

November 2021

RAAV Ravings



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Helping Ambulances Respond To Most Critical Cases

The Victorian Government is boosting the number of Ambulance Victoria services on the road, ensuring Victorians get the best care.

This week a new Medium Acuity Transport Service hit the road helping Victorians and providing critical care when they need it most.

The new service is providing world class care for Code 2 and 3 patients with 22 vehicles and 165 dedicated staff, freeing valuable resources up to respond to the most urgent and time-critical emergency cases.

The service is partnering new paramedic recruits with experienced paramedics, providing an opportunity for senior paramedics to impart valuable knowledge gained through years of experience to their new colleagues.

This new approach not only creates new jobs but also creates new pathways for experienced staff whose vital skills may otherwise have been lost to the workforce.

Up to 15 new crews are operating each day covering the Casey, Greater Dandenong, Hume, Knox, Kingston, Maroon-dah, Mornington Peninsula and Wyndham local government areas.

The new initiative will also bolster resources in regional Victoria, with an additional seven regional crews expected from November.

The new Medium Acuity Transport Service is the first stage of a \$266 million Government investment in the Victorian Budget 2021/22 to improve patient care and drive down response times.

This investment will also deliver expanded secondary triage services and new paramedics and additional support staff to help their hardworking colleagues

An additional \$204 million investment is bolstering Ambulance Victoria's resources through programs like Telehealth, and will deliver ongoing operational improvements across the state.

This investment builds on the more than 250 paramedics already recruited by Ambulance Victoria since November 2020 and the more than \$1 billion the Government has provided to Ambulance Victoria since 2014.

As stated by Minister for Ambulance Services Martin Foley

"The pandemic has had a lasting impact, and right across Australia we're seeing more ambulance callouts – this new service will ensure Victorians continues to have access to the world-class care they deserve."

"Our paramedics are some of the hardest working in the country and this investment reinforces that we will always back them – and the extraordinary work they do."

"We're creating jobs while boosting the paramedic workforce to ensure Victorians receive world class care when they're needed most – protecting our health system and saving lives."

Inside this issue:

AV CEO Report	2
Presidents Report	2
District Meeting Dates	3
Birthday Greetings	3
District Reports	4
Quick Quiz	4
New Members	5
Ambulance Ramping	5
Caravan & Motor Home Club	7
The Back Page	8



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



Hi everyone,

I hope this finds you all coping with the personal challenges that lockdowns bring. The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on health systems, Ambulance Victoria and hospital emergency departments. We are currently experiencing our busiest days on record with the predicted peak between mid-October and mid-November still ahead of us. Everyone at AV is working incredibly hard to keep the community safe.

Defence personnel will be deployed to drive ambulances and triage tents are going up outside many Melbourne hospitals as part of a suite of extraordinary measures designed to protect Victoria's health system from being overwhelmed by a growing wave of COVID-19 patients. Crews will be split, and a single paramedic will be joined by a driver from the Australian Defence Force, St John Ambulance Australia, State Emergency Service or student paramedics.

The Victorian state government has announced it will roll out rapid antigen tests (RAT) to the state's healthcare settings and government services, as it embraces the normalisation of COVID-19 in the community. At AV we have commenced embedding this RAT testing within our critical teams.

Over 92 % of our staff have now had one dose of a COVID vaccine, with over 5,900 (78%) fully vaccinated. Healthcare workers are required to be fully COVID vaccinated to continue working in their role. To enjoy increased freedoms and reduced personal and community risk we must have high rates of vaccination. If you are eligible for vaccination and have delayed this, for whatever reason, now is the time to roll up your sleeve!

In the August edition of this newsletter, I shared details of the upcoming MICA 50th anniversary celebration scheduled for this September. Disappointingly, this event had to be postponed, however, we have rescheduled for next year- September 2022. You are still welcome to express your interest to receive early notification of ticket sales via my Chief of Staff. kerryn.douglas@ambulance.vic.gov.au

A wonderful commemorative book *MICA: Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance in Victoria – The First 50 Years* has been published. Hard copies will be available for purchase from November through AHSV (the Museum) for \$30 includes P&H – please contact chas.martin@ambulance.vic.gov.au.

