

MINUTES OF THE NINETH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LEGACY HOUSE BRISBANE 21ST MAY 88

PRESENT

National Executive

PRESIDENT	Tim McCombe
VICE PRESIDENT	Kevin Gill
SECRETARY	John Printz
TREASURER	Grant Collins

State Delegates

Queensland	John Thompson Ray De Vere MC
New South Wales	Absent Absent
Victoria	John Delacca John Printz
Tasmania	Basil Breadmore Terry Poulson
South Australia	Paul Wells Grant Collins
Western Australia	Rob Cox Vera Wragg
Aust Capital Terr	Kevin Gill

The meeting was held in the usual manner with any members of the association wishing to attend , so attending.

OPENING OF THE CONGRESS

President Tim welcomed all to the ninth National Congress of the Association and thanked all for attendance and wished the congress good will in its deliberations over the next two days. The meeting opened at 9.10 am Sat 21st May 1988

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CONGRESS AND ANY NATIONAL COUNCIL HELD

The Secretary read the minutes of the eighth National Congress held in Melbourne and the minutes of the continuation meeting held at Kew (Vic)

Moved : ACT

Seconded : WA

That the minutes of May and June be accepted as read and are a true and correct record of those meetings and that they be confirmed.

That the three items a. Criteria for Life Membership  
b. Certificate of Life Membership  
c. Promulgation of Long Tan Day

which are indistinguishable on the tapes be listed for re-discussion during General Business

CARRIED

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES****Murray Border Association**

It was noted that no meeting had taken place between The Murray Border Association, Victoria and New South Wales.

**Mr Jim Greenwood Re: Trustee on AVWT Committee**

It was resolved that Mr Greenwood was still one of the VVAAs trustees on that committee

**Motion from WA re: 2% discount on DFRDB**

The appropriate letter was dispatched with no reply

**REPORTS****NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

The Presidents written report (Issued to delegates) was Distributed and the following items added verbally

**The Monitoring Committee of the VEA**

The VVAA sub-mission was tabled to the committee and both the President Tim and Brian Donellan (NSW Legal Aid) gave evidence to the committee on behalf of the VVAA  
The VVAA submission is printed in the current edition of the VVAA National Magazine DEBRIEF.

**House of representatives committee on community welfare**

The VVAA submitted a paper to the committee and the President was interviewed by the Chairman of that committee  
The VVAA sub-mission is printed in the current edition of the VVAA National Magazine DEBRIEF.

**Letter from NSW Branch re: Non Attendance**

The letter was read to the National Congress and it was resolved to hold the letter for discussion in General Business

**Motions pertaining to Presidents report**

Moved :           ACT  
Seconded :       WA

That the Nineth National Congress of the VVAA express its appreciation, confidence and total support of Tim McCombe for his consistent and effective advocacy of the VVAA in the past 12 months and for his tireless efforts on the Royal Commission and the Hogg Report.

**CARRIED**  
**(By Acclamation)**

## TREASURERS REPORT

The treasurer first reported that all states had paid their capitations and that all according to the constitution were eligible to cast their votes

### Preamble

The treasurer explained to the congress that on taking over the books of account the VVAA was in Debit and the accounts required substantial work to bring the affairs of the VVAA to order with a Debit of \$2762.69 and creditors threatening action.

### Action Taken

With the states levy of \$400 and a Govt Grant for \$5,000 the situation was turned around and there was a Credit balance of \$4,104.80 by the end of Dec 87  
The treasurer thanked the states for their levy payments and recommended that the Govt be recognized in the DEBRIEF for their generosity in supplying the grant.  
He also noted that the VVAA would be gaining approx \$1800 per year from the publication of DEBRIEF

Report of accounts (The main documentation was distributed to all delegates)

receipts	\$12,788.17
Expenditure	\$ 6,649.81
Credit Bal	\$ 6,138.36

after some small expenditures since the audit  
the Balance at the Fed A/C is \$5,640.45

