



The Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.

TRAAVI Times

November 2025 Vol. 8



President's introduction and welcome

As the festive season rapidly approaches and 2025 draws to a close, it provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on the past year.

Since the 2024 AGM there has been one constant theme which has focused improving our financial recording and reporting systems. Improving our cyber security with the introduction of the traavi.org.au internal administration email system.

Implementing a secure membership database (*Airtable*) which provides real time accurate information of member details. Also, Airtable now holds individual ambulance work history details along with life membership information to AV Membership Subscription Scheme.

As a result of these surveys, we have compiled an extensive database which is available in times of need along with individual Funeral Participation Plans when needed. We received an outstanding return which is unprecedented with these types of surveys. Thank you to everyone for your contribution.

Due to concerted efforts by Committee Members, we now have two new Districts, Echuca and Launceston (Tasmania). We acknowledge the efforts of the Late Peter BRISCOE supported by John and Judy HEAD with getting Echuca established. And Peter JAMES who advocated strongly for Tasmanian Paramedics to join TRAAVI. There are ongoing discussions to establish additional venues in Shepparton and Swan Hill.

In mid-October the TRAAVI Executive met with the new AV CEO Jordan EMERY who requested that we continue our ongoing discussions in the new year along with the Executive Director of People and Culture, Jesse MADDISON. The Executive will continue to advocate for all former employees who face physical and mental health challenges because of their ambulance work history.

It would be remiss not to mention the great support we get from both the volunteer and AV Chaplains. Some of whom are members of TRAAVI provide exceptional support to our members in times of need and often in trying circumstances.

Just a reminder, TRAAVI was built on maintaining social connections, If you notice a colleague or friend who is struggling please let us know so that we can reach out and offer our help. Be that through District Co-ordinator and/or Welfare Liaison, a TRAAVI committee member or Deb STALLARD TRAAVI's Welfare Co-ordinator. Or maybe directly to one of the Chaplains who attend District meetings. When talking with a Chaplain that conversation remains totally confidential.

Other recent projects have been the Member Attendance Register and the Square Point of Sale both which have been trialled and implemented. See Graham DOUGLAS' Newsletter Membership Report.

There have also been several disappointments over the past year.

Earlier this year we approached two renowned Melbourne based Academic Institutions to conduct survey's on TRAAVI behalf with a focus on looking into ambulance work related physical, traumatic and mental health injuries. This has been a painfully slow and torturous process with no return at this point intime. This is certainly a topic which will be again raised and discussed our next meeting with AV in the New Year.

Securing an appropriately qualified person to become our Treasurer has proven difficult. Early this year Ben ELLIS stepped down to support family members, his replacement also stepped away for similar reasons. Both were eminently capable and brought a set of unique skills to the role of Treasurer.

Without the efforts of the Committee Members, our District Co-ordinators, Welfare Liaison Officers both past and present we would not be able to support our members as we currently do. Thank you everyone.

By nature, TRAAVI's demographic in an aging one and we are always on the lookout for volunteers be that as a Committee Member, District Co-ordinator or Welfare Liaison Officer.

Airtable automations have reduced our administration tasks and time involvement considerably. The more people involved helps to reduce our individual time commitments. Any assistance would be appreciated.

Wishing everyone an enjoyable and safe festive season with your family and friends.

Meri Kirihimete

Steve MULLIGAN.

M: 0418 331 984

E: president@traavi.org.au

Secretary's Report

This is our post AGM edition, which allows us to reflect on the year and years past. I'm sure others will elaborate on some of our successes of our last year, but if I may, since my appointment to the Secretary's role I have witnessed the exponential growth in our organisation. We have streamlined our tasks and become more efficient, dare I say, more professional in our outlook. I have said it before, but we are truly standing on the shoulders of giants. I marvel when I think of all the tasks that Ian Cameron performed for such a long time, along with other committee members of the time. We have a lot to be thankful for.

We have witnessed sorrow with the passing of some of our TRAAVI friends during the year, Terry Baker, Jim Sleep and Peter Briscoe to name a few, but we have also welcomed so many new faces to our organisation which enables us to bring a breath of fresh air to our membership. None the less than our new Tassie friends which we welcome, and we can only grow from here. Our membership is heading towards 550 members which is a great achievement as we need the new members to carry on the traditions of our organisation. It has been my pleasure to serve TRAAVI this year as we strive for continuous improvement.

