



The Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

National Patron: Lady Lynne Cosgrove

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FOR THOSE WHO STAND BESIDE THEM



Presidents' report

Annual General Meeting October, 2020

Hello everyone and welcome to the 2020 AGM. What a year!!!! We have had to adjust our lives so dramatically. How we took for granted so many things. I miss the sounds of life going on around me, but I love the bird's songs. I miss the interaction between friends when I am out and about at the shopping centre, but I love the smiles between strangers. Those smiles seem to say "I know but we'll beat it".

ESORT meetings are of course Zoom or Teleconference but we still achieve the same amount. DVA have done a powerful job during the pandemic, with most of their staff working from home. Open Arms available 24hours a day seven days a week. The ADF available to assist where necessary All great stuff.

I have taken part in as many of the ESORT briefings as I have been available for. These are policy sessions only. I am looking forward to the Budget briefing. Should be very interesting. There will have to be massive cut backs somewhere, let's hope it's not the Veteran Community.

The Agenda item regarding Best Funding has resulted in a committee being formed. It was first in best dressed and I apparently wasn't either. Pat McCabe got a guernsey so that will be a voice of common sense on that particular committee.

We have seen the appointment of an Advocate for Veterans Families. Don't know how that will benefit us but let's wait and see. We have seen the appointment of a Committee into Veterans Suicides, both recent and historic. My question was would the mental health care available to families telling their stories be a continuous and dedicated one. There could be nothing worse than retelling the same story to different counsellors. I was told that it would be and that it was written into the Legislation.

I think it is apparent that the fabric and structure of the DVA is altering, both as a result of the pandemic and its massive fall-out and simply because over time things change. Methods and practices etc. I think we need to adjust in some ways while always knowing that we don't fit into any criteria except our own. We are it for the partners of a Veteran.

With the acceptance today of the alterations to our Constitution we are moving forward and I know it is a great thing for our Association. My Daughter has asked to join so that when I am “too old for meetings” she can take me and my walker along. But so many of our children will join and their unique perspective on the life of a Veterans family will be invaluable to us. Along with other family members it can only add a further dimension to our outlook.

Members, during these frightening and harrowing times, I have been heartened by the hard work which is continuing on your behalf. By the efforts to make sure no one is forgotten. The lovely little touches from one State to another. I will treasure the “hug” I received from the South Australian Branch. The parcel of treats from a special person in New South Wales and the calls of support and care from all over the country. We have banded together and we should all be proud of ourselves.

We must continue doing what we do; we are the single voice for Partners. Our work is important and gets more valuable each day. I look forward to the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc growing stronger and with the inclusion of family members this will surely happen.

Heather Evans.

National President.