

Annual Report 2019

Introduction

The Committee of the RAE Association (Victoria) has continued focusing on:

1. growing membership,
2. achievement of the fundamental purposes of the association, and
3. strengthening the management and administration functions of the Association.

This report outlines the efforts and activities undertaken by the Association in achieving these areas of focus.

Growing Membership

We have seen a 10% Growth in membership in 2019. Detail of membership categories is shown in the table below.

Membership level	2018	2019
Concessional Life Membership \$250 once only for those Aged 65 and over	37	37
Complementary Life Membership	1	1
Honorary Life Membership	6	6
Member	226	256
Associate Member	5	5
Over 80 Honorary Life Membership	42	42
Ordinary Member 10 year payment Year ending 2025-	3	3
Total	325	355

Fundamental Purposes of the Association

To foster esprit-de-corps between all Sappers.

Our strategy for fostering esprit-de-corps is based on:

1. Developing and maintaining close ties with Sapper associations both locally and nationally.
2. Providing opportunities for members and guests to meet in fellowship.
3. Provide opportunities for members to attend excursions of both military and engineering interest.

Developing and Maintaining Ties with Sapper Associations.

1. RAE Southern Region Corps Committee (SRCC).

The fundamental purposes of the SRCC and the RAE Association (Vic) are essentially the same, generating considerable overlap in administration and financial effort. A joint committee examined the possibility of amalgamation of the two bodies, concluding that a formal amalgamation would prove expensive and administratively difficult. However, to reduce administrative effort and improve efficiency for both bodies, we have agreed that where possible management meetings would coincide and administrative system would be streamlined and closely linked, reducing duplication of effort in the achievement of our common goals. This new mode of operation is proving beneficial to both organisations.

2. **Local Sapper Associations.**

The committee encourages and supports Sapper Associations in the distribution of information and invitations. In this reporting period we have exchange information with and promoted that activities of the of local association including: the Blue Tongues, the Woodpeckers, the Latrobe Valley Sappers, Sir Clive Steele Lecture 15th November 2019, the 22 Construction Regiment Reunion – 25th – 27 October 2019 – Echuca, and the Reserve Forces Day (modified) Committee.

Note: The Official Reserve Forces Day Committee and Defence Forces supported activities ended in 2018. A small group of like minded people have decided to continue with a smaller event on Reserve Forces Day, which was supported by a small group of our members.

3. **Other Sapper Organisations.**

We have continued to share information with our kindred organisations in other states, sharing reports and copies of the Sapper Summit with Associations and units around the nation.

4. **The RAE Corps Conference.**

Don Hughes (Vice President) represented our Association at the RAE Corps Conference (4 November 2019) which included consideration of the establishment of a national structure for RAE associations. The discussion provided the opportunity for the various associations to deliver a short presentation on their status and outlook.

The conclusion that we drew from the conference is that our association provides an excellent service to a strong membership base. There is no significant advantage in the development of a national structure for RAE associations. However, we would all benefit from improved communications between associations.

The Head of Corps confirmed that the National Sapper Association Conference would become an annual event in the Corps calendar and the Associations would receive an invitation to send one representative to attend the SAPPER 2020 Corps Conference which is to be held at SME over the period 28 - 30 April 2020.

The Association will attempt to send a representative.

5. **COCKATOO RISE at Macarthur.** The Association currently pays an annual membership fee of \$50.00 to support Cockatoo rise, a retreat situated between Port Fairy & Hamilton in Victoria's Western District. Established and Run by Greg Carter, ex Vietnam veteran of 6 RAR., is in a 156 year old hotel, the 3rd oldest in Victoria, provides a unique atmosphere, to enjoy a beer in the retreats private bar (not open to the public) and a campfire outside welcomes ex and serving defence personnel and their partners. Visit the Cockatoo Rise website to access further details and booking information, <https://cockatooriseretreat.com.au/>.

Fellowship Activities.

The Association held three activities focussed on providing opportunities for fellowship:

1. **The Annual Muster (16 Feb 19), Oakleigh Barracks.** Attended by about 125 members and guests this annual event provided the opportunity to recognise the considerable efforts of our past president Colin Bowater, who was presented with life membership of the association.
2. **ANZAC Day March and Sappers Reunion.** The march was, as usual, well supported by a smart looking group of Sappers include eight Royal Engineers. Disappointed in the lack of a coordinated location for Sappers of all ages to meet after the ANZAC Day March, the Association arranged for access to a room at the Elephant and Wheelbarrow Hotel (corner of Bourke and Exhibition Streets, Melbourne). An extremely successful event which will now be included on our annual calendar.

