



The Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.

TRAAVI Times

July 2025 Vol. 6



President's introduction and welcome

We had hoped that things would slow down after the signing of the MoU with AV in May. Alas that doesn't seem to be the result.

TRAAVI also welcomes AV's new Chief Executive Officer, Jordan Emery to Victoria and look forward to working with him on TRAAVI's behalf.

We have been able to consolidate the *traavi.org.au* email system thanks to the efforts of Graham Douglas and the Computer Initiatives technicians who have provided support on an as required basis. To date we have only had a few minor hiccups.

We are still working with both Monash University and Phoenix Australia with the research projects looking work related physical, traumatic and mental health injuries. We are extremely disappointed with the lack of progress due to circumstances beyond our control which centre on funding issues and organisational structural change.

These are important projects as they will provide a better understanding to the extent injuries that exist amongst our members and to better understand what support may be required to assist with everyone's wellbeing.

Over the past 5 weeks we conducted a survey of TRAAVI members to identify members who worked for greater than 15 years for Ambulance Victoria therefore entitled to life membership of AV membership Subscription Scheme (MSS).

To date we have received well over a 50 percent return which is a great. And we are still getting additional daily responses. Included into this survey was individual ambulance work history, which I personally found to be highly enlightening especially when hearing from, or reading the work history of some of our “older” members.

It is important that this historical data is both recorded and preserved.

If you haven't yet responded please to do so. Click on this link to the [Survey to do so here via the website.](#)

“Breaking News” following the great leadup work by John & Judy Head, Graham Douglas & myself attended the inaugural Central Echuca meeting at Moama RSL on Thursday 10th July. It was great to see TRAAVI members of Echuca, Shepparton and surrounding areas in attendance. I'm reliably informed that after much discussion and just a hint of arm twisting, that Harry Sheppard has agreed to Co-ordinate Central Echuca. Supported by Phil Herd as Welfare Liaison.

We are constantly discussing and looking at where we can hold our quarterly TRAAVI meetings. There is more to follow as these discussions continue.

The inaugural Echuca Group 10 July 2025



Back row (L to R): Harry Sheppard, John Head, Phil Herd, Gordon, Greg Prosser, Graham Douglas, Shayne Norton

Middle row: Steve Mulligan, Belinda Herd, Tony Deenen, Julie, Pam Prosser,

Front row: Joan Vidler, Roger Vidler, Peter Briscoe, Judy Head

John also took the opportunity on the way back to Melbourne to catch up with his old colleague from ASM Latrobe St Communications Centre, Smokey Barrett



Steve MULLIGAN.

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Secretary's Report

As our regular readers would be aware, we have changed our masthead to the *TRAAVI Times*, this is to reflect the changing times which we are all affected by and so eloquently put by our Vice President Graham Douglas in our last edition.

Changes which we are facing internally must also be considered, none more than us, the Committee, asking you for your assistance.

We have coordinator vacancies in Bendigo and Ballarat which are both being covered ably by our committeeman John Head and his wife Judy, but this is not sustainable in the longer term. We also have other coordinators who are considering their position but haven't vacated their post due to there being no one else to step up and take this position on.

This is not an onerous position and we ask you all to consider taking on or assisting those in those positions to enable us to maintain a presence in your district. Sharing the workload helps the Committee to promote welfare and access to social activities and outings for the wellbeing of our members.

If you would like to find out more please give me a call or email and I would be more than happy to show you how easy this role is.

There are districts where the role is shared with an assistant coordinator, this works well when one or the other may not be in a position to attend all meetings. We ask you to actively consider this and step up to assist where you can.

I have undertaken some travel recently on behalf of TRAAVI and I must thank the groups at Bendigo, Mildura, and Southern Metro who have been most welcoming as usual and I would encourage any of our members that are travelling around Victoria to consider joining in on a district meeting if you are in the area.

Jim Ballard

secretary@traavi.org.au

RAAV Infirmary

We have a few who are infirm; Jock McRae is recovering after a brief period in hospital after he took a tumble. Get well soon Jock

Also, David Calder took a tumble recently while walking his dog, hopefully the shoulder is getting better now David.

The Vice President's Report

Again, it's been a busy few months.

The MoU was signed with Ambulance Victoria way back on May 19th, that in itself has generated a lot of activity in the background, especially for the President.

Now that the backbone of the TRAAV administration system, Airtable, is in place and is bedding in nicely conforming to our processes & procedures.

It is proving to be a time saving device for committee members and District Coordinators alike.

For example, John head has been working at making the new District, Central Echuca, a reality and a success after first being raised as a possibility around 18 months ago. Well done John (& Judy) from all of us.

Airtable has also simplified data collection, which enabled the Service History Survey to be undertaken.

