

May 2019

RAAV Ravings



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How first responders are coping with PTSD and mental health tolls that come with saving lives



Photo: After more than three decades volunteering as a lifesaver, Garry Meredith knows firsthand the toll saving lives can take.

Drownings, fatal car crashes, and suicides are tragic events most of us hope never to have to encounter.

But for our first responders, attending life and death situations is a daily reality. Garry Meredith knows firsthand the toll saving lives can take on the mental health of emergency service workers.

"I always thought I'm one of the lucky ones because it didn't affect me ... and then, in the end, it did," he said.

Mr Meredith has spent more than three decades volunteering as a lifesaver, including time as a crew member onboard a jet boat and rescue helicopter on the far north coast of New South Wales.

"My first experience was an unconscious fellow at Shelly Beach [in Ballina] floating face down in the back of the break," he said.

"In the helicopter we were going to road crashes and body recoveries ...

But I think what got to me the most was the suicides and shark attacks and

probably resuscitation on kids.

"I didn't know much about PTSD until I was basically diagnosed with it."

HIGH PREVALENCE OF PTSD AMONG FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr Meredith's experience is by no means an isolated one.

A recent parliamentary inquiry into the mental health of first responders found 10 per cent of employees have probable PTSD, compared to the general population which is estimated to be 4 per cent.

The Beyond Blue report cited in the inquiry also found more than a fifth of emergency service workers have high levels of psychological stress — almost three times the national average.

"What we do is not a normal job," firefighter Pat Jones wrote in his submission to the inquiry.

"We are there to help those Australians who are having the worst or last days of their life, and we do it because we care."

According to figures from the National Coronial Information System in 2015, one first responder takes his or her life every six weeks.

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A Message from AV CEO Assoc. Prof. Tony Walker ASM



Hi everyone

Thanks again for the opportunity to contribute to the newsletter. I have just returned from a quick visit to the UK where I had the

opportunity to visit Warwick University and the Scottish Ambulance Service where we shared learnings and ideas for continual improvement within our agencies. I also had the opportunity to present at a conference in London on both our mental health and cardiac arrest work. Whilst it's nice to be away, it is always nice to be home again

You may have seen in the media, particularly via 3AW, that we recently announced a partnership with the children's charity, 'TLC for Kids' in which we are developing a fit for purpose Ambulance that will be supporting children with terminal illness, and their families, to participate in last wish activities such as a trip to the zoo or the beach, in a safe and supported environment. This is an important project with a gap observed in the system for these children, and our Paramedics will have the opportunity to volunteer their time to support this initiative. We are really pleased to be partnering with TLC and we hope to have this program up and running over the next couple of months. Another project that has now progressed is the State wide Emergency Serviced Memorial being established in the Treasury Gardens. I was fortunate enough to attend the sod turning at the site recently, with the planning and approval processes for this work having been underway for nearly 2 years. This will be complete later this year and will be a fitting tribute to those that have made the ultimate sacrifice and have lost their lives in the line of duty. It has been an honour to be supporting this incredibly important work.

Last year I was pleased to announce the launch of the Retired and Former Employee (RAFE) Peer Support Program pilot to provide support for any AV employee after they have left the organisation. On 23 May the pilot celebrated its first year anniversary which is a fantastic milestone!! The beyondblue survey "Answering the Call" released last year confirmed that we were on the right track and that these sorts of programs are integral to the wellbeing of our people once they have left the organisation. I'd like to acknowledge the fantastic collaboration between our Peer Support Program and the Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria for their support to get this program off the ground. Most importantly I would like to thank Steve Mulligan (volunteer coordinator) and Phillip Wade (volunteer) who were the founding volunteers of the pilot and for their ongoing commitment and support. We are currently evaluating the pilot and will keep it running pending the results, and I look forward to sharing the results with you once known. In the meantime, you can continue to contact the RAFE on mobile 0428 332 418 or via email RAFEpeersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au.