Chris and I recently visited Peter & Barbra Dent at their home near Albury. I also had the pleasure to present Peter with his TRAAVI Life Membership. Congratulations Peter, your service has not gone unrecognised.

Can I finish by wishing all of our members a safe and joyous festive season and I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can next year. Merry Christmas from Chris and I.

Jim Ballard
secretary@traavi.org.au



We have mourned the passing of:

Stan Paley	25 th September 2025
Bert Martin	14 th October 2025
Dave Cramer	12 November 2025
Ron Callaway	15 November 2025

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.

I attended the funeral for Bert “Bugsy” Martin on the 30 October 2025 in Cowes.

We were all impressed with Bugsy’s last ride as his family had organised an A Model Ford hot rod hearse for his last ride.

RIP Bert.



On the Sick List

Jock McRae continues to suffer ill health enduring one problem after another. We’re told that Jock is now back home recovering, hope you get better soon Jock.

Neil Carolan is recovering after his recent surgery, we hope to see you up and about feeling better Neil.

Talking about Neils’. Neil Hall, our former coordinator in Gippsland is struggling a bit and has been admitted to nursing care at Heritage Manor in Morwell. Neil would be delighted to receive his old pals for a visit.

Greg Prosser has been unwell recently; we believe that he has had a small CVA. We’re sorry to hear of your illness Greg; get well soon

I hear that Bill Middleton took a tumble off a ladder and spent a few days in hospital. Bill was miffed as he’d completed his cobweb duties outside on the large extension ladder and was attempting to store some items when he missed his step from the small stepladder and landed on his back in the shed. How many times have we heard that.



And I recently had the privilege to present Bill Middleton with his Life Membership to TRAAVI at his home in Kilcunda, South Gippsland. Bill has suffered from profound deafness and has recently received his new Cochlear.

Bill misses his catch ups with old work mates but is unable to socialise in larger crowds.

Congratulations Bill.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Jim

On behalf of mum, Patti, I would like to extend a warm and sincere thank you for all the ambos contributed to make Pete's send-off special.

He would have been incredibly happy with the result especially the appearance of his much-loved rig.

Please forward our sincere gratitude to Trish & Issac (AV Chaplains), Ian Cameron, Chris Varley, Veitchy (Tony Veitch) and John Clancy for their kind words.

Mum has great comfort in knowing he is at peace.
She is well, happy and content in her lovely home at Strath Haven.

Kind regards
Leanne Nally
Patti's daughter.

This letter was received from Peter Briscoe's stepdaughter. For those who may not have known him, Peter was a former MICA officer from Frankston and later a Station Officer in Echuca. The 'rig' Leanne was talking about was Peter's assigned vehicle at Frankston back in the day, it was found in a dilapidated state and Doug Dawson (formally of Peninsula Ambulance), Managing Director of Pro-Medic Services Victoria along with his son Tom have resurrected the vehicle to a high spec and brought it along to Peter's funeral.

Merchandise

Not much to report this time around other than, we have plenty of stock at the moment. Have you thought about buying a TRAAVI shirt? They look smart and even better if we're all dressed the same. Give me a call or go online and we can arrange speedy delivery.

As with all organisations, TRAAVI are experiencing price rises on our goods, the Committee have discussed raising our prices so get in soon before the price goes up.

Les Wood
Merchandise Officer

Vice President/Membership Officer

Season's Greetings to all our members from my family to yours.

As 2025 draws to a close I'd like to briefly recap the highlights of this year & give you a glimpse of what's on the horizon for 2026.

- To date this calendar year TRAAVI welcomed 70 new members and farewelled 8 valued members.
- Currently the membership totals 535, with two new applications pending completion.
- One new region, Tasmania, was established in the third quarter and two new Districts held their inaugural meetings, Echuca & Launceston.
- Early in 2026 another three new Districts will hold their inaugural meetings:
- Shepparton on February 9th at the Shepparton RSL, Hobart on February 20th at the Moonah Hotel & Cellars & Swan Hill in March (date/venue to be confirmed).
- The committee re-established close working relationships with AV Executive Officers and in May signed off on a Memorandum of Understanding with AV spanning 4 years.
- The TRAAVI Executive welcomed, updated & are in ongoing discussions with the new AV CEO Jordan Emery, to ensure the changing culture within AV recognises the service record of each in a worthy manner and supports all employees, current or former, with physical or mental challenges as a result of their service.
- Facilitated by utilising the TRAAVI administration system (Airtable) we successfully rolled out & completed the Member Service history survey. The contents of which were presented to Jordan Emery during our initial meeting.
- Airtable also facilitated the digitisation of Funeral planning requests submitted by members. This is an ongoing offering to members. To submit your requests, go to the Members Area on the TRAAVI website.
- Formalised the death & funeral notification process which includes notifications on both the TRAAVI Bulletin Board & via our social media partnership with the Signal 8 AV Facebook group.
- The process also ensures that all relevant member requests & information are made available to those organising our members' final farewell.

