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## ***Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.***

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# **RAAV Wrap**

September 2024 Vol. 4



### **President's introduction and welcome**

Our next-door neighbour was cleaning up his property after a long-term tenant had recently moved out. He kept mentioning that he was “time poor” on multiple occasions as he beavered away with the cleanup. Whilst not necessarily “time poor” it’s been a busy year to date for the RAAV committee.

One of the key objectives for this committee has been to revamp the RAAV website. The outgoing Executive of the previous Committee had laid a good foundation that we are able to build upon. From my personal experience, being involved in organising the development of any website opens one (me personally) to another completely foreign language when compared with just providing emergency medical training programs.

The website needed to be functional, informative, interactive and relevant to the RAAV member’s needs. Our Web Maven Graham Douglas has spent many hours, along with limited support from Computer Initiatives one of our Partners who look after all things about computers, to develop a site that suits our current needs.

It’s an interactive site which is constantly being updated and improved upon. We look forward to receiving your feedback. For those who haven’t had a look check it out at [www.retiredambulancevictoria.org.au](http://www.retiredambulancevictoria.org.au)

As our membership numbers grow and spread not only across Victoria, Interstate and overseas, ok as a Kiwi, I have to make a special mention and shout out to our Member living in Mangonui, Northland NZ.

We have seen our District group meetings and venues also expand from being Metro-centric to cover the whole of Victoria to support our members maintain that social connection with old work colleagues.

A couple of our Districts routinely rotate their venues to different locations to reduce travel time, thus making it easier for other members to attend.

In Wimmera under the guidance of our Past Secretary Ian Cameron we have witnessed the growth of the Horsham as another venue. Feedback from our North East Victoria has suggested we need a venue in the Albury Wodonga region which would benefit those members in that region.

Not everyone can get to their nearest venue. This is not just a regional issue, we have a similar problem in our Metro regions, especially with those who have restrictions placed on their driving licenses due to aged related medical conditions. If you know of any members who struggles with getting to their nearest venue, please let us know so that we can work out how best to support them.

The RAAV AGM has been planned for Monday 18 November, gathering from 10:30 AM for 11 AM meeting start. The venue is the Ambulance Victoria Chas Martim OAM Museum, Barry St Bayswater. It's a good opportunity not only to see what the Museum has to offer but also catch up with the volunteers who usually are there on Monday restoring exhibits and maintaining the older vehicles.

Steve M.

## Secretary's report

There has been much happening behind the scenes since our last edition. Our Webmaster Graham Douglas has been working tirelessly developing our website, an arduous task which we heartily thank him for his efforts. As Steve has mentioned, I also would encourage you to have a wonder through and see the improvements and the more up-to-date feel of our Web [retiredambulancevictoria.org.au](http://retiredambulancevictoria.org.au)

It has been financial reporting time and I know that Ben Ellis has had to also put in the hard yards to ensure that our books comply with the myriad of financial compliances and regulations.

Further, our interim president, Steve has been reviewing and editing our documents to bring them up to date also which is a thankless task and one that is difficult to see from an outsiders perspective, but nonetheless a time consuming task.

So, why would you think I would raise this with you now. It's because to run a successful association there is much to do and many hours spent to ensure that you receive the best possible value for our membership, all of this huge effort is through our volunteer committee who have your best wishes at heart.

Another matter which was raised recently related to who is eligible to become a member of RAAV. Under our Constitution who's wording hasn't been altered since 2013 states;

***Who is eligible to be a member*** Division 1 (sec 8)

*1. Any person who:*

*(a) is a member or former member of staff of the Ambulance Service in Victoria or any of it's predecessors: or*

*(b) is a member or former member of any of the various entities established to provide non-emergency ambulance transport or first-aid services Victoria; or*

*(c) supports the purposes of the Association; is eligible for membership.*

We currently have new members who are still serving with AV or it's sub-contractors, under our latest Constitution they are quite entitled to be within our ranks and we extend our thanks to all of our members for their shared interest in our Association.

Jim Ballard



## Welfare & Wellbeing

### Supporting Our Friends.

Recently there have been a couple of close family friends and neighbours who have suffered the loss of a close family member or good friend following sudden medical emergencies.

The first automated response was, we need to organise some support for these people to help ease their suffering and we need to that right! We to make sure they get the right type of assistance!

Hang on, let's pause and reflect, whose needs are we trying to address, ours or theirs!

Support comes in many forms, be it family members, neighbours, work colleagues, social groups or friends. All of whom bring their own life experiences to each situation. Just being there often provides the necessary comfort to those individuals suffering loss or grief.