### Budget for 1988

The treasurer distributed a budget for guidance showing those items of receipt and expenditure common in yearly trading

### Motion pertaining to treasurers report

Moved : SA  
Seconded : WA

That the National Congress of the VVAA gives its appreciation and congratulations to Grant Collins for the splendid effort in resurrecting the financial standing and recording to a professional level

CARRIED  
(By acclamation)

### Note.

The treasurer tabled a copy of all correspondence originating from the treasurers office

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary John opened his report by stating that his report would cover the administration of the VVAA with some explanations, resolutions and recommendations of the past year and for the future

### Preamble

That as this last year saw a radical departure to the National office with National Office bearers in NSW, ACT, VIC and SA a decentralization of tasks were required whilst keeping the focus in Sydney with the National President.

### Operating procedure

Items under this heading must include the learning process that we under went in interstate communication and co-operation particularly the need to know what the other office bearers were up to....We believe this was a great success.

Communication was our prime concern and we believe that we have built up a system that operates effectively but is at the same time under financial restraint. We must thank the offices of the state VVCS and the Gippsland La Trobe valley sub-branch

The development of a good working relationship, the knowledge of each others habits (So as to connect on the phone) and the frugal use of National funds on postage was excellent.

### Problems that arose during the year

All problems arising were solved except the problem of grass roots members coming through the national body. We always referred them to their State bodies or local sub-branches BUT their were a significant number who for one reason or another would not deal with those bodies. It is important that the credibility and understanding for veterans that we succeed in getting those members back in the fold

TO HELP THIS PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A GATHERING OF RELEVANT INFORMATION COVERING A WIDE SPECTRUM IS CENTRED IN A RESUME SO THAT EXPERIENCES GAINED IN ONE STATE IS ABLE TO BE RELATED TO A MEMBER ELSEWHERE .IT IS OUR HOPE TO , VIA THE NATIONAL SECRETARYS OFFICE PRODUCE THIS RESUME . PLEASE HELP THIS CAUSE.

### Concept for the future

Communication.

It is hoped that with the distribution of the DEBRIEF that states and sub branches will improve their communication to the grassroots members even better than at present

It is vital that the DEBRIEF mailing list is built up but also kept in an up to date condition.

#### Claims/Pensions/Welfare

It is important that details of cases be interchanged between states as well as sub branches it is hoped to build our data base to achieve easy access and to have it in plain language so we all understand that information

#### Training of members

It is hoped that training information from areas like the Victorian Govt funded pensions/claims officers course run by the Vic state branch is shared by all.

#### National participation

One of the plusses from the decentralized National Office is the ability and the advantage gained in states where "talking to a national officebearer" seems to open many doors and gives the opportunity for pressure and lobby to come from many quarters.

#### DEBRIEF mailing list

If any state wishes to covert its mailing list for any of many data base exercises it only need discussion with Grant Collins it is necessary to correct any anomalies in this list so as not to create any hardship on relations of deceased veterans etc.

#### Thanks

Finally let me thank Grant Collins and his helpers for their much appreciated work on those debrief mailing list and also the much appreciated efforts of Graham Walker as editor of DEBRIEF

#### ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS

President Tim declared all positions vacant and called for nominations for a chairman of the elections.

It was resolved that Tim McCombe chair the elections

#### PRESIDENT

Tim McCombe was	nominated by	Kevin Gill
	seconded by	John Delacca

There being no further nominations Tim was Re-elected

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Kevin Gill was	nominated by	(Indistinguishable on the
	seconded by	tapes)

John Thompson was Nominated By Paul Wells  
 seconded by Ray De Vere

Kevin Gill withdrew  
 there being no further nominations John was elected

#### SECRETARY

John Printz was nominated by Kevin Gill  
 seconded by John Delacca

There being no further nominations john was re-elected

#### TREASURER

Grant Collins was nominated by Rob Cox  
 seconded by Basil Breadmore

There being no further nominations Grant was re-elected

#### MOTIONS FROM QUEENSLAND

QLD 1. Moved : QLD Seconded : S.A.