At recent meetings, starting with the AGM, Bendigo, Metro North & SW Geelong you may have seen Committee members recording the presence of each attendee.

We were trialling the Member Attendance Record form. The trial enabled the form to be simplified & refined to allow the rapid input of member data recording exactly who attended each meeting (or offered an apology for not attending).

The Committee has approved the rollout of the Attendance Register to all Districts in 2026.

District Coordinators will shortly be contacted about how to access and use the Member Attendance Record form.

Why record attendees?

TRAAVI pays almost \$2800 for public liability insurance.

This ensures our members are protected should they be injured in any way whilst attending any TRAAVI events, these in the main are District Meetings in 3rd party venues.

Without the Member Attendance Record (MAR) we are unable to provide that evidence if and when required.

Both members & non-members attending TRAAVI events need to be noted for insurance purposes.

We have observed that several former ambulance employees regularly attend District meeting who are not TRAAVI members.

The TRAAVI Executive may be placed in the unenviable position of disclaiming responsibility if any of these non-member attendees are injured at an event. If a member chooses to take action against a venue, should they be injured, eventually the venue's insurers come to the TRAAVI insurers to recoup their funds, theoretically TRAAVI's insurers then seek compensation from the injured party (the non-member!).

Currently, these attendees seem to be benefitting off those who chose to join TRAAVI, is this fair to our members?

We may be forced to request a nominal payment by these attendees at each meeting to protect them under the TRAAVI public liability insurance.

In the process of continuing to simplify TRAAVI's administrative processes we have been evaluating several pieces of Point-of-Sale software.

The Committee has accepted Square as the simplest & most cost effective to use & administer. Now that most Committee members have successfully accessed Square on their mobile phones, we will now be offering Square to all District Coordinators to do the same.

Some Coordinators have already volunteered to do so as they see the value in simplifying the purchase of TRAAVI apparel & merchandise.

Also, when member subscription fees are due Square facilitates payment of those fees by members attending the District meetings.

District Coordinators will be receiving an email with the details regarding Square early December, so you'll all have time to implement prior to first meetings of 2026.

In closing I would like to thank all District Coordinators & Welfare Liaisons for all their work during the year. In particular, those members who have volunteered to be Interim District Coordinators in addition to their other administrative roles within the Association.

If any members would like to contribute their services we need Coordinators in these districts: Ballarat, Benalla and Metro West

Graham Douglas
VP/Membership Officer
m: 0450 319 111



Webmaster Report

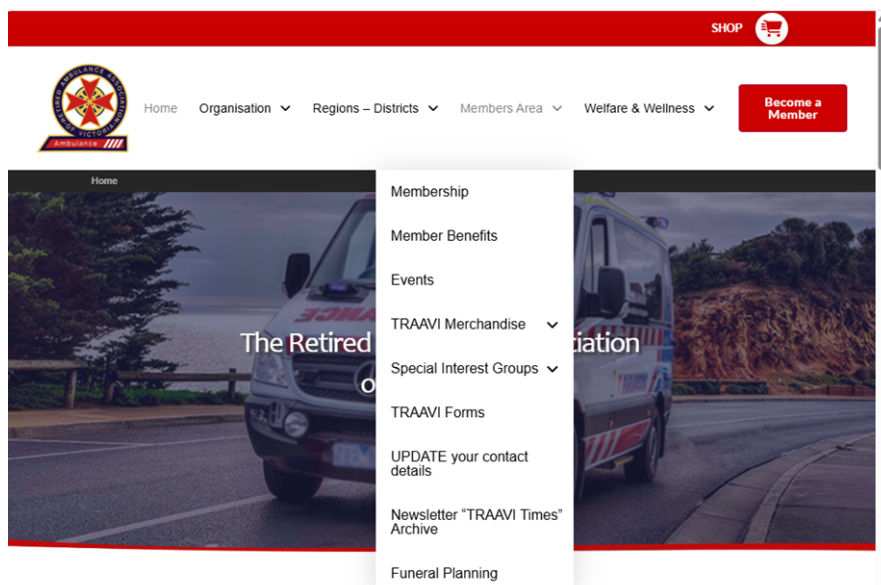
Navigating the TRAAVI Website – Merchandise Guide

We will be including regular tips in the Newsletter to help members navigate the TRAAVI website. The site contains a wide range of useful information, making it easy to access what you need at any time.

