



Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia

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12th NATIONAL CONGRESS
OF THE
VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

KESWICK BARRACKS, ADELAIDE.SA.

18/19 MAY 91

MINUTES

PRESENT

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

National President
National Vice President
National Treasurer
National Secretary

Tim McCombe
Nev Varley
Grant Collins
John Printz

STATE DELEGATES

Queensland
New South Wales
Aust Capital Territory
Victoria
South Australia
Tasmania
Western Australia
Northern Territory

David Forbes-Beitch, Paddy Boxhall
John Haines, Norn Robertson
Ron Budworth, (Second vote as Proxy)
Richard Culliford, John Methven
Adrian Walford, Norm Coleman
Jim Arnold, Kevin Walker
Rob Cox, Ian Hunter
Steve Poulter, Bonnie Poulter

OPENING REMARKS

Mr Adrian Walford, State President of SA, The Host state, opened the proceedings and invited the Key Note speaker, Dame Roma Mitchell, AC. DBE., Governor of South Australia to address the Congress and officially open the 12th National Congress of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

Additional speakers were :-

Mr Lionel Woodward
Brig Peter Bray

Chairman, Repatriation Commission
Commander, 4th Military District

MINUTES OF THE 11TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

Moved: NT

Seconded: WA

That the minutes as circulated are a true and correct record of the 11th National Congress and that they be confirmed.

CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE

Moved: VIC

Seconded: QLD

That the correspondence as tabled be received
CARRIED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Moved: WA

Seconded: SA

That the President's Report as circulated be received.
CARRIED

ITEMS ARISING

It was resolved that:-

1. That after AAT decisions are handed down, Press reports/ Releases be circulated
2. That the National Body continue to lobby the start of the Dapsone inquiry
3. That the National Body continue to lobby for the upgrade of the staffing levels of the VVCS
4. That any name change of the VVCs include the words "Vietnam Veterans"

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Moved: VIC

Seconded: QLD

That the Secretary's Report as circulated be received.
CARRIED

TREASURER'S REPORT

Moved Grant Collins

Seconded: QLD

That the Treasurer's Report as circulated be received and that the accounts as tabled be paid.

CARRIED

ITEMS ARISING

1. As the National Treasurer had indicated in his report that he was not standing for re-election he had tabled an Audited Report.
2. The Tasmanian Delegate expressed the meetings congratulations for a professional, well prepared and presented Treasurers report.
3. The NSW delegate expressed the thanks of the VVAA for Grant Collins in his efforts over the years to steer the Association into a bright financial future.
4. The President tabled a motion of gratitude on behalf of the VVAA expressing our thanks for his expertise and forthought as the National Treasurer. The motion was carried by acclamation.

DEBRIEF MAGAZINE

The National Vice President, Nev Varley reported on the recommendations for the re-activation of the DEBRIEF Magazine, as described in the handout.

ITEMS ARISING

1. Grant Collins reminded the congress of the Moral and operating issues.
2. John Methven spoke on the importance of the magazine to the members as well as the Association
3. Rob Cox explained the publication, format and costs of their state Magazine "SITREP"
4. John Printz expressed the importance of tone and state input.
5. Richard Culliford spoke on Advertising, Information Value as well, as the editorial policies and whether a glossy publication is needed.
6. David Forbes-Beitch expressed information on the publication of O GROUP

(It was resolved to leave decision on this subject to later in the congress to allow further discussion)

NEUROTOXIC EFFECTS REPORT

John Methven Gave his report on the research and listed the following points :-

1. That over 6,000 Vietnam Veterans were accepted as suffering PTSD.
2. That Neurotoxic Stress Disorder (NTSD), had exactly the same symptoms as PTSD.
3. That some Veterans on disability pensions may be being treated for the wrong Disorder.
4. That some veterans not helped by counseling and proscribed medication may be still in need of proper assistance
5. That there is probably veterans who could not be helped still suffering in the community
6. That there existed a simple test for NTSD
7. That a simple treatment is available
8. That co-operation by Repat Commissioner Neil Ralph was assisting in the Repat and the VVAA to start a research test in Victoria
9. That although Veterans, mainly in the Gippsland area, had received help from Dr Cass Van Tiggelen widespread assistance could have been prevented by professional jealousy
10. He tabled the current correspondence on the subject