Lastly, a new circulating coin, dedicated to Australia's brave and skilled ambulance services has been released by @RoyalAustMint. The \$2 coin honours those who tirelessly provide urgent medical care to all Australians. Special collectibles now available:

<https://bit.ly/2021Amb>

I encourage you to check in with your former colleagues, your family and friends, and take a moment for introspection. The sustained nature of the pandemic will impact all of us in different ways, and it is

Presidents Report



Welcome to all our members and trust that you are all ok and well

It gives me great pleasure to announce that we are in a very favourable position on being released from lockdown.

Friday the 29th of October at 6pm we will be in a position to again see all our relatives and close friends. Let's hope we can sustain this position and look forward to a normal life free from Covid.

Just a reminder that we all need to be double vaccinated to gain entry at our selective venues and in particular to AV facilities including The Ambulance Museum and AV Branches. If anyone needs help with downloading the myGov app and linking the certificates please call us and we will try and help.

The book published on the 50 years of MICA is now in circulation and anyone wanting to purchase the book please contact Kerryn Douglas at Doncaster operations. The cost of the book is \$30.00 post and packaging inclusive. The book is also available now at the Museum and from Friday will be on sale if picked up from the Museum for \$25.00

The committee and myself will now be able to attend all venues and really look forward to catching up and hearing your lockdown stories etc. The dates for the different districts will be announced shortly and we hope everything we have been hoping for comes to fruition.

My Wife and I would like to wish you a festive and joyous Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing you all in 2022

Please stay safe and see you at our next luncheon meeting.

Ian Donaldson
President

important to reflect on how we are feeling from time to time so we can look out for ourselves and each other. Please remember the RAFF Peer Support Program is available to support you. Contact RAFF on 0428 332 418 or via email RAFF.peersupport@ambulance.vic.gov.au. Take care and stay well.

Tony

Professor Tony Walker ASM

Chief Executive Officer, Ambulance Victoria

District Meeting Dates

Our next District Meetings for 2021 are:

Geelong & Surf Coast - Wednesday 10th November 12 noon at
Geelong RSL Belmont

Central & Northern Victoria - Tuesday 16th November at Bendigo
Club 22 Park Street Strathdale commencing at 12 noon.

Metro North & East - Thursday 18th November 12noon at Wheel-
ers Hill Hotel. 871 Ferntree Gully Road Wheelers Hill

Gippsland Region - Thursday 25th November 12noon at
Morwell Golf Club

North East Victoria - Saturday 27th November 12noon at Benalla
Bowls Club

Metro - West District - Friday 3rd December 12noon at
Kealba Hotel

South West Victoria - Monday 6th December 12noon at
Hamilton

Metro - South District - Tuesday 7th December 12noon
at Steeples Restaurant Mornington

Ballarat & Central West - Wednesday 8th December
12noon at the Golf House Hotel

North West Victoria - Tuesday 14th
December 12noon at Mildura RSL



Birthday Greetings

January

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
David Hadj	30 th
Ian Johnson	30 th
Geoff Quennell	30 th
John De Boer	31 st
David Pederick	31 st



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
Mal Cole	9 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
Dee McDonell	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
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
Peter Crew	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



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

With disappointment only Central and Northern District managed to hold a lunch function due to the continuing Covid lockdowns and limitation on numbers. We look forward to managing to meet for the Festive Season.

South West Victoria

There is nothing to report from the SW area of Victoria as of course, like everyone else, we have been unable to get together for our much needed Meetings.

I am pleased to report however that our meeting on the 6th of December will go ahead in Warrnambool at the Warrnambool FC Rooms and we are all

looking forward to the much needed Christmas catch up.

Onwards to a better and brighter 2022 and keep Covid safe.

Ray Loughheed
Convenor

Ballarat & Central West

South Metro District

West Metro District

Central & Northern Victoria

Last meeting held at the Bendigo Club with a smaller group than usual Meeting attended by 10 and a good catch up as always.

Although restricted due to the COVID-19 virus.

However we enjoyed the day and hope to hold our usual Christmas lunch.