Regardless of the duration of your employment in an Ambulance Service it would be beneficial for you to complete the Survey to enable your member profile to be as complete as possible. I urge all those who have not as yet responded to the [Survey to do so here via the website](#).

The new email domain setup is now complete with each District Coordinator & Welfare Liaison having their own TRAAV email address.

Some members have email providers that consider emails coming from "traavi.org.au" to be SPAM.

If you are not receiving emails from us please check your JUNK or SPAM folders and add "traavi.org.au" to your contact list.

Please remember to explore the TRAAV website, it is a great resource for members whether you are looking for the dates & locations of upcoming District meetings or you are looking for financial planning info or just how to help a relative arrange aged care, it all there AND more...just go the MEMBERS AREA tab in the [MAIN menu](#).

For everyday savings on everyday purchases the free **BlueLight Card** will help you save EVERYDAY.

For information on how to get your **free** BLUELIGHT membership **CARD** [CLICK HERE](#).

Membership Officer

Thank you to everyone who have paid their subscription fees. They are now due & payable, promptly.

To the person who paid their dues on June 10 at 16:10 hours & marked the payment as "RAAV fees" please get in touch as we don't know who you are!! You will continue to receive requests for payment until you identify yourself.

In the past 12 months we have welcomed 82 new members to the Association, bringing the total number of members to 517.

New Members

In the last 3 months, these members have joined.....

Terry Lee	Central Bendigo	Karen Gittins	Metro South
Harry Sheppard	Central Echuca	Roy Hurlbut	Metro South
Paul James	Gipps Central & South	Olga Bartasek	Metro West
Trevor Gibson	Gipps East	Tony Pearce	Metro West
Mick Jongebloed	Gipps East	Jim Reeves	NE Benalla
Peter James	Interstate	Peter Kelly	NW Mildura
Cate Jones	Interstate	Lynne Carter	SW Warrnambool
Tony Armour	Metro East		

The Membership currently consists of: -

364 Full members
109 Life members
40 Associate members
14 Honorary members

We have also mourned the passing of:

Ron Arbon	July 20 th
Don (Dusty) Rhodes	July 10 th
Terry Baker	June 24 th
Bob Bowman	June 3 rd

We honour their service to Ambulance & the wider community.

Funeral Participation Requests

We have a number of members who in the past have preplanned / requested Ambulance related components to be provided during or after their funeral service.

In the past this was a physical paper form that was completed & returned to us. Recently the process has been streamlined, it is now possible to complete or update your previous requests via an online form available on the TRAAVI website under the “Members Area” dropdown menu.

The “Funeral Planning” webpage and the associated links are reproduced below for your convenience.

TRAAVI Funeral Participation

The Association offers a funeral service participation plan by delivering a eulogy on your service career and providing additional material to highlight your involvement with Ambulance. Our thoughts are that the event itself can be made easier for your next of kin if they are aware of your wishes when funeral service plans are being made. Our endeavour is to gather comprehensive details of your ambulance service history to assist with compiling a personal and meaningful tribute of your Ambulance career.

Topics could include:

- When & where did you commence your Ambulance career.
- What was the crewing arrangement when you started (single person, multi person station, etc.)
- Where did you work? – Metropolitan, Regional, MICA, Airwing.
- Which rank / positions did you hold? e.g Clinical Instructor, Station Office/Team Manager, Clinical Support, Duty Manager.
- Highlights you may recall of historical note.
- One or more tales that you liked to recall with mates, long after the job was done.
- Colourful personalities you worked with.
- You may like to mention the role your partner and your family played on your career.

The gathering of this information is a request only and purely voluntary which can be altered at any time by contacting the TRAAV secretary with your updated information,

To accept the Offer of Participation simply complete the online [Funeral Participation Request form](#)

[Download a copy of the document from the “TRAAVI Forms” page](#)

All information provided is subject to the TRAAVI Privacy Policy.

Merchandise

We have had good sales of TRAAVI merchandise recently with cups and stubby holders still being popular sale items. I'd like to remind everyone that our range of merchandise items can be found on the TRAAV Website for your perusal. Order forms to be completed and payment sent.

Orders are coming in for our Jumpers which is appropriate for this time of year!

We have a range of sizes from M to 7XL (no 5 XL). They are an 80/20 wool blend and good value at \$40.00.

Our District Coordinators have our updated merchandise list which can be viewed at the lunch meetings.

Les Wood
Merchandise Officer

Welfare

As this season settles in a little too well, it's great to hear of the get-togethers around our regions. A lot have stories to share of past life but it's also time to remember and get to know a few like-minded crew.

A big thanks to the dedication of the local coordinators who plan and look forward to the chance to share a meal and a good laugh!

Honestly, reach out and keep in touch!

A 24 year old boy seeing out of the train's window shouted...

"Dad, look the trees are going behind"

Dad smiled and a young couple sitting nearby, looked at the 24-year-olds childish behaviour with pity. Suddenly he again exclaimed...

