

May 2020

## RAAV Ravings



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## Record Survival Rates for Cardiac Arrest in Victoria

New data from Ambulance Victoria confirms that Victoria is one of the safest places in the world to have a cardiac arrest.

The latest [Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry \(VACAR\) Annual Report](#) shows that use of publicly accessible defibrillators has tripled over the past decade, with 89% of survivors able to return home to their families, having benefited from the lifesaving intervention.

In the last financial year alone Ambulance Victoria has treated a record 6,000 cardiac arrest patients and has reported its fastest ever response times to cardiac arrest cases.



Stephen Clarke (centre with football) is alive and well today thanks to the quick thinking of bystanders

42-year-old Stephen Clarke was one of those people, when, in December 2018, he had just finished a footy training session.

As the team gathered to debrief, he began sweating profusely and felt light-headed, and shortly after fell to the ground, unconscious and without a pulse or heartbeat.

"My answer to myself in that moment was that I would have a shower and feel better, I thought I had a flu or virus, I didn't have any pain," Stephen explained.

"I was walking next to a teammate and he knew something wasn't right and I started to stumble."

Key to Stephen's survival was that a teammate knew exactly where a defibrillator was located at a neighbouring footy club, and ran to collect it.

Other teammates started CPR, while another called Triple Zero (000) and relayed the situation to the ESTA call taker.

Stephen's heart was shocked twice and within five minutes paramedics were on scene

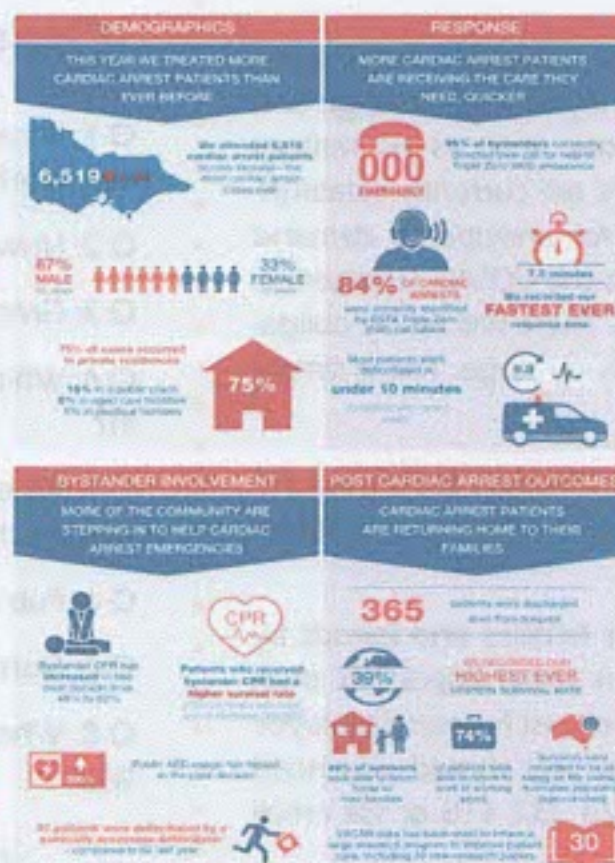
reviving him.

After 11 days at The Alfred hospital, Stephen's wife and daughter were absolutely delighted to have him home for Christmas, and he kicked off the new year by getting back to regular exercise.

"I was fit and healthy and never had a health issue, so it was an enormous shock," he said.

"It was incredibly seamless how the people on the ground with the defibrillator and the CPR worked with the fireys and the ambos, within minutes I was in a cardiac ward."

"I was very lucky to have people around me act quickly and act calmly."



## Statistics

included in the [VACAR 2018-19 Annual Report](#)

Ambulance Victoria CEO Associate Professor Tony Walker said Stephen's incredible outcome is the result of his teammates' quick thinking, along with the lifesaving treatment he received from paramedics, MFB firefighters and staff at The Alfred.

"We know minutes matter in a cardiac arrest and we know the sooner a person receives bystander CPR and defibrillation, the better their chance of returning home to their loved ones," Associate Professor Walker said.

"Our data shows that you are twice as likely to survive a cardiac arrest if a public defibrillator is used."

"We have also seen an increase in bystander CPR over the past decade with our latest VACAR report showing you are three times more likely to survive a cardiac arrest if you receive CPR before an ambulance arrives."