That this Nat Congress prepares the strongest possible representation to the Minister for Vet Affairs and the Federal Government to improve the benefits to eligible students receiving assistance under the veterans childrens education scheme

#### CARRIED

QLD 2. Moved : QLD Seconded : S.A.

That this National Congress supports the Townsville SubObranch in its petition that the Vehicle assistance scheme be abolished and re-introduce the Vehicle Gift scheme

#### CARRIED

QLD 3. Moved : QLD seconded : Vic

That this National Congress recommends to the Federal Government that the following policy be adopted for the prescription of Veterans Pharmacuetical drugs , That the veterans Doctor on finding that an unlisted drug is the most efficient for treatment of the veterans accepted disability that he/she be allowed to prescribe that drug at least once with out prior approval thus allowing the veteran to receive maximin and continuing benefit whilst the set procedure is followed to enable approval or otherwise to be obtained from the DVA for the continued perscription of the unlisted drug

#### CARRIED

QLD 4. Moved : QLD Seconded : ACT

That this National Congress request that the funding for Angus House and similar facilities be funded through the DVA treatment vote as counselling is part of the treatment for veterans war caused disabilities ..

CARRIED

QLD 5. Moved : QLD

That the VVAA request the Federal Government to have promulgated the 18th August as Vietnam Veterans Day as recommended by Mr Justice Evatt

Withdrawn on the advice that the Minister will announce such in his address to the congress

QLD 6. Moved : QLD Seconded : VIC

That this National Congress expresses that it views with alarm the steady erosion of veterans entitlements since may 1980 and calls on the dept of finance and DVA to use compassion in their treatment of veterans and that they honour the commitment made to servicemen upon enlistment. This meeting notes the changes include :-

- a. 50% reduction in travel allowances for treatment of disabilities
- b. An attempt to modify with consequent adverse effect on many veterans the DFSH loans scheme
- c. Cessation of the dependents pension
- d. Dental treatment restriction
- e. Deductions on pharmacueticals
- f. Removal of board and lodging payments for nursing home care
- g. cessation of re establishment loans

CARRIED

QLD 7. Moved : QLD Seconded : WA

That this Association adopt a minimin format for Long Tan Day services and read the Long Tan Honour roll, this could be added to for local purposes of interest but not diminished

Amendment Moved : ACT seconded : Vic

That the above motion be referred to the National Executive for consideration with the purpose that the National Executive report back to state bodies by the end of June with a suggested format for a recommended service

The amendment was passed became the motion and was CARRIED

QLD 8. Moved : QLD Seconded : SA

*Reminded Sat and  
Feb 2 89 ✓*

that the association plaque tabled be adopted as the National Plaque for presentation to worthy recipients and for sale to members and other interested bodies , the nett proceeds to be contributed to the Phil Thompson Memorial fund and the cost be \$30 , \$20.50 to the makers, \$5.00 to the Phil Thompson memorial fund and \$4.50 to the National Body

CARRIED

QLD 9. Moved : QLD Seconded : SA

That all future National Congress be held in a fixed, central location with the total financial burden being equally distributed to all states by the National Treasurer

It was agreed to put the above motion in two parts

part 1. Be held in a fixed, central location

DEFEATED

Part 2. That the financial burden be shared equally by all states

CARRIED

QLD 10. Moved : QLD Seconded :

That the National Congress rejects outright the unproven assumption that chemicals did not effect veterans of the vietnam war as stated by the Evatt Royal Commission and further the National congress is appalled at the delay between the Royal Commission and the cabinets reply

It was resolved to defer this motion until after the minister addresses the congress

QLD 11. Moved : QLD Seconded : SA

That a register be kept on a National basis , available to all sub branches of the location of all graves of those who died as a result of service in SVN through the period 1962-73

Further that on an annual basis (Perhaps Long Tan Day) at a date to be determined our association make the necessary arrangements to have a wreath placed on the graves and the necessary cost being determined and accordingly dispersed

