



The Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.

TRAAVITimes

Aug 2026 Vol. 11



President's Introduction and Welcome

Tasmania Update

On the 10 June, TRAAVI and Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

HACSU have endeavoured over many years to establish an independent body that supports both current, retired and former Ambulance employees in Tasmania. HACSU will both support and encourage former ambulance employees to join TRAAVI. We would like to thank Tim Jacobson for encouragement and support of TRAAVI in Tasmania

On the 4 August, Ambulance Tasmania (AT) Chief Executive, Nicole Ashworth and TRAAVI President Steve Mulligan signed a Memorandum of Understanding at AT Headquarters Hobart.

Both AT and TRAAVI are committed to work together over the next three years with the aim of developing a peer support program that supports retired and former employees of AT, like what is in place at AV.

TRAAVI acknowledges the support of CE Nicole Ashworth and the assistance of Jane Sweeney, Senior Manager – Culture and Wellbeing has provided in making this MoU a reality.



Steve Mulligan, Nicole Ashworth,
Graham Douglas.

As a prelude to the signing Peter James (retired AT Paramedic) and Jenny McGuirk (Volunteer Chaplain) had an open frank discussion with Nicole regarding the general experience of retired & former AT staff post separation.

It was bilaterally agreed that improvements need be implemented. Both Nicole & Peter have committed to further discussions in the near future.

TRAAVI also acknowledges the support of Andrew Hiller the CEO of Devonport Chaplaincy (Tasmania Crisis Chaplaincy Emergencies Ministry) and Gordon Kelly Chaplaincy and Wellbeing Manager. TCCEM will provide selected Chaplains who will attend District Meetings and support our Members in times of need.

Vale Tony Walker.

Reflecting on Tony's recent passing we acknowledge his support of TRAAVI not only as the CEO of AV but also as a member of TRAAVI.

Previous TRAAVI Committee members mentioned getting access to office supplies and tech support over the years. And reflected on Tony's support with establishing the Retired and Former Employees (RAFE) Peer Support Program. The inclusion of Chaplaincy Support into AV has been beneficial to our members.

We celebrate Tony's stellar Ambulance career as a respected colleague and mentor to many Paramedics both young and old.

Steve Mulligan

President, TRAAVI

M: 0418 331 984

E: president@traavi.org.au

Secretary's Report

Since my last column, I've had the opportunity to do a little travelling, including a trip to **Mildura – one of the furthest points in our state** – and it was wonderful to be welcomed so warmly by our North-West members.

A big thank you to all the guys and gals who took the time to catch up with us. Unfortunately, **Alan Cooksley** was unable to join us on the day, as he was travelling to Perth aboard the *Indian Pacific*. Alan, we hope you had a wonderful trip and enjoyed the journey.

It is particularly pleasing to see TRAAVI providing a place where retired ambulance personnel can come together, share stories, reminisce and, importantly, provide friendship and support to one another.

While we are proud of the network we have established across Victoria, there are still areas where we don't yet have a TRAAVI presence. Ideally, we would like every retired ambulance person – and their close family members – to have access to the fellowship and support that TRAAVI provides.

So, if you are travelling around Victoria, why not consider visiting another TRAAVI district? You'll be made very welcome, and you might even have the added bonus of catching up with an old colleague or workmate you haven't seen for years.

Where Are They Now?

At a recent virtual meeting with our District Coordinators, an idea was raised that I think has great potential – **"Where Are They Now?"**

Over the years, many former ambulance colleagues have retired and, for one reason or another, we have simply lost contact with them. Some may not even be aware of TRAAVI or the opportunities we provide to reconnect with old friends and colleagues.

If you know of a former colleague who has retired, moved away or simply lost contact with the ambulance family, **we would love to hear from you.**

Perhaps you know where they are now, or perhaps you can help us reconnect with them.

One of the great strengths of TRAAVI is our shared history. Let's continue to find those who have been part of that history and bring them back into the fold.

After all, once an ambo, always part of the ambulance family.

