



The Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.

TRAAVI Times

March 2026 Vol. 9



President's introduction and welcome

The changes to TRAAVI's Constitution to align with the Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2023 have been submitted to Consumer Affairs Victoria following the Special General Meeting held on the 17 February 2026. Thanks to Victorian Ambulance Union who hosted both TRAAVI's Committee and provided online access via their online network.

In early February we ushered in the Shepparton District Meeting due primarily to the efforts of Roger Vidler and David Gawne supported by Graham Douglas. We are continuing to have ongoing discussions with our Members in the Northwest and Northeast regions of Victoria, our key objective being to establish new venues closer to our membership in these regions. Wangaratta, Wodonga, Swan Hill, Metro Bayside are additional venues under consideration.

On our recent trip to Tasmania, we have been able to develop strong working relationship with Tasmanian Crisis Chaplaincy Emergency Ministries (TCC EM) who are keen to provide Chaplaincy support not only to our members but also to former and current Paramedics (employees) of Ambulance Tasmania which a significant step forward. Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) who cover Paramedics in Tasmania are also very supportive of TRAAVI's efforts.

Our planned meeting with Jordan Emery (AV CEO) had a slight hiccup due to urgent meeting with the Victorian Government fortunately we met with Jesse Maddison (Executive Director People & Culture). Who has arranged a meeting with AV Director of Wellbeing and Support Services Quincy Cheng. This will provide a good opportunity to discuss TRAAVI's concerns around the services linked to Wellbeing & Support Services. It must be stated that the support offered by individual Chaplains to TRAAVI members is consistently of the highest order.

The biggest disappointment is the lack of traction with Monash and Phoenix survey/study into work related physical, traumatic and mental health injuries our members and former employees of AV. We will be definitively reviewing what options we have to resuscitate these surveys.

Wounded Heros Australia a Queensland based organisation who provide support to ADF service men and woman have been in touch to reaffirm that TRAAVI will again be a beneficiary of WHA "24 Hours of Heroes" Annual Fundraiser. Check out <https://24hoursofheroes.com.au/> for more information.

Also, I'd like to thank Joel Marly and Jesse Maddison who assisted with promoting this event via AV intranet.

At our February Committee meeting we were able to encourage Warrick Jackson to take over the Treasurer's role. Warrick brings a unique skill set which will enhance the workings of the Committee.

Steve MULLIGAN.

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Secretary's Report

Welcome everyone to the new year 2026, we hope that we find you in good health and in keen spirit for the forthcoming year's activities.

There has been much occurring within the Association which others will elaborate on, suffice to say that we are all working hard to make our Association the best it can be for now and for those we pass it onto in the future.

My wife and I have just returned from a month-long trip to New Zealand, a country we have visited many times before. I can't help but compare our two countries and remark about how similar we are in so many ways, without wishing to be disparaging they are almost like another state, unlike other South Pacific islands we have visited which are quite different in culture and day to day attitudes.

We are continuing to see growth in our memberships, which we must do to survive as the cost of living affects all of us and we find our membership and supporter dollars being spread quite thinly.

I hope you enjoy the read, thanks to our regular contributors and if you have something to say, please drop me a line for the next issue.

Jim Ballard

secretary@traavi.org.au

The Vice President's Report/Membership Officer

TRAAVI Membership current status

- Members now total 543
- In the last 12 months 51 have joined
- In last 3 months we lost two members
 - Ian Dale & more recently
 - Ted Van Dyken the founder of Signal 8, TRAAVI's social media outlet partner.

New Districts

NE Shepparton District met for the first time on February 9th, 30 people attended to make it a vibrant, enjoyable occasion.

We thank Roger Vidler & David Gawne for their efforts for making this a successful venture for the North-East region and for volunteering to administer the group into the future. The next meeting for Shepparton is scheduled for May 11th with 35 currently indicating their attendance.

The TAS Hobart District met for the first time on Friday February 20th. Paul 'Chunky' Meehan has stepped up to Coordinate the meetings in Hobart. Thank you, Paul.