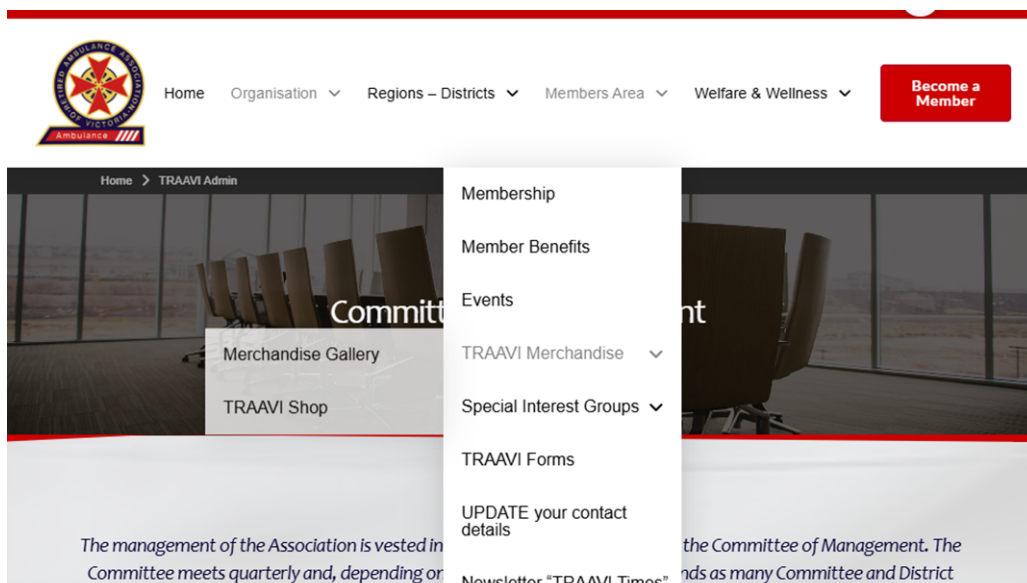
This edition covers how to access the TRAAVI Merchandise section, where you can purchase items such as polo shirts, caps, badges, and stubby holders.

How to Access TRAAVI Merchandise

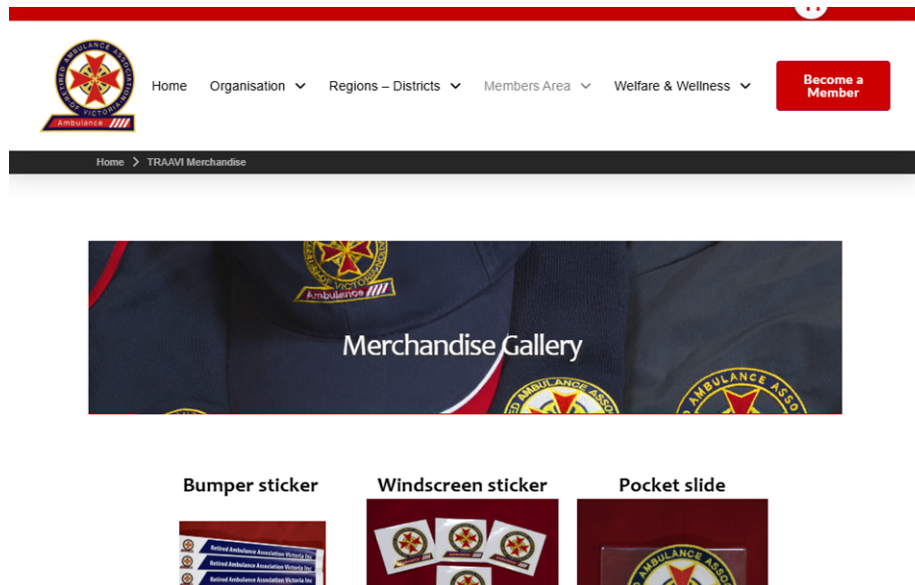
1. Go to the TRAAVI website:
[Home – TRAAV – The Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria](#)
2. On the homepage, locate the main menu headings.
3. Click the down arrow under the Members menu.



