



The Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.

TRAAVI Times

September 2025 Vol. 7



President's introduction and welcome

It's been a hectic past couple of months.

A group of ex AV Paramedics who now live in Tasmania approached the Association to establish a Tasmanian District of TRAAVI. As we have previously mentioned on the 6 August with overwhelming support of all who attended the Tasmanian District was formed.

They have already organised two meetings planned for 6 October and 28 November. I'm sure visitors to Tassie around those dates will be more than welcome to attend the planned meeting at The Plough Inn in Launceston around midday for lunch and a chat.

The unfortunate news is that we had planned a meet and greet with the Jordan EMERY to new AV CEO unfortunately due to the recent tragic events in North East Victoria. The other competing factor is he continually touring the State and getting acquainted with all of AV Branches especially the regional ones. So TRAAVI meeting has been postponed to mid-October.

TRAAVI's AGM is planned Monday 27 October at the AV Chas Martin OAM Museum. Which will commence at 10:30 AM sharp, light refreshments will be provided. For those people who are unable to attend in person we will be providing a video link details which will be provided closer to 27 October.

The AGM also provides a perfect opportunity to wander through the Museum and view not only the collection of historical vehicles but to also look at the great work by Ralph CASEY and his team of volunteers archiving and restoring the "old and not so old" equipment.

Without the efforts of volunteers, the Association and the AV Chas Martin Museum would not be as successful as they currently are. As the current custodians we stand on their shoulders and continue to build upon their foundations and legacy they have provided.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to assist with running the Association. It could be picking up an older member who has a restricted driver's licence and taking them to a TRAAVI meeting. Or helping your local District Co-ordinator or Welfare Officer by checking on one of your fellow members. Finding an interesting article for our newsletter, I know Jim B our secretary welcomes relevant interesting article especially if it's a Word document.

If you are interested in being a Committee Member, please have a chat with anyone of our existing Committee Members. I'm also positive that the Museum would welcome volunteers to join their group, so get in contact with Ralph CASEY and have a chat to see how you can help.

Steve MULLIGAN.

M: 0418 331 984

E: president@traavi.org.au

Secretary's Report

As I write this, the news has just broken that two Victorian police officers have been murdered while executing a search warrant in country Victoria. Such horrific scenes have been confronted by many of our members during their careers or the like, which can be triggering. Please, if you are suffering after hearing this news, please reach out to your GP, helpline or give us a call; our welfare people can put you in touch with carers who can help you.

On a more positive note, I want to congratulate all our members who have achieved Life Membership. Thanks for sticking with us. Also, a special mention to our wives who have been an integral part of our support system in Victorian ambulance, your counsel and day to day assistance has often gone unrecognised so I thought I'd give you a special mention and we encourage all of our partners to come and join in for our lunches.

Don't forget that our AGM is upon us, it's to be held at the Ambulance Victoria, Chas Martin OAM Museum, at 55 Barry Street, Bayswater on 27th October 2025 beginning at 10:30 sharp. I will send out our agenda, but this is early notification for your diaries.

Jim Ballard

secretary@traavi.org.au

The Vice President's Report

Another busy few months have just flown by, I thought I was meant to be retired!! We began August with a trip to Launceston Tasmania for what turned into the inaugural meeting of the Launceston District of TRAAVI after a motion was unanimously passed for that to occur.

It was really nice to see how many hands went up volunteering to run the District. Peter James is the Coordinator, Cate Jones the Assistant and Lindsay O'Brien is the Welfare Liaison, our thanks & appreciation to all.

The recent call to all former employees of Victorian Ambulances Services to submit their employment history received an overwhelming response from TRAAVI members and non-members alike.

If any survey receives a response rate over 30% it is considered very successful. Thanks to our members we achieved a response rate of almost 81% on August 31st, when the form was taken offline for collation.

The form is back online now & can be accessed here: [SERVICE HISTORY SURVEY](#)

Each response has also been used to update our members contact details ensuring that TRAAVI communications reach our members as efficiently as possible.

The employment history data provided in the survey has been uploaded to each member record and has been aggregated for use in our discussions with Ambulance Victoria regarding the inconsistent application of MSS Life Membership entitlements when ambulance transport has been required. This information can also be used should we need to advocate for members in this regard.

The Funeral Participation Request form has also been added to the website now and can be completed online if you wish to either update or make your wishes known to us for when the time comes for us to work with your loved ones to give you the bespoke sendoff you request.

Once finalized, a copy of your request is emailed to you, this can be given to your loved ones or your legal advisor if required.

The online [Funeral Participation Request form can be found HERE](#).

Membership Officer

New Members

TRAAVI's membership base, at the time of writing, now totals 525.

74 members have joined in the last 12 months.