According to the internationally recognised Utstein measure rating, Victoria has one of the best cardiac survival rates in the world, thanks to a number of initiatives such as the [GoodSAM app](#).

The GoodSAM app connects Victorians in cardiac arrest with responders and defibrillators in the critical minutes before paramedics arrive.

"It takes a community to save a life and I encourage everybody to embrace these by learning CPR, signing up to GoodSAM and organising a public defibrillator for your community or workplace," Associate Professor Walker said.

VACAR is one of the world's largest registries of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, and one of the few that routinely follows up on survivors' quality of life to drive improvements to patient outcomes.

The [VACAR Annual Report](#) has been collecting data for more than 20 years.



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



Hi everyone,

It is with a sense of sadness that I reflect upon my last note to you which was written at a time when areas of Victoria had been declared a State of Disaster amidst the devastating bushfires of our recent summer. Today we find ourselves in an unprecedented event of the COVID-19 pandemic - Victoria declared a State of Emergency, our nation coming to terms with a new way of living and the confronting reality of what other parts of the world are experiencing. Ambulance Victoria has been preparing and planning for the impact of COVID-19 since mid-January, with paramedic safety and stringent infection control front and centre of our response.

It is reassuring that Victorians appear to be responding to the important restrictions put in place and staying at home in order to protect our health system and save lives. We are all in this together and the renewed sense of 'community' in spite of social distancing is really comforting.

Please know that you are a valued part of our network and we want you to stay safe and well. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank those of you who have offered your services as retirees through the COVID-19 hotline and email. We are currently establishing a register of availability in preparation for anticipated demand and considering what that might look like. As the COVID-19 situation constantly changes, so too will our response. There will be no obligation whatsoever to assist if you reconsider at any stage. This is simply an expression of interest at this time.

Remember that flu shots are now available through both your GP clinic and local pharmacy. It is very important to protect yourselves against flu just as it is every year.

I encourage you to keep in touch with your families and friends by phone and internet as staying connected is more important than ever at this time of social isolation. The Retired and Former Employee (RAFE) Peer Support program is available to you should you need assistance. Contact the RAFE on mobile 0428 332 418 or via email [RAFE.peersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au](mailto:RAFE.peersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au).

Your welfare is important to us.

Stay well and take care.

Tony

Email us at



[covid19@ambulance.vic.gov.au](mailto:covid19@ambulance.vic.gov.au)

COVID-19 Hotline  
Call us on



**1800 943 443**  
8am-8pm 7 days

## Presidents Report



Welcome all members to this unprecedented chapter in our lives.

It all seems so surreal that in a matter of weeks we have been in "Lockdown"

With the Corona Virus Pandemic.

RAAV have been closely monitoring the COVID-19 developments and our number one priority is taking practical action to protect and support our members.

The committee via numerous phone calls have kept in contact with our conveners and made sure that all our members are safe and well.

Looking forward to meeting "face to face" again and catching up on the other side of this crisis.

Stay Safe Stay Strong.

Ian Donaldson

President

## Quick Quiz:

- Q 1: What can be a punctuation mark or part of the large intestine?
- Q 2: How many were in the Ned Kelly Gang?
- Q 3: Greco-Roman is a version of which sport?
- Q 4: Which branch of science was Indiana Jones an expert in?
- Q 5: Who captained Victoria in the 2008 Hall of Fame Tribute Match?
- Q 6: Pub is an abbreviation of what?
- Q 7: Norman Coburn starred in which TV drama?
- Q 8: Who is the star of the British TV series "Man versus Wild"?





## District Meeting Dates

Our next District Meetings for 2020 are:

- Geelong & Surf Coast - Wednesday 6th May - CANCELLED
- Gippsland Region - Thursday 14th May - CANCELLED
- Central & Northern Victoria - Tuesday 19th May - CANCELLED
- North East Victoria - Saturday 23rd May - CANCELLED
- Metro North & East - Thursday 28th May - CANCELLED
- South West Victoria - Monday 1st June - TBA
- Ballarat & Central West - Wednesday 10th June - TBA
- Metro - West District - Friday 12th June - TBA

North West Victoria - Tuesday 16th June \_ TBA

Metro - South District - Tuesday 30th June - TBA

We apologise for the cancellations and we are unsure if June lunches will be held due to the continuing COVID-19 situation. We are sure you all understand and will support us in our endeavors to abide by the directions of our Federal and State Health Departments.