Whilst talking things Tasmanian, we had been struggling to find chaplaincy support for the region, previous local attempts to set up a support network for former & current Ambulance Tasmania staff had proven unsuccessful.

My confidence of immediate success in finding chaplaincy support was waning when Lindsay O'Brien, Welfare Liaison for TAS Launceston introduced us to Paul Hueston, Royal Hobart Hospital Chaplain Coordinator & Clinical Educator of Chaplains & Gus Yearsley who does the same for the Melbourne & Hobart Airports.

With their support we have now in the process of securing chaplaincy support across all of Tasmania, through Devonport Chaplaincy who now provide Tasmanian Crisis Chaplaincy Emergency Ministries (TCCEM) for the state.

This has facilitated creation of the third Tasmanian District, at Burnie, providing support for those in the North-Western region.

The Inaugural TAS Burnie meeting will be held in Ulverstone on 28th April 2026.

TRAAVI's presence will ensure that we will be able to provide support in each major towns & regions in Tasmania, exciting times.

We are grateful for everyone's assistance & enthusiasm in getting us to this point.

HACSU Secretary Robbie Moore & Assistant Sec Tim Jacobson (TRAAVI member), Paul & Gus, Gordon Kelley & Andrew Hillier at Devonport Chaplaincy along with Peter James, Lindsay O'Brien and all our Tassie members for their continued encouragement in this project.

Member Attendance Records

These guidelines have now been circulated & implemented.

Any Coordinator who needs assistance or are yet to indicate how they intend to complete their records should call me.... anytime.

Public liability insurance

This was discussed during the last committee meeting.

It has been resolved that regularly attending non-members at District meetings will be asked to join the Association, failing that, written confirmation that only TRAAVI members are protected under our PL Insurance policy will be handed to such attendees.

District Business

Square has been rolled out.

Members are now able to buy items of apparel & merchandise from the TRAAVI Shop at District Meetings, just speak your District Coordinator.

When your membership subscription is due for payment, you'll be able to make payment at a District meeting or by calling the Membership Officer to pay via credit card over the phone.

Any questions on any of the above please contact the author.

Cheers

Graham Douglas

We have mourned the passing of:

David Cramer	12 th November 2025
Ron Callaway	15 th November 2025
Ken Atkinson	10 th December 2025
Jim Spanswick	7 th January 2026
Terry Taylor	5 th February 2026
Ian Dale	25 th February 2026
Ted Van Dyken	9 th March 2026

May they all rest in peace.

We honour their service to Ambulance & the wider community and pass on our sincere condolences to family and friends.



Merchandise

There has been not a lot happening regarding our merchandising. At our last Committee meeting we discussed the merits of adding Beanies to our merchandise list. These were approved and we will be obtaining some samples soon.

Don't forget, if you need merchandise you can go to our at website retired.ambulance.org.au and toggle down through the merchandise page, or talk to your district coordinator, they have the updated list of merchandise and some of them can utilise our charge mechanism.

Les Wood
Merchandise Officer

Welfare

A man visited his doctor, and the doctor checked him over before commenting

"It looks like you get a fair bit of exercise"

The man replied, "Oh Yeah, in fact, just the other day I walked 5 miles over rugged terrain as I climbed around rocks & trees. I also waded along the edges of a lake, pushing my way through tall thistles, and even slid down sandy slopes while getting sand in my eyes"

The Doctor was quite impressed "Well, you are certainly a dedicated outdoor enthusiast."

The man replied, "Not really doctor, I'm just a very bad golfer." 😊

A big hello and as Autumn changes our environment, winter is on its way!

Just a few words from Welfare and a thank you to a brilliant group of Coordinators who head our wonderful get-together groups. I know so many of our members and partners enjoy the organized lunches & day trips to keep us all together. Whether you get to attend or are just kept in touch with, these coordinators extend a welcome hand and will go above & beyond to make your care known. I'm also honored to be in touch with our amazing volunteer Chaplains all over our state, and very soon into Tasmania. They are approachable, damn good listeners, and their "point of base" is to be there for us. If you need someone to talk to, have problems, heard or need a second opinion, they are there. I've sent a range of "Get Well", "thinking of you" and Bereavement cards to a few over these last months. I know we appreciate the thanks we are sent.

