

**Annual Report 2021**  
**(covering the period 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021)**

**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 slight reduction in our membership to 31st December 2020 but since the start of the year we have seen a growth of 5.0% mainly from serving members of the Regiment. Detail of membership categories is shown in the table below.

<b>Membership level (31<sup>st</sup> December yearly)</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b>
Concessional Life Membership \$250 once only for those Aged 65 and over	37	37	34	36
Complementary Life Membership	1	1	1	1
Honorary Life Membership	6	6	4	4
Member	226	256	264	278
Associate Member	5	5	6	6
Over 80 Honorary Life Membership	42	42	41	43
Ordinary Member 10 year payment Year ending 2025-	3	3	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>371</b>

**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.
4. strengthening and the development of ties with 22<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Regiment.

## **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 with the result that as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 the SRCC committee was disbanded and remaining surplus funds transferred to the Association.

The Colonel Commandant (COL Bruce Murray, AM (Retd)) will continue in his appointment.

The Colonel Commandant has been invited to join the committee of the Association and will act as a conduit between the Head of Corps, other RAE Associations and the Regiment. The Association will be responsible for the continued support (including financial) of any events previously administered by the SRCC such as the Sir Clive Steele lecture and Golf Day.

### **2. Local Sapper Associations.**

Although activities were severely curtailed during 2020 the committee encourages and supports local Sapper Associations such as the Woodies, Blue Tongues and 22<sup>nd</sup> Construction Regiment Reunion group, in the distribution of information and invitations.

### **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.**

Due to COVID this particularly important event did not proceed.

We have recently seen a change in our Head of Corps and at this stage are waiting on his directive and guidance in relation to the National Sapper Association Conference. It is hoped that this event will become an annual one in the Corps calendar and the Associations would receive an invitation to send one representative to attend the next SAPPER Corps Conference. 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. On the 06<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 Don and Michelle Hughes (and Zeus) represented the Association at the official opening of the Retreat which was performed by Senator Jacqui Lambie.

Visit the Cockatoo Rise website to access further details and booking information, <https://cockatooriseretreat.com.au/> .

## **Fellowship Activities.**

The Association provided the following opportunities for fellowship:

### **1. Support to 22<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Regiment**

On the final Parade night conducted on 08<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the Association was invited to provide a BBQ to members of the Regiment. This was a great chance for the Association to be "on show" and for the younger Sappers to get to know who the Association are – in the future it is hoped that we will be invited to attend and support many more activities. Thanks to the committee members who gave their time so willingly.

- 2. The Annual Muster (27<sup>th</sup> February 2021), Oakleigh Barracks.** 117 members and guests attended this year's event which provides an opportunity to catch up with friends and enjoy a wonderful social event.

3. **Ringwood RSL pre-ANZAC Day march 2021.** Conducted on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and as usual was well supported by about 25 members, family and friends - following the short march along Maroondah Highway a ceremony and wreath laying service was conducted at the Clock Tower followed by refreshments at the RSL. This is a great family day activity.
4. **The following activities were not conducted (due to COVID-19 restrictions/lockdown)**
  - Anzac Day 2020
  - Waterloo Dinner
  - Remembrance Day 2020
  - Sir Clive Steele lecture
  - Sir John Holland Golf Day
  - 22 ER Family Day BBQ
  - Christmas Nibbles 2020

#### **Excursions and Tours**

The pandemic of 2020 did not allow for any excursions. The Association aims to provide three to four tour/excursion activities annually and planning is underway to make up for lost time with the following scheduled.

1. **Kapooka Tour (20 – 22 Many 2021)** being planned and coordinated by Mel Constable with the tour itinerary to include:
  - Seymour – visits to Vietnam Vets Wall, Light Horse Park (Site 17), Tank Museum.
  - Kapooka – attend the Kapooka Tragedy Memorial Service, RAAF Museum, Wagga War Cemetery, Kapooka Military Base and evening meal together in Wagga.
  - Bandiana – visit to the Museum.

#### **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 (currently under review), 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 and Michael Potts we are seeing headway being made in the recording and documentation of a large collection of memorabilia. With more than 3144 items and 31,800 photographs and 60 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. A recent meeting with Executives of Puffing Billy Society (PBS) indicated that the PBS would be happy for the Association to instal additional markers particularly at the new interactive facility being established at Lakeside.
  - b. The Redwood Bridge in Warburton has had its marker installed but unfortunately the bridge structure recently suffered damage during a storm and work is now under way to restore it to a working and safe condition.