## Birthday Greetings

May:

- Trevor Martin 1<sup>st</sup>
- Laurie Spelling 1<sup>st</sup>
- George Jackson 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Denis Rowe 6<sup>th</sup>
- Peter Cain 7<sup>th</sup>
- Garry Cassells 8<sup>th</sup>
- Bruce Westerland 8<sup>th</sup>
- John Lacey 9<sup>th</sup>
- Trevor Greay 10<sup>th</sup>
- John Head 10<sup>th</sup>
- Allan Oakes 10<sup>th</sup>
- Kenneth Laycock 11<sup>th</sup>
- Geoffrey Williams 12<sup>th</sup>
- Bob Boucher 14<sup>th</sup>
- Greame Mant-Old 14<sup>th</sup>
- Stephen Nangle 14<sup>th</sup>
- Donald Pollard 15<sup>th</sup>
- Col Bowden 16<sup>th</sup>
- Darryl Wells 16<sup>th</sup>
- Eric Edwards 18<sup>th</sup>
- Sandra Johns 18<sup>th</sup>
- Ronald Hartley 20<sup>th</sup>
- Ross Smith 20<sup>th</sup>



- Max Beeson 21<sup>st</sup>
- Bryce Lindermann 21<sup>st</sup>
- Brian Phipps 24<sup>th</sup>
- David Boyd 24<sup>th</sup>
- Gary Mason 24<sup>th</sup>
- Dave Talbot 25<sup>th</sup>
- John Waters 27<sup>th</sup>
- Norman Burville 28<sup>th</sup>
- Michael Wilson 28<sup>th</sup>
- Daryl Anderson 29<sup>th</sup>
- Peter Donovan 31<sup>st</sup>

June:

- Douglas Martin 1<sup>st</sup>
- Graham Carpenter 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Bill Atkinson 6<sup>th</sup>
- Peter Butcher 9<sup>th</sup>
- Stan Medew 9<sup>th</sup>

- Brett Ckark 12<sup>th</sup>
- Tom Reakes 12<sup>th</sup>
- Robert Adams 13<sup>th</sup>
- Dale Gibbons 13<sup>th</sup>
- Dianne Rock 15<sup>th</sup>
- Georgie Hall 19<sup>th</sup>
- Alan Cooksley 21<sup>st</sup>
- Barb Matson 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Clive Wawn 23<sup>rd</sup>
- David Boyd 24<sup>th</sup>
- Ian Mc Pherson 24<sup>th</sup>
- William Van Den Akker 24<sup>th</sup>
- Bob Gilmour 25<sup>th</sup>
- Leslie John 25<sup>th</sup>
- Terry Courtney 26<sup>th</sup>
- Robert Mercer 26<sup>th</sup>
- David Shugg 26<sup>th</sup>
- Roy Ryder 27<sup>th</sup>
- Ian Rowed 28<sup>th</sup>
- Trevor Abbott 30<sup>th</sup>

July:

- Frank Gaylard 1<sup>st</sup>
- Mick Hill 1<sup>st</sup>
- Wayne Simmons 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Thomas Chapman 7<sup>th</sup>
- Samual Hadden 7<sup>th</sup>
- Rob Phillips 7<sup>th</sup>
- John Engledow 9<sup>th</sup>
- Ian Gardner 10<sup>th</sup>
- Michael Higgins 10<sup>th</sup>
- Jock Purves 12<sup>th</sup>
- Phillip Worboys 12<sup>th</sup>
- Anna Murphy 13<sup>th</sup>
- Don Tippet 15<sup>th</sup>
- David Skinner 16<sup>th</sup>
- Ted VanDyken 16<sup>th</sup>
- Michael Williams 20<sup>th</sup>
- Peter Watson 21<sup>st</sup>
- Raymond Churches 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Peter Leek 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Neil Carolan 25<sup>th</sup>
- Darryl Tinker 25<sup>th</sup>
- Jeffrey Allan 26<sup>th</sup>
- Peter O'Meara 28<sup>th</sup>
- Ian Gedge 30<sup>th</sup>
- Colin Arscott 31<sup>st</sup>
- John Baldiston 31<sup>st</sup>

With sadness we record the passing of:

Donald (Don) Carpenter  
Eileen Moran (Wife of Martin)

## 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

The first meeting of the year was held in Warrnambool at Rafferty's hotel and was attended by 11 members, with 13 apologies. This was a new venue for the members in the South West and was well accepted by all present.