4. Select **TRAAVI Merchandise** from the dropdown list.



5. Click the down arrow again and choose **Merchandise Gallery** to view the full range of items.

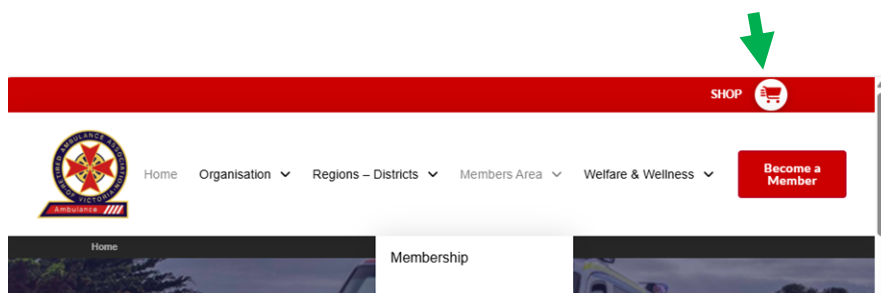


Placing an Order

At the bottom of the Merchandise Gallery page, you will see a

[Download the Order Form Here](#)

- Open the order form and complete your selections.
- Save the form as a PDF and email it to: merchandise@traavi.org.au
- TRAavi bank details for payment are included on the order form.
- Or click on the SHOP icon and purchase from TRAavi's online shop



If you need assistance at any stage, please contact:
Graeme Parker
0409 382 040



Welfare

Just a note of hello from welfare...please keep up the contact if you feel we can help/guide/ give a pat on the back or a shoulder to help!

We come close to a season, blessed and significant, but sometimes where not all is Jolly!

So I thought, yep...you've heard all the stories, but here's an extra slant.

"Kids can say the kindest things".

Among the record-breaking 111,000 calls to NORAD this year asking about Santa's location was one thoughtful youngster with a prayer for Newtown, Connecticut US

Thirteen-year-old, Sara Berghoff was volunteering in the call centre when a youngster called in from area and asked about the possibility of Santa brining

"extra presents so I can deliver them to the families that lost kids?"

Kids are known to say the darnedest things, but they also can remind of the best qualities of human beings.

AND

I'd wondered if any [brands were doing anything special for the Christmas](#).

It seems to me there's been a death of news about corporate philanthropy, but one Atlanta-based Toys "R" Us gave the Thompson family a big gift last year.

After the family returned to find their home – including Christmas presents – had been burglarised the week leading up to Christmas, the local franchise in a trendy area of Atlanta called Buckhead, gave them a free shopping spree.

The Thompson's kids "were free to roam and pick out whatever they wanted."

SO MAYBE HAVE A LOOK AT THIS...

What is the "4 rule for Christmas"?

The 4 gift rules are very simple: you get each of your children something they want, something they need, something to wear, and something to read.

BUT ABOVE ALL...

Embrace the spirit of giving. ...Keep it cheap – or free! ...Bring back the traditions you loved. Swap stress for love and gratitude. ...Keep it fun and festive. ...Do something different.

Safe travel or just being at home. All the very best to the New Year Ahead

Deb Stallard

welfare@travvi.org.au

District Reports

Metro South

We had a very successful September Luncheon held at Steeples in Mornington which was attended by 40 Members which included a new member Phil Brake great to catch up with Phil and he appeared to enjoy the day.

Also, we remembered the passing of two of our members, Jim Yandle and Peter Briscoe. Would like to give a special mention to Jim Ballard and Chris who on the way home visited Robert Rigby and presented him with his Life Membership the tables were quickly turned when Robert then presented Jim with his prized possession a home built remote controlled replica ambulance helicopter to be placed at our AV Chas Martin AOM Museum in Bayswater a big thankyou to Robert.

Regards
Bryan Cass ASM.
Metro South Coordinator

Tuesday 23/09/2025.

Today I visited Robert Rigby at his residence in Hastings after attending the Metro South luncheon to present him with his Life Membership.

Robert is well known to many having initially served at Frankston from 1968 and was promoted to Station Officer Frankston. Robert later transferred to Southeast District at Morwell in Comms before finishing his career.