Jim Ballard

T: Ph: 0412 544 011

E: secretary@traavi.org.au

Membership Officer

REMINDER – Membership subscriptions fell due on July 1

If you are with Bank Vic & made a transaction on: July 6, 16 or 20, and you have not received an acknowledgement via email, then you are probably one of the five people we can't identify who have made payment.

Please contact me ASAP

T: 0450 319 111

E: membership@traavi.org.au

At the time of writing, our membership totals: 564

Members by membership type:

Full:	381
Life:	120
Associate:	52

We have recently welcomed:

Brian Linton	SW Geelong & SC
Mal McCann	GIPPS Central & South
Sam Ross	Metro East
Slim Simpkins	Central Bendigo
David Skeat	TAS Hobart
Austen Todd	MetroWest
Roger Williams	Central Bendigo
Bruce Williams	SW Warrnambool
Bucky Williams	NE Shepparton
Jane Sweeney	TAS Hobart
Cathy McNamara	TAS Hobart
Matt Arion	TAS Hobart

Sadly, we farewelled:

Tony Walker	Metro West	20 July 2026
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Graham Douglas



VALE

Prof. TONY WALKER ASM



It is with deep sadness and a heavy heart that we inform members of the passing of our respected colleague and friend, Anthony "Tony" Walker ASM, who passed away, 20th July 2026, at the age of 63.

Tony was a dedicated life-long servant to the Victorian community and a true leader in pre-hospital care. He first joined the Victorian Ambulance Service on 10th February 1986, embarking on an extraordinary career as a paramedic. His exceptional skills and commitment naturally led him into clinical leadership roles, where his vision continued to shape the service.

Upon his retirement on 22nd October 2022, Tony concluded a distinguished tenure as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ambulance Victoria—a position he held with immense pride and integrity for almost a decade. His profound impact on the profession earned him the prestigious Ambulance Service Medal (ASM).

Tony joined the Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria (TRAAVI) shortly after his retirement in November 2022, remaining a proud part of our MetroWest district. He was a deeply admired paramedic, an inspirational leader, and an administrator who achieved monumental positive change throughout his career.

On behalf of the Committee and all members of TRAAVI, we extend our deepest, most heartfelt condolences to Tony's partner, Robyn Cameron, his family, loved ones, and former colleagues during this incredibly difficult time.

Rest in peace, Tony. Your legacy lives on.

Remembering Professor Tony Walker ASM

Shane Magrath commenced his ambulance career at Shepparton in 1980, believing from the outset that it would be his lifelong career. Unfortunately, severe rheumatoid arthritis curtailed his paramedic career and, following his successful completion of Station Officer qualifications, he left the Service in 1986. Deeply disappointed by his experience, Shane carried those feelings for many years.

In 2018, a serious accident resulted in a below-knee amputation and changed his perspective. The paramedics who treated him went to considerable lengths to reconnect him with former colleagues, including his training officer Frank Gaylard and former colleague Russell Calley.

Russell visited Shane at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and told him that Ambulance Victoria would be there for him and that **he was still part of the family**. Those simple words had a profound impact.

The following day, Shane learned that his sister had unexpectedly passed away. Determined to attend her funeral, he was told this would be impossible given his medical condition and impending amputation. Russell simply said, **"Leave it to me."**

Within 24 hours, arrangements had been made for a qualified paramedic and ambulance to transport Shane to his sister's funeral and safely return him to hospital. Those arrangements had been authorised by the then CEO of Ambulance Victoria, **Professor Tony Walker ASM**.

For Shane, Tony's compassion towards a former colleague he had not seen for more than 30 years was a defining moment. In a subsequent letter, Tony wrote that Shane had served his community as a proud member of the Service and that he and the Ambulance Service respected that contribution.

Those words stayed with Shane and restored his sense of belonging to the ambulance family.

With the encouragement and persistence of Ian Cameron and Graham Douglas, Shane eventually joined TRAAV and attended his first meeting in Shepparton in May this year. After almost 40 years, he was reunited with former colleagues and, in his words, **"I was back."**

Shane reflects that the more he learned about Tony Walker's life and career, the greater his respect for him became.