Finally, Friday 5th July saw the launch of the inaugural Emergency Services Game in the AFL. The game (Hawks vs Pies) recognised the work of the volunteers and staff across all emergency service agencies with some pre-match activities, and has raised funds for the Emergency Services Foundation – increasing awareness of mental health for emergency services workers. Another great initiative that we are very proud to support.

Thanks again everyone, and stay warm through these cooler months

Tony

Presidents Report



Here we are again with our RAAV. Ravings and newsletter for the month of August.

Thanks once again for help from the Convenors and members of the committee.

As you will be aware we are supplying the Pullovers and they seem to be in demand especially in our recent cold weather. Please let us know if you wish to purchase one of these quality Pullovers.

As you will understand we have limited resources as regards to funding.

It is important that you submit your membership fees, and let us know if you still require to have RAAV membership, currently we are nearly \$1000.00 in arrears and late fees. We do understand that there are a few members that are in permanent care and we seek information from those members and family

The RAA are asking for interested parties that would be willing to participate in the Ambulance Victoria Good Sam program

"Someone nearby might need CPR"
Could you help?

This program is open to the general public with associated skills and certificate.

The program is on the AV website please inform us if you are interested.

GoodSam (Smart phone activated Medic) connects first aid qualified people to patients in those first critical minutes of cardiac arrest while Paramedics are on the way.

Looking forward to seeing you all at one of our District Venues

Ian Donaldson

President

District Meeting Dates

Our next District Meetings for 2019 are:

Central & Northern Victoria - Tuesday 6th August at the Bendigo RSL commencing at 12 noon.

Geelong & Surf Coast - Wednesday 14th August 12 noon at Geelong RSL Belmont

Gippsland Region - Thursday 15th August 12noon at Morwell Club

Metro - West District - Friday 23rd August 12noon at Sunshine RSL

North East Victoria - Saturday 24th August 12noon at Benalla Bowls Club

Metro - South District - Tuesday 27th August 12noon at Steeples Restaurant,

Ballarat & Central West - Wednesday 28th August
12noon at the Golf House Hotel

South West Victoria -
Monday 2nd September 12noon at Casterton

North West Victoria - Tuesday 3rd September 12noon at Mildura RSL

Metro (Annual General Meeting) - Wednesday 11th September - 10.30am at AV Headquarters, Doncaster

Geelong & Surf Coast - Wednesday 9th October 12 noon at Geelong RSL Belmont



Birthday Greetings

August:

Bill Harvey	1 st
Des Freeman	2 nd
Robert Rigby	3 rd
Stanley Methery	4 th
Geoffrey Coffey	7 th
John Clancy	8 th
Jeanette Williams	8 th
Daryl Knight	13 th
Paul Pardoe-Matthews	13 th
Darrell Rintoule	13 th
George Wait	13 th
Margaret Kerr	14 th
Stanley Paley	18 th
David Calder	19 th
Ralph Casey	19 th
Robert Henderson	22 nd
Neville Hettick	24 th
Bill Middleton	25 th
Phillip Matthews	26 th
Rodney Poulson	26 th



Gary Thompson	26 th
Peter Cassady	27 th
Christopher Coucill	30 th
Don Gillies	30 th
Vaughan Murphy	30 th
Ross Robotham	30 th

September

Charles Johnson	4 th
Mal Peters	4 th
Alan Close	7 th
Ian Lewis	13 th
Robert Reilly	13 th
Don White	13 th
Bob Beggs	15 th
Warren Ashley	17 th
Sandy Jones	18 th

Neale Johnson	18 th
Bruce Slater	18 th
Peter Abery	19 th
Jim Ballard	19 th
Terry Baker	20 th
Sandy Kahn	20 th
Brian Trenerly	22 nd
Bernie Griffiths	23 rd
Mike Mc Manus	23 rd
William Sleep	23 rd
Bill McKnight	25 th
Don Rhodes	26 th
George Brown	29 th
David Johnson	29 th

October

Glen Dowlan	2 nd
John Perry	3 rd
Ron Arbon	5 th
Peter Whittle	5 th
Ian Crocos	7 th
Michael Gleeson	7 th
Bill Jeffs	7 th
Brian Redfern	7 th
Les Hotchin	9 th