As first responders we have become increasingly aware of the importance of Peer Support programs on the long term wellbeing of people who are consistently subjected to multitude of "traumatic" events.

An accumulation of tragic events such as sudden death, multi-traumatic accidents, terminal illness or sudden medical emergencies can all have an impact on our mental wellbeing. As human beings, we all react differently depending on the circumstances surrounding the event. That reaction could be outpouring of grief, a delayed response or little or no outward signs.

Again, it begs the question, "how do we support" our family, colleagues and friends in their time of need?

Current support programs under AV Wellbeing & Support Services include;

- Peer Support program with a focus is on current employees both clinical and administrative staff.  
Provides out of hours support to the retired & former employees
- Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care includes both appointed and volunteer Chaplains
- AV appointed Clinical Psychologists
- The VACU (Victorian Ambulance Clinician's) Network.
- RAFF Peer Support supports retired and former employees of AV.

### Peer Support

Is best described as people, be they a formal "Peer Support Responder" or others "informal" such as family member, friend, work colleague, sporting or other social club member who can provide a safe environment where people are treated equally, feel accepted and importantly listened to.

Most of all these support people have what is termed "Lived Experience" now considered to be important factor in assisting others in their time of need. The Oxford Reference defines lived experience as being "*personal knowledge gained through direct, face-to-face involvement in everyday events taken for granted rather than perceived or represented*".

[www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com)).

Pastoral Care (Chaplaincy) also have an important role in these circumstances. Providing;

- Support emotional, psychological, spiritual and pastoral needs of our members

- Provide a listening ear and support with whatever life issues that may be confronting us. Be is illness, injury, stress or relationship issues
- Some Chaplains can officiate at wedding, baptisms and funerals.
- Through the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry, we can access broad range of multi-denominational faith based Chaplains.

Other support networks that can also provide great support.

- Catching up with old work colleagues on a regular basis for a coffee, breakfast and the like.
- Local sports club be it darts, bowls, cricket, footy (of all persuasions)
- Other activities be it walking the dog, bike rides with friends, etc. Game of golf, swim at the local pool or down the beach. Exercise has a positive effect on our wellbeing.
- Bowls Gr8 for Brains, Frontline Wellness – trauma based yoga are RAAV affiliates
- Men’s Shed have clearly demonstrated positive outcomes for those who feel either disenfranchised or isolated by providing a welcoming friendly and safe environment
- Monday sessions at the Chas Martin OAM Museum “tinkering” with historical ambulances and other assorted medical equipment etc. Opportunity to catch up a number of former work colleagues.
- RAAV District (Meetings) lunch gatherings.

The list is almost endless, but all provide an opportunity/venue where can interact with likeminded people, swap “tall stories”, have some fun and importantly feel comfortable in these environments. Separate from our normal daily routine.

Importantly, take care, stay safe and have some fun.

Steve M.  
Welfare Co-ordinator.

E. [vicepresident@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au](mailto:vicepresident@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au)

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## **Webmaster**

In the June newsletter I said that I was hesitant to predict when the website would go live thinking it would take another six months of work. Good thing I didn’t say that as you may recall the new RAAV website went live at midday on July 22nd.

My thanks to the committee for their assistance in getting the website to where it is today. Every paper document, form, letter head, and administrative process needed review updating & processes documented to ensure the website would be current and would assist us administer the Association.

Within 12 minutes of “going live” we had our first online membership application and within 28 minutes the first online purchase order.

When the new site was being planned the overriding purpose of the site was to be relevant to the membership and to simplify processes.

It would seem that we have achieved the latter for the fact that since going “live” seven weeks ago we have received more applications for membership than in the first seven months of the year.

With the exclusion of bank clearing times it now takes less than five minutes to process an application, saving 40 minutes on the manual method.

The Committee and District Coordinators can now securely access relevant information online and it comes from one up to date register.

Coordinators can now print or download electronic copies of their District members contact details whenever they need a current list.

Members now can purchase merchandise or elect to pay membership fees for 1, 2 or 3 years directly in the "RAAV store", whilst EFT payments via bank accounts is the only method of payment supported.

The website is constantly evolving and being updated.

EVERYONE is encouraged to explore the site, there's a Special Interest page, Welfare & financial info and advice and heaps more.

Return regularly to see what's new, all the major news will be on the Bulletin Board.

Enjoy the site..... it was built for RAAV members!