Tony Walker was a remarkable man. His passing is a significant loss to his family and the wider community, but his legacy of compassion, leadership and service will endure.

Rest in Peace, Tony.

Shane Magrath

Vale Pat Wells (1925–2026)

It is with deep sadness, but also immense gratitude for a life so well lived, that we share the passing of **Pat Wells**, who quietly passed away on Saturday, 25 July, aged 100.

Pat was a much-loved and fondly remembered member of the administrative team at **Latrobe Street**, and later **Doncaster**. She served as secretary to Superintendents **Gordon Ortman and Norman Branson**, and later worked in Finance alongside **Derek Sutherland and Rosa Polivka**, supporting ambulance branches across the Service.

Pat's daughter, **Yvonne**, who herself worked as a Payroll Officer with ASM, has shared these wonderful memories of her mother and of an era that many of our older members will remember with great affection.

Pat commenced with ASM in 1977 after being placed through a typing agency. What began as a job became a career, she was immensely proud of. She remained with the Service until her retirement in 1990.

Yvonne recalls a very different working environment to that of today. There were no computers or emails. The switchboard was a mass of plug-in cords, documents were typed from shorthand into triplicate, and a telex machine could leave paper trails winding down the stairs at headquarters.

Photocopiers produced damp-smelling pages, filing cabinets filled the offices, and important documents were duplicated using a **Roneo machine** that occupied a room of its own. Records, when microfiches, were viewed on machines the size of large ovens.

There were also the familiar faces and routines that made the workplace a community. **Ron Jacobs** from City Branch would carry the milk upstairs each morning, while the tea lady, Cath, wheeled her trolley through the office with tea and biscuits. After work, the Police Club and City Court Hotel were popular gathering places for everyone from management to workshop staff and office clerks.

Pat was a remarkably dedicated worker and, according to Yvonne, the fastest typist she had ever known. Every weekday, Pat walked two kilometres to Ringwood Station, travelled by train to Latrobe Street and arrived at work by 8.05 am. She continued that routine when the administrative offices moved to Doncaster.

Pat was required to retire at 65, something she deeply resented because she would happily have continued working.

Her years with what is now Ambulance Victoria remained a source of great pride and affection throughout her life. Even in her later years, as dementia took hold, she would often tell her family that she had been at work all day, still performing the duties she had carried out decades earlier.

Somehow, the people, the workplace and the sense of purpose remained with her long after so much else had faded.

Pat celebrated her **100th birthday last year**, an extraordinary milestone. On Saturday, 25 July, she quietly slipped away.

vale A private funeral service will be held by the family.

On behalf of all TRAAVI members and the broader ambulance community, we extend our heartfelt condolences to **Yvonne and the Wells family**.

Pat was part of the fabric of **Latrobe Street and Doncaster**, and her dedication, warmth and contribution to the Service will be remembered with great affection.

Rest peacefully, Pat.

And thank you for a lifetime of service.

Vale Robyn Collins

It was sad to hear of the passing of Robyn Collins on the 30th July 2026 after a brave fight. Robyn will be remembered by those who worked in the Latrobe Valley as a former PTO and later as the wife of Les Collins, Morwell FMO. Robyn was laid to rest in Morwell on the 7th August 2026.

We offer our sincere condolences to Les, family and friends and while not members of TRAAVI we honour Robyn's contribution to ambulance.

Merchandise

DISCOUNT JACKET SALE!

Our current shower- style jacket is no longer available from our supplier.

Therefore, we are offering remaining stock, at a 50% discount, in the following sizes and quantity.

Size	Qty
Large	1
XL	3
5XL	4
7XL	1

- They are brand new and still an excellent jacket!
- If you want to purchase one at \$20.00 plus \$10.00 postage, contact me on 0418 457 104.
- First come first served. A new jacket will be available soon.

