

November 2020



RAAV Ravings

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Inside the ambulance: paramedics stories should always be told



Paramedics stories rarely turn out to be told. Many prefer to avoid expressing their feelings after ambulance shifts, while others feel the necessity of pouring them out.

We've listened to many different paramedics stories, and all of them deserve to be heard. When first responders jump on board the ambulance, they never know what they could find on the emergency site. Dispatchers always try to get as many information as possible, but they are not always clear.

The Guardian reported a paramedic experience who expresses his state of mind after many years of dispatching. Ambulances reach anyone, but many times their availability is used in too many exaggerated ways.

The cases are several and even absurd sometimes. They go from the desperate drug addict who urinates on the ambulance floor, to the woman who would rather call an ambulance than read the back of a packet of paracetamol.

Then there is someone as a frail and disabled 46-year-old man, lying in the dark on his bathroom floor for two hours after a fall which needs the ambulance but there is another one who calls an ambulance because he/she is incredibly lonely. Many times, the ambulances are busy because of reasons that could be avoided. On the other hand, isolated people like a lonely elder woman or a disabled man left on his own, often on the margins of society, have voices that we seldom hear.

Paramedics spend shifts along streets, up through blocks of flats, down into the dark, and their stories are many times

ignored. But what many do not understand is that they dedicate their entire life to others. Even when they got kicked or assaulted, they still are dedicating their time and efforts to improve other lives. That's why paramedics stories should always be told.

Even if the blue lights are flashing, an ambulance isn't always shooting off to give "critical care in strange locations", reports The Guardian. Paramedics often attend a call that turns out not to be urgent or even medical, and the medicine he dispenses most is common sense.

Pioneering paramedics and volunteer receive Ambulance Service Medal

Six Ambulance Victoria paramedics and a CERT volunteer have been recognised with the Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) in the 2020 Australia Day Honours List.

Led by Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Australia Day Honours List recognises the outstanding service and contributions of Australians across all walks of life and industries.

Ambulance Victoria CEO Associate Professor Tony Walker said each recipient had displayed outstanding leadership and dedication throughout their careers.

"We are so incredibly proud of our colleagues, who have selflessly gone above and beyond to make a difference to those around them," he said.

"From developing specialist advanced airway training programs that help save more lives, leading initiatives that improve the mental and physical health of their peers, and providing outstanding care for their communities – their contributions are significant and their dedication is outstanding."

Meet our 2020 Ambulance Service Medal Recipients:

- **Ken Whittle**, along with his lovable six-

year-old Labrador, Bruce, has been a driving force behind the success of Australia's first Peer Support Dog Pilot Program in an ambulance service. Ken has been influential in raising awareness of mental health and reducing the stigma attached to seeking help.

- **William Briggs** has made a significant contribution to the promotion of occupational health and safety in his 28 years with Ambulance Victoria. William has been instrumental in the research and development of the MICA Single Responder program.

- **Rain Histen** is an Advanced Life Saving paramedic who has been a driving force in improving the health of Ambulance Victoria staff and our wider emergency service colleagues, encouraging them to participate in events including the Eureka Stair Climb and MCG Stadium Stomp.

- **Terry Marshall** has been a mentor to upcoming leaders at Ambulance Victoria in a career that has so far spanned more than three decades.

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



Hello everyone,

With COVID-19 restrictions slowly beginning to ease, I hope this finds many of you able to reconnect with local friends and family and enjoy some spring sunshine in outdoor spaces. We all look forward to the next step of our roadmap to COVID-normal, and in the meantime must remain vigilant with COVID-safe practices of good hand hygiene, social distancing and wearing masks. The 14-day case average is gradually dropping and if we all stay the course we will get there soon.

As restrictions ease, many people – some of whom have not driven for some time – will get back behind the wheel, driving to and through rural areas they are unfamiliar with, and in weather conditions influenced by the La Niña event. Additionally, an increase in summer recreational activities will lead to an increase in callouts to accidents arising from those activities. Our Emergency Management Unit, as always, is working hard behind the scenes to prepare for summer and support our regions as we look ahead to the bushfire season as well as the possibility of floods and of course, the risk of Thunderstorm Asthma moving into that time of the year again.