- 3. Christmas Nibbles (22 Nov 19).** Historically this activity has been held in the Dublin Road Ringwood East Depot. This year it was held in the Ringwood RSL, which proved to be very successful reducing the administrative workload on the committee and the heavy reliance on 22 ER to support the activity. Although adding to the cost of attendance, members enjoyed the activity and the added flexibility for drinks and a meal during and after the event. We are likely to continue with this format for the foreseeable future.

Excursions and Tours

The Association aims to provide three to four tour/excursion activities annually. The 2019 calendar included the following:

- 1. Sydney & Canberra Tour (3-5 Jun 19)** Planned and coordinated by Mel Constable the tour itinerary included:
 - am 3 Jun - 2 hour guided tour of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney
 - pm 3 Jun - RAE Museum at Holsworthy

 - 4 Jun - Navy – HMAS Kuttabul and surrounds. Hosted by CAPT Stephen Bowater (RAN), Son of Colin Bowater. The tour included the Navy Museum (Garden Island); the memorial for the HMAS Kuttabul, sunk during the mini subs attack on Sydney Harbour during WW2; HMAS Brisbane (DDG 41) a Hobart Class Guided Missile and the Captain Cook Graving Dock) which is currently run by Thales and services both military and civilian vessels.

 - 05 Jun - the Australian War Memorial (AWM) for a 90 minute conducted tour and followed the laying of wreaths at the Last Post Ceremony with Mel Constable, Michael Potts and Kevin Coleman representing the Association.
- 2. Thales Australia, Bendigo (26 Oct 19).** Twenty-five members and guests saw the Hawkei being built, over 1,100 of these vehicles are being built for the Australian Government at a rate of 2 per day by March 2020. We presented Murray our tour guide with an Association plaque then few of us had lunch at the Bendigo, Long Gully RSL before heading back to Melbourne. Report is attached.

To foster and maintain the history of the Royal Australian Engineers in Victoria.

The Association has three main areas of focus in maintain the history of the Corps in Victoria:

- 1. History Rooms** The preservation and management of memorabilia held in the three depot locations of 22 Engineer regiment. Following the signing of an MOU with 22ER, the Association now manages the maintenance of 22 Engineer Regiment Unit History Rooms. Following years of resource constraint, the Regiment's ability to manage regimental property memorabilia has been in gradual decline. With the expert skills and dedication of Mel Constable, Don Hughes and Michael Potts. With more than 2000 items and 10,000 photographs and videos now registered the Association is well on the way to restoring the management and maintenance of unit history and memorabilia.

We continue to have items donated and it is great to see the collection being supported

The Association now has a dedicated website which provides access to information on the artefacts and documents now managed by our curator, Mel Constable. The website can be accessed at <https://raevictoria.com/>

- 2. Heritage trail.** The history trail project focuses on placement of markers on sites of historical significance to the Corps. Projects currently in progress include
 - a. Puffing Billy Railway to install 3 markers at Belgrave Station, Menzies Creek Station and Lakeside Station.
 - b. The Redwood Bridge in Warburton.

- c. The Walhalla Railway in Gippsland.
3. **Historical Plaques.** With DVA Funding (\$3,500) five (5) bronze plaques covering the history of all the Regiments here in Victoria will be placed at the Regiments current depots (Ringwood East, Oakleigh and Newborough), Repat Hospital (Sappers Lane), and Ringwood RSL.

We continue negotiations with the Trades Hall Council for an appropriate design and location for the placement of a plaque on the location of the first Engineer Depot at the site located on the corner of Lygon Street and Victoria Street, Carlton.

To disseminate information relating to Sapper activities.

Information dissemination is based on:

1. **The Association's Website.** The Association established its first website at <https://www.raevictoria.asn.au/>. With the growth in our activities and the move to place RAE Victoria heritage and history research material on the web this site has no longer meets our needs. The committee has investigated moving to a "Wordpress" based site which will provide the benefits of increased storage capacity, greater speed in the uploading and downloading of heritage and history research material and the capacity to include Electronic payment of fees and purchases over the internet.