CARRIED



MOTIONS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA 1. Motion Indistinguishable Secretary to follow up

WA 2. Moved WA seconded :

That this association increase its fees regularly in line with the CPI index at 3 year intervals

Amendment Moved : ACT Seconded : SA

That this National Congress sets the National Capitation at \$5 per head per member, with the states being able to set the total subscription with the recommendation that it be \$20

The amendment was passed ,became the motion and was CARRIED

WA 3. Moved : WA

That with regard to the late payment of TPI pensions in WA

1. That the VVAA investigate whether or not this is happening,with what frequency and if by either the financial institutions or the DVA

and

2. If this is proved correct the VVAA take the necessary steps to ensure that it ceases immediately

Amendment Moved : ACT Seconded : SA

That the Secretary write ,citing the complaints, to the minister for Veteran Affairs requesting his investigation and assurance that all pensions are paid on the due date

The amendment was passed,became the motion and was CARRIED

WA 4 Moved : WA

That the National Body Make representations to the Commonwealth Employees compensation board to seek an overhaul and update on the system of making payments for back injurys

This motion went unresolved

WA 5 Moved : WA Seconded : Tas

That the 1989 National Congress be held in Perth between the 6 - 20th May 1089 and that the WA state branch carry out a feasibility study in the areas of fares , accommodation and sponsorship and report back to the National Body

CARRIED

## MOTIONS FROM VICTORIA

VIC 1.

Moved : VIC Seconded :ACT

That the National Body Tender a submission to the minister for defence in support of the members of the HMAS SYDNEY and logistical support association that they receive a "General service" type medal for there service in support of australiam Land forces in Vietnam for the stated reasons listed.

## Amendment

that the submission include the following recommendations for the medal preference

1. The Australian Campaign medal
2. The Australian Campaign medal in bronze
3. The Transport Medal 1903

The mover and seconder accepted the inclusion and the motion was CARRIED

VIC 2. Moved : VIC Seconded :

That the National Congress submitt a paper requesting investigation of the presentation of a Unit meritorious or valor award to the 173rd Airborne Brigade(Sep) for service in SVN and if it is correct that Australian and NZ forces under command in 1965 66 are eligible to that award

This motion was unresolved on the grounds that information was at hand that this information was correct and was being handled by the IRAR association and would be available in august

VIC 3. Moved : VIC Seconded : QLD

That copies of state council meetings be sent to the National Secretary so as if any items of inconsistency in operating policy is noted that that item be distributed to the state councils for consideration

CARRIED

VIC 4.

Moved : VIC Seconded : W A

that all sub branches be warned and ensure that members using the "EASY" action of using medibank cards instead of repat cards to pay Medical Officers for repatriation servive understand the possibility that as the health department is footing the bill the Government could use that situation to close down the benefits side of the DVA and transfer it to the health dept. Using the medibank card distorts the statistics in favour of the government aims of reducing veterans entitlements

CARRIED

VIC 5. Moved :VIC Seconded : SA

That the treasurer supply one 6 monthly un audited financial report and an audited report the other 6 monthly period per year

CARRIED

MOTIONS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ACT 1. Moved : ACT Seconded : S A

That this National Congress express it full support for the extension of Half way house facilities around Australia as announced by the minister for Veterans affairs and call on the Minister to ensure that any management committee elected or appointed to manage those half way houses, partly or fully funded by the DVA comprises a significant number of vietnam veterans.