Mental Health Week in October explored the impact of COVID-19 on mental health- a reminder to take a moment to look at what we need to be doing to look after ourselves. Please remember we have wellbeing and support services available to you. If you're not travelling well, put your hand up. The Retired and Former Employee (RAFE) Peer Support program is available. Contact the RAFE on mobile 0428 332 418 or via email RAFE.peersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au.

Our friends at the Charles Sturt University are running a research project to better understand the quality of life of retired Australian paramedics/ambulance officers. The findings will be shared with AV to help inform our own Retired and Former Employee (RAFE) program into the future. Please contact researcher Emily Denning at emdening1995@gmail.com or by phone 0422 573 707 to request the survey link be sent to your personal email address if interested in participating.

Lastly, October 15th marked the 50th anniversary of Australia's worst industrial disaster- the West Gate Bridge collapse of 1970 where 35 workers tragically lost their lives as the span of some 130 metres in length, weighing 2000 tonnes, collapsed and plummeted 50 metres into the Yarra River below. *The Beacon*, publication of the Ambulance Historical Society of Victoria (the Museum) has published a special souvenir edition to mark this anniversary. It is a well-researched and detailed account. A tribute to all who contributed to the rescue operation and pays respects to the lives lost which included one of our own- Joseph Ozelis, who had recently left the ambulance service to work on-site as a first aid officer. Copies available through Peter Dent at vintambos@bigpond.com or on 0427 508 888.

Looking forward to summer and to the end of what has been a challenging and difficult year. Keep well and take care.

Tony

Presidents Report



Welcome to all members and trust that you are all coping well with the COVID restrictions.

At the time of writing this report we appear to be climbing out of the abyss and seem to be on track for a favourable outcome "fingers crossed" let's hope that it all plays out to plan.

I believe in the next couple of weeks the regional branches will have more autonomy and could perhaps organise their own meetings, providing that we can find suitable venues.

I am sure, we as members are looking forward to catching up with all our friends and colleagues and are able to enjoy our luncheons together.

I will try and attend meetings with you all at some stage (restrictions permitting) and update you all with future planning of the RAA Vic etc.

Hoping the newsletter finds you all in good health and that we meet up again shortly.

Take care and be safe

Ian Donaldson
President RAA Vic



When you find out that an
ambulance is \$500 but a
tow truck only charges
\$80.. 🧑🏻 🧑🏻



District Meeting Dates

Our final District Meetings for 2020 are:

Geelong & Surf Coast - Wednesday 4th November - TBC

Central & Northern Victoria - 17th November - TBC

Gippsland Region - Thursday 19th November - TBC

Ballarat & Central West - Wednesday 25th November - TBC

Metro North & East - Thursday 26th November - TBC

North East Victoria - Saturday 28th November TBC

Metro - West District - Friday 4th December - TBC

South West Victoria - Monday Wednesday 7th December TBC

Metro - West District - Friday 4th December - TBC

Metro - South District - Tuesday 8th December - TBC

North West Victoria - Tuesday 15th December - TBC

With the changing situation 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.

We are looking forward to seeing as many Members as possible at the lunches that are able to be conducted in what ever format we can.



Birthday Greetings

November:

Max Lee	1 st
Greg Prosser	1 st
Christopher Casey	2 nd
Michael Rienits	4 th
John Haines	6 th
Daryl Lee	7 th
Michael Knight	10 th
Nigel Longman	10 th
Brian Shott	11 th
Alan Bray	12 th
Neville Lloyd	12 th
John Fahey	13 th
Barry Schurmann	14 th
Peter Pildre	15 th
Robert Spencer	15 th
Greg Wood	15 th
Alan White	17 th
Kevin Cannon	18 th
Steve Mulligan	19 th
Phillip Cavanagh	22 nd
Greame Williams	22 nd
Janelle McManus	23 rd
Noel Brebner	25 th



Gillian Evans	26 th
Terry Baulch	27 th
Darrell Douglas	30 th

December:

Graham Lewis	4 th
Alan Smith	4 th
Steve McGhie	5 th
Colin Street	6 th
Neil Flanigan	11 th
Bill McNally	11 th
Trevor Mitchell	12 th
David Doering	13 th
Frank Mc Neill	13 th
Bob Bowman	14 th
Peter Spolding	14 th
Allan Vivian	15 th
Brian Kinsella	16 th
Gary Dole	18 th

Phillip Wade	18 th
Charles James	19 th
Laurence Timpson	19 th
Bert Martin	20 th
Garry Hodson	21 st
Joy Mayhew	21 st
Gary Patten	22 nd
Patricia Wells	22 nd
David Riddell	23 rd
Colin Saunders	24 th
Laurie Henry	26 th
Andrew Wilson	26 th
Ray Hubbard	27 th
Les Wood	27 th
Noel Mirtschin	27 th
Rosemary Bosse	28 th
Morrie Browne	29 th

January

Victor Henshaw	2 nd
Rodney Bell	6 th
Peter Skinner	6 th
Peter Briscoe	7 th
Leo Cartwright	7 th

Ken Clarkson	8 th
Ken Curtis	8 th
Allan Cross	9 th
Peter McMurtrie	11 th
Tom Witte	11 th
Ronald Mc Clean	12 th
Brad Pike	12 th
Dennis Meek	14 th
Brian Mellor	14 th
Louis Grygierczyk	17 th
Athol Nicholas	18 th
Allan Malone	19 th
Dennis Wood	19 th
Dave Tyson	20 th
Pat McKenzie	21 st
David Perkins	21 st
Tony Veitch	21 st
Ben Ellis	23 rd
Ron Batten	24 th
David Hadj	30 th
Ian Johnson	30 th
Geoff Quennell	30 th
John De Boer	31 st

With sadness we record the passing of:

Richard (Dick) Cursons
Debra Dole (Wife of Gary)

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

Due to the continuing COVID-19 restrictions we do not have any reports but hope that next year we will be able to hold and report on all activities around the State.

Geelong and Surf Coast District

Ben Wright
Coordinator

Central & Northern Victoria

Peter Briscoe
Convenor

Gippsland District

Neil Hall
Convenor

Metro - East & North District

Ballarat & Central West

Metro - West District

Georgie Hall
Coordinator

South West Victoria

Ray Loughheed
Convenor

Metro - South District

Bryan Cass Metro – South , Convener

North West Victoria

Allan Cooksley
Co-ordinator

North East Victoria

Leanne Russell-Jones
Co-ordinator

Jet suit trial for Great North Air Ambulance paramedics

Jet suit trial for Great North Air Ambulance paramedics

A jet suit for paramedics has been tested by the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) in the Lake District.

It comes after a year of talks between GNAAS and Gravity Industries.

Andy Mawson, GNAAS director of operations, said users do not need to be travelling that fast to cover large areas of terrain, compared with someone on foot.

Editors Note:

To view to the full story and watch the video of the jet trial go to BBC News UK and type in - Great North Air Ambulance paramedics

Visually stunning and if successful, a great way to get medical help quickly to a patient in a difficult situation.

At the end of the commentary the words are "It is awe inspiring and amazing" So very true.



Committee Matters

Welcome All,

I do trust the you. your wife, husband or partners have been able to overcome the massive changes we have faced during the long and, at times, tedious lockdown situation associated with COVID-19 and are taking all the defunction in your stride.

With the continuing easing of restrictions and the slow return to what is being called the new COVID normal I, and the Committee, look forward to all of us being able to resume some more familiar activities very soon.

With the regional conditions being eased quicker than in Metro Melbourne I am aware that most of our Regional Coordinators are working on restarting lunches and activities to finally meet and share each others stories of the year that was. In order to restart our lunches there may have to be some changes to days and locations due to restrictions on the number of Members able to attend our regular venues, this may mean we meet at a location outside the normal "4 walls".

Our Co-ordinators will continue to monitor the situation and we look forward to seeing as many as we can at our lunches prior tho the Festive break.