As our lives change, so do situations and the chance to keep in touch is so important.

Feel free to reach out. Know that you are respected and cared for.

Also, your opinion does count...feel free to keep in touch! welfare@travvi.org.au

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Deb Stallard
Welfare Coordinator.

Letters

22/1/2026

Hi Jim,

I visited Alan Bowden yesterday.

The nursing staff were excited as seems he rarely has visitors.

He conversed freely for an hour and was amazingly fluent with past VCAS, PAS, NEVDAS, MICA 4 and MICA 5 history and crews. Together with stories about individuals that was new to me.

Surprisingly, he told me about his role with St John at Mt Evelyn when I was Vic Commissioner.

More later.

Regards

Peter J. McMurtrie,

AO, KStJ. JP(Qual.) FACP(Hon.), LFAIES, FAIM, LMAFCHSM,

Thanks, Peter, for sharing this news snippet. For those that may not know Alan Bowden he had a long history in Victorian ambulance, unfortunately Alan is now suffering from dementia and is resident in an aged care facility on the Gold Coast. Ed

Regional Reports

Metro South



On 2nd December last year we inducted Ken Laycock and Bob Boucher into the Life Members realm

On the 2nd of December 2025 we met at our Steeples in Mornington for our end of year celebration. About 40 were in attendance and we were privileged to bestow Life Memberships on Bob Boucher and Ken Laycock which was performed by our Secretary Jim Ballard. A great day was had by all with much fellowship. Our next meeting will be again at Steeples Mornington on Tuesday 31st March at 1200 midday.

Metro East

Hi Jim,

Hope this finds you well. Just a short note on the Metro East meeting that was held last week on the 5/3/26.

Metro East Lunch meeting
Thursday 05/03/2026
The Wheelers Hill Hotel

Metro East had 11 attendees, and all enjoyed a very nice lunch in very nice surroundings. There seemed to be much more merriment today than usual, but this was very much welcomed given some losses that we have suffered over recent times and some upcoming funerals. As you know, Ian Dale was laid to rest the day before and it was great to see representation from TRAAVI Metro East members and the Chas Martin OAM Ambulance Museum. Chaplain Tom Rose was in attendance and always great to see him there.

Hope to see many more at our next meeting on Thursday 04/06/2026
Regards

David Hadj

Ballarat & Central West District

The Central West – Ballarat lunch was held on Monday March 16, at the Golf House Hotel in Ballarat North with 17 members and partners attending.

This was the group's first lunch for 2026, and it was good to see everyone again. While there were a few apologies, most members were able to attend, and everyone enjoyed the catch up. It was also good to see Graeme Parker, our webmaster, as he was able to walk some members through the Retired Ambulance Association web page.

We are now looking forward to our next meeting on June 16, 2026 at the Golf House Hotel





Interim Coordinator
John Head

South West District

The last meeting for 2025 was held on 2nd December at Thompson's Tavern, Hamilton. 12 members and partners attended. There were 9 apologies.

We also enjoyed the company of TRAAVI Secretary, Jim Ballard and his lovely wife, Chris. Jim advised that all member attendances/apologies must now be registered for insurance purposes. Members were advised that the Minutes of the AGM held on 27th October, 2025 are available on the TRAAVI website.

Our tour of the Ambulance Museum will be planned for February 2026. Details to follow in the New Year.

All in all, it was a wonderful afternoon of camaraderie.

On behalf of members of the South-West District, I wish you all a safe and merry Christmas season.



SW District Christmas Luncheon at Thompson's Tavern

SOUTH WEST DISTRICT REPORT (Part 2)

Our first meeting for 2026 was held on Monday, 2nd March at Macey's Bistro, Warrnambool. 16 members and partners attended. There were 5 apologies.