11. That the Dandenong Hospital was a possible location of the proposed research

12. That proper treatment would alleviate other health problems

13. That some pensions could be varied with better health.

14. That Commissioner Ralph had agreed to the DVA paying for treatment for NTSD.

(It was resolved to allow further discussion and that John Methven was tasked with the responsibility to pursue this subject to a suitable conclusion)

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

National Vice President, Nev Varley reported on the changes recommended by the Association Solicitor to ensue acceptance of the National Constitution by Corporate Affairs on our application to be incorporated. (ANNEX A refers)

MOTION

INCORPORATION

Moved : VIC

Seconded : WA

That the following motion as stipulated by Corporate Affairs be instituted and a letter stating the following be sent :-

"At a General Meeting of the members of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia held at Keswick Barracks, SA on the 17th of May 1991 at 4.40 PM, it was resolved that the presently un-incorporated Association, namely the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, be taken over by the proposed incorporated association, namely the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia if incorporated.

CARRIED (Unanimous)

MOTION

CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

Moved : VIC

Seconded : WA

That the changes as listed in ANNEX A be adopted into the Constitution and rules of the VVAA

CARRIED

(With note that The NSW delegates disagreed to the inclusion of the clause re: Membership listing.)

CHILD ABNORMALITY REPORT

President Tim McCombe, reported on the advice received of what requirements needed to be met to run a High Court Child Health abnormality case. He reported that the three main items we would need to prove were :-

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

1. prove that the Veteran father was exposed to chemicals.

2. Prove that the Commonwealth Government (or its agents) were aware that at the time of the veteran fathers exposure, knew that the chemicals were harmful to the veterans children in the future, by fact that scientific knowledge was available. (Note A)
3. Prove that the Commonwealth Government, knowing of the danger of chemicals, did NOT provide protection to the veteran.

(Note A...Dr Ted Steele is researching para 2)

VETERAN REQUIREMENTS

To exhibit the difficulties of finding the right case the following is an outline of the requirements about the veteran and his family :-

1. That the Veteran putting forward the case would have to be in financial circumstances that he would qualify for Legal Aid or the cost would be exhorbitant.
2. That the ideal situation of the veteran would be that he had a child(Children) prior to service in vietnam who had no abnormalities and another child(Children) born after service in vietnam who had abnormalities.
3. That the veteran, his children and spouse could stand up to the stress of such a case.
4. That the veteran, his children and spouse were of character so as to stand up to the publicity and cross examination of such a case.
5. That the veteran knew that any scientific evidence put forward needed to be accepted under the Law of Proberbility.

FRIENDS OF THE WAR MEMORIAL

President Tim, reported that he had attended a meeting which included RSL, RFW&DA, AVADS, WAR WIDOWS, NAVAL/RAAF ASSOC and the TPI ASSOC which discussed the possibility of assisting in fund raising for the war memorial

(It was resolved to leave this in the hands of the Executive/Council when further information comes to hand)

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

President Tim reported on an approach by a student who wishes to co-operate with a visual communication project.

(It was resolved that further discussions take place prior to the national executive giving approval)

ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICEBEARERS

President Tim declared all position vacant and invited Mr Barrie Newman, to take the chair for the elections. Barrie thanked all outgoing members for there efforts.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot
Nominees:- TIM McCOMBE	8	5
JOHN METHVEN	8	11

JOHN METHVEN WAS DECLARED ELECTED

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Nominees:- ROB COX
 JOHN METHVEN

JOHN METHVEN WITHDREW AND ROB COX WAS ELECTED

NATIONAL SECRETARY

Nominees:- JOHN PRINTZ	10
NEV VARLEY	6

JOHN PRINTZ WAS RE-ELECTED

NATIONAL TREASURER

There being no nominees the chair called for nominations from the floor

Nominees:- NEV VARLEY

NEV VARLEY WAS ELECTED

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

(Chemical Issues)

Nominees:- TIM McCOMBE

TIM McCOMBE WAS ELECTED.

ITEMS ARISING

MOTION

DISTINGUISHING TITLE

Moved : NSW

Seconded : NT

that as the Vice President (Chemical issues) was an Association spokesperson position it should be given the status of National Senior Vice President (Chemical Issues)

CARRIED

MOTION

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Moved : QLD

That the National Senior Vice President make his Public statements thru the National President

(Lapsed for the want of a seconder)

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAM WAR VETERANS TRUST

VVAA Trustee Mr Norm Robertson tabled the Trust report which is attached as ANNEX B to these minutes.