Geoff Elmes	10 th
Jim Spanswick	11 th
Andrew Fowler	13 th
Ray Loughheed	13 th
Richard Williams	22 nd
Brian Cass	24 th
Ian Dale	25 th
Ken Atkinson	26 th
Wal Mc Curdy	26 th
Ronald Callaway	27 th
Ken Holt	27 th
Col Evans	28 th
Stewart Cook	30 th
Ben Wright	30 th
Ron Handley	31 st

With sadness we record the passing of:

John O'Keefe
Valerie (Val) Morgan

Payments to the Association

Please be aware that any payment made to the Association MUST have either your NAME, INVOICE NUMBER or MEMBER NUMBER for us to allocate the received amount. Failure to do so may render the sender to receive a reminder invoice which could be an embarrassment to both yourself and our accounts department.

Several payments have been made to our account with no idea who sent them To the Members who sent these payments please contact our Secretary to ensure the correct details are recorded and you are correctly credited with the payment.

District Reports

South West Victoria

Another very successful meeting was held in Warrnambool on Monday 3rd June at the Warrnambool Football Club rooms with seven members in attendance and 12 apologies.

The meeting was addressed by Ian Cameron, who brought us up to date with the latest news from Melbourne, along with two guests from the Department of Corrections. Both guests gave a very good insight into the operations of the Corrections Service which raised robust questions from Members.

The next meeting of the SW RAAV will be in Casterton on Monday 2nd September commencing at 1200hrs.

Ray Loughheed

Convenor

Gippsland District

Held at the Morwell Club Inc
136 Helen St Morwell

With 14 members and Partners Present and 11 Apologies for our 16th May lunch.

We all welcomed to the recently revamped dining area at the Morwell Club

Discussion took place about moving meetings around the region to the east and west due the expanse of the region or splitting into two East and West for consideration

Since this meeting Jumpers are now available sizing as normal and the same Style as original AV issue with badge on left front

Cost around the \$30-\$35ea orders Via Ian Cameron

Neil Hall

Convenor

Meeting date for the rest of 2019

Thursday 15th August 2019

Thursday 14th November 2019

North West Victoria

Alan Cooksey

Convener

Ballarat & Central West

Eleven Members and partners attend our gathering at the Golf House Hotel in Ballarat on Wednesday 29th May. We were very pleased to have Sandra Middleton with us and we assured her

that she is still very much a part of our Association. During lunch our Secretary, Ian Cameron, gave us an update of happenings around the State and progress on many ongoing activities. We are looking for a member to take over the role of Co-ordinator and trust that we can fill this position very soon.

South Metro District

May Meeting of Metro South held at Steeles Restaurant Mornington Racecourse 28th. May.

This was held in a great atmosphere of 39 Members in attendance. Adding to the day was the appearance of our President Ian Donaldson and Christine this gives our local members a chance to see and appreciate his effort to take the time to share a meal with us.

The day was enhanced by the signing of three new members and the attendance of two who have been unable to join us for a long period. Ian gave a short talk and went on to answer questions which was well received, he then produced samples of our new jumpers to try for sizes all were happy with quality and design.

Bryan Cass Metro – South Co-ordinator

West Metro District

The Sunshine RSL hosted 10 Members, Partners and guests for our second meeting. On Friday 24th May for a most enjoyable lunch and catch up. We are pleased that we gained two new Members for the West Metro area and are looking forward to seeing many new faces join our ranks. We were given an update on the Associations activities and progress for our Secretary, Ian.