## **New Members**

We welcome the following new members to RAAV, we hope you enjoy all the friendship and camaraderie which our association is known for;

Sue Knox	Metro-W
Guy Zuccala	N-E
Steven Jones	Metro-W
Wolfgang Haas	Metro-W
John Cowell	C-V
Marion Neil	G & SC
Mark Hockey	G & SC
Graeme McKibbin	G & SC
Kevin Burke	N-W
Robert Standfield	Gipps-E
Robyn Ferroff	Metro-W
Sam Gentile	Metro-N
Lynette Stacker	N-E
Jennifer Allen	G & SC
Gary Bertram	Metro-W
David Lyster	Metro-W

## **Departed Colleagues.**

Peter Neylon 18/08/2024 and

Bill Jeffs 27/07/2024

Please see our web site for departed members list.

We pay homage to their dedication to ambulance and we send our sincere condolences to their family and friends. May they all rest in peace.

**Currently we have.....**

- 304 Full Members
- 105 Life Members
- 13 Honorary Members
- 41 Associate Members

Last but not least, I would encourage those members who have outstanding subscription fees to pay them as soon as possible.

If you are unsure of your financial status call or email the Treasurer or the Membership Officer, details are on the website.

Cheers, Graham Douglas

**RAAV Infirmary**

Wishing a speedy recovery to Peter Briscoe post knee surgery. We know something like a little knee op won't confine you for long Pete.

Please let us know if any other member is on the sick list and we will include it in future editions

**Letters to the Editor**



19/06/2024

I have just finished reading the RAAV Newsletter "RAAV WRAP" & feel the day should not go by; without complimenting both you, plus the professional compilation/contributions from so many others.

For me a Sterling effort, emanating from such a short time of the newly formed committee coming together.

Guess it is now up to all of us in the outfield, to strengthen even more so the Centre Bounce team.

As you have this time brought to light awareness on a few early training periods, I had for a time wondered if stories of past transitions toward elevating the Ambo pre-hospital skill levels era - might be considered worthy for future publications.

We have the elevation from Oxy Viva to Dr. David K's initial intro plus inhaled analgesics. Which did quickly omit the use of Nitrous Oxide so many of us were then using.

Mr. Gordon Trinca on the development of Seat Belts. Plus his BIG bit of paper work.

All were asked to contribute by filling in his questionnaire format alongside patient care records post attending RTA/MTA's. Brought out some heavy research inclusive of law changes.

Struan Sutherland on the development updating the treatment of Snake Bite.

Again, to benefit from his staff lecturer who beside the written word, was a guest speaker at one of our Institute of Ambulance sessions.

Dr. Joe Toscano who sure did make world wide improvements to the pre-hospital treatment of Spinal Injuries.

Plus the Seminars we held bringing in other Australian State run Services, inclusive of American interests - there is a history these seminars changed their needs. The Alfred, Prince Henry et-al lecture theatres, made available for such.

So proven when the Yanks purchased the number of Modified Thomas Splints Victoria held in stock. Inclusive of our form of hand held analgesics.

Thanks again to the RAAV WRAP TEAM.

Regards,

Ben Wright.

*Ed: Thanks Ben, you make some salient points. The ALS paramedics of today don't realise how difficult the job was with the skill set at hand from years gone by. Thanks for your contribution.*

Hi Steve/Jim,

Hope this finds you well. Two weeks ago Christine Rhodes, wife of Don Rhodes, former Ambulance Officer who worked at Camberwell and Lilydale, rang me and said that he was in hospital following some falls at home. He is now transitioning into full time care as Christine is unable to look after him at home. Christine is 82 and Don is 87. He is currently at Westernport Community Care and they are hoping for a spot at The Bays Aged Care Facility in Hastings to become available.

I am letting you know as he is a member of RAAV and perhaps a mention on the website or newsletter to notify other contemporaries of his circumstances. I asked them if they were happy for me to contact you and they said they were. I went and visited him today. He seems to be in good spirits but is sometimes a little forgetful. Christine is only just coping but, as she said, they have been together over 65 years and it is a difficult adjustment. They have good family support.

Christines phone number is 0406 364 337. She was happy to let me pass on this number to you should you wish to call. I will continue to stay in contact with them and visit occasionally to offer support.

She did ask me if I knew any solicitors as they are trying to organise power of attorney paperwork but unfortunately I don't. Maybe someone in the peninsula region has some contacts and could offer some guidance.

I will update you further if anything changes.

Regards to you and the committee.