Les Wood
Merchandise Officer

Welfare

Hello and hoping everyone is travelling ok and keeping warm; as you know winter has hit with a vengeance. Welfare has been busy with life in general, but I look forward to birthday greetings and keeping in touch with those who may need a hello “from a lot of like-minded mates”
Just let me know! Send an email me at welfare@traavi.org.au

Often there are those moments when you just have to scream!

“I was advised to go somewhere desolate, like a field or a forest, and scream there.

This was supposed to make me feel better.

I took my bike and headed into the forest. I sat on a stump and let out a yell!

At first, wild boar piglets darted out of the bushes.

I tried again, and then I heard someone saying behind me, “Why are you yelling here? Go home.” I turned around, and there was an old lady collecting mushrooms.

I laughed really hard”

We all know there’s a lot of negatives in older age, when the body decides its own plan in aches and losing the mind! It’s great to know we have mates to be in touch with. Reach out!

Try. Keep faith, Keep energy. Just know you have people thinking of you and plan a sunny walk if you can. And every now and then you can get a win, and a good laugh,

“When I used to commute to university, a friend gave me a tip on how to avoid giving up my seat on public transport. Just pretend to be asleep, close your eyes, and that’s it; no one will bother you. I used this advice quite successfully for a few years until the other day when an elderly lady in the subway woke me up with the words, “Stand up!”

Kind regards ‘til next newsletter.

Thank you

Deb Stallard

Welfare Coordinator.

Making a Difference Through the 1000 Generations Program

Around two years ago, **1000 Generations** approached TRAAVI looking for volunteers to assist with their school mentoring program. They believed that retired paramedics, with their wealth of life experience, communication skills and years spent helping people through difficult situations, would make valuable mentors for young people.

Since then, three TRAAVI members—**Col Evans, Steve Hollowood and Graeme Parker**—have been regularly involved in the program, and we thought it would be worthwhile sharing their experience with other members who may be looking for a rewarding way to continue giving back to the community.

The program is delivered over 10 weeks, with volunteers attending one one-hour session each week. It focuses on helping young people develop self-confidence, resilience, communication skills and the ability to make positive life choices.

The organisers have been extremely appreciative of TRAAVI’s involvement. They continue to tell us how much they value the life experience, practical knowledge and empathy that retired paramedics bring to the classroom. Our real-life experiences often help reinforce the lessons being delivered and provide students with perspectives that only come from many years of serving the community.

As volunteers, we've found the experience to be incredibly rewarding. Seeing students grow in confidence over the course of the program, watching them become more engaged and knowing you've played a small part in that journey makes the time commitment well worthwhile. We can honestly say we've gained as much from the experience as the students themselves.

We also know that many TRAAVI members enjoy travelling or spend time away from Melbourne throughout the year. Fortunately, the program organisers understand this and are very flexible. Even if you're only available for part of a 10-week program, your involvement is welcomed and appreciated.

If you're looking for a meaningful way to use the skills and life experience you've gained throughout your ambulance career, we'd encourage you to consider becoming involved. It's a wonderful opportunity to continue making a positive difference in the lives of young people.

If you'd like to express your interest in volunteering, please contact:

Chloe Garisto

Schools Engagement Coordinator

Email: chloe@1000generations.org.au

Mobile: 0431 116 064

If you would simply like to have a chat with one of the TRAAVI members already involved before making a decision, you're very welcome to contact **Graeme Parker 0409 382 040** or **Col Evans 0419 115 350**, who would be happy to answer any questions and share his experiences with the program.

We hope to see a few more TRAAVI members join in supporting the next generation.

Letters



Buy a cup of coffee and get upgraded to a mug.

- Food supplied.
- Meet in Alfresco area

The next Police/Ambulance Coffee Mornings is 13 Aug at RSL Frankston at 10.

No partners. I will need RSVP for this.

Veterans is every Wednesday with partners and Friday veterans only at 9.45.

If you need any more information let me know.... or ask Steve!