Central & Northern Victoria

The last meeting of Central and Northern District was held on May 7th at our usual Venue of Bendigo and District RSL. It was well supported again with 22 Members and Partners attending. There was one apology received from Laurie Spelling of Echuca who chose to be in Queensland over Bendigo (obviously the ambient temperature in Bendigo had something to do with it). The meeting was enjoyed by all attending and we also welcomed 2 new members – Lou Grygierczyk (ex Central Districts) and Pat Kelly who is now enjoying the country life after moving from Melbourne. Looking forward to the

next meeting on Tuesday, August 6th at 12 noon again at the Bendigo RSL

Peter Briscoe

Convenor

North East Victoria

Our May get together at the Benalla Bowls Club was of a nice group of 22. While we missed a few people this month, the group is becoming very comfortable, and as I'm sure is the same with all the groups these are much needed gatherings, for retired ambo's, ex-staff, and spouses alike. While some of the old stories are repeated everyone laughs just as hard each time! We send our best wishes to Geoff Williams who had a terrible accident and will be out of action for quite some time. We have plans to get a bus & travel down to the Ambulance Museum, where we have been assured we will receive a warm welcome, looking forward to a good day!

Leanne Russell-Jones

Convenor

Geelong and Surf Coast District

June 5th. saw G&SC Branch luncheon meeting take place in the Geelong RSL once again.

Thirteen of us enjoyed both a luncheon & the cross table catch up chat.

Again, we had the pleasure of representatives from Committee - with Secretary Ian Cameron, John Head & wife Judy all well known to our membership.

John brought down a welcome line of long awaited RAAV Pullovers which soon saw those who were of demo size, decked out & warmer. Others being quick to place their orders with Ian.

Bob Gosden came down on another visit from Ballarat. Bob was also reported to have been a recent visitor to Bendigo.

Luncheon over, members once again made use of the RSL Board Room with Ian Cameron giving a report on the Committee / A.V. proposed developments - including the appointment of an Executive Officer, plus that long awaited Assistant Secretary.

Ian further outlined more information on the proposed October project to be held at Macedon.

District Reports

John returned comments on many of the issues we had charged him with at our previous meeting – thanks John.

Interest was shared in hearing Warrnambool Branch were visiting Branch Stations for BBQ's, permitting members to become acquainted with current staff – some of whom attended off shift.

Continuing discussion between Branch members & our Melbourne representatives, allowed for many questions to be either answered or held in abeyance for further research & follow up answers.

With holidays/sickness holding keeping members away this meeting, it was recognised that good wishes be made known to members going through this flu lurgy, trusting their discomfort is soon over. For those on holidays, we trust you benefited from the warmer climates.

Ben Wright

Coordinator G&SC Branch.

General Meeting - Doncaster

Wednesday 12th June greeted 38 Members and guests at our General Meeting held at AV Doncaster. The day was few cold, wet and miserable so we were surprised to have a good attendance.

We also note that with Doncaster Headquarters carpark filled to the maximum most of the time we felt that many members were put off from attending due to the weather as well.

Following the reports and general discussion a suggestion was made that we move the meetings from Doncaster to another location and follow similar procedures as our other Metro and Regional Districts. This was agreed to be further investigated and a report made to the AGM in September.

Following the meeting we engaged in catching up with each other since our last meeting and enjoyed lunch.

Ian Cameron
Secretary

RAAV Caravan & Motor Home Club



Our next get away is on October 25th to the 28th. There have been a number of sites reserved by the club for members and any current AV member who wish to become part of the club.

Buronga Riverside Tourist Park

71A Buronga NSW

Phone: 0350233040

Internet:

www.burongacaravanpark.com.au

Email:

info@burongacaravanpark.com.au

Cost Per Night – No Seniors Card. \$35

Cost Per Night – Seniors Card. \$33

Cost of Cabins: No On suite. \$60

Cost of Cabin: With On suite. \$85

Dogs Allowed – Must have current immunisation, i.e. Parvovirus, Kennel Cough, Ticks etc.

Dates: October 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th

* Please note I have been informed by the park that there are limited numbers of Cabins available for the weekend that we are going away. If you wish to book one please do so ASAP to avoid disappointment.

University Research Project Seeking Former Ambulance Officer Participants

I am a 4th year university student conducting research as part of my studies toward the Bachelor of Psychological Sciences (Honours) degree at the Australian College of Applied Psychology. My research is supervised by Dr Charini Gunaratne, a lecturer in the Discipline of Psychological Sciences (email: charini.gunaratne@acap.edu.au).

My research examines the topic of vicarious resilience, specifically, the factors that predict the development of vicarious resilience in helping professionals who currently work or have formerly worked with clients experiencing a range of trauma narratives. I am currently seeking participants for this project.