Finally I, The President and the Committee, Members and families wish you and your loved ones the very best of the Festive Season and trust that 2021 will be very kind to us all.

Ian Cameron,
Secretary



Homework Dog

"Johnny, where's your homework?"

Miss Martin said sternly to the little boy while holding out her hand. "My dog ate it," was his solemn response. "Johnny, I've been a teacher for eighteen years. Do you really expect me to believe that?"

"It's true, Miss Martin, I swear," insisted Johnny. "I covered it with peanut butter and he woofed it down."

Continued from Page 1

Terry developed a specialist intubation training program for MICA paramedics, which has helped save more lives.

- **Gail Sharp** has dedicated more than 15 years as a volunteer with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Birchip. She has provided outstanding care in her local community and has been instrumental in encouraging more volunteers to join Ambulance Victoria.

- **Lance Simmons** has been an Advanced Life Saving paramedic for an impressive 45 years. Lance played a key role in initiating a welfare fund for paramedics following the death of a colleague in 1975 and after the 1984 Ash Wednesday bushfires.

Susan Walsh is a valued MICA paramedic and amid ground-breaking challenges for women in ambulance, has continued to support, develop and mentor the skills of volunteers in her community of Wedderburn, in Victoria's North East.



Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) recipient Ken Whittle and his peer support dog Bruce

Members not in good health

Peter Briscoe
Patti Briscoe (Peters wife)
Les John
Vic Henshaw
Shirley Churches (Wife of Ray)
Greg Prosser

New Members

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

Lyle Teakle - Nhill
Trevor Dennis - Bailieston
Daryl Lee - Kilmore
Frank Fordham - Croydon

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



RAAV Caravan & Motor Home Club



Hi Everyone

Well it seems that we are a little closer to getting back to normal or Covid Normal as long as we don't experience what is happening throughout the rest of the world with increased infections and deaths.

I have been in touch with the Bright Pine Valley Tourist Park and have pre booked sites for the following dates, arriving on April 26th and depart on 3rd of May which covers that last week of the Bright Autumn festival.

The phone number is (03) 57551010 or 1800069091

The park has also informed me that deposits that we payed last year are still valid I presume less the cancellation fee from this year however I will follow that up with them in the next few weeks and will let everyone know either by email or in the New Year News Letter.

I know that a couple of people want to book a Dog Friendly Cabin if you are going to book I suggest that you do it sooner rather than later as the Autumn festival is extremely popular and you wont want to miss out.

The normal procedure regarding booking will apply so when ringing the park please inform the office that you are from the RAAV Caravan & Motor Home Club and mention my name so we can be in the same area of the park.

Things to do in and around Bright

Bright has lots of things to do - from walking or cycling along the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, cooling off at the Splash Park, enjoying a movie at the cinema, or just enjoying a meal at one of the many cafes or restaurants.

Canyon Walk

Bright Splash Park

Howitt Park

Murray to the Mountain Rail Trail

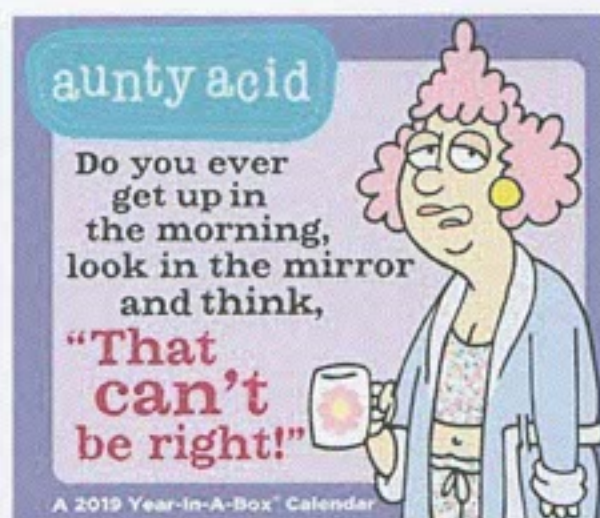
Bright Brewery – Highly Recommend

Lots of Walking Trails

If you are into bike riding bring you bike along, half day's rides can be arranged if required and if Gold Prospecting is you fancy bring your Gold Detector along as well you never know you might strike it rich.