David Hadj

We are scouring AV for the latest happenings which might interest our readership. If you have any snippets please send them along to [secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au](mailto:secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au) and we'll put them in the next edition.

27.08/2024

RAAV Committee,

Thank you very much for my 15 year badge. It makes up for the gold watch that I didn't get when I left Doncaster.

Cheers to one and all

David (Noddy) Skinner.

On 6 Jul 2024, at 10:55, [george@hoodfamily.org.au](mailto:george@hoodfamily.org.au) wrote:  
Newsletter

Hi Jim, A great newsletter, thank you. This time it bought back happy memories of our time at Shep driving course and our stay at the Vic hotel. A great time and opportunity to catch up with colleagues from around the state.

Please keep up the good work as you and the team advance our Association.

Hope this finds you well,

George,(ancient ao).

George Hood.

## Regional Reports

### Metro East

Hi Jim

Hope all is well. Just a short report from the Metro East Lunch meeting.

The Metro East lunch meeting was held at the Wheelers Hill Hotel on Thursday 15/08/2024. It was a small gathering but there were a few regulars away travelling. Many laughs were had and, the meal at the hotel, was of a high standard. Thanks to Steve Mulligan (President RAAV) and Chaplain Tom Rose for attending. We also held a moment of reflection to honour those members that had passed since our last meeting.

Our next lunch meeting will be the last of the year and will be held on Thursday November 14 at 12 midday at the Wheelers Hill Hotel. Any suggestions for the day welcomed.

I commend these gatherings to all as they offer a great connection to our past colleagues and families and hope to see a big turnout for the day. Invitations to be sent out closer to the day. Keep your eye out for it.

Regards

David Hadj  
Metro East Coordinator

### Metro North

The last Metro North lunch was held on Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> August at the Darebin RSL.

The lunch was attended by 15 Members and partners.

At this lunch, Darrell Rintoule was presented his 10 year Membership Badge.

Let your colleagues know about our lunches. All Ambulance personnel, working and retired, as well as partners are welcome.

Our next lunch will be on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 12.00 at the Darebin RSL, (Bistro), 402 Bell St Preston. Hope to see you there.

Col Evans - Coordinator



### Gippsland East

We had a pleasant lunch on the 14<sup>th</sup> August at the Bairnsdale RSL, not a great turnout but I was able to present Jim Yandle and Dennis Meek with their commemorative badges.

The next East Gippsland meeting will be our Christmas meeting which will be held at the Bairnsdale RSL on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Come in your Christmas finery if you wish to make it more fun.

Cheers Steve Wood





Hi Jim,

You may remember this amazing lady, I was fortunate enough to catch up with her for her 100th Birthday! Margaret Woodhouse, wife of former East Gippsland Superintendent, Doug Woodhouse who is now living in Campbell ACT  
Regards

Jelle Burggraaff.



### Central & South Gippsland

Hi Jim,

The Central & South Gippsland meeting was held at the Inverloch Hotel on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Eighteen attended including Gary Hodson who visited from Mildura. We enjoyed the view from upstairs, the fellowship and the meal.

Frank Abela gave a presentation on some wellness initiatives that are available to members. Service Awards were given to Glen Dowlan (15 years), Neil Hall and Bruce Slater (10 years).

Our next meeting will be our Christmas meeting to be held at the Morwell RSL on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Neil Akers

### Metro South

Our last Luncheon was held at Steeples on the 25th June and was attended by 32 members. Attending for the first time was Peter Collins who was warmly welcomed by all increasing numbers is a very slow journey.

At our next luncheon which is on again at Steeples, Mornington on the 24th September we will be rewarding Members with their service pins. We look forward to presenting these awards.

Bryan Cass  
Metro South

### Metro West

Hi Jim,

We had a lovely day today so here is our report;

I would like to welcome the following retirees and their partners to Metro West RAAV  
Steven & Debra Jones  
Wolf & Carman Haas  
Sue Knox

Our quarterly lunch was held on Friday 6th September at the Kealba

Hotel.

We had 42 members and partners attend which was great.

Steve Nangle & Howard Smith received their 10 year Service awards.

It was a very noisy get together but I think it always is when you get a bunch of Ambos together.

The next Lunch will be held on Friday 6th December at the Kealba Hotel.