Eligible participants will meet the following criteria:

- 18 years or older
- Fluent in English language
- Currently work or formerly worked as a helping professional
 - o Psychotherapist (including psychologists and counsellors)
 - o First Responders (including emergency service personnel and crisis supporters)
- Live and work in Australia

The research will take between 30-45 minutes to complete. The participant will be provided with information about the study, asked to confirm their voluntary participation, and then asked to answer the survey questions. Upon completion, there is an option of voluntarily participating in a raffle draw. 2 x \$50 Myer gift vouchers are available to be won. At the end of the survey the participant is provided with a space to enter their email address. To ensure the anonymity of their participation, answers to the survey will not be linked to the email address provided.

I am hoping to recruit as many participants as possible to complete this research. I would be very grateful if you would share this email with your network of family, friends, work colleagues, etc. to assist me with engaging eligible participants.

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How first responders are coping with PTSD and mental health tolls that come with saving lives



Photo: A recent parliamentary inquiry into the mental health of first responders found 10 per cent of employees have probable PTSD.

The actual number is estimated to be much higher, given that figure does not include part-time or volunteer emergency service workers, nor those who have retired or have been medically discharged. The inquiry also found rural and regional first responders faced additional pressures not experienced by their metropolitan counterparts. These pressures include lower staffing levels, fatigue caused by shift work, community connections to patients or victims, working alone, and having less access to mental health services. The inquiry made 14 recommendations including extensive data collection on the number of mental health injuries and suicide of first responders, as well as a national action plan on first responder mental health.

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT A REGIONAL SOLUTION

Terry Mortimer has been a first responder for more than 40 years, with experience as a pilot and crew member onboard a rescue helicopter, as well as a lifesaver and firefighter. He said one of the hardest parts of the job was dealing with failure.

"There's a lot of success, but there's a lot of failure too," he said.



Photo: Former rescue helicopter pilot Terry Mortimer started a local catch-up for first responders in the Northern Rivers. (Contributed)

"But it's not failure due to want, it's failure due to the extent of their injuries." After dealing with his own struggles and witnessing those of colleagues and friends, Mr. Mortimer decided to start an informal support group for first responders in the Northern Rivers. He said the group met once or twice a month over a pub meal to catch up and check in with each other's wellbeing.

"What we're trying to do here is show people it's OK to be injured," he said.

"If they're suffering because there are different things that trigger them, even for anxiety and depression and things like that, there is a way out.

"I've found a lot of people only need somebody to say 'hey, it's OK!'"

THE NEED TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS

Thursday 27th June was international PTSD awareness day.

It's a cause close to the heart of paramedic and musician Brendan Smoother who knows the importance of raising public awareness around the realities and mental health aspect of emergency service.

"If the broader public is aware of it, then it brings it out in the open and people don't have to feel ashamed about it," he said.

OH GOLLY GOSH?????

Recently we sent out reminders to Members who are yet to pay their Subscriptions.

On viewing the Bank Statements going back 3 months we note several PAYMENTS WITH NO Invoice number, Members name or Invoice number have been recorded.

With regret no one on Committee is able to MIND READ or is a CLAREVOYANT.

Any Member who has NOT received a receipt but received a reminder, Contact with our Accounts Dept. would be most helpful to resolve any misunderstanding.

Members not in good health

John Parkinson
Stan Sandford
Peter Whittle
Ray Neal
Ted Mawby
Helen Wood (Wife of Dennis)
Margaret Kerr
Ian & Joan McPherson

Sandy Jones
Peter Leek

We wish all Members a speedy recovery

How first responders are coping with PTSD and mental health tolls that come with saving lives (From Page 1)



Photo: Music artwork from Brendan Smoother's song 'Behind the Seen'. (Contributed: DanSun Photo Art)

Mr. Smoother said his songs like 'Paramedic Suicide' and 'Behind the Seen' were prompted by a growing awareness of colleagues who had been lost to suicide or damaged beyond the point of being able to return to work.

