

RNZN COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I have pleasure in presenting my President's Report for the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the association.

2018/19 has been a fairly quiet year for the association, with little major activity.

Thanks to the efforts of our enthusiastic Treasurer, the financial position of association remains healthy, as Dearne will explain in her Treasurer's report.

The association's blog site remains a major asset to the association in providing the main medium for communicating with both our members and others. The success and standard of the blog site reflect the dedication of our Blog master, Frank Rands, who gives considerable time and effort to its daily upkeep. I would like to record a vote of thanks to Frank for his efforts.

No real improvement has been achieved in membership numbers, unfortunately. We are not alone in this problem; other organisations are also finding it difficult to attract younger members of their Service or branch to join their association. This membership matter will remain a primary objective for the committee in the forthcoming year, but I cannot guarantee that there will be any change.

Contact was made during the year with a number of similar organisations to ours to explore the possibility of coordinated approaches on matters of mutual interest, such as the Patterson Report and the Veterans Advisory Board (VAB). A positive response was received from the South East Asia Veterans Association (SEAVA) and regular communications and liaison has been established with them.

The committee has continued to make representations to Veterans Affairs, CDF, the Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs, and the Minister of Health on a number of issues, including the Patterson review; the VAB makeup and report; medallic recognition of service in SEA; and burial of ex-Service personnel in Service sections of cemeteries. Unfortunately, these exchanges of correspondence have not resulted in any real positive outcomes or advice. The VAB report on the Patterson report was delivered to the Minister in June. It would seem that a lot depends on the outcome of the report recommendations on who is a Veteran. The decision by the Government on this definition will have an impact on a number of the aforementioned issues. Additionally, it will reflect the value placed by the Government on the service of our military personnel.

With regard to medallic recognition of service in SEA, NZDF has completed an analysis of local threat assessments and submitted a report on this matter to the Minister. Should action by the Minister of Defence's office on this report proceed at the same rate as that accorded to the VAB report, it is likely to be some time before any real decision is made and announced. The committee will continue to monitor these matters and the action, or lack thereof, by the Government or relevant government departments and act on your behalf in pursuing satisfactory outcomes.

To a certain extent these actions and correspondence fall outside of the objectives of the association. Arguably, the matters should have been taken up and championed by other associations; they come more within the other associations' bailiwicks.

However, they have not been forthcoming in taking any action and there is a possibility or even a likelihood that the Government, government departments or NZDF will go unchallenged if the RNZNCA does not take up the issues. Therefore, I seek the endorsement of this meeting for the committee to continue acting on behalf of the association in pursuing satisfactory outcomes on the previously mentioned matters.

On a brighter note, the committee has found a champion in Mr Dan Bidois, a National MP and member for Northcote. He has met with committee members, taking a keen interest in the issues we are pursuing and has tabled various questions for the Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs. Mr Bidois support is very much appreciated. He will be addressing the gathering after the conclusion of this AGM.

Earlier this year application was made for the association to be an Affiliate Member of the RNZRSA. The background to this application being made was that it was felt that it would give us a seat at the table and enable our voice to be heard. The application was accepted, and I attended the annual RNZRSA Affiliates Meeting in June. To a great extent the other organisations attending the meeting were more directly involved with welfare matters for their members than we are, but there were many items of mutual interest such as, in particular, the burial of ex-Service personnel in cemeteries.

Being an Affiliate Member also gives us a seat at the RNZRSA National Conference, which I will attend if at all possible. Not only does being an affiliate provide an ideal channel for networking with other organisations, it also gives the association access to more information than we normally would have. There are many and various personal views on the RSA and its workings, but I think it is easier to influence things and raise issues from the inside rather than from the outside. Even if we are unable to have a delegate attend a meeting, we can allocate our proxy to another attendee to act on our behalf. I therefore recommend that the association retain Affiliate membership at a cost of \$50 per year.

Looking to the future, arrangements for the 2021 Reunion in New Plymouth are well in hand, thanks to the efforts of Rod Berry and his team of Dale Leggett and Chris Bond as our man on the ground in New Plymouth. BZ to them for their efforts to date. I will leave Rod to give a short brief on the reunion arrangements and details of information on the blog site.

In closing I would like to thank the members of the association executive and the committee for their support during the year. Also, for giving me the benefit of their experience in association matters when I have asked for it. Thank you for your assistance.

Finally, a long-standing member of the committee is resigning from the committee. Brian Henman is standing down for health reasons. I would like to record a vote of thanks to Brian for his efforts over the years and wish him all the best for the future.

Gary Houghton
President

05 October 2019