

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DFWA ACT AGM – 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your attendance this evening. Your attendance and the holding of this AGM is an important governance activity for the Association to ensure it is managed in a proper manner. To that end I note this AGM was advertised by way of a notice in The Canberra Times on 19 October 2019, as well as on our website, in *Camaraderie* and finally by a direct email to members.

The Branch Committee met formally four times in the FY year but of course was also able to work “out of session” when necessary with the use of email communication. Importantly, many of the Committee members – our advocates, our treasurer, Membership Officer, DWG members etc had a continual flow of work during the year, in many cases on almost a daily basis. I take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to all Committee members for their support and the effort they put into the work of the Association.

Your Treasurer Paul Jones has prepared audited reports for your information. You will see that we again have a small surplus. Paul is here tonight and I invite you to raise any questions you may have when his report is formally tabled.

Trevor Goodhew, your Membership Registrar, continues to work hard in managing all our membership issues and your four pension, welfare and advocacy officers – Hilton Lenard, Kerry Mellor, Annette Sadler and Keith Russell - have again assisted dozens of individuals. As I advised in my last report, our advocates will be ramping down their works in the coming year or two.

Our Defence Widows Group convenor – Christine Lamb – has provided a written report which will be tabled at this meeting. The hard work, dedication and commitment of Christine and her Committee warrant our special thanks.

I now come to the significant matter of the future. In the last *Camaraderie* I published a special note to members regarding the decision of the Committee to investigate options for closing the Branch due to falling membership and difficulty in filling Committee positions. My note was emailed to members and also posted on the DFWA website.

The process will continue in the coming months and whatever decision is taken, it will be in accordance with the Branch Constitution and members will be given the opportunity to voice their views. My personal view is that amalgamation with another larger Branch – ideally NSW – would ensure the interests of members are maintained as it would allow for an ACT Chapter to be established (and thus allow ACT based operations to continue); be a relatively easy process to implement; and ensure members continue to be members of an incorporated Branch of the DFWA.

Your incoming Committee will make its decision on this matter shortly, and members will be informed and be given the opportunity to comment. Significantly, our Constitution requires members be given the opportunity to vote on any proposal to close, with a two month notice of voting required. If all goes well, a closure date of 30 June 2020 is therefore attainable.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Les Bienkiewicz 11 November 2019