"We're exposed to trauma situations and not just the physical trauma that we do see, but there's all the emotional baggage that comes with that ... and it's prolonged and protracted over many, many years," he said.

"People probably don't think about it in their everyday lives until it's brought to their attention

IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW NEEDS HELP:

[beyondblue](#) on 1300 22 4636

[Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14

[Headspace](#) on 1800 650 890

[Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467

Source Reference: ABC North Coast NSW



Steve Mulligan and Phillip Wade receiving an award for their services to the RAFF Peer Support Program pilot.

The Presentations were made at our meeting with AV Staff from Wellbeing and Support Services on Friday 14th June

Celebrations on
completion of the
First Year of Our
Peer Support
Program

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following New Members to our Association.

Pat Kelly - Quarry Hill
Louis Gryierczyk - Golden Square
Johnson Peters - Craigieburn
Robert O'Gorman - Taylors Hill
Steve Llewellyn - Newport
Peter Spolding - Cobram
Alf Greaves - Bittern
Michael Gleeson - Irymple
Ron Handley - Whittlesea
Ralph Casey - Endeavour Hills
Les Wiles - Long Gully
Paul Lodder - Belgrave
Greg Prosser - Mooroopna
Gary Mason - Devon North

We look forward to seeing all our new Members at a meeting soon.

University Research Project Seeking Former Ambulance Officer Participants

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For further information about the study, or if you would like to participate in this research, please follow this link: https://acap.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4YkO7T2HNNASH3L

In addition, there is a research page for this project on Facebook. By liking the page, and sharing it, you would assist me in the distribution of the survey. In addition, results of the survey will be posted on this page. Please follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/vicariousresilienceresearch/> Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are unsure if you meet eligibility to participate in this study or have any other queries.

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the Navitas Professional Institute has approved this research (approval number: 515070619).

Kind regards,
Nicole McMahon

Australian College of Applied Psychology

The Back Page

Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria Inc.



Committee of Management

President: Ian Donaldson
Vice President: Erik Schanssema
Secretary: Ian Cameron
Assistant Secretary: Jim Ballard
Treasurer:

Committee Members:

Bill McKnight
Les Wood
John Clancy
Ray Loughheed
Steve Mulligan
Greg Wood
John Head

All Correspondence to:
The Secretary
Unit 2 / 20 Brooks Street
Bentleigh East
Victoria 3165
Mobile: 0435 010 943
Email: raav.secretary@gmail.com

This is Priceless! Note reference to the 'Main Stream Media'...74 years ago!!

What is meant by the modern term referred to as "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS"...The definition is found in 4 telegrams at the Truman Library and Museum in Independence, Missouri.

The following are copies of four telegrams between President Harry Truman and General Douglas MacArthur on the day before the actual signing of the WWII Surrender Agreement in September 1945.

The contents of those four telegrams below are exactly as received at the end of the war - not a word has been added or deleted!

(1) Tokyo, Japan 0800-September 1, 1945

To: President Harry S Truman

From: General D A MacArthur

Tomorrow we meet with those yellow-bellied bastards and sign the Surrender Documents, any last minute instructions?

(2) Washington, D C 1300-September 1, 1945

To: D A MacArthur

From: H S Truman

Congratulations, job well done, but you must tone down your obvious dislike of the Japanese when discussing the terms of the surrender with the press, because some of your remarks are fundamentally not politically correct!

(3) Tokyo, Japan 1630-September 1, 1945

To: H S Truman

From: D A MacArthur and C H Nimitz

Wilco Sir, but both Chester and I are somewhat confused, exactly what does the term politically correct mean?

(4) Washington, D C 2120-September 1, 1945

To: D A MacArthur/C H Nimitz

From: H S Truman

Political Correctness is a doctrine, recently fostered by a delusional, illogical minority and promoted by a sick mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a piece of shit by the clean end!

Now, with special thanks to the Truman Museum and Harry himself, you and I finally have a full understanding of what 'POLITICAL CORRECTNESS' really means.....

www.retiredambulancevictoria.org.au

Facebook: Retired Ambulance
Association of Victoria Inc.