ITEMS ARISING

1. ACT expressed concern where payments made by the regional committee to business houses in a small community failed to ensure confidentiality of the clients business
2. ACT expressed concern that the application form was user unfriendly
3. ACT questioned the terminology 'Deserving and Necessitous'.

MOTION

LETTER TO TRUST

Moved : ACT

Seconded : QLD

That the National Secretary write to the trust Director expressing National concern at the lack of acceptable response to define 'Necessitous and Deserving' circumstances.

CARRIED

NOTICE'S OF MOTION

VIC MOTION 1

DEBRIEF

* This motion was withdrawn as the subject was previously raised

VIC MOTION 2

NEUROTOXICOLOGY

* This motion was withdrawn as the subject was previously raised

VIC MOTION 3

RECRUITING PACKAGE

Moved : VIC

Seconded : WA

That a Recruiting package be produced which includes an outline of VVAA Achievements at both State and National level.

CARRIED

(Tim McCombe volunteered to co-ordinate the information required so that a State Branch can be allocated the preparation of this project. The project to be completed and distributed for states approval or amendment prior to an urgent release of the package)

VIC MOTION 4 ACCEPTANCE OF USA VETERAN HEALTH STUDIES

Moved : VIC

Seconded : WA

That the VVAA write to the Prime Minister with the proposal that as the Repat commission has (To this date) not accepted the same medical conditions accepted by the US DVA, They should show cause why they should not be accepted immediately.

CARRIED

VIC MOTION 5 INCORPORATION/ REGISTER OF CONSTITUTION

* This motion was withdrawn as the subject had already been raised

VIC MOTION 6 RESPONSIBILITIES/ NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Moved : VIC

Seconded : WA

That the elected members of the National Executive be designated areas of Responsibility for the administration of the VVAA, these responsibilities be resolved by executive discussion and the appointees and responsibilities be communicated to the state branches for direct contact.

CARRIED

(The National President stated that this motion would be enacted as an administrative procedure)

VIC MOTION 7 VVAA PROJECT PLAN

Moved : VIC

Seconded : QLD

That the state branches, where possible, assume responsibility for a project, allocated by National Council/Congress, of National importance.

CARRIED

VIC MOTION 8 APPOINTMENT OF AVWV TRUSTEES

Moved :VIC

Seconded :WA (To allow discussion)

That the VVAA appointed Trustees to the AVWV Trust be selected from members of the National Council or State appointees with National Council/Congress experience and that those trustees be responsible for representation of VVAA Policy at Trust meetings

DEFEATED

ITEMS ARISING

Moved :VIC

Seconded : WA

That the National Executive be responsible to fully brief the VVAA Trustees on current Policy pertaining to the Trust.

DEFEATED

Moved : VIC

Seconded : NT

That the National Executive members of the VVAA be seen in a high profile position "Where possible", on the Vietnam Veterans Remembrance day ceremonies

CARRIED

VIC MOTION 10VVAA MEDIA PLAN

Moved : VIC

Seconded : QLD

That the National Executive and state executive reps produce a written Media plan for the co-ordination of VVAA Media requirements

CARRIED

VIC MOTION 11RGH INTERGRATION

* This motion was withdrawn as it was already resolved.

VIC MOTION 12VVAA LOBBY PLAN

Moved : VIC

Seconded : WA

That the National Congress discuss and put in place an Australia wide Lobby plan

CARRIED

(It was resolved the the Vic State branch would take on this project)

McCOMBE MOTION 1VRB MEMBER SELECTION

Moved : SA

Seconded : WA

That the selection procedures for the VRB be changed so that the responsibility for the selection process be removed from the DVA (or the Minister) and be given to the attorney Generals Dept;and

That the salaries of the Members of the board be increased to encourage suitable candidates to apply for selection

CARRIED

McCOMBE MOTION 2CHEMICAL ISSUES

Moved :VIC

Seconded : WA

That the Repat commission recognises as does the US Congress and the US Dept of Veteran Affairs that every veteran who served in Vietnam was exposed to dioxin and the other chemicals accepted.

CARRIED

McCOMBE MOTION 3AAT DECISIONS

Moved :QLD

Seconded : WA

That once the AAT establishes that a reasonable Hypothesis exists that a certain category of illness can be attributed to exposure to chemicals and service in vietnam, then future claims relating to that illness should automatically be accepted by the delegates of the DVA.

