containing loose fill asbestos is encouraged to read the information available on the Asbestos Response Taskforce website.

The Taskforce has a process that enables former tenants and home owners to establish if a property they resided in contained loose-fill asbestos and was part of a removal program.

The ACT Government recently passed legislation that provides for a register of the addresses of affected residential premises to be made publicly available.

The register will enable legislative and regulatory requirements, such as the mandating of asbestos management plans for these properties, attachment of new planning permissions and the capacity to break residential tenancies to take place.

More information is available on the ACT Government Asbestos Response Taskforce website at: <http://www.asbestostaskforce.act.gov.au>.

Media contact:

Defence Media Operations (02) 6127 1999

DFWA (SA Branch) – proudly supported by



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