364 Full members

106 Life members

42 Associates

13 Honorary

In the last 3 months, these 24 members have joined

John Millar	Wayne Rice	Ian Newey	David Hyndman
Geoff Davis	Nobby Harper	Geoff Marum	Dave Jones
Dave Cramer	Tony Armour	Rory Hurlbut	Harry Sheppard
Peter James	Cate Jones	Mick Jongebloed	Paul (PJ) James
Jim Reeves	Terry Lee	Olga Bartasek	Lynne Carter
Trevor (Gibbo) Gibson			

Let me remind the 19 members who are yet to pay their subscription fees for the current financial year that those fees are now 3 months overdue.

Once a member is non-financial for 12 months, they may be removed from the TRAAVI member register.

The fee of \$30 can be made by Direct Debit to:

Account name: The Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria

BSB: 633-000

Account: 213422272

Reference: YOUR MEMBER NUMBER & SURNAME please to enable your payment to be matched to your member record.



We have mourned the passing of:

William (Jim) Sleep

James (Jim) Yandle

Graham Jones

Peter Briscoe

(Partner of Leanne)

31st July 2025

6th September 2025

10th September 2025

16th September 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.

Merchandise

There has been not a lot happening regarding our merchandising. I can say that we have distributed updated Merchandise Sheets to all our Co-ordinators so if you need any items from our catalogue just ask your Co-ordinator, give me a call or go to our website.

Les Wood
Merchandise Officer

Welfare

YAYYYY...first month of spring. New beginnings.

I often curse tech and (new fandangle tech things), but I've got to say how great it is to see our gathering groups on "Facebook". Like it or not, it's the chance to catch up and share a meal or a laugh and so many thank-you's to our wonderful group coordinators who keep a caring eye over so many! They negotiate venues, invent new ideas to keep so many involved and generally keep-in-touch. Really appreciate that.

Welfare has been busy with life and sending wishes, but always happy to hear ideas or wingers if needed, 'cos life really needs support!



A little info about a support group I follow...a good bit of reading...

<https://areyouboggedmate.com.au/>

Are you bogged mate? is all about helping country blokes talk about mental health and suicide while spreading awareness about depression in the bush.

Depression in the bush is a lot like getting bogged in the mud. It might have been just a sticky patch of the road or paddock where the vehicle stopped moving, maybe you needed low range or to winch yourself out. But what happens when you get properly bogged? When it's down to the running boards, sitting on the chassis, you are not getting out of this one easily – that's the kind of bogged we mean.

Country blokes are facing challenges like never before, but it doesn't mean you need to get stuck in the mud. There are plenty places to go to get a tow, and it takes guts to admit you're bogged. We're making sure you're connected with the right hands to pull you out.

And as a final note...

"Mindset"

As my friend was passing the elephants, he suddenly stopped, confused by the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time, break away from the ropes they were tied to but for some reason, they did not. My friend saw a trainer nearby and asked why these beautiful, magnificent animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away.

“Well,” he said, “when they are very young and much smaller, we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it’s enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free.” My friend was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they couldn’t, they were stuck right where they were. Like the elephants, how many of us go through life hanging onto a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before? So make an attempt to grow further.... Why shouldn’t we try it again?

“YOUR ATTEMPT MAY FAIL, BUT NEVER FAIL TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT.”

As our lives change, so do situations and the chance to keep in touch is so important. Feel free to reach out. Know you are respected and cared for. Also, your opinion counts...feel free to keep in touch! welfare@travvi.org.au

Deb Stallard
welfare@travvi.org.au

Webmaster

Hi All,

We thought it might be worthwhile having a regular item in the Newsletter regarding accessing and navigating the TRAAVI website.

There is a huge amount of information here enabling easy access to everything our members from time to time may require.

This edition we will cover how to access the funeral planning site for members who wish to record their desire of any involvement of TRAAVI and at what level.

We know this is a somewhat dark subject but none the less important.

Some may want all/part or nothing of TRAAVI involvement which is fine but the aim is to record and observe your wishes.

Now we may be teaching many the bleeding obvious but in any case, -

The first link below is to the TRAAVI website.

[Home - TRAAV - The Retired Ambulance Association of Victoria](#)

Hit on this and it will give you the land page to our site with these headings-



Now hit the down arrow on the “Members” area which will give you a list of options. Please hit on the final option of Funeral Planning.

This will take you to an information page enabling you to click the link below. Fill in details and submit.

1. Fill the form out and lodge your request online

[CLICK HERE to accept the Offer of Participation simply complete the online Funeral Participation Request.](#)

It is an important exercise to accurately record those members who wish to state their funeral requests.

