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Message started by Joe_Linaker on May 16th, 2007, 10:07pm

Title: **National President Annual Report**

Post by **Joe_Linaker on May 16th, 2007, 10:07pm**

FESR NAVY ASSOCIATION (AUSTRALIA) INC.
SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD
1430 MONDAY 23rd APRIL 2007 AT SOUTH FREMANTLE FOOTBALL CLUB

Agenda Item 3 – National President's Report 2006-2007

I stand before you today as a former national vice president who inherited this position midway through 2006, after the resignation of Noel Payne to pursue his business interests in the legal sector.

His resignation was preceded by that of Harvey Mills our national secretary. I must say to you that I fought strongly to retain the expertise of both executives but ladies and gentlemen- their time had come.

With the support of our rulers on national council I was able to present a striking engraved silver plate to Noel and a bouquet to his wife Margaret on your behalf for his remarkable service toward a better quality of life for veterans of the FESR.

Had Noel attended this reunion I was prepared to recognize his deeds before you here in the west with another worthy presentation. Notwithstanding our gift holds pride of place on his honour wall, at home.

An appreciation of Harvey's efforts was also extended him on your behalf, and I was most fortunate to have our national treasurer Keith Markey step up to the plate and assume both roles for the remainder of our tenure.

I have treasured Keith's expertise with the somewhat daunting administrative needs of an incorporated body, and thank him for having things in order for this AGM.

My thanks must also go to members of our national council who helped me make the transition to the presidential role.

Their respective reports on affairs of state under autonomy display financial buoyancy indicative of a sound, healthy ex-service organization, and given our modest financial membership of 600 plus, an organization that is punching well above its weight.

On a sad note during my watch, we lost a number of valued members to the medical legacies of their service, none more valued than the late Brian "Windy" Gale and Bill "The Legend" Jarman.

Brian and Bill were life members of our association and NSW state president and SA vice president respectively. I ask you to spare a thought for both shipmates during our memorial services of this reunion here in Fremantle.

We have the good fortune to receive the experience of Brian McAuliffe on national council as NSW state president, and thank him for taking the baton from Windy.

During my time at the helm, I have pursued a number of issues on your behalf with the Minister of Veterans' Affairs the Hon. Bruce Billson MP.

Entitlement Act, and the alarming drift to Civil norms are, and continue to be pursued by far more informed bodies than ours, such as the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council (AVADSC) under RADM Ian Crawford.

Sensibly, I have not sought to cloud our own pursuits with these important matters until I speak with the Admiral about a role we may play as a kindred affiliate of his organization.

I represented you at a meeting with the minister last October and raised the following concerns:

- Australian Defence Medal (ADM) - volunteer connotation lost.
- Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) - discriminatory qualifying criteria against RAN personnel.
- FESR Memorial in national capital.
- Inclusion of Malayan & Borneo theatres on plinth of NAA memorial Anzac Drive, Canberra.
- Membership Drive- Need to revitalize Ex-service organizations.
- FESR Delegation to 50th anniversary of Malaysian Independence.

After a number of phone calls to the minister's advisers and written responses, I can include the following in my report:

ADM- Minister Billson is aware of the disenchantment with the loss of the "volunteer" connotation and will recognize volunteers in a way yet to be determined by his department. I would like to think we are among the contributors that drew attention to this error.

PJM- Minister Billson yet to address the discrimination issue but has all my documentation on the matter and the blocking tactics employed by government bureaucrats. I understand this is not an issue here in WA, and the NAA seems to be running with the fox and the hounds on the matter. The PJM is certainly an issue down the eastern seaboard and in SA.

NATIONAL FESR MEMORIAL- Minister Billson will support this project with funding and help in kind, providing we can demonstrate appropriate management skills to achieve the goal. Our contemporaries in Army & Airforce will be invited to form a steering committee for the project. A positive response is already received from the National Malay Borneo Veterans Association of Australia.

ADDITIONS TO NAA MEMORIAL- In seeking the rightful and simple inclusion of the "Malayan" & "Borneo" theatres on the plinth of this memorial is akin to riding on a carousel. Minister Billson is passing the buck to the NAA and vice versa- I shall seek guidance from the AWM.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE- My "Matter of Membership" proposal has not met with approval by Minister Billson. His reasoning beggars belief. I quote "My department administers a number of grants programs which provide funding for projects that benefit members of the veteran community. Unfortunately, your proposal is not consistent with the aims and objectives of these programs. I regret that funding is not available for a media campaign to recruit members to ex-service organizations."

As a lifetime conservative I am jarred by this insular thinking by the person elected to serve me. Clearly, they wish to have ex-service organizations wither and die on the vine as quickly as possible to diminish their responsibilities to our community- Disgraceful.