Thanks, Julianne Casey 0417 557 809

Regional Reports

Metro East

The Metro East meeting was held on Thursday 4 June 2026 commencing at 12 midday at the Wheelers Hill Hotel. A small group of 9 attended and had a pleasant get together. Unfortunately, we had late cancellations due to predicted inclement weather and medical issues. We also have some members away travelling. Our chaplain Tom Rose was also in attendance. Our next meeting is due on Thursday September 3rd, 2026. Hope to see everyone there.

Regards
David Hadj.

North West - Mildura

I had the great pleasure in travelling to Mildura for their June meeting. It was a small affair with 12 members attending, unfortunately Mildura coordinator Alan Cooksley was away in Perth and couldn't attend.

It was a very friendly and inviting gathering with many stories shared. I look forward to revisiting in the future. The next regular meeting will be held on the 8th September at the Mildura RSL.

Regards
Jim Ballard



South West - Warrnambool

Our June Meeting was held on 1 June 2026 at Thomson's Tavern in Hamilton. Despite the inclement weather, 15 members and their partners attended. We had 5 apologies.

We were also joined by Vice President, Graham Douglas who was able to address some concerns that members had, regarding current serving members being able to join TRAAVI. Thank you, Graham, for travelling so far to catch up with us. It was very much appreciated.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday 7 September 2026 at a venue to be confirmed.

Kind regards
Rhonda Oliver

Gipps Central & South

Central & South Gippsland held a lunch on June 18th at the Morwell RSL. A great turnout of 26. A few apologies due to illness and others who are enjoying the opportunity to travel.

Lots of laughter and discussions. It was great to see Alan White there after an extensive period in hospital.

Jim Ballard advised the group of a planned joint lunch with the East Gippsland group some time in



August at the Gippsland Vehicle Collection in Maffra, and we are looking forward to that.

Neil Carolan has put his hand up to assist the group as the assistant coordinator, I thank Neil for his offer.

Next scheduled meeting will be on September 17th at the Inverloch Hotel.

Neil Akers
District Coordinator

South West - Geelong

On Wed 9th July we held our luncheon meeting at the Belmont RSL, we had a good turnout of twenty members which is excellent considering the cold weather.

We welcomed two out of district members, John and Judy Head and Lee Klein as well as a potential new member Vivian Lewis.

Vivian is the daughter of Geelong & District Ambulance Service founder Superintendent Alan Cummings who established the first Ambulance Station in Geelong and the first Training school for Ambo's and cadets. He was also instrumental in forming Body Craft that built the first modern Ambulance based on a Ford Chassis.

Vivian expressed a desire to become a member of TRAAVI and was given a membership link for her to do so.

I also had the honour of presenting a life membership to Marion Neal her husband had an historical link to our service working under two superintendent and being on our board of management for several years.



Marion Neal receiving
her Life Membership

Despite the cold weather we all had a great time and our visitors expressed a desire to attend future meetings/luncheons



Metro South

The Metro South group met at Steeples, our usual venue in Mornington on Tuesday 30th June. We had a very good turn up considering the bleak weather conditions, with 29 hardy souls turning up.

We had a few late apologies with the winter ills taking its toll, we hope you are all feeling better by the time this article goes to press.

Our President, Steve Mulligan talked to the group about what the Committee has been up to, including the bedding down of our Tasmanian contingent and the discussions that are being held with AV regarding chaplaincy provisions.

Julianne Casey from the Committee brought along a merchandise bin which was well subscribed with polo shirts, rain jackets, hats and car stickers all being purchased on the day.

We look forward to meeting up with everyone again at Steeples on 29th September at 12:00 midday.

Metro North

Celebrating Two Well-Deserved Life Memberships

Today's **TRAAVI Northern District Lunch** was another wonderful gathering, with a terrific attendance, plenty of laughter, and countless stories and memories shared from years of service and friendship.



A highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of **TRAAVI Life Memberships** to **Trevor Mitchell** and **Roger Richards** in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the ambulance profession and to our Association.

Pictured: Trevor Mitchell (left), Graeme Parker (centre), and Roger Richards (right) following the Life Membership presentations.