I look forward to seeing you all in April

Cheers Noel





Museum

West Gate Bridge Disaster - 1970

In the recent Spring issue of the Ambulance Victoria Museum's official publication '**The Beacon**', the **50th anniversary** of the **West Gate Bridge disaster** was featured. A 21-page coverage of unique, first-hand, personal accounts from Police, V.C.A.S., M.F.B. and St John attendees, supporting information and detailed photographs.

This feature has been exceptionally well received, and in consultation with our emergency services counterparts, a project is now underway to produce an updated, quality, commercially printed publication A4 booklet of 28 to 32 pages under the four emergency service badges. A valuable history keepsake.

R.A.A.V. members will be informed of the availability of this publication when it is completed via the R.A.A.V. secretary.

Also, the next 'Summer' edition of The Beacon will feature an '**attendance roll**' recognising any V.C.A.S. members who attended the West Gate Bridge disaster. So as to avoid any legitimate personal omission, if any R.A.A.V. member attended on the day of the disaster, or has knowledge of other V.C.A.S. personnel who did so, (living or deceased), please contact: **Peter Dent** – Email: vintambos@bigpond.com Phone: 0427 508 888 - Postal: P O Box 451, Albury, NSW 2640 with details including the role carried out at the disaster scene (i.e.) transporting casualties, recovery, etc. – **Deadline is November 15, 2020**

Also, it is contemplated this attendance roll will appear in the pending West Gate Bridge publication mentioned above.

Peter Dent (JP NSW)

Editor – The Beacon



CASUAL WORK

ERS is a private company owned by Robert O’Gorman (ex. AV) and has been operating since 2015 providing medic/paramedic and safety staff for motorsport and public events.

We are looking for qualified paramedics that are semi-retired that wish to keep their hand in. Casual work is available as a medic/paramedic for club motorsport or public events.

AHPRA registration preferred but not essential.

Minimum requirement is an Advanced First Aid certificate

Our motorsport support covers both motorcycle and car club events at various venues around the state.

Motorcycles at Victorian Motorcycle Complex at Broadford on the road, speedway and motorcross tracks.

Cars at Sandown, Phillip Island, Broadford road track, Wilby Park and Winton.

Hill climbs (cars) at RobRoy, Mt Leura and Bryant Park. Drags at Swan Hill and Drifting at Calder

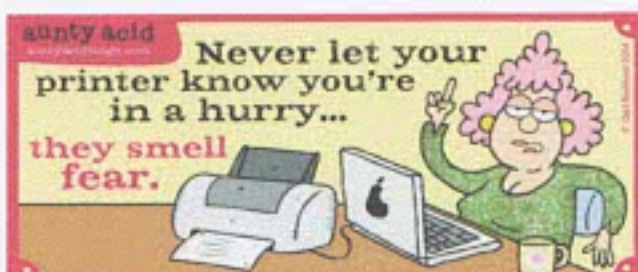
We have 4 sprinter type vehicles with the expected base equipment.

Our event work has been mainly for crew and artist back stage, covering the stage build, bump in, show and bump out. Some of the previous events include Adel, Ed Sheeran, ACDC, Foo Fighters, Elton John, and Midnight Oil, just to name a few.

Interested?

Please email or give me a call.

info@emergencyresponseservices.net.au



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.retiredambulacevictoria.org.au

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My wife asked me to take her to one of those restaurants where they make the food right in front of you. So I took her to Subway and that's how the fight started.

When Insults Had Class....

A member of Parliament to Disraeli: *"Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease."*

"That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, *"whether I embrace your policies or your mistress"*

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one."

- George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill

"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second if there is one."

- Winston Churchill, in response

"He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others."

- Samuel Johnson

"He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts... for support rather than illumination."

- Andrew Lang (1844-1912)

Facebook: Retired Ambulance
Association of Victoria Inc.