



## National President's Report to AGM 2019

On behalf the National Board of the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc. I would like to welcome you to the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and present to you the President's Report.

The year started and looks like ending with our concerns contained in the Productivity Commission Report to the Government. We should all be very pleased with our concerted effort to present our views to each level of Government in each State and to make very certain that both sides of Government knew what was on our minds. We have done our very best and will wait and see what the results may be. Well done everyone.

Representing P.V.A. I have attended ESORT (Ex-Service Organisations Round Table) meetings four times this year and represented our concerns to the meeting. The Secretary of the DVA (Department of Veterans Affairs), Liz Cosson, has also instigated monthly teleconferences which are working very well and means that we are having the opportunity to discuss issues on a regular basis.

You will be pleased to know that an issue we presented two years ago has now been legislated. We spoke to government of the unfair issue of the short time period which transitioning ADF members had in which to make use of their Housing Loan. We believed that two years was not a long enough period to settle into civilian life, seek and settle into employment, work on the family relationship and all that leaving the ADF entails. That period has now been extended to five years which we feel is a beginning.

I also visited Canberra to attend, with Lesley Minner, Narelle Bromhead, and Lorraine Burt, the Women United by Defence Dinner which was held at Parliament House. We had a lovely evening and caught up with some of our A.C.T. members as well as Rona Lunney and Bev Benporath who were also attendees representing the Female Veterans and Family Forum.

Last month I returned to Canberra with Anita to attend the T&PI Association Annual General Meeting where I was a speaker, and to hand to the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Mr. Darren Chester, our joint submission in response to the Productivity Commission Report. I also took the opportunity to have a meeting with Mr. Chester regarding our concerns regarding the Gold Card, Home Care, the Funeral Benefit and several other matters. The following day I also had an appointment with Mr. Dan Tehan (Minister for Education) who offered to help us with our quest to have a tick box inserted onto School Enrolment forms indicating that the child enrolling was the child of an ADF/Ex ADF member. Mr. Tehan offered to write a joint letter with Mr. Chester supporting this issue and also to include the information that it was an initiative of our Association.

Also in August I took part in a tele-presentation speaking on the role of the Partner in supporting both our veteran partners and in remembering to take as much care of ourselves. This tele-presentation has been accepted to be a part of Veterans Health Week so we may expect some phone calls ladies.

Our National Representatives on the Operational Working Party, Aged Care Forum, Female Veterans and Family Forum are doing wonderful work on behalf of each of us and they have our thanks.

Our State Representatives are working just as hard, attending Deputy Commissioners' Forums etc. and ensuring that you are represented and your concerns are made known. Thank you ladies.

What is ahead for us this coming year is more of the same. To continue to have our voice heard nationally, to represent you, our members, with the same determination and thoroughness as always.

To our National Board, thank you. You are all marvellous strong women and wonderful to work with. To Kitty, Chris and Allison who are stepping down this year, thank you sincerely, you have all made a difference both to the members of our Association and to our Board. We, as a Board and as friends, are so grateful to have shared this time with you. Thank you. Thank you.

I look forward to getting to know and working with those brave souls who will be coming onto the new Board. You will work hard, be angry and emotional as are the rest of us at times, be disappointed and tired, but you will know you have done your very best for our members.

Heather Evans.  
President