Peter Briscoe
Convenor

North East Victoria

Geelong and Surf Coast District

East & North Metro District

North West Victoria

Gippsland District



Members not in good health

Howard Smith
Ted VanDyken

We wish all Members a speedy recovery

Quick Quiz:

- Q1: What animals are studied by a hippologist?
- Q2: The Big Marino is near which NSW town?
- Q3: Which movie includes the phrase "Tell him he is dreaming"?
- Q4: Which American sports magazine has an annual swimsuit issue?
- Q5: How many toes does an Emu have on each foot?
- Q6: What type of tree did the Jolly Swagman once camp under?
- Q7: Which two AFL teams share nicknames with NBA teams?
- Q8: What was the name of the Addams family Butler?
- Q9: In what year was the AFL final 8 introduced?
- Q10: Which famous Sea Captain was cast adrift by his crew in 1789?

Peer Support

It is with regret we acknowledge the resignation of Steve Mulligan as Co-ordinator of our Peer Support Team.

Steve has resigned due to personal reasons and has left the position. The phone and coordination of our Peer Support will be handled by the Peer Support of Ambulance Victoria until a replacement can be appointed, which should take place early next year.

We thank Steve for his dedication to the role and support him in this decision.

Ambulance ramping is a symptom of a health system in distress

Long lines of ambulances idling outside hospitals have shocked the public in recent news reports, especially in [states](#) with high COVID case numbers and increased hospital admissions.

Mick Stephenson, executive director of clinical operations at Ambulance Victoria [told ABC radio](#) he'd "never seen the health system under the pressure it is under at the moment" and he expected worse to come.

In fact, ambulance ramping is an issue even in [states](#) with low or no COVID cases, pointing to [health systems](#) under stress. It's a problem that risks the health of patients and paramedics.

After bypass was banned

Ambulance ramping appears to have increased since some Australian states [banned hospital bypass](#). Hospital bypass previously allowed overwhelmed hospital emergency departments (EDs) to request ambulances "bypass" them for another hospital. But this just shifted a patient's treatment to another hospital. An ambulance that would have bypassed a hospital under the strategy is now potentially ramped there.

Still, ambulance ramping is not a new phenomenon. It's a decades-old problem and an [international](#) one, not limited to Western countries.

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) explains ramping as when

[...] ambulance officers and/or paramedics are unable to complete transfer of clinical care of their patient to the hospital ED within a clinically appropriate timeframe, specifically due to lack of an appropriate clinical space in the ED.

Overseas, ramping is also referred to as "off-stretcher time delays", "ambulance turnaround delays" or "ambulance offload delay".

Bad for patients and paramedics

Ambulance ramping delays access to appropriate management for the ramped patient. It has [long been known](#) to contribute to longer ED stays and stress on service provision.

Ramping leads to a lack of ambulance resources to respond to new

cases and delayed response times. When multiple crews are ramped at a hospital like Melbourne's [Northern Hospital](#) or sitting with patients in hospital corridors while they wait to be seen, other crews might need to travel much farther to respond to life-threatening emergencies. Paramedic morale can suffer and lead to disillusionment with the potential for paramedic "burnout". News reports have identified people suffering and [dying after long periods of ramping](#), even in states not greatly affected by high COVID cases.

Ambulance ramping is what the public see and hear about via news reports. They might be less aware of bed shortages or access blocks in the aged care sector, which flows back to the hospital bed availability. This in turn flows back to the ED.

As with many aspects of health care, [COVID has highlighted](#) and worsened existing problems and pressures.

A complex problem

Some [state](#) ambulance services have had extremely high demand which has stretched service delivery, especially when combined with ramping.

Ambulance Victoria has announced [plans to use the military](#), other non-government staff and student paramedics to drive ambulances to cope with the anticipated surge in demand. Given the number of graduate paramedics in Australia without current employment in state or territory ambulance services, such graduates would be a better option as they at least know how to be part of a "paramedic crew". Hospital ED blockages and delays are caused by a number of factors. Some patients could be adequately managed by a GP. An ageing population means patients with complex medical conditions, who take longer to treat in the ED. Patient treatment may be delayed while they wait for a procedure room to become vacant and a lack of hospital beds for ED patients who need to be admitted. The time needed to assess and treat COVID patients and to maintain a COVID-safe environment also leads to longer waits.