Robert surprised us by donating his prized possession of his home-built remote controlled replica ambulance helicopter.

Apparently, due to age restrictions Robert no longer flies his helicopter and would hate to see it smashed. It will go on permanent display at the AV Chas Martin AOM Museum in Bayswater.

Jim Ballard.



Congratulations to Robert Rigby on achieving TRAAVI Life Membership.



Bendigo & Central West District

The Central Bendigo lunch was held on Tuesday, November 11 at the Bendigo District RSL in Long Gully.

Today saw 21 retired members and partners gather for a lively lunch with lots of conversation. Members were intrigued with our latest tech tool, the Attendance Register. This will be a handy tool for all co-ordinators to utilise in their groups.

I would like to thank everyone who attended and look forward to the next lunch which will be on January 20 2026, with Dale Prentice taking the lead as co-ordinator.



Bendigo & Central West Group



Daryl Anderson receiving his Life Membership Award



Dale Prentice with Frank Bonser receiving his Life Membership Award

South-West District

The meeting of TRAAVI members was held on 1st September 2025 in Mortlake.

11 members attended, with 7 apologies.

Three new members were welcomed – Lynne Carter, Shane McGrath and Dave Tyson.

Our guest speaker was Roger Doulis. Roger is a Mortlake local and is also a tour guide for the Mt Shadwell quarry. Roger spoke about olivine. Olivine is an important [rock-forming mineral](#) group. Magnesium-rich olivine are abundant in low-silica mafic and ultramafic igneous rocks and are believed to be the most abundant [constituent](#) of the [Earth's](#) upper mantle. Olivine also occurs in high-temperature metamorphic rocks, lunar basalts, and some meteorites. Mortlake is known as the olivine capital of Australia and has the 4th largest deposits in the world.

I relayed the minutes of the TRAAVI District Co-ordinators Meeting held on 30th July 2025, to members in attendance.

Some discussion was held regarding a visit to the Ambulance Museum in Bayswater. This is likely to take place in November.

Our next meeting will be held in Hamilton on 1st December 2025.

Overall, a great attendance, great food, great comradery!

My apologies to the guys and girls in the South-West District as I omitted to include this report in the last edition due to circumstances beyond my control – namely my memory! Ed.

South West Geelong & Surf Coast District

At our August meeting we presented Margaret Kerr with her 10 year membership award Well done Margie!

In September we farewelled our esteemed member, Stan Paley. Many of us attended his memorial service and for those that did not know of Stan's service he spent over 10 years as a volunteer driver at the SWG&SC when we had one-man cars, the country services could not operate without the volunteers assisting the full-time Ambo. Stan is sadly missed by all who knew him, may he rest in peace.

We held our Christmas lunch meeting in November which was well attended with 20 members, and it was a resounding success, we conducted a raffle to raise funds for the Salvation Army Christmas appeal. Thank you to all of those who donated a wonderful array of prizes. A special thanks to the Belmont RSL who donated two \$50.00 vouchers and also for their care and attention to us throughout the year.

We raised the princely sum of \$175.00 which was duly delivered and very much appreciated. That about raps up the news from the members at Geelong SW, except to wish all a very happy and safe Christmas and a happy Hogmanay.

Regards



Margaret Kerr
receiving her 10 year
badge



Geelong & South West Group



Donating money raised to
Salvation Army Christmas
Appeal.

Stephen McFadyen District Coordinator

Echuca District

Thursday October 16, 2025

Today we had our end of year lunch at the Echuca Workingman's Club. Which was attended by 12 members and 8 partners. All are getting a little older, but the reminiscing was as clear as if it were yesterday. Smokey Barrett, John Head and Harry Sheppard worked together out of the Broadmeadows Station in 1975, it was nice to be together again. Smokey is now 91 and in care at Bupa Echuca still has the same haircut and sense of humour and would enjoy a visit from old cohorts.

We had visitors from Bendigo, Shepparton, John, and Judy came up from Melbourne. All present are looking forward to the next function at the Workies early next year where once again we will enjoy good food, good company and great banter. Until then Merry Christmas and stay safe.



Smokey Barret, Harry Shappard
and John Head



Echuca Group

The TRAAVI Committee wish all our members a safe and joyous Christmas and New Year



All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor
J. Ballard
PO Box 83
Dromana, Victoria 3936
Email secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au