We also welcomed our new member, Linda Goodman and her partner, Richard.

Our guest speaker for the afternoon was Anna Reilly, who is an avid quilt maker. Anna displayed quilts which had significance to her life experiences. A highlight was a quilt Anna made for her husband Chris who was terminally ill. Anna made squares and asked family and friends to write messages in each square. She then joined them to make a complete 'memory' quilt.

Although I thought at the time, that this would be something 'for the ladies' for a change, a number of our male members enjoyed the display as well. Thank you, Anna!
All in all, another wonderful day of good food and good company!

Rhonda Oliver
SOUTH WEST CO-ORDINATOR

Metro West District



Metro West Lunch at Kialba Hotel 5th December 2025

Honouring David Cramer – TRAAVI Life Membership Presentation

Recently, our respected colleague and valued member of the Retired Ambulance Association, **David Cramer**, passed away following his illness with Parkinson's disease.

We were honoured to have David's wife, **Carolyn**, join us at the Metro West lunch on 5th December. This gave our group the opportunity to present Carolyn with **David's Life Membership certificate**, acknowledging his dedicated service and the high regard in which he was held by all of us.

It was a privilege to share this moment with Carolyn and to recognise David's lasting contribution to our profession and our association.



Carolyn receiving certificate from Graham Douglas

Kind regards
Graeme Parker

Central & South Gippsland

We met today 19th March at the Morwell RSL. This was the lowest number of attendees that we can recall of recent times with 11 attendees due to illness and I guess the fuel situation. We made the best of it and had good personal one on one conversations. Hopefully the fuel crisis will be resolved by our next meeting 18th June 2026 at the Morwell RSL

North-East District – Shepparton

We had great pleasure welcoming over 30 members and guests to our first gathering in Shepparton at the RSL of the Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc. On the 9th of February 2026.

The RSL made the venue enjoyable, and we thank Grant and staff for making it memorable and great meals offered.

We feel there is a need for retired Ambos and partners to have fellowship and get together here in Shepparton and a meetings every 3 months, and we welcome you to join the luncheon and gain membership to TRAAVI. To the members of other areas that may holiday in sunny Shepparton your most welcome, together with the TRAAVI Caravan club and the newly formed Tasmanian gathering , your invited to come to Shepparton and luncheon with us.

To those who came long distances to the meeting thank you, and we hope to catch up again at the next meeting in May.

To those Ambos feeling poorly, a speedy recovery to good health.

Hopefully, ideas for future meetings could be tabled and maybe guest speakers could grace some meetings, look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, cheers for now your

Roger Vidler
NE Shepparton Coordinator,
0477704556

I am pleased to be able to report that the Inaugural Meeting of NE Shepparton District of TRAAVI was well attended by members, non-members and partners.

Thirty people enjoyed the socialising, the formalities were pleasing when the group chose to continue quarterly meetings to be organised by District Co-ordinator Roger Vidler & Welfare Liaison David Gawne.

The TRAAVI Executive sincerely thank Roger & David for volunteering their services & their work in making today a huge success.

May I say that cats are easier to herd than this lot was to get the photo!
Graham Douglas



East Gippsland District

A great day was had with the East Gippsland district celebrating Christmas with a cruise on the 10th December 2025 on the Gippsland Lakes. There were 21 attendees for the cruise, we welcomed Frank & Marilyn Abela from Gippsland Central/South district (our Welfare Liaison) and we also congratulated Harry Berns on achieving his Life Membership with TRAAVI. We lunched at the Metung Hotel before departing for home but not before we went seal watching in the entrance to the lakes. The day was a resounding success with participants keen for new adventures in 2026.





Harry Berns receiving his Life Membership

One of East Gippsland's members Graham Hall was nominated for the "Good Citizen of the Year" as part of the Australia Day Awards in January in 2026. Congratulations Graham, well deserved.



Graham Hall receiving his Award

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