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THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

 EAST GIPPSLAND SUB-SECTION

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**President’s Report for 2019 – NAA East Gippsland Sub-section**

1. This report is compiled on the foundation of the Association’s pillars that underpin the Association’s mission. The three pillars relevant to the East Gippsland Sub-section are: Care, Commemoration and Camaraderie. The Navy Cadet pillar is omitted due to the absence of a Cadet Unit in the region. Additionally, relevant items from the Association’s Constitution, for example, The Treasurer’s Statements and Accounts, Projects and Membership will be detailed.
2. **Care**. As the Welfare Officer I was busy for several months conducting welfare activities for members, needing to travel some 1600 Kilometres, attended hospitals and Opal on twenty occasions and assisted two families with DVA matters relating to the passing of loved ones.
3. **Tribute to Past Members**. The Sub-section sadly farewelled two former Sub-section Skippers – Alby Gray and Lorraine Goslin made for a sad 2019. These late members will be remembered in a commemoration ceremony in 2020.
4. **Commemoration**. The occasion of significance conducted on 04 August 2019 in the City of Bairnsdale by the Sub-section, was the rededication of the RAN Memorial Plaque. Principal guests included The Honourable Darren Chester, MP, and The Minister for Gippsland, Minister for Veteran’s Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel, Commodore Greg Yorke, CSC, RAN, Senior Officer Victoria, Mr Terry Makings, Naval Association of Australia National President and Mr Alan Pappin, President of the Bairnsdale Returned Service League. The Sub-section President delivered the Opening Remarks, the Minister delivered the keynote speech and Commodore Yorke reminded those gathered of the sacrifices made by the permanent Navy Officers and Sailors at sea in warlike and non-warlike operations. On completion of the ceremony the Bairnsdale RSL hosted a buffet luncheon. The NAA National President presented two Sub-section members with a NAA President’s Commendation. The Commendation recipients were me and Tom de Voil. The new Secretary, Graham Thomas made a significant contribution to the ceremony by augmenting the earlier organisation completed by Tom de Voil.
5. The Sub-section has initiated a rolling program of presentations and commemoration based on the NAA Milestone Commemoration Services web page. Presentations were delivered during General Meetings by delegated members. The Battle of Bita Paka and the sinking of HMAS Armidale featured recently.
6. The critical commemoration milestones feature in a 2020 events calendar and the next presentation of commemoration is the sinking of HMAS VAMPIRE.

1. **Camaraderie**. The membership has indicated the social outlet provided by funded outings and gatherings is vitally important. Funds raised at Bunnings throughout 2019 were allocated against seven subsidised and programmed functions ranging from events on water and land using local businesses. This approach will be continued in 2020 as one way of providing camaraderie to the members.
2. **Treasurer’s Statements and Accounts**. As detailed in the Treasurer’s Statements and Accounts. Bob Billingsley has provided a sterling job as the Treasurer throughout 2019 and has my sincere appreciation for maintaining the Sub-section’s financial accounts.
3. **Projects/Fundraising.** Bunnings Bairnsdale provided the Sub-section with six opportunities throughout 2019 to raise funds. Money raised by selling sausages in bread and soft drinks are a significant portion of the Sub-section’s income; the other source being a portion of the membership renewal fees. Bunnings have formally advised the Sub-section of the four allocated 2020 dates for fund raising. Our appreciation is necessary for the sustained effort of Bob Billingsley and Bill Ross and when circumstances dictated Bob Hammond and Graham Thomas in support of the 2019 fundraising effort.
4. The Melbourne Naval Committee (MNC) was approached for a $2400 grant to procure additional computer equipment. The business case provided justification that the grant would directly contribute to the sustained effort in support of welfare to the Sub-section members. The MNC provided $1500 and the Sub-section procured two additional laptops with computer peripherals in support the existing unit, and a new printer. The Sub-section’s money and a private donation provided the balance of required funds. My thanks to Graham Thomas for undertaking the business case, the administration and the wherewithal to bring this project together. The Sub-section now has dedicated computer hardware for the President, as the Welfare officer, the Treasurer and the Secretary.
5. **Membership**. The Sub-section’s membership grew by eight members during 2019. All members total 61. Financial members as at 31 Dec 2019 totaled 49 and one provisional member. Non-Active members totaled eleven. One new full member recruited to join in January 2020. No resignations. The challenge for 2020 is for each current member to recruit a new member to the Sub-section in 2020. To address the recruiting issue a notice has been forwarded to DVA. The intent of the notice is to solicit expressions of interest from current and former RAN members living and or working in the East Gippsland region.
6. There are a number of individuals in the Sub-section that just get on and do those small but significant and important logistic things often without thanks or recognition. Throughout 2019 Mick Collins served as the Sub-section bus driver for our members with limited means and or mobility. Mick, accept our collective appreciation for a job well done. Barbara George throughout 2019 provided many of the raffle prizes. Thankyou Barbara.
7. **Conclusion**. The Bunnings fundraising effort resulted in welcomed funds and is a main source of income. This income provided for the welfare and camaraderie by providing **subsidised** social functions to the Sub-section membership. The membership has increased with five full members and three club members but the issue of our aging member base remains. The Sub-section’s future depends on recruiting Contemporary Veterans into the fold.
8. The provision of welfare and care to Sub-section members throughout 2019 was challenging yet very satisfying. Our efforts to recognise, reflect and commemorate have improved and the education of RAN history is an intended and welcomed benefit. My thanks to Bob Hammond and Blue Lawless who researched, constructed and presented the facts. Bravo Zulu.
9. 2019 could only be assessed as a year of challenge, of change, of growth and of achievement due of the efforts of a small collective. Thank you for your support throughout 2109. Without your support the Sub-section executive could not have conducted the Sub-section’s day-to-day business. Each of us bring to the Sub-section, knowledge, via experience and exposure, skills, values and attitude accumulated over a long period of time. Let us endeavour to build on those attributes as we progress into 2020.