"Dad, look the clouds are running with us"

The couple couldn't resist and said to the old man...

"Why don't you take your son to a good doctor?"

The old man smiled and said,

"I did, and we are just coming from the hospital,
my son was blind from birth, he just got his eyes today."

Every single person on the planet has a story.

And you, as life carers, know only too well.

Sometimes it's time to win lotto...celebrate!

Sometimes it's time to reach out and talk...make the call.

You have some good mates around and a committee who want to make a difference if we can.

Also, your opinion counts...feel free to keep in touch!

Deb Stallard
welfare@travvi.org.au

Falls Prevention.

In this article we tackle the difficult subject of aging and falls prevention. It is without doubt that many of our members are facing their senior years and all that comes with it. It's hoped that these tips might engender some thoughts on how to prevent falls around your own home environment. - Ed.

Falls are one of the leading causes of injury-related hospitalisations among older Australians, with **1 in 4 people aged 65 and over experiencing at least one fall per year**. While not all falls result in serious injury, they often trigger a loss of confidence, reduced mobility, and increased dependence — making prevention a top priority.

Why Falls Happen

Falls in older adults are rarely caused by a single factor. Instead, they result from a combination of:

- **Age-related physical changes:** Weaker muscles, slower reflexes, and reduced balance.
- **Medical conditions:** Diabetes, arthritis, Parkinson's disease, and stroke can affect mobility.
- **Medication side effects:** Dizziness or drowsiness from certain prescriptions.
- **Vision and hearing loss:** Impaired senses make it harder to detect hazards.

Environmental hazards: Poor lighting, loose rugs, and slippery surfaces at home.

Falls prevention in older adults involves a multi-faceted approach including regular exercise, environmental modifications at home, medication reviews, and addressing underlying health conditions. Key strategies include improving balance and strength through exercise, ensuring safe footwear, optimizing vision and hearing, and making homes safer with better lighting and clear pathways.

Preventing falls requires a **multifactorial approach**, combining lifestyle changes, medical assessments, and home modifications:

Physical Activity

- Engage in **balance and strength exercises** like tai chi, Pilates, or group fitness programs.
- Programs such as the **Otago Exercise Programme** have shown a 32% reduction in falls.

(The Otago Exercise Program is a falls prevention program designed for older adults. It involves a series of strength and balance exercises performed at home, typically the guidance of a physical therapist. The program aims to reduce the risk of falls by improving lower body strength, balance and walking ability)

Home Safety

- Install **grab rails** in bathrooms and stairways.
- Use **non-slip mats** and remove loose rugs or cords.
- Improve lighting and reduce glare with blinds or curtains.



Medical Support

- Get regular vision and hearing checks.
- Review medications with a GP or pharmacist to reduce side effects.
- Consider vitamin D and calcium supplements to strengthen bones.
- Use hip protectors if at high risk of fractures.

Personal Habits

- Wear well-fitting, non-slip shoes.
- Stand up slowly to avoid dizziness.
- Stay hydrated and maintain a balanced diet to support overall health.

Key Falls Prevention Strategies:

Exercise and Mobility:

As detailed earlier we encourage engagement in regular physical activity, focusing on exercises that improve balance and strength, such as walking, Tai Chi, or resistance training. Those of us that lead a sedentary lifestyle are most at risk as core strength, muscle tone and mass dissipate.

TRAAVI are supporting a gentle yoga exercise, call our Welfare officer Deb Stallard for more information.

Home Environment Modifications:

Improve lighting, especially in hallways, bathrooms, and stairways, and keep nightlights accessible.

Remove tripping hazards like clutter, loose rugs, and electrical cords.

Install grab bars in bathrooms and on stairs where needed.

Use non-slip mats in wet areas and on stairs.

Health Management:

Discuss all falls with a healthcare provider to identify and address contributing factors.

Regularly review medications, as some can cause dizziness or affect balance.

Ensure vision and hearing are checked annually and address any impairments.

Actively manage chronic conditions like diabetes and arthritis, which can impact mobility and balance. Once again, regular exercise can be a positive influence on reducing chronic condition outcomes.

Footwear and Personal Safety:

Wear well-fitting, non-slip shoes with low heels and rubber soles.

Keep emergency contacts readily available. Be mindful of where you are walking, hazards like cracked foot paths, uneven surfaces etc.

Nutritional Support:

Ensure adequate intake of vitamin D and calcium, as these can help reduce the risk of fractures from falls.

Consider Assistive Devices:

Utilise assistive devices like canes or walkers as recommended by healthcare professionals, and ensure they are used correctly.

Bibliography:

Simple tips to prevent falls - Mayo Clinic

Light up your living space. Do not walk around in the dark, keep your home brightly lit to avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see. Also: Place night lights in your bedroom, bathroom...

