



**State Minister's Message  
Issue 42 (25 November, 2009)**

A regular update from the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon. Michael Atkinson M.P.

**R.A.R. National Conference**

The 2009 National R.A.R. Conference was held in Adelaide between Sunday, 15 November and Wednesday, 18 November 2009 at Keswick Barracks.

Unfortunately, owing to the sitting schedule of State Parliament, Minister Atkinson was unable to be present at the conference. The Director of Veterans SA, Bill Denny A.M. briefed the conference on the background, formation and achievements of the Veterans' Advisory Council (V.A.C.) in S.A. and how this model may be advantageous to other States and Territories.

The key issue to emerge from the conference is that the RAR Association is planning to incorporate as a limited company that will include each of the State R.A.R. Associations and all 9 of the National Battalion Associations. The R.A.R. Association believes this new structure, with a potential membership of 85,000, will enable it to best achieve its main objective, which is to look after and assist current and ex-serving members of the Regiment.

Through the direct involvement of Major General Hori Howard A.O. M.C. E.S.M. (Retd), Colonel Commandant of the R.A.R., there will be a direct link to serving defence personnel, which is critical for the future success of a Regimental Association (as opposed to an ex-service organisation).

The President of the R.A.R. Association in South Australia, Maj. Mike von Berg M.C. (Retd) is a member of the working party that will draft the new constitution in the coming months, with a view to the inaugural board being appointed in July 2010.

Much discussion also took place about the Matthew's Report and the current trend in journalism of "civilianising" the defence force, such as describing a soldier as being "tragically" wounded in battle. Describing injured civilians as being "wounded" is also a practice that is disappointing to veterans.

Minister Atkinson congratulates the R.A.R. Association on the success of the 2009 National Conference and on its commitment to planning for the future.

**Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander War Memorial**

The Director of Veterans SA, Bill Denny AM recently attended a meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial Committee where the Governor, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR accepted the role of patron of the memorial project.

**Friends of the Vietnamese Invalid Veterans Association**

The Director of Veterans SA, Bill Denny AM represented the Minister and spoke at the AGM of the friends of the Vietnamese Invalid Veterans Association on Friday, 20 November and presented this particularly worthwhile Association with a donation of \$1,000.

**Replica Firearms Legislation**

Minister Atkinson is conscious of how this legislation could effect ex-service organisation clubrooms and collectors of replica and de-activated weapons. Veterans SA is working to represent the views of veterans.

### **Opening of the Gums Reserve War Memorial Garden**

The Director of Veterans SA, Bill Denny AM represented Minister Atkinson at the opening of the Gums Reserve War Memorial Garden at the invitation of the City of Campbelltown. The Memorial Garden recognises all Australians who have served at war and in peacekeeping efforts. The garden includes feature walls, a remembrance area, bronze plaques, flag poles with a walking path and seating available. The design of the Garden was overseen by representatives of the Council and the Magill RSL Sub-Branch. Minister Atkinson encourages members of the veterans' community to visit the Memorial Garden located at Shakespeare Avenue, Tranmere.

### **Request to the Australian War Memorial**

Veterans SA has recently written to the Australian War Memorial seeking to display major items of military significance in SA (part of the 70% of their collection that they have in storage). We'll keep you informed of the progress of our request.

### **Veterans Health Advisory Council Meeting**

The Director of Veterans SA, Bill Denny AM attended a recent meeting of the Veterans' Health Advisory Council at St Andrew's Hospital.

For more information about any of the items mentioned, please contact Veterans SA on 8207 1723.