Partners are always welcome and looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Georgie Hall - Coordinator



Ballarat District



There are six photos being lean Lewis receiving his Life Membership Award, New Member Lauren Downing and Service Award recipients, J. Mathew, M. Wilson, L. Hotchin, B. Shott, G. Cassell, B. Bowman, P. Skinner, G. Thompson, T. Mawbey, & P.Wells

John Head



#### North West District

Our regular lunch was held on Tuesday 10 Sept. With 24 attendees. Some who have missed the last 12 months or so. Others were overseas. We presented 4 x 10 year membership medals. There was considerable interest shown in repeating last years December meeting of a paddle boat tour with tea.

#### South West District

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Hi Jim, following is the report for the south west region.

Unfortunately, due the atrocious weather conditions and the illness of some members, it was decided to cancel our September meeting which was planned to be held in Hamilton.

Kind regards,  
Rhonda Oliver  
SW Convenor

### North East District

August 24 we held our meeting at Benalla. It was a relatively small gathering, but the day saw presentation of the service badges. We had 2 of the 3 over 30 years presentations on this day! Where does the time go, I received a 10 year badge!

In times of grief it is a wonderful thing to see a member come to be a part of the day. Partners are such a big part of what an ambulance officer's journey was about. Others are having surgeries, etc, & we're all enjoying the pains of ageing bodies (not!)

Please keep in touch with each other.

Leanne



### Wimmera & Grampians

My wife Chris and I had a great day visiting the Wimmera and Grampians district lunch. Unfortunately, Ian Cameron was unable to attend due to medical reasons and we wish him a speedy get well.

My father John Sr. worked in Horsham for 5 years when we emigrated from England in 1965, it's uncanny to meet up with my father's workmates as I travel around the state given that he would have been 95 years old this year. I have previously caught up with Jock McRae on one of our trips to Bendigo and this time we got to catch up with Colleen and Ray Harris who were our neighbours and

work chums of my fathers all those years ago back in the 60's. It was fantastic to catch up after all these years. We were warmly greeted as we were with the rest of the Wimmera participants.

On our trip across from Bendigo we stopped off in Rupanyup to check in on Ian Cameron and present him with his commemorative badge which he can wear with some pride.



Jim Ballard.

### Central Victoria

We had our regular meeting at the Bendigo RSL on the 13th of August. Jim Ballard, Secretary of our Committee came along with his wife Chris. There was 18 attended for lunch. Col Bowden presented Frank Bonza with his commemorative badge.

Our next meeting will be at the Bendigo RSL on the 12th November, we hope to see everyone there for our last meeting of the year.

Peter Briscoe.



## Caravan and Motorhome Club.



1. Helping ourselves to a roast dinner.
2. Enjoying our meal.
3. Almost time for dessert.
4. Ice creams after our ninety minute cruise.
5. Not sure what Dave is running away from.
6. Happy hour.
7. The Cumberoona, our cruise ship.



As I write this, we are drawing to the end of our week away at Mulwala NSW.

What a marvellous week we have had from some of the group being nearly locals at the local Water Ski club when more than one couple would frequent there for their scrumptious lunches. The local bakers was a place not to be missed especially the "Yummy" cakes. Instead of going out for a group dinner, we joined together in supplying a fabulous pulled roast lamb dinner with roast potatoes, pumpkin, cauliflower in white cheese sauce, peas and lots of gravy. It was personal, quiet and we all enjoyed the fellowship and a chance to talk and socialise in the privacy of the camp kitchen.

Two days later saw us aboard the P.S. Cumberoona enjoying a cruise around Lake Mulwala, which included a lovely Roast Chicken lunch. We followed this with Ice creams at the local Ice cream shop. Two hours later was the final "Happy Hour" for this trip, which we enjoyed every evening, even if it did get a tad cold after the sun had gone down.

The next getaway will be at Lakes Entrance from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025. I am hoping to book at the Eastern Beach Holiday Park. Stay tuned for further details.

Cheers,

Thanking you and happy caravanning.

Anne Akers.

Home is where my caravan takes me.

