



State Minister's Message
Issue 35 (7 October, 2009)

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

P.O.W. Fraud Outrage

The Australian Federal Police are investigating the President of the Ex-Prisoners of War Association of Australia, Rex Crane. Veterans around the nation are justifiably outraged by the fraud that has been allegedly perpetrated.

The Commonwealth Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin M.P., who referred the matter to the Federal Police last week, said the alleged fraud on the Commonwealth, involved payments of a T.P.I. pension over 22 years worth "well over \$400,000".

Minister Atkinson expresses his sympathy to the members of the Ex-Prisoners of War Association of Australia who it appears have been so callously deceived. It is unfortunate that these brave Australians who have already suffered so much at the hands of the Japanese have had to endure the alleged deceit of Rex Crane. To impersonate a prisoner of war is one of the most despicable and 'un-Australian' acts imaginable, a grave betrayal of the values our nation upholds.

Minister Atkinson is hopeful that the Australian Federal Police will pursue this matter to the fullest extent of the law.

Minister Atkinson congratulates Lynette Silver, military historian and author, for exposing Rex Crane upon becoming suspicious of his story after meeting him at Ballarat's prisoner-of-war memorial earlier this year. Without her intuition and tenacity, Rex Crane's alleged fraud may never have been uncovered.

No greater sacrifice can be made than to lay one's life at the service of his or her country. When a person enlists in the Armed forces that is exactly what they do! Such altruism is rarely seen and the acknowledgement and respect we owe those who make such a sacrifice must be guarded vigilantly.

Rather than focussing on Mr Crane, Minister Atkinson believes that we should take this opportunity to once again thank all veterans who served our nation and re-confirm our determination to protect their legacy.