The impact of states with significant COVID cases re-opening once certain vaccination percentages have been reached has yet to be seen in Australia. Based on overseas experiences, patients may face trying to access a health system that becomes completely [overwhelmed](#).

What's needed now

Rather than a piecemeal state-by-state

approach to community paramedicine, there is a need for national role definitions and educational standards. Instead of the current situation of emergency calls and ramping, a workforce of advanced or extended care paramedics could safely manage many patients in a community setting, rather than take them to hospital.

Some hospitals have tried to implement processes to improve ED, but a patient's progress still might come down to a bed being available in the hospital.

The issue remains a state or territory and federal problem with beds needed beyond the ED to ease pressure there. The federal government funds a significant amount of aged care beds and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) slow processing of hospital patients means they are often stuck in a hospital awaiting a place in an aged facility or a NDIS-funded facility. This continues to limit or block access to hospital beds.

Ambulance ramping is one symptom of a [multi-factorial health system failure](#). Until there is sufficient federal funding for aged care beds, improved NDIS processes and funding to allow GPs and allied health workers to manage patients in the community, we will continue to see patients and paramedics put at risk.

New Members

[We are pleased to welcome the following New Members to our Association.](#)

David Lees - Mt Waverley
Roberto Ceppellini - Gardenvale
Ella Prigroove - Sunbury
Barbara Faulkner Bacchus Marsh
Steven Williams - New Zealand
Bruce Timms - Halls Gap

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

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

Quick Quiz Answers:

- A1: Horses
- A2: Goulburn
- A3: The Castle
- A4: Sports Illustrated
- A5: Three
- A6: Coolabah
- A7: Hawks, Blues
- A8: Lurch
- A9: 1994
- A10: Captain William Bligh

Committee Matters

Welcome all, to this, our final newsletter for 2021 and we now look forward to the removal of restrictions and hope that we can all enjoy the resumption of our lunch meetings for the Christmas New Year period.

Due to the restrictions we have been basically "Treading water" over the past 12 or so months, we are now looking at reviving and expanding our bases over more of the state as we have continued to gain more members in areas not covered with a close meeting area.

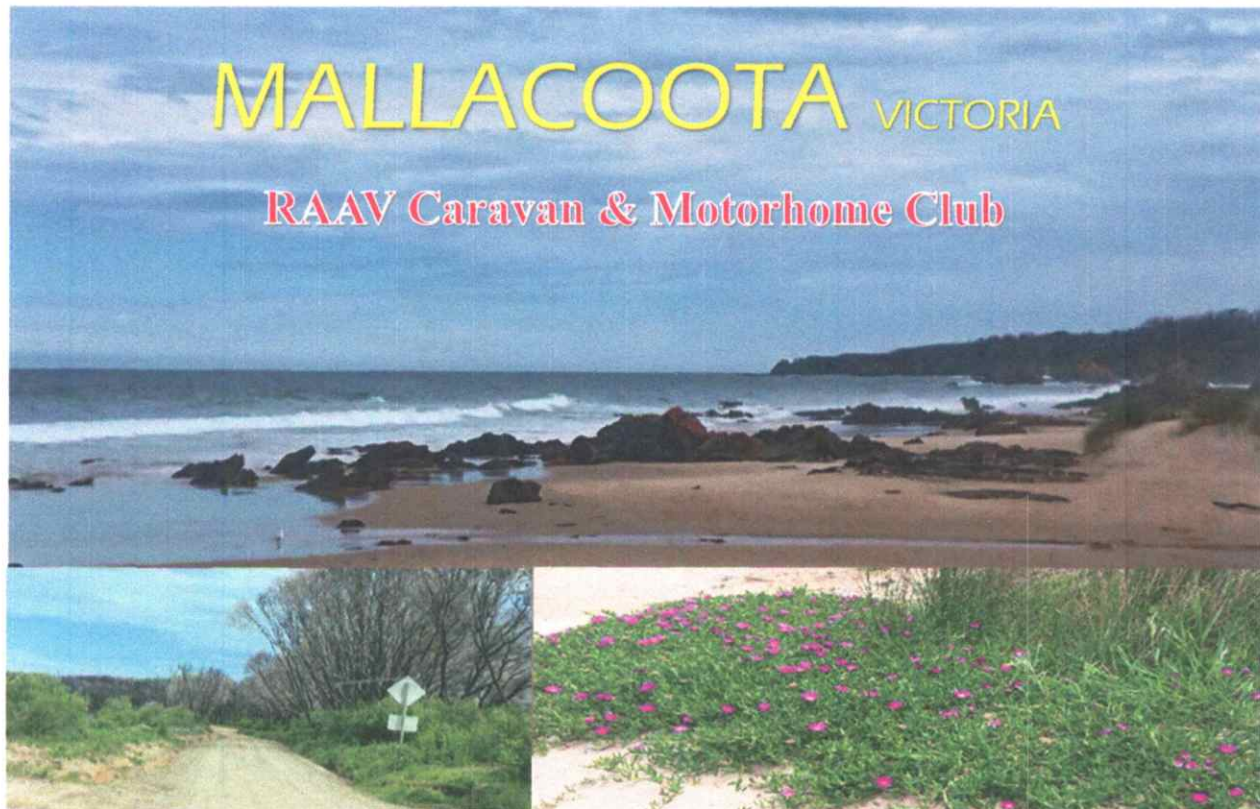
The final details are almost finalised for next years lunches and we will be releasing these within the next couple of weeks and we will be organising