## Mens Health

*In this edition our feature article is taken from the Pfizer website and is dealing with Men's health which we are all guilty of ignoring at some stage in our life. While some of this article is basic in regard to our ambulance knowledge, it's always better to start at the beginning to ensure that we all are having an understanding of this important message. Please read this article earnestly and look after yourself first, but if you know of another fellow who is ignoring his health, we urge you to talk to him about following up with his GP.*

Men's health often takes a backseat due to various reasons, including societal expectations, busy schedules, and a reluctance to seek medical assistance. However, overlooking regular health checks can have consequences. The significance of health checks for men cannot be stressed enough, as they serve as a proactive measure to identify potential health issues, prevent serious conditions, and ultimately ensure a healthier life. In this article, we will dive into 2 important areas:

1. Why men should prioritise regular health checks and the positive impact they can have on overall well-being
2. The types of recommended health checks for men – what, why, and when

### ***Why should men prioritise regular health checks?***

#### **Early Detection of Health Issues:**

Regular health checks provide an opportunity for early detection of potential health problems.<sup>1</sup> Some diseases, including cardiovascular issues, diabetes, and certain cancers, can develop silently without obvious symptoms in the early stages of disease progression. By undergoing routine screenings, such as blood pressure measurements, cholesterol tests, and prostate examinations, men can detect potential problems before they become more serious or advanced.<sup>1</sup> Early intervention and treatment can improve outcomes and reduce the risk of complications, enabling men to maintain their quality of life.

#### **Prevention and Risk Assessment:**

Health checks not only detect existing health issues but can also help in preventing future problems. Regular visits to a medical clinic allow men to assess their overall health and identify potential risk factors associated with their lifestyle, family history, and age.<sup>1</sup> With this information and in partnership with their health professional, they can make informed decisions about adopting healthier habits, such as improving their diet, increasing physical activity, managing stress levels, and avoiding harmful behaviours like smoking or excessive alcohol consumption. Such preventive



measures can effectively reduce conditions and promote better



the risk of developing chronic long-term health outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

### **Mental Health Awareness:**

Health checks extend beyond physical well-being; they encompass mental health as well. Mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders, are prevalent among men but often go unnoticed and untreated.<sup>3</sup> Regular check-ups provide an opportunity for men to discuss their mental health concerns with healthcare professionals who can offer appropriate guidance, support, and necessary referrals to specialists if required.

### **Monitoring Lifestyle-Related Conditions:**

Regular health checks help monitor lifestyle-related conditions including obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels and enables healthcare professionals to prescribe diet and lifestyle changes, and/or treatment when needed.<sup>1</sup> Through screenings and discussions with medical professionals, men can gain valuable insights into healthy weight management, dietary adjustments, exercise routines, and stress management techniques.

### **Building a Strong Doctor-Patient Relationship:**

By prioritising health checks, men can establish a strong doctor-patient relationship, which plays a pivotal role in their overall health journey. Regular check-ups create an opportunity for open and honest communication, allowing men to discuss any concerns, ask questions, and seek professional advice tailored to their specific needs. Trusting relationships with healthcare providers promote better compliance with recommended treatments, improve health literacy, and enhance overall health outcomes.

### **Blood Pressure Measurement**

Blood pressure is a vital indicator of cardiovascular health and can provide valuable information about the functioning of the heart and blood vessels. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is often referred to as a "silent killer" because people don't feel any symptoms, until their blood pressure rises to a very high level. When left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to severe conditions such as heart disease and stroke.<sup>4</sup> By regularly monitoring of blood pressure levels, individuals can detect abnormalities early on and take appropriate measures to manage or prevent the development of these serious health issues.

### ***When should I have my blood pressure measured and how often?***

In Australia, it is recommended that men have their blood pressure measured at least every 2 years, starting from the age of 18.<sup>5</sup> More frequent monitoring may be necessary if there are additional risk factors or a family history of high blood pressure.

## **Cholesterol Testing**

Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in the blood that is essential for various bodily functions. However, when levels of certain types of cholesterol, such as low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, become elevated, it can build up in the arteries, forming plaques. Plaque build up causes the inside of the arteries to narrow over time and reduce blood flow.<sup>6</sup> This increases the risk of heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes.<sup>6</sup>

By undergoing cholesterol tests, individuals can monitor their cholesterol levels and identify potential abnormalities early on. This allows for timely intervention through lifestyle modifications, dietary changes, or medications, if necessary, to manage cholesterol levels and prevent the progression of cardiovascular diseases.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, cholesterol testing is crucial for individuals with a family history of high cholesterol, those with existing heart conditions, and those with risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, or high blood pressure. When should I take a cholesterol test and how often?

In Australia, it is recommended that men have their cholesterol levels checked every 5 years, starting from the age of 45 in adults with no risk factors for heart disease.<sup>6</sup> However, individuals with risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, or a family history of heart disease may require more frequent testing – talk to your doctor for more information.