CARRIED

ACT 2. Moved : ACT Seconded : QLD

That this National express its support of the Vietnam National Memorial committee and accept donations from members for the memorial and to invite those members of the committee not members of the VVAA to join

CARRIED Note Individual invitation to membership

ACT 3. Moved : ACT Seconded : QLD

That the VVAA present a plaque to Senator A Gietzeld for appreciation of his past assistance and support and wish him well in his retirement

and

Present a plaque to Jenette McKew for her assistance to the VVAA

CARRIED

ACT 4. Moved : ACT Seconded : VIC

That the VVAA write to the minister for finance to attain funding to produce a video on advocacy and case works to assist the DVA and welfare officers from veterans organizations in forwarding cases for determination

CARRIED

## GENERAL BUSINESS

Item 1. Moved : ACT Seconded : WA

that 1988 Auditor and solicitor be retained for the next 12 months

CARRIED

Item 2. Moved : ACT

That a Notice of motion be prepared that on voting rights, each state has two votes, regardless if it is represented by one or two delegates. The President being the only other person to have voting power and that only as a casting vote.

It was resolved in the affirmative

Item 3. Explanation by President

Attention was drawn to the letters distributed re: the complaint to the Government ombudsman about false statements about the VVCS made by the Minister from information given by DVA staff

A reply from the ombudsman stating that there is evidence to support our claims and his office is investigating.

Item 4. Bill before the US Congress

The letter distributed from Prof Axelson was explained and information that there is a bill before the US Congress moving that all cancer and illness listed below should be treated in all Vietnam Veterans

- a. Hodgsons disease
- b. Lung cancers
- c. All diseases caused by suppression of the immune System

The national body is to keep a watch on developments in the US Congress

Item 5. Press release by National President on Hogg Report

The press release was distributed

No comment

Item 6. Letter of recognition  
Moved : QLD Seconded : Vic

That this Congress recognize the efforts of the following persons by presenting them with an appropriate certificate  
Hon Clive Holding, Hon John Brown, Mr John Evans, Dr John Pollack,  
Mr Brian Donellan and Mrs Carla McCullum

CARRIED

**CARRIED**  
Item 7.

**Letter re-formation of NT branch**

A letter from Mr Bob Roberts, currently a member of the WA branch was received asking permission to reform the NT Branch

Moved :ACT      Seconded; WA ..

That a letter authorizing Mr Bob Roberts to call a meeting of vietnam veterans to reform the NT state branch and re-apply for affiliation be approved

**CARRIED**

Item 8            **President called for a report on the Caulfield group im Victoria**

The delegate from Vic gave a comprehensive report on any problems arizing in Vic

**Motion**      Moved : ACT      Seconded : WA

That this National Congress direct the National Secretary to forward a submission to the Victorian Attorney General and the Dept of Corporate affairs that the Caulfield cease using the NAME and the INSIGNIA of the VVAA as it does not represent this Association

**CARRIED**

Item 9.          **Record of expenses of National executive members**  
Moved : ACT      Seconded : QLD

That this congress directs the executive members to claim milage allowances ,at a rate to be determined by the Nat treasurer, for any trip outside the city limits where that executive resides when he is on official executive business

**CARRIED**

Item 10.        **reimbursement to national President**  
Moved : ACT      Seconded : QLD

That the President be Paid \$500 for expenses in using his own car on official VVAA duties

**CARRIED**

Item 11.        **Letter of Non-attendance NSW Branch**

A discussion on this subject was carried out in a conscientious manner

It was resolved that the President write to the NSW branch in the terms as directed by this Congress

**Item 12****Certificates**

Moved : QLD Seconded : WA

That there be three type of certificates in use by the VVAA being

1. Life Membership
2. Certificates of Merit
3. Certificates of appreciation ..

and that the National Secretary be authorized to procure and stock those certificates

CARRIED

**Item 13.****Deserters policy**

Moved : ACT Seconded : TAS

That the draft policy as distributed in last years minutes be accepted as VVAA policy on that matter

CARRIED

**Item 14. Gratitude to Joan and Colin Evans**

Moved : ACT Seconded : Vic

That a plaque and life membership certificates be presented to Colin and Joan Evans at the tenth National Congress in Perth in 1989 as gratitude to them both for their services to the National body of the VVAA

CARRIED

**Item 15.****Letter to John Schumman**

Moved : ACT Seconded : Vic

That a letter of gratitude be written to John Schumman for his support of the VVAA

CARRIED