Secretary Ian Cameron attended the meeting and brought all members present up to date with the latest news from the Executive.

We were very lucky to have the presence of Councilor Kylie Gaston, as the guest speaker, and she presented a very interesting talk on her personal life and that of being a representative of the city. Many in-depth questions were asked of Kylie and she was mostly able to answer all.

It was good to see 3 of our 4 new members in attendance and everyone present enjoyed the comradery. A good day in all.

The next meeting of RAAV SW will be held in Hamilton on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and we look forward to another successful meeting.

Ray Loughheed  
Convenor

### Gippsland District

Thursday 13th February 2020 saw 27 Members and guests attend the Esplanade Hotel Inverloch for our Lunch and gathering. We also recorded 18 apologies for the day.

It was encouraging to see so many turn up for this luncheon meeting and it was great to see some members who have not been to previous meetings.

As the Association Secretary was an apology Jim Ballard stepped in as Assistant Secretary for this meeting. The meals were enjoyed by all. The RAAV Caravan & Motor Home Group Activities were past by Noel Mirtschin as to the up and coming get away in Bright at the Bright Pine Valley Tourist Park 7-15 Churchill Ave Bright 30<sup>th</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> May.

We still have some sites and cabins available.

Hope to see you there.

Also a reminder of the open day at the Ambulance Museum on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March at 10.00hrs - 15.00hrs at 1/55 Barry Street Bayswater.

Light food and beverages available - Promises to be a great family day. Flyers and order forms for merchandise were handed around for anyone who was in need of uniform or bits and pieces.

Next meeting, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at  
The Morwell Club Inc 136 Helen Street  
Morwell  
12 noon onwards.

Neil Hall  
Convenor

### Ballarat & Central West

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March saw 17 members, partners and guests attend our Lunch at the Golf House Hotel, North Ballarat. As usual we enjoyed the meal and the various conversations and stories that were told around the table. Our Guests for the day were Tim Maywald, Regional Director and David Garner Operations Manager for the Grampians Region. Following lunch we honored Life Member, George Prolongaeu, who celebrated his 103<sup>rd</sup> Birthday on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, with a cake and our well tune choir sang "Happy Birthday" to him.

This was followed with the presentation to Les Hotchin in honour of him obtaining his Life Membership. Following a presentation of his working life as an Ambulance Officer/Paramedic, read by secretary, Ian Cameron, Tim Maywald presented him with his Life Membership Certificate to the applause from all attending.

Again, a most enjoyable day was had by all.

### Metro - South District

With regret our Lunch meeting for March was cancelled due to the COVID-19 virus.

Bryan Cass Metro - South, Convener

### Metro - West District

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March saw 17 Members, Partners and guests attend our Metro West Lunch. Our convener, Georgie Hall, did a great job in rounding everyone up and making it a special day.

As usual our lunch at the Sunshine RSL was readily devoured and satisfied all in attendance. Of course, we all managed to discuss the Coronavirus situation and how we may have to cope in the future. Secretary Ian gave an outline of items from the Committee and answered questions on the progress of the Association. We look forward to meeting again soon.

Groegie Hall  
Coordinator, Metro West

### Central & Northern Victoria

The February meeting was held at the Bendigo RSL as usual with slightly less

members than usual. 21 members and partners were in attendance. We welcomed Ben Ellis for the first-time representing committee. He was most informative with the current status of the claim re hearing impairment. We all trust that this issue can reach a conclusion in the near future as so many of us are currently having to rely on hearing aids. Apart from that nothing to report. As usual all in attendance enjoyed the customary catch up.

Peter Briscoe  
Convenor

### North East Victoria

North East Gathering February 22 2020

And it's March already! We again had a smaller group of only 17 this time around, some due to illness.

Unfortunately, Get well everyone. Best wishes to Jim for his recovery, and also to Chris Coucill who I hope is able to join us at a future get together.

We were short on women attendees this month, we miss you Barb! It's always lovely to hear people say "Is that ? such & such, I haven't seen them for years" so keep putting out the word about the organisation. Where else do you pay a membership and have the chance to get it back fourfold!

I understand this "meeting" is good for all parties who come along so please ensure future dates are

entered in your diaries, or on calendars. Take care everyone.

Leanne Russell-Jones  
Convenor

### Geelong and Surf Coast District

Ben Wright  
Coordinator G&SC Branch.