## **Blood glucose testing**

Blood glucose, or blood sugar, refers to the amount of glucose or sugar present in the bloodstream, which serves as the primary source of energy for the body's cells. Abnormal blood glucose levels can indicate the presence of type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes, a condition where blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes.<sup>7</sup> Monitoring blood glucose levels through regular testing helps individuals with type 2 diabetes to manage their condition effectively by making necessary adjustments to their diet, regular physical activity, and weight management in addition to taking prescribed anti-diabetic medications.<sup>8</sup> For healthy individuals, blood glucose testing can provide valuable information about their risk of developing type 2 diabetes down the road.

Blood glucose testing is crucial for individuals with a family history of type 2 diabetes, those who are overweight or obese, and those with other risk factors such as high blood pressure.<sup>7</sup> By undergoing regular blood glucose tests, individuals can stay on top of their health, take appropriate measures to manage their blood glucose levels, and reduce the risk of developing the conditions and diabetes-related complications such as heart disease, kidney problems, and nerve damage.<sup>9</sup>

### ***When should I take a blood glucose test and how often?***

In Australia, it is recommended that men consider screening for type 2 diabetes every 3 years from the age of 40.<sup>10</sup> However, earlier, and more frequent screening may be recommended for men with risk factors such as, those with high blood pressure or those with a family history.

## **Prostate Health Checks**

The prostate is a small gland located below the bladder and plays a vital role in the reproductive system. Prostate health checks typically involve screenings such as a digital rectal exam (DRE) and a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test.<sup>11</sup> These tests help detect potential abnormalities or signs of prostate conditions, such as prostate cancer. Men at high risk of prostate cancer, include men with a family history of prostate cancer, or those who had an elevated PSA result in their previous test.<sup>12</sup> For those who are at high risk, early detection of prostate cancer is particularly important, as it allows for early intervention and improved chances of successful treatment outcomes.<sup>11</sup>

### ***When should I get a prostate health check and how often?***

It is recommended that men discuss the potential benefits and limitations of prostate cancer screening with their doctor. Shared decision-making based on individual circumstances is crucial in determining the appropriate screening strategy. If a prostate check is suggested, following the Australian guidelines, a test should be done every 2 years, starting from the age of 50.<sup>12</sup>

### **Bowel Cancer Screening**

Regular bowel cancer screening can help identify precancerous polyps or detect cancer at an early stage. Some screening methods can include faecal occult blood tests (FOBT) or colonoscopy.<sup>13</sup> These screenings can detect blood in the stool or abnormal growths in the colon or rectum that may indicate the presence of cancer or pre-cancerous conditions. By undergoing bowel cancer screening, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing advanced-stage bowel cancer. Did you know that 90% of **bowel cancer** cases can be treated successfully if found early - bowel cancer screening is crucial for early detection and prevention.<sup>13</sup> Importantly, the risk of bowel cancer increases with age.<sup>14</sup> Regular screenings can save lives by identifying bowel cancer in its early stages or preventing its development altogether through the removal of precancerous polyps.<sup>13</sup>

#### ***When should I take a bowel cancer test and how often?***

In Australia, it is recommended that men consider regular bowel cancer screenings from the age of 50+ or earlier if they are at higher risk of bowel cancer (e.g. family history).<sup>13</sup> Even if there is no family history, it is still a good idea to screen for bowel cancer in people aged 50-74 which can help find any signs of changes in the colon and detect cancer early.<sup>15</sup> For many people, screening for bowel cancer is a simple, at-home test – [The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program](#) offers free tests in the mail for people aged 50-74 years.<sup>15</sup>



### **Mental Health Check**

A **mental health check-in**, also known as a mental health screen or assessment, is a process that helps identify potential signs, symptoms, or risk factors associated with mental health conditions. It is typically a brief questionnaire or interview conducted by a healthcare professional, such as a psychologist, psychiatrist, or GP.<sup>16</sup> These screenings can cover various areas, including mood, anxiety, stress levels, sleep patterns, and overall mental health functioning. The results of a mental health screening can guide healthcare providers in making informed decisions about diagnosis, treatment options, and appropriate referrals to mental health specialists if needed.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note that mental health screenings are not diagnostic tools but serve as an initial step in assessing an individual's mental health and providing appropriate care and support.

#### ***When should I get a mental health check-in and how often?***

In Australia, regular mental health assessments are recommended for individuals of all ages. Regular check-ins provide an opportunity to discuss mental health concerns and seek appropriate support if needed.