Some areas on the form worth noting-

<p>Do you wish to have.... *</p> <p>Select all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance flag on casket<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Service Cap<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Service Medals<input type="checkbox"/> National Medal<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Service Tribute / Eulogy<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Prayer / Ode<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Service Piper<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Service Drummer<input type="checkbox"/> Guard of Honour<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Ambulance Vehicle<input type="checkbox"/> Current Ambulance Vehicle<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above	<p>Do you prefer mourner flowers or a donation made to TRAAVI? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Donation</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Flowers</p>
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Also -

Do you wish to make a bequest to TRAAVI? *

If you have any problems or need further help navigating, please contact
Graeme Parker
0409 382 040

Health Report - Arthritis.

“Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis and can develop at any age, but tends to be more common in people aged over 40 years or those who have had joint injuries,” – Jonathan Smithers, CEO of Arthritis Australia, says.

Key Points

- Arthritis is commonly mistaken as a normal part of ageing. However, lifestyle changes may play an important role in prevention.
- Early diagnosis can lessen the severity of symptoms; help you stay independent and keep you healthy.
- Your GP is an important resource: they can answer questions about your condition, talk you through options for treatment and help to create a Chronic Disease Management Plan (CDMP).

Arthritis is a collective term used to describe more than 100 different conditions. All affect joint health but may be caused by different things. Osteoarthritis is a degenerative disease; gout is caused by a build-up of minerals and rheumatoid arthritis is a type of ‘autoimmune arthritis’ where a person’s immune system attacks the joints.

Your likelihood of developing arthritis depends largely on the specific condition. Dr Michelle Funder, president of Osteopathy Australia, says, “some of these you cannot avoid as they are hereditary or idiopathic (which means we don’t know why they happen to certain people).” For older Australians in particular, previous injuries and lifestyle factors may be significant.

Aches or Arthritis

Dr Funder warns that untreated arthritis can cause more serious health issues including joint deformity and severe loss of function whereas some inflammatory conditions may impact other organs.

It’s important to understand arthritis symptoms for early diagnosis. Symptoms can vary and don’t always indicate arthritis, but the most common things to look out for are pain, stiffness or reduced mobility. “Joint pain could be from an injury or from using your joints and muscles in an unusual way (for example playing a new sport or lifting heavy boxes). Talk to your doctor if you have pain and stiffness that starts for no clear reason, lasts for more than a few days, or comes on with swelling, redness and warmth,” Jonathan says.

Varying causes and symptoms make it essential to seek a professional for diagnosis. “Medical and allied health professionals will be able to assess you and your joints. If arthritis is a possible diagnosis, they will order the correct tests, such as an X-ray or blood test, to confirm,” Dr Funder says.



New Research

The good news is that experts from all around Australia are working on technologies that make life with arthritis better. Arthritis Australia's Accessible Design Division aims to improve independence by making products and packaging easier for people with arthritis to use. "We have worked to improve and certify packaging that meets our consumers' needs, including portion-control packaging from SPC and Kelloggs," Jonathan says.

The Bionics Institute in Melbourne is developing a tiny implanted device that can control the inflammation response that affects rheumatoid arthritis. Researchers hope to take the device into clinical trials over the next few years.

Why It's Important to Stay Healthy

"It is never too late to make positive lifestyle changes to reduce your risk of arthritis, or to improve your symptoms if you are living with arthritis," Jonathan says. Managing overall health, including maintaining a healthy weight and staying active is key, especially for minimising pain and flare-ups.

"Strengthening the muscles and tendons around the joints affected by arthritis is the best way to reduce pain and protect the joints. Some research suggests that gentle massage and stretching can help reduce pain," Dr Funder adds.

Infections (rheumatoid arthritis), repetitive motions, stress and some foods (especially for gout) can make symptoms worse. Although it's not conclusive, some research and anecdotal evidence suggest that flare-ups can come with the seasons. This could be due to cold weather or even changes in air pressure causing stiffness and soreness. Staying active, eating well and taking care of your health to prevent infection is essential



04 October 2022

Tags: Community & Relationships Flourish Australian Unity Magazine

Letters

Hi Jim,

I trust you are doing well.

I wanted to inform you that we have been working with some incredible volunteers from Ambulance Victoria (TRAAVI), both Graeme and Stephen have been invaluable mentors throughout Term 3!

We are now gearing towards Term 4, and I'd like to update you on the new schools we'll be working alongside to send through a notice to any interested members.

- Craigieburn Secondary College, Wednesdays
- Wollert Secondary College, Wednesdays
- Melton FLO, Wednesdays

Please note, we will be continuing to book schools and add to this list as the Term progresses. I will send updates as I get them.