CARRIED

McCOMBE MOTION 4

SOFT TISSUE SCARCOMAS

Moved :NSW

Seconded :QLD

That the minister for Veterans Affairs and the Repatriation commission make an announcement formalising the position of the government relating to Soft tissue Sarcomas.

CARRIED

McCOMBE MOTION 5

DIABETES

Moved :NSW

Seconded : VIC

That the Repat Commission automatically accept claims by Vietnam Veterans suffering Diabetes

CARRIED

QLD...Against ACT...Abstaining

McCOMBE MOTION 6

INQUIRY INTO DVA METHODS

Moved : QLD

Seconded : NSW

That the National VVAA Lobby the chairman and the members of the House of Representatives committee on community affairs to have an inquiry into the conduct of the Dept of Veterans Affairs in relationship to the methods used by the Dept in determining chemical claims.

CARRIED

McCOMBE MOTION 7

VVCS/ STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Moved : QLD

Seconded :SA

That the VVAA insists that the VVCS remain independent from the DVA and pursue a policy that this independence be in the form of a statutory authority, similar to the War Graves commission

CARRIED

McCOMBE MOTION 8

VVCS/ RESOURCES

Moved : QLD

Seconded : NT

That the VVAA insists that the minister of Veterans Affairs and the Repat commission abide by their promises made in Parliament and to the National Advisory Committee regarding increase resources for the VVCS

CARRIED

ITEM ARISING

NAME VVCS

Moved : QLD

Seconded :WA

That the Name "Vietnam Veterans" remains as the title of the VVCS

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

NO 1 AUDITOR

It was resolved that the new treasurer, Nev Varley be authorized to re-locate the banking of the National VVAA and recommend to the National Executive appointment of a suitable National Auditor.

NO 2 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

Moved : VIC

Seconded : SA

That an organisational review be conducted resulting in a report to National Council and congress on future structure, Objectives and plans for the VVAA

CARRIED

(It was resolved that Dick Culliford was to conduct the review)

NO 3 PRE-SELECTION FOR A POLITICAL PARTY

Moved :SA

Seconded :NT

That if a member holding an Executive Position in a State Branch or the National Body accepts pre-selection for a political party to contest state or federal parliamentary elections, then that member should resign from his/her executive position to ensure that the Association does not show allegiance to any political party whatsoever.

CARRIED 11 For, 5 Against (2xQLD,1xTAS,2xNSW)

(It was resolved that this motion be put as a Notice of Motion for next years National Congress)

ALND →

NO 4 RECOGNITION OF NEXT OF KIN

* This motion was withdrawn as it requires state by state action.

NO 5 HMAS SYDNEY AND LOGISTIC SUPT FORCES

It was resolved that the VVAA re-states its support for the above groups efforts to gain recognition with a letter to the association and the minister

CARRIED

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS NATIONAL COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE MEETINGS REQUIRING RATIFICATION OF CONGRESS

(a) ASSOCIATION BOUNDARIES

* Withdrawn

(b) HOSPITAL INTERGRATION

Moved :WA

Seconded :SA

That the National President correspond with the minister for Veterans Affairs re-stating the policy of the VVAA on Hospital Intergration

(c) LIST OF FINANCIAL MEMBERS

Moved :QLD

Seconded :WA

That capitation fees paid to the National Treasurer be accompanied by a list of names and addresses of those financial members

(d) COST SHARING

Moved :QLD

Seconded :VIC

That from this meeting on, States not attending be included in the VVAA cost Sharing system in default The States not attending would be charged for the cost of one delegate for accommodation and fares. *at the discretion of the National Executive.*

(e) COMMUNICATION

After some discussion it was resolved to better communication by ;

- (i) Copies of important correspondence be circulated
- (ii) All state branches are to ring Tim McCombe at the VVAA National Office (Now the VVAA Research Centre) on the last working day of the month between 9.30am and 2 pm

RATIFICATION MOTION

Moved :WA

Seconded : NT

That the motions listed in General Business Motion NO 6 of these minutes , which are from the National Council meeting, be ratified.

CARRIED

WELFARE /PENSIONS TRAINING PACKAGE

It was resolved that the National Executive prepare a discussion paper, including costings for discussion at the National Council meeting

CARRIED

NO 9 EXECUTIVE MEMBERS DIARY

It was resolved that the National Executive action a system of keeping a Diary of items performed for