



# NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Letter to Members – National President #6/2018

Welcome to all new members, may all members be energised and enthusiastic about our future.

A warm welcome to VADM Tim Barrett AO CSC RAN, Chief of Navy, a new member for Gerringong Sub-section, NSW. Our strategy remains, each member to try and recruit one new member this year. The reception for new and long term members needs to be engaging and encouraging for all concerned.

*Communication* is an important means of sustaining an organisation. Our capacity to communicate with all members has proved to be challenging. The connection with those unable to regularly attend meetings, that seems to comprise most of our members is crucial. These letters are designed to make at least some contact with every member. Being in the loop is crucial for several reasons: a reminder that we support Navy; know of events that may be of interest; advise changes/improvements pertinent to Veterans, their family and Department of Veterans' Affairs; and to provide a gateway for Veterans and their families should they find themselves in need of support. One extension of these attributes is the bond between Navy Veterans, family and friends that support them.

The majority of Navy don't realise the value of Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) until they transition out of the Service, it may take years before they appreciate the benefit of such a union. Our challenge is to grow our profile within Navy so the benefits that flow are recognised. We must be relevant, build a relationship that is meaningful to members! Sub-sections must put energy into their communication processes. We need to drive improvement, simply put, we must be better today than yesterday.

There has been a changing of the guard at DVA, with Liz Cossen taking over the reins as Secretary of the Department from Simon Lewis. We wish Liz the best as she tackles this difficult role. The Naval Association becomes vital if the unique circumstances of serving in the Navy are to be emphasised. There are several influential gateways for ESOs to access DVA. These include the Young Veterans Forum (Mark Fuller) and Female Veterans and Family Forum (Trish Dollisson and Pela Markogiannakis). There is also the Operational Working Group (Brian Warren). Each of these forums is important to the Association and our representatives do a commendable job. The primary forum is the Ex-service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) involving the National President. Volunteering to assist with welfare and compensation are particularly worthwhile activities that other Veterans rely upon.

In May, there was a notable milestone to remind us of past service and sacrifice, the Battle of the Coral Sea occurred between 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1942. This may have been the turning point of WWII, it was the first time the Imperial Japanese Navy had been stopped from achieving their objective. On 30<sup>th</sup> June will be the HMAS *Waterhen* service. *Waterhen* was lost in action in 1941, whilst deployed to the Mediterranean. As a member of the Scrap Iron Flotilla, *Waterhen* was one of five destroyers deployed to the Mediterranean immediately at the outset of WWII. *Waterhen* was severely damaged by dive bombers, all explosions were near misses. The water integrity of the hull was compromised and the warship eventually sank. Fortunately, all of the Ship's Company were rescued.

The social aspect of Sub-sections is central to many, for others the mutual alliance amongst like-minded individuals is an effective means of weathering the storm, for assisting shipmates where and when necessary. Shipmates who are immobile, visits and general awareness to assist their journey.

There have been several changes to the constitution of late. For those interested, such as office bearers, they need to familiarise themselves with these changes. In the meantime, keep safe and good health. *Yours aye, Terry Mahings*

Once Navy, Always Navy

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