- c. The Walhalla Railway in Gippsland will be installed following completion of the Puffing Billy project
3. **Historical Plaques.** With DVA Funding (\$4,815.00) eight (8) bronze plaques covering the contribution of Sapper's in recent conflicts (Iraq and Afghanistan) have been presented to the Regiment and will be placed at the current depots (Ringwood East, Oakleigh and Newborough) in addition plaques have been presented to the Repat Hospital (Sappers Lane), and Ringwood, Oakleigh and Warrandyte RSLs  
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 has a highly active and progressive website which provides flexibility with online purchases, membership and events which is located 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.

Production effort, content management and changing communication systems have led 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.

Special thanks to Graeme Lambert for his continued commitment and professional contribution to this wonderful magazine which, in our view, is the premier publication for Associations throughout Australia.

## 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 (\$4,342.00) was better than planned/budgeted for in the trading period mainly due to the limitations preventing us conducting activities coupled with increased merchandise sales.

The Association's net financial position remains strong at \$54,251.00 allowing us to continue with the implementation of projects as outlined in this report. Following the wind down of the SRCC our overall financial position was boosted by the transfer of funds from the SRCC.

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

Bill van Ree - Vice President

Jim Davis - Secretary

Duncan Howarth - Treasurer

Mel Constable – Curator, Heritage and History

Michael Potts - Heritage and History

Eric (Jock) Howatt - Merchandise

Mark (Jack) Horner

Margaret Handte – Social

Jim Crosling – Old Sappers

Although Mel Constable has previously been acknowledged for his outstanding contribution, his work is now well known throughout the Corps and in recognition of this in December 2020 he was awarded a Head of Corps Commendation – congratulations Mel.

J.H. Davis  
Secretary

April 2021

Don Hughes  
President

April 2021

## Annex A - 2020 Trading Period Financial Statement

01 Jan 2020 – 31 Dec 2020

<b>Income</b>					
22 ER Relationship Building (Family Day/plaques/prizes)	\$0.00				
Donation	\$1,458.60				
DVA Grant – plaques – other conflicts	\$4,815.00				
Interest Received	\$372.01				
Membership	\$7,159.83				
Merchandise Sales (Income)	\$3,218.41				
Postage & Stationary	\$229.88				
Sapper Muster Income	\$2,451.48				
Sapper Summit (Magazine) Income	\$480.89				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,186.10</b>				
<b>Cost of Goods sold</b>					
Merchandise Expense	\$2,736.22				
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$17,449.88</b>				
<b>Expenses</b>					
22 ER Relationship Building (Family Day/plaques/prizes)	\$522.50				
Audit Costs, Honorariums, Gifts, Consumer Affairs	\$97.18				
Computer/Website Expenses	\$648.20				
DVA Grant Acquittal-plaques – other conflicts	\$4,629.90				
Donation	\$150.00				
Heritage & History (Memorabilia display & Maintenance) (Recurring)	\$434.62				
Heritage & History (Memorabilia display & Maintenance)	\$561.04				
Sapper Muster Expense	\$3,764.01				
Insurance- Public Liability	\$486.78				
Membership Refund	\$48.71				
Merchandise Purchase	\$2,736.22				
Postage & Stationary	\$499.85				
Sapper Summit (Magazine) Expense	\$1,265.00				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,844.01</b>				
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>\$4,342.09</b>				
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	
<b>Assets</b>					
Westpac Cheque account	\$19,696.00	\$16,174	\$21,268	\$20,616	
Westpac Term Deposit	\$15,000.00	\$15,000	\$8,464	\$8,464	
Westpac Term Deposit – Swan Street Officers Mess	\$21,642.00				
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Prepaid fees			\$270	\$270	
Heritage Trail Markers Grant	\$2,087.00	\$2,907			
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$54,251.00</b>	<b>\$29,462</b>	<b>\$28,810</b>	<b>\$27,100</b>	
<b>Equity</b>					
Opening Balance	\$28,267.00	\$29,466.00	\$28,814.00	\$27,100.00	
Year Earnings	\$4,342.00	\$1,199.00	\$652.00	\$1,714.00	
Funds from closure of RAE Southern Region Corps Committee	\$21,642.00				
<b>Total Equity/Members Funds</b>	<b>\$54,251.00</b>	<b>\$28,267.00</b>	<b>\$29,466.00</b>	<b>\$28,814.00</b>	