Mayo Clinic

Falls and Fall Prevention in Older Adults - StatPearls - NCBI Bookshelf

Single-factor Interventions Exercise Programs: Exercise programs help prevent falls with no differences between types of exercise interventions, including endurance...

NCBI

Falls prevention - Health Victoria

18 Oct 2024 — Evidence suggests falls can be prevented by exercising, modifying the environment (particularly at home) and reducing some medications.

Health Victoria

Older people and falls – causes, treatments and prevention | Health direct

Regional Reports

Metro South

We met again at Steeples in Mornington on the 24th June. It was a great turnout with some 40 people attending. We had special guests Acting Area Manager Jo Wilton and Acting Senior Team Manager Kain Grose from AV attending to present Ben Ellis with his well-deserved Life Membership certificate and a Certificate of Appreciation for his past dedication as the Treasurer of our organisation. Also, John Clancy was awarded his 15-year pin.

Congratulations to all recipients. It was a shame that Len Starkey, who was due for his Life Membership award was unwell on the day. Also, Robert Rigby was unable to come along. These Certificates will be presented on a later date.

We also had a special presentation from Karen Gittens who spoke to us about Wounded Heroes

The Wounded Heroes Australia describes itself as a "National defence community organisation, established to support Australian servicemen and women and their families, and to ease the financial, emotional and personal hardships of contemporary military life.

Wounded Heroes are 'First Responders' and supports not only homeless veterans but also partners of veterans, where other community services are not available.

Providing emergency support to current Australian Defence members, veterans and their families in financial crisis, homeless or at a risk of homelessness, and domestic & family violence".

Don't forget our next meeting which will be held at Steeples, Mornington on the 23rd September. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Bryan Cass

Metro West

Great catch-up 6th June at Metro West Lunch at Kealba Hotel. We had over 30 members attend. (Sorry no pics)

As always it provided an excellent opportunity for old friends/colleagues to chat about past and present events.... also future plans.

Please keep a look out for next lunch Kealba Hotel Friday 5th September. All welcome.

We are always looking for new members, so please go on our site <https://retiredambulancevictoria.org.au/membership/> It is a very easy process.

Hope to see you in September.

Graeme Parker
0409 382 040

Ballarat & Central West District

The Central West – Ballarat lunch was held on Monday June 16, at the Golf House Hotel in Ballarat North.

There were 12 members and partners that braved the colder weather and had an enjoyable lunch with lots of stories and memories exchanged around the table.

Illnesses of various types kept quite a few from attending. They were missed and we hope that their health and situations improve.

Unfortunately, our photographer was too into the stories and memories to remember to take a few snaps. Oops!

We look forward to seeing everyone at the next lunch, which is on September 15, 2025.

Central Echuca District

The Inaugural Central Echuca lunch was held on Thursday July 10, at the Moama RSL.

Today was the first of many lunch meetings at Echuca/Moama. Between members, their partners, prospective members and Committee members, there was a grand total of 16 people attending. Lots of verbal interaction transpired, new connections were made and everyone seemed to enjoy the time together as well as lunch.

A Coordinator and Welfare Liaison person is still a work in progress but I will keep the membership informed of any changes.

I would like to thank everyone who attended and look forward to the next lunch, details will be advised in due course.

We also called into Bupa Echuca to catch up with Smokey Barrett who was thrilled to receive a visit from someone from 'the job'.*(Check out the photos under the President Report.)*

Interim Coordinator
John Head

South West District

Our June meeting was held on the Monday 2nd at Rafferty's Tavern, Warrnambool. Seven members attended along with Lynne Carter, our Chaplain. There were seven apologies.

I informed members of TRAAVI's initiative to increase cyber security and advised them of my new TRAAVI email address.

I advised members that I had decided to remain in Mortlake.

We discussed the possibility of members of the South West, visiting the Ambulance Museum in Bayswater. I will contact members to gauge their interest. Due to the distance we will travel, I will contact the Museum to see if their hours could be extended to accommodate our visit.

The next meeting for the South West Region will be held on Monday, September 1st at Mac's Hotel, Mortlake.

Kind regards,

Rhonda Oliver
SW Coordinator

North West Victoria District

We attended the district meeting at the Mildura RSL, it was a little disappointing that there were only 10 members in attendance, but it was unseasonably cold by Mildura standards which may have kept more reasoned heads in front of the fire at home. However, we all enjoyed the company and a good feed.

I informed the group of the impending survey (MSS) for ascertaining member length of service and service history which will enable us to report back to AV for them providing subscription life membership for our long serving members. This is a subject which has been a request from our members as there have been issues previously causing a degree of angst, usually as a result of a billing conflict after transport.

The next meeting will be on the 9th September at the Mildura RSL, we hope you can make it.

Jim Ballard

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