This change provides an improved service to members at a reduced overall cost. Our new website is at <https://raevictoria.com/>

2. **Facebook®.** We increased the Association's facebook® page use with greater emphasis on advertising and reporting on activities and events. This will continue.
3. **Mail.** The committee continues to provide email updates for members who do not access social media pages. We also continue to use the Australia Post surface mail for members who do not access the internet.
4. **Sapper Summit.** The committee has reviewed the publication of the Sapper Summit magazine. At its birth, the Sapper Summit, published quarterly, provided much needed information on the activities and events of the Association in a newsletter format. With greater use of the internet and social media much of the day-to-day activity and event promotion and reporting has shifted to the internet and Sapper Summit has evolved into a sixty plus (60+) glossy page coffee table magazine. Thank you, Graeme Lambert.

Production effort, content management and changing communication systems have lead us to reduce the production schedule for the Sapper Summit to twice annually June/July for the Waterloo RAE Birthday edition and December/January summer break edition. Both editions will be circulated electronically with hard copied available at additional cost to members.

Welfare

The Association provides limited welfare support through visitation by both members and the Association's Padre, John Raike. Additional professional or specialised guidance/assistance is provided through organisation better equipped for the task.

Financial position

The net cash position (-\$1199.28) was slightly better than planned/budgeted for the trading period, which is the reason for the increase in fees approved for 2020 at the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

The Association's net financial position remains strong at \$28,267 allowing us to continue with the implementation of projects as outlined in this report.

A copy of the audited financial activities for 2019 is included as Annex A.

Management and Administration

We continue to implement systems to reduce administrative workload and maintain, if not improve governance of the Association.

The main management system is based on a web-based application provided by “TidyHq”. This system is the basis for both membership management and financial management of the Association, allowing relevant committee members access to all financial and membership data/information.

The introduction of the new website at <https://raevictoria.com/> will improve member access to information and introduce simplified procedures to access electronic funds transfers for payments and purchases.

Conclusion

The Association is in a strong position improving on the delivery of products and services designed to achieve the fundamental purposes of the Association while maintaining a strong financial position.

I would like to thank the management guidance team and committee for their efforts in continuing to improve the outcomes achieved by the Association.

COL John Wertheimer - Patron

COL Bruce Murray - SRCC

Don Hughes - Vice President

Jim Davis - Secretary

Duncan Howarth - Treasurer

Mel Constable – Curator, Heritage and History

Michael Potts - Heritage and History

Eric (Jock) Howatt - Merchandise

Graeme Lambert – Editor Sapper Summit

M. Handte – Social

Jim Crosling – Old Sappers

J.H. Davis
Secretary

March 2020

W van Ree
President

March 2020

Annex A - 2019 Trading Period Financial Statement

01 Jan 2019 – 31 Dec 2019

Income	
22 ER Relationship Building (Family Day/plaques/prizes)	\$3,518.35
Activity/Event Expense	\$345.00
Donation	\$1,275.01
Heritage & History Trail Program	\$3,500.00
Less Heritage & History Trail Program (grant not yet equitted)	-\$2,907.32
Memorabilia and display maintenance	\$500.00
Interest Received	\$273.89
Membership	\$5,910.00
Merchandise Sales (Income)	\$1,915.00
Postage & Stationary	\$33.00
Sapper Muster Income	\$2,937.05
Sapper Summit (Magazine) Income	\$710.00
Total	\$18,009.98
Cost of Goods sold	
Merchandise Expense	\$2,210.72
Gross Profit	\$15,799.26
Expenses	
22 ER Relationship Building (Family Day/plaques/prizes)	\$4,503.72
Activity/Event Expense	\$892.40
Anzac Day Expense	\$339.20
Audit Costs, Honorariums, Gifts, Consumer Affairs	\$358.79
Computer/Website Expenses	\$786.59
Donation	\$900.00
Heritage & History (Memorabilia display & Maintenance)	\$3,550.47
Heritage & History Trail Program	\$592.68
Sapper Muster Expense	\$2,349.12
Insurance- Public Liability	\$499.99
Official Travel (Representative at Corps Conference)	\$608.60
Postage & Stationary	\$351.98
Sapper Summit (Magazine) Expense	\$1,265.00
Total	\$16,998.54
Net Cash Position	-\$1,199.28

Balance Sheet	2019	2018	2017	2016
Assets				
Westpac Cheque account	\$16,174	\$21,268	\$20,616	\$18,856
Westpac Term Deposit Matures 2 Feb 20	\$15,000	\$8,464	\$8,464	\$8,244
Liabilities				
Prepaid fees		\$270	\$270	
Heritage Trail Markers Grant	\$2,907			
Total Current Assets	\$28,267	\$29,462	\$28,810	\$27,100