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## External Resources

[-Better Health Channel – Health checks for men](#)  
[-Health direct – Essential screening tests for men](#)  
[-Cancer Council – Get Checked – Men](#)  
[-Mental Health - Beyond Blue](#)

## **From the P.A.S. Post**

### *The MICA Man*

*The man we have to thank for the Mobile Intensive care Ambulance was honoured the other day by those who know its value.*

*Ambulance Officers, doctors and nurses joined in paying tribute to Dr. Graeme Sloman, Director of Cardiology at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.*

*Training officer Wally Ross, who worked on the first MICA with Dr. Sloman in 1971, presented him with a plaque on behalf of all who appreciate the value of his work.*

*Dr. Sloman has been with the hospital for 21 years and is of great assistance to ambulance officers who want to work with MICA.*

*Peninsula MICA crews are continually helping to save lives with the excellent emergency equipment in their vehicle. But there are times when one is not enough.*

*More MICA's are a MUST and the \$25,000 needed for each vehicle should not be an obstacle when lives are at stake.*

*PAS Post circa 1980.*



MICA Station Officer John Clancy and MICA Officer Len Starkey

## Hearing Loss

I have been fielding a few enquiries regarding hearing loss and I thought it might be timely to reprint an earlier memo to our members. This information is still relevant as far as I'm aware. Of course this is all medically confidential as to where an individual takes this and as such we don't expect much feedback from those that have successfully had compensation for their hearing loss.

25<sup>th</sup> May 2022

*Yesterday, the RAAV Committee met and along with other items we discussed the long awaited result of our hearing survey.*

*To catch everyone up on some history, we held a survey to determine the level of our membership who are experiencing some form of hearing loss, in particular we were concerned with members who have been exposed to a work related injury. We had a good response to our survey, of the 300 survey forms sent out we had a return of 79 or 26%, which is a reasonable return.*

*The questions asked were :-*

*Have you been suffering hearing loss? (Yes) Result 18%*

*Has your hearing deteriorated? Result 13%*

*Have you been tested by an audiologist? Result 20%*

*Do you have regular hearing tests? Result 12%*

*Annually? Result 10%*

*Have you been advised to wear hearing aids? 13%*

*Are you presently wearing hearing aids? 13%*

*After some discussion, and with these results in hand, we pursued the potential for a class action. Unfortunately there were/are too many variables to us running a successful class action and so this idea was abandoned. Ambulance Victoria was being supportive and they said they would assist our members with any WorkCover issue in the form of support for members with genuine work related claims.*

*In the meanwhile, we had some discussion with one of our members who successfully sued Ambulance Victoria's insurer as to the process required. Through this we have found a central agency, which we are able to recommend to our membership for those wishing to further their claims for work-related hearing loss.*

*So ask yourself, am I finding the TV or family members hard to hear? Do you have tinnitus (ringing in the ears)? Do you have difficulty following a conversation, especially when there's background noise? Or do you find yourself asking people to repeat themselves? These are the signs of hearing impairment.*

*We have been in contact with CompLaw, who's processes will require our members to obtain an initial industrial hearing screening, which is a basic 15-minute hearing test to ascertain if there is any hearing deficit. This hearing test can be conducted free of charge at any of their Melbourne and metro outlets or at members own cost (approximately \$50 - \$70) at a hearing test station of your choosing closer to home. Members who have undertaken audiology in the previous 6-month will not need another hearing test. The next step is to take the hearing results to one of their industrial lawyers and from there, there will an assessment of the individuals claim. This is all done on a 'no win-no fee' basis, but that will be fully explained during your interview. Our members can still undertake a case assessment even if you are currently wearing hearing aids.*

*CompLaw can be contacted on (03) 8650 8500 or [complaw.net.au](http://complaw.net.au) for more information.*

*This is a great outcome for our members as we now have a realistic avenue for those concerned about their work related hearing loss. It will be explained though at your meeting with the legal team that the longer you leave it, together with one's advancing age reduces the chances of a successful outcome. So the sooner you get the ball rolling will be better for you.*

*Please ring CompLaw initially to discuss your needs but I can be contacted on 0419 384 716 if you're unsure and need to discuss this further. As this is a medical process, individual's confidentiality will strictly be maintained.*

## **Annual General Meeting**

It's that time again for the Annual General Meeting there will be an election for President along with financial and general reporting of where your association is heading to be tabled.

The AGM is scheduled to be conducted at the ***Chas Martin OAM Ambulance Museum***, 55 Barry Street, Bayswater on the Monday 18th November 2024 at 1100 AM. Light refreshments will follow the AGM.

We will endeavour to live stream this meeting for those that are unable to attend, otherwise we strongly encourage all financial members to come along.



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