Many members will remember Trevor and Roger as respected identities throughout Melbourne's northern suburbs and beyond. Over more than a generation, both made an enormous contribution to their communities, their colleagues, and the ambulance service. Their commitment, professionalism, and willingness to support others have left a lasting legacy.

On behalf of all TRAAVI members, we congratulate **Trevor Mitchell** and **Roger Richards** on this well-deserved honour and thank them for their many years of dedicated service to the Victorian community and their continued support of TRAAVI.

Congratulations, Trevor and Roger, on your **Life Membership**—a fitting recognition of two remarkable careers and your enduring contribution to our ambulance family.
Graeme Parker

North East – Shepparton

A good roll up of 24, and 14 apologies. Some of our members are overseas and some up North for the winter. There were 4 apologies on the morning due to flooding. The RSL is a great venue and obliging, they help make our meetings successful (thanks Julie).

6 members farewelled Ian "Sully" Sullivan last month, Ian saw service in Healesville, Albury, Jerilderie, and Shepparton.

We have potential members; the cards will be a great help to entice membership. and remarks that the format is working and don't change a thing and we would welcome other districts, and the new Tasmanian TRAAVI members to meet with us. Our next meeting is November 9th at the RSL at midday, so there Tassie cousins, come on over to sunny Shepparton.

We have five members unwell and receiving treatment and we hope their recovery is swift back to good health and be able to attend the next meeting.

The late Michael Knights daughter Kristy graced our meeting and got to see her Dads illustrated humour.

Thanks, Dave, for keeping those archives. We would like to find these Ambos and to make sure they are ok, Paul Byrne, Max Brooker, Glen Robinson, Gareth Graham, John Loadsmen, somebody will know where they are, we would like to know they are ok,
Cheers to all, Roger and David. Catch up November 9th.



Caravan & Motorhome Club

It is sad to report that due to a lack of interest, the C&MC has gone into recession. We thank Anne and Neil for their hard work keeping this ship afloat for as long as they have.



Forth Coming Meeting Dates

20-Aug-26	Central Echuca , Echuca Workers Club, 165 Annesley St, Echuca Contact Harry Sheppard 0417 323 376
26-Aug-26	North East Benalla , Benalla Bowls, Arundel St, Benalla Contact Graham Douglas 0450 319 111
03-Sep-26	Metro East , Wheelers Hill Hotel, 881 Ferntree Gully Rd, Wheelers Hill Contact David Hadj 0418 557 490
04-Sep-26	Metro West , Kealba Hotel, CNR Sunshine Ave & Main Rd East, Kealba Contact Georgie Hall 0418 124 890
07-Sep-26	South West Warrnambool , Macy's Tavern, CNR Raglan Pde & Fairy St, Warrnambool Contact Rhonda Oliver 0409 073 216
08-Sep-26	North West Mildura , Mildura RSL, 130 Maddern Av, Mildura Contact Alan Cooksley 0400 055 144
09-Sep-26	TAS North West , Furner's Hotel, 42 Reibey St, Ulverstone Contact Steve Mulligan 0418 331 984
17-Sep-26	Gipps Central/South , Inverloch Hotel, 1 A'Beckett St Inverloch Contact Neil Akers 0407 351 626
21-Sep-26	Central West Ballarat , Golf House Hotel, 920 Doveton St North, Ballarat Contact John Head 0402 332 302
29-Sep-26	Metro South , Steeples Bistro Mornington- Tyabb Rd, Mornington Contact Bryan Cass 0417 554 360
14-Oct-26	South West Geelong , Belmont RSL, 50 Barwin Heads Rd, Belmont Contact Stephen McFadyen 0438 007 037
20-Oct-26	Central Bendigo , Bendigo District RSL, 75 Havilah Rd, Long Gully Contact Dale Prentice 0411 383 308
18-Dec-26	TAS Hobart , Moonah Hotel & Cellars, 99 Main Rd, Moonah Contact Paul Meehan 0417 502 707

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