new locations for Wimmera & Grampians and Metro North. Venues still to be finalised.

Due to the Metropolitan lockdown and restrictions on attendees we have held over our AGM this will be conducted on Tuesday 23rd November. The location will be organised within the next week. We are calling for nominations for the following positions - Vice President, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and 2 or 3 Members of Committee. Nomination Forms will accompany this newsletter.

Finally on behalf of the President, Executive and Committee may I offer you all the best for Christmas and the New Year and I look forward to catching up with you all next year.

Ian Cameron
Secretary

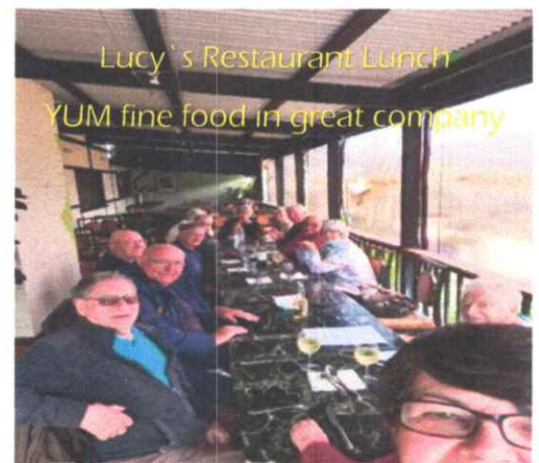


December 2019. Mallacoota is stormed by horrific bush fires impacting on the Town, causing deaths, loss of property and evacuations. Though the trees bear the scars to show and tell, the undergrowth and wildflowers are amazing in their come back. The people of Mallacoota though will be scared for life, but still greeted us with a smile wherever we went.



October 2021. As regional COVID travel restrictions lifted the RAAV Caravan & Motorhome Club decided to travel and meet at Mallacoota to spend a few \$errs: to assist the Mallacoota business community in their recovery.

We stayed at the Foreshore Caravan Park, great van park plenty of grass and fantastic ocean views, the weather was generally cold, with some rainy and sunny days but nevertheless a good time was had by all, due to COVID restricting camp kitchen numbers only 4 people at a time, we had our get togethers (happy hour) around our vans and motorhomes, sharing nibblyies, drinks and a chit chat.



Participating Members > Neil & Anne Akers C/Van Morwell. Allan & Frances Oakes Coaster Yarragon. Marilyn & Peter Raft C/Van Callignee. Neil & Suzanne Hall M/Home Morwell. Cheryl & Brian Mellor M/Home Foster North. Garry Hodson C/Van Mildura. Frank & Marilyn Abela C/Van Traralgon.

A HUGE THANK YOU to Suzanne Hall our co-ordinator for organising the club get-together

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

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