I shall rework the document, take it to the AVADSC and seek the counsel of RADM Ian Crawford. His organization appears to be the only one left with any teeth in our community.

FESR DELEGATION TO MALAYSIA- Minister Billson is in receipt of a letter from me requesting his department fund a FESR delegation to Kuala Lumpur to participate in the 50th anniversary celebrations of Malaysian Independence (Merdeka) Day during August 2007. I have suggested on your behalf, wreath laying and other ceremonies as part of the visit. No reply received at this time.

We are on track with our bid to establish memorials to our service in each state of this wonderful country. Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria boast impressive memorials to the ships & men

This week Western Australia continues the endeavour unveiling a striking memorial on Monument Hill here in Fremantle.

On the 10th November 2007 our Victoria/Tasmania division will unveil the FESR memorial in the HMAS Shropshire Naval Memorial Park Ulverstone Tasmania, as part of the All Ships Reunion.

A unique memorial to our service is to be established in NSW during a FESR week commencing 30th June 2008. A footbridge walkway over water between Gosford and Woy Woy will be dedicated as the Malaya Borneo Bridge and our FESR memorial plaque will be unveiled on or near the bridge.

Our association is at last, now included in the Australian Government's Directory of Ex-service Organizations (P.25 of March edition) the importance of this inclusion should not be underestimated.

It is DVA's bible on ESO's, places us on their information distribution list and strengthens any bids we make for grants, funding etc. Inclusion is also a step toward removing the stigma that surrounds our association in some quarters of Canberra.

In a bid to provide a more comprehensive advocacy service to our membership, we have enlisted the support of the Queensland based Armed Services Assistance Centre (ASAC). The centre boasts level 4 advocates capable of taking your case to the Veterans Review Board, and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, as well as pension and welfare officers.

With the aid of FESR association personnel acting as conduits in the respective states and electronic mail overcoming the tyranny of distance, the service is growing rapidly. SA, VIC, NSW, & TAS are now on line and the number of active case files in QLD & NSW is growing rapidly. ASAC website- www.asacaustralia.com

The association continues to be served well by our award winning website www.fesrassociation.com and I thank webmaster Ross Jennings for his service throughout the year as well as the respective state moderators who keep a watchful eye on postings to their boards.

I do reserve special thanks to the "Queen Bee" of our website and honorary member of this association- Erica Witt.

Her vigilance and immediate response to problem solving requests of others and myself are the measures which keep the website functioning at optimum level.

I will ask our rulers on national council to recognize her tireless voluntary service with a one off ex-gratia payment as reward for her valuable service.

My thanks as well, to state newsletter editors Dennis Sefton, Bob Bergin, John Best, Laurie Shaw, and Ken Staff for their productions during my watch. I ask members not to underestimate the enormous value of the newsletters and our website to our very survival as an ex-service organization. Invaluable communication tools- please support and contribute to them in the years to come.

One of the most important elements of our association must be recognized in this report- the women and the widows of the FESR. I have written a number of published appreciations of our ladies in the past, so today, may it suffice to say that without them we would all be up the creek without a paddle.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I say in conclusion that I believe I have demonstrated an open management style and kept you apprised of all matters of association through a fully functional National Council with the most grateful support of my colleagues on the National Executive Keith Markey and Tony Kendrick.

I also believe I have pursued matters and issues of concern to members with the utmost vigour, and given the exasperation one experiences when dealing with government bureaucrats, retained the eternal optimism and enthusiasm one needs to drive our pursuits into 2007 and beyond.

I commend this report to you-

Gary (Joe) Linaker
National President.

Title: **Re: National President Annual Report**
Post by **Webmaster** on **May 17th, 2007, 8:01pm**

Dear Joe thanks for the kind words - we have hung in there - you are right Erica is the hub of all of this and deserves any kind of recognition the Executive team may be able to give..despite health problems and a workload of considerable size she has never not been there when I have called for help or guidance - Ian McClure and I think it was Shep stand ready to help also and maybe I need to work with them on this - I hope to retire soon and then allow Erica the 'watching brief' she is supposed to have.

Duty above and beyond.

Now re Merdeka day - I would like to attend if you are not drowned in volunteers - I have been back many times and would like to say thank you for the fact of their recognition - Renate and I could build attendance around a planned holiday - so let's know - Best regards to the Team and sorry I missed the AGM - of a staff of four at this site I was down to just me - roll on retirement - Regards
Ross

Title: **Re: National President Annual Report**
Post by **Ray Norton** on **May 18th, 2007, 1:27pm**

Why am i unable to print pages 2&3 of Joes annual report. Ray.

Title: **Re: National President Annual Report**
Post by **Webmaster** on **May 18th, 2007, 8:03pm**

Hi Ray - I am not sure why but have taken the message and scanned it to send as an attachment - will send via your member e mail Regards Ross