For any interested members, I'd be happy to be contacted to share more details and check for suitability. 🟡 😊

Kindly,

Chloe Taylor

Schools Engagement Coordinator

E: chloe@1000generations.org.au

M: 0431 116 064

Regional Reports

Metro East

The Metro East lunch meeting was held at the Wheelers Hill Hotel on Thursday the 14th of August 2025. A small gathering of 8 joined together for a very nice meal and enjoyed a great chat. We had a few pull-out last minute due to unforeseen circumstances but on the plus side, there were 2 first time attendees.

Thanks again to Tom Rose our Chaplain for attending.

Our next meeting is due on Thursday the 13th of November 2025.

Regards

David Hadj

East Gippsland District

East Gippsland region had its lunch on Wednesday at the Bairnsdale RSL. Well attended and a good get together of former colleagues and friends.

Frank Abela also came along and gave us a brief insight into his role in peer support and the types of help the organisation can offer to assist any of us who may need it. We're hoping to venture further afield at the next gathering so watch this space for further updates!



Paul Lodder
Coordinator – East Gippsland District

Ballarat & Central West District

The Central West – Ballarat lunch was held on Monday September 15, at the Golf House Hotel in Ballarat North on a very windy but beautiful fine sunny spring day.

There were 11 members and partners that attended and enjoyed the banter around the table.

Whilst some of our members are still travelling in warmer states, we look forward to seeing everyone at our December meeting which will be held on Monday 15th at midday.



Interim Coordinator
John Head

Metro West District

We had another good rollup of Retired paramedics at Metro West lunch Friday, 5 September at Kealba Hotel.

It's always good to see old work colleagues catching up and the lively chat that ensures.

Our final meeting for the year is on 5 December at the Kealba Hotel, Hope to see you there.



Graeme Parker

North East District Benalla Meeting

Saturday 23 August.

We had the pleasure of catching up with TRAAVI members at the last Benalla meeting.

It was disappointing to hear that Leanne Russell-Jones stepped away from the Co-ordinators role for family reasons. Leanne's contribution to TRAAVI has been immense over at least past 8 to 10 years that I know of. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend this meeting as she was feeling unwell.

The Association greatly appreciates Leanne's involvement with organising these meetings.

The Committee will continue to provide administration support whilst seeking a replacement Co-ordinator.

It is always great to catch up with TRAAVI regional members and receive their feedback. The main theme, why have "guest speakers" on topics of interest? This is something that has been raised with the Committee. The "GoodSam response" is a good example, we have spoken to AV about this topic. Their current presentation needs to be modified towards retired Paramedics, more to follow on this topic.

The most important celebration of the day was awarding Bob BEGGS and Roger VIDLER with their Life Membership to TRAAVI.

A wee bit of interesting history, both Roger and Bob worked at Moorabbin Branch under Vic Civil Ambulance.

This prompted questions about the many other Ambos they worked with along with some very interesting stories. Along with the whereabouts of old work colleagues.



One interesting question posed was "what happened to the Ambulance Ball", to which Bob proudly responded that "he and Bob Boucher organised these events whilst working together at Moorabbin"

An important piece of history now sadly lost to the memory bank.

Seven Degrees of Separation.

During the AV MSS survey which also gathered information of Life Membership to AV subscription scheme, we also gathered information about individual ambulance work history. What this demonstrated was just how interconnected we all are, within Ambulance. For example, one member I spoke to started as volunteer then became an Ambulance Officer. Their son became a Paramedic as well.

As a tradie and volunteer his work boss turned out to be a business partner of my late father-in-law and the family's relationship remains strong.

In October last year I discovered an interesting connection between Roger & Joan VIDLER and myself and now extends to the NRL side Canterbury Bankstown.

Canterbury's Junior development group has drafted Roger's and Joan's grandson Harry. A normal happening with professional sport with young players who could develop into first class players. Nothing unusual there, but Harry's maternal whanau (family) are direct relatives of mine. We originate from a small country town called Tokomaru Bay (population approx. 500) on the East Coast of NZ.

So, sorry Storm but Roger & I will be following the Canterbury NRL team when Harry is on the field.

Steve Mulligan

We pass on our condolences to Leanne Russell-Jones whose husband Graham passed away recently. Leanne has been a stalwart in the North East for 10 years or so and has conducted herself with aplomb as coordinator. Through her husband's illness Leanne has sought to step back from her coordinators role. We thank you for all you've done Leanne to progress the Association, and we send our best wishes at this sad time and wish you all the best for the future. Ed.

Central & South Gippsland

The Central & South Gippsland Group met at the Inverloch Hotel on August 21st. 17 persons present who engaged in conversation and much laughter. Apologies from members travelling (all over Australia) were shared and recognition of two recent deaths also occurred. Short presentations were made regarding the upcoming caravan group outing to Beechworth and also regarding welfare services available. We are looking forward to the next gathering on December 16th at the Morwell RSL



All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor

J. Ballard

PO Box 83

Dromana, Victoria 3936

secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au

