Response to the Article in The Beacon

**Reference: 26th Edition – August 2023 Page 17**

***Former Ambulance Colleagues Service Tributes – An Explanation***

I, as Secretary, the Executive, Committee and the Members of the Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria Inc. take offense to and the derogative assumptions made in this edition of The Beacon magazine.

The editor at no stage engaged with us for any information or advice as to the authoritative nature of the subject matter.

WE TOTALLY refute the assumption of little or no assistance to either Members of the Association or former Ambulance personnel, being either Service Paramedics or any other department of Ambulance Victoria and/or any aspects of Ambulance Victoria procedures.

Our system of Peer Support is dovetailed into the Peer Support and Welfare program of Ambulance Victoria and works well with regular meetings and updates on a bi-monthly basis. We also have our own Welfare program that is organized and overseen by John Clancy at the Committee level as well as the ongoing establishing of a Welfare Officer in each or our Districts.

As Ambulance Victoria has not acknowledged the passing of former staff for a substantial number of years and it is not in the current policy to do so nor to undertake the organisation of such events.

We, the Retired Ambulance Association, acknowledge the passing of all Serving and former staff as and when we become aware of their passing. We then make contact with the family if possible and offer what ever assistance we can to the family. This includes the offer of a Service Flag, Cap, Medals and a eulogy. If the family accept, arrangements are made. We ensure the required items are delivered to the funeral home as soon as possible. We collaborate with the family on a eulogy if necessary and allow them to decide if a Chaplain from AV is required or a close Association Member or family Member to provide the eulogy. AT NO STAGE do we override the family wishes.

As stated above we have our own team of Welfare Officers who engage in all matters relating to our members and their families as needed and your supposed suggestion that we need to do more is unfounded and disrespectful.

As for your suggestion that there needs to be a Service Prayer and/or Ode. WHY DID YOU NOT enquire if there is such available. In the past there was a Prayer and Ode but these, like so many other items, were discarded during the 1990’s. HOWEVER A NEW ODE HAS JUST BEEN FINALISED AND IS ABOUT TO BE RELEASED.

Again, you give us TOTAL DISREGARD and DISRESPECT towards our Association which is frustrating. We will continue to provide the best possible services and assistance to all our Members and help and support to those who are not members in times of difficulty to our best ability and include Ambulance Victoria as and when we are unable to do so.

Your assumption that no services exist is TOTALLY WRONG and we DO NOT need to be told how to run our Association nor DO WE NEED outside persons attempting to take over our rights and obligations.

We have at our disposal a total of 6 Service shrouds or Palls dispersed throughout the State as well as Service Caps and Medals as required. These items are willing made available to all who may wish to use them for their desired purpose.

Ian Cameron,

Secretary