### Metro - East & North District

27th February at Wheeler Hill Hotel saw 20 Members and guests attend for the first Gathering of our new North/East District.

Pleasant informal gathering for lunch. All enjoyed the venue and happy for meetings to be at this venue but also not an issue with rotating to other areas. Information sheet handed out on arrival with \$10 subsidy to each. At least 4 members handed back the \$10 as a donation to RAAV, a nice gesture!

We look forward to the next lunch at Wheelers Hill in June



## District Reports

## RAAV Caravan & Motor Home Club



### North West Victoria

Mildura RSL again hosted our lunch on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March where we hosted 11 Members and partners. As usual we enjoyed the company of all present and the now familiar banter and stories were shared.

The meal was, as always, generous in supply and quantity along with the friendly and very capable staff service.

During our general discussion we noted the concerns from some as to the impact that may relate to the Coronavirus situation and our Secretary, Ian, inform us that all will be done to provide as much information and assistance as we can.

Allan Cooksley  
Coordinator.

Regretfully we had to cancel our proposed Club trip to Bright due to the COVID-19 shutdown. However a couple of members did go and we assume they managed to enjoy the surroundings even with limited movement.

We are off to Daylesford in October but more of that getaway later in the year provided that we are able to resume a more normal lifestyle.

Anne and I look forward to seeing everyone if and when the situation allows

Noel Mirtschin  
Convenor,  
Caravan, Motor Home and RV Club



### Members not in good health

Ray Neil  
Brian Kinsella  
Max Beeson  
Jim Ballard

We wish all Members a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you at a Meeting soon.

## Quick Quiz Answers:

- A 1: Colon
- A 2: Four
- A 3: Wrestling
- A 4: Archaeology
- A 5: Jonathon Brown
- A 6: Public House
- A 7: Home and Away
- A 8: Bear Grylls

## Committee Matters

Welcome to our May newsletter, under very different circumstances than anything we have experienced before.

I hope and pray that each and everyone of you have made the transition to self isolating and so far avoided the dreaded COVID-19.

It is with regret that we have had to cancel many of our scheduled lunch meetings and any other social functions, but I am certain all of you would rather be safe than stuck in a hospital bed, or worse.

Despite the no close contact regime we are still working in the back ground on projects to further the interests and development of our Association. We are considering changing our Committee contacts to video and teleconferencing in the near future so that the Committee can be involved with the functioning of all aspects required to make any new transitions practicable and sustainable.

Even with the restrictions placed on us it is encouraging to note the ever increasing new Members joining and we hope they will be able to share lunches and other social activities as soon as the situation allows.

Most of you will now be aware that all lunches for the month of May have been cancelled and to date we are awaiting further information and guidance from federal and state authorities if we can proceed with scheduled meetings in June.

Any changes will be notified as soon as we have the clear guidance to proceed.

I reiterate if any Member, partner or family members needs any type of assistance we are available to provide any information, guidance or support should it become necessary. Do not hesitate to make contact even if you think it may be a small matter. Everyone's health and security is important to us, particularly during this time of partial isolation.

Take care and stay safe until we can again meet and share our stories.

Ian Cameron, Secretary

## New Members

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

Russell King - Pascoe Vale South  
Gary Patten - Morwell  
Neil Akers - Morwell  
Steven West - Kangaroo Flat  
Alan Colley - Manor Lakes  
Maureen King - Pascoe Vale South  
Rodney Bell - Leongatha

We look forward to welcoming all of you, our new Members, to a luncheon meeting soon.



## Retired and Former Employee Peer Support Program

*Although your direction has changed, we still share the same journey.*

The Retired and Former Employee (RAFE) Peer Support Program is a new program available to all former employees of Ambulance Victoria.

The program allows volunteers to provide confidential support to previous employees who have retired or resigned and assist in linking them into appropriate support if requiring counselling or experiencing mental health issues.

RAFE volunteers are *not* qualified counsellors and are unable to make psychological assessments, but they do have great listening and communication skills that allow them to assist those who are seeking help.

Ambulance Victoria encourages all former employees to engage with this service – which is free – if they feel they require help. To contact the AV Retired and Former Employee Peer Support Program

Email: [RAFEpeersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au](mailto:RAFEpeersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au)

Available 9am – 5pm daily.

Access FAQ'S [here](#)

**The RAFE Program is not a crisis service. If you are in crisis please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or if there is an immediate risk, dial Triple Zero (000).**

Feedback forms have been developed to collect information to assess the effectiveness and level of client satisfaction with AV's RAFE peer support services or to services you may be referred. The information you provide will be used to ensure that procedures, protocols and training are meeting the needs of previous AV employees and will help us to continue improving our services. The surveys are designed to be anonymous and individuals will not be identifiable through the responses they provide. Please select the relevant link below and tell us your latest experience with the services provided by the RAFE team OR other service you may have been referred to via RAFE peer support.

[2018/19 RAFE Peer Support Satisfaction Survey](#)

[2018/19 VACU Session Feedback Form](#)

[2018/19 Chaplaincy Satisfaction Survey](#)

**Editors Note:** The links may not work in this document - Please go to AV website or contact RAFE Co-Ordinator for assistance

~~~~~ If you would like to purchase this book. ~~~~~

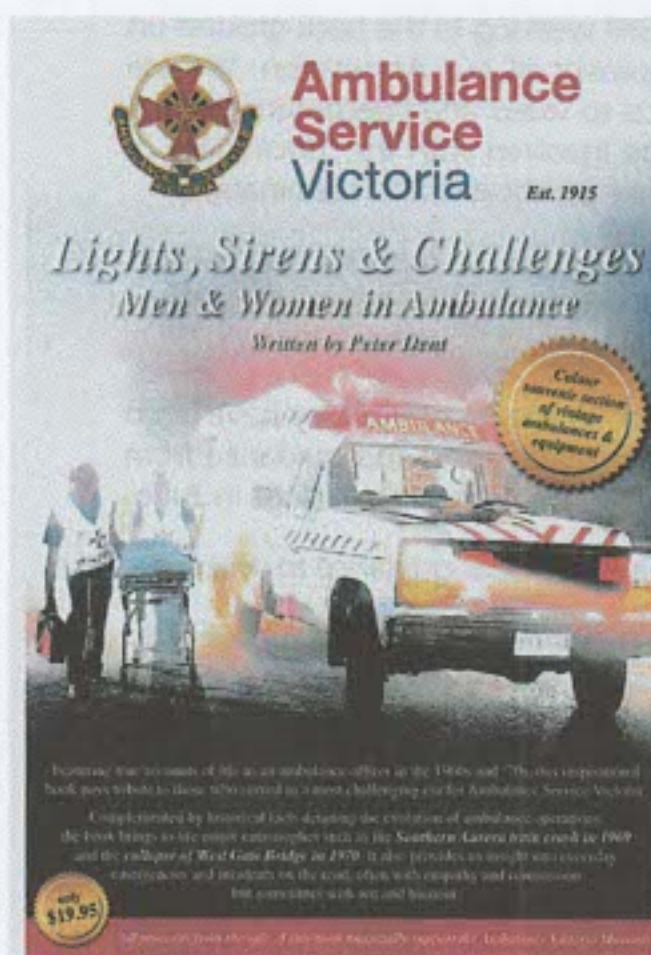
The Ambulance Victoria Museum is closed at present due to the Covid19 virus. Until such time as the museum re-opens, this book will only be available by mail (Postage cost \$3.05) which will be the normal process for most, and particularly for remote members.

Please use the following method to purchase:

1. Email quantity of books with name and postal address to: [vintambos@bigpond.com](mailto:vintambos@bigpond.com)
2. Direct deposit amount to: Account Name: Ambulance Historical Society Vic Inc.  
BSB No: 704-230 Account No: 100167781 (\$1)
3. In bank reference field insert: Book and Surname. - **(Essential)**  
Alternative: Mail cheque with name and address to:  
Chas Martin, 58 Lomond Avenue, Kilsyth, Victoria. 3137.  
Your book will be sent to you by Australia Post.  
Book Price: \$19.95 Postage: \$3.05 = \$23.00 per book. For multiple books to one address, lower, bulk-postage rates apply. (4+ books, maximum postage \$9.20 incl.)

The book is A5, a quality publication, 100 plus pages with colour photographs.

**All book sales financially support the Ambulance Victoria Museum.**





## I've seen terrible things as a paramedic. The worst isn't what you'd expect

Taking an elderly man to hospital while knowing his wife would probably never see him again is the job I've most agonised over



What's the worst thing you've ever seen? Ask any paramedic and they will have been asked this question many times over in their careers. I'd never given myself time to properly think about the answer, until recently.

Is it having my fingers in the back of a teenage boy's brain as my colleague and I lift his limp bloody body into a bag after he had flipped over his new car on a dark country road?

Is it looking upon a small, wafer thin, dead child curled up on her Cinderella duvet after drinking her parents' medication that they use to help with their addictions?

Is it the elderly man whose closed curtains had gone unnoticed by his busy neighbours while he lay decomposing into his own carpet?

It is none of these.

My answer starts at 6.10am one morning many years ago with a callout to an elderly man who is struggling to breathe.



We arrive at a slightly neglected bungalow where a frail elderly figure limps slowly to the door and greets us with an apology – she didn't want to bother us. Her husband is slumped in the front room. I know he is not well and he needs to go to hospital. Mavis\*, the woman who answered the door, is visibly shaken on hearing this news but she finds solace in starting preparations for her beloved husband, Bert, to leave for hospital. He needs clean pajamas and a toothbrush, and after fondly rubbing his chin, he will need his razor too.

I give Bert some oxygen and start to think that if we don't get him to the ambulance quite quickly he will collapse. Mavis returns tearful with her husband's belongings. I talk to her to try to convey the seriousness and urgency of the situation. Bert is stoic in his responses, telling his wife he will be fine, but he is

kind too, reminding Mavis of how much he loves her. Mavis is proud, they have been married for more than 60 years, she says, as she ambles away again.

I look around the room at faded photos of many generations of their family. Bert tells me they are all dead now, even their son who died young. I talk with him and reassure him that we will be going to hospital soon. She is the love of my life, he says, between tiring breaths; there has never been anyone else. I remember his soft slow words perfectly and the telling look in his eyes – he knows he is not coming home again. I worry that we are taking too long. Bert needs to be in hospital quickly; I don't want him to die in my ambulance.

Mavis is elderly and frail herself, and accompanying her husband to hospital isn't an option. I worry there is no one to come to help her when we are gone. My haste to get Bert out of the door and to hospital is abruptly subdued by the realisation that this is most probably their final moment together; they are about to say goodbye to each other for the last time.

I try to convey the gravity of the situation to Mavis. I think she finally understands when her eyes fill up. She limps back towards Bert, who is still protesting to her that he will be fine. Her hands cup his cheeks as her small stooped frame leans forward to give him a kiss. I pause momentarily, trying to be invisible, and then ask quietly if we can go. Mavis delicately flattens Bert's hair to one side of his head, smiles at me and nods her head. I ask Bert if that is OK and he smiles and nods too.



Bert died later that day and I spent a lot of time wondering what happened to Mavis. I knew that I had cared for Bert and looked after him well, but I had deserted Mavis, I had left her all alone. I toyed with the idea of visiting her to check up on her. This felt right in many ways, but wrong in others too. I didn't know what to do. I had prioritised Bert's care but in doing so neglected what Mavis needed. I was left feeling I had failed her in many ways.

When thinking about my answer to the "What's the worst thing you've ever seen?" question it didn't take me long to remember this job, even though it happened many years ago. It is the job that I most agonised over. It is the job that stayed with me for the longest time after it was over. You might think it can't be the worst thing I've ever seen, but it is definitely the worst thing I've ever felt.

I never did go back and check on Mavis.



## The Back Page

### Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria Inc.



#### Committee of Management

President: Ian Donaldson

Vice President: Mike Williams

Secretary: Ian Cameron

Assistant Secretary: Jim Ballard

Treasurer: Ben Ellis

#### Committee Members:

Les Wood

John Clancy

Steve Mulligan

Greg Wood

John Head

[www.retiredambulancevictoria.org.au](http://www.retiredambulancevictoria.org.au)

All Correspondence to:  
The Secretary  
Unit 2 / 20 Brooks Street  
Bentleigh East  
Victoria 3165

Mobile: 0435 010 943  
Email: [raav.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:raav.secretary@gmail.com)

### WINE PAIRING IN THE STONE AGE



"Simple rule of thumb; if it tries to eat us, serve with red. If it runs away from us, serve with white."

Pee on the electric fence  
they said...  
It will be fun they said...



FINE, YOU CAN SLEEP  
HERE, BUT ONLY FOR  
TONIGHT!



Facebook: Retired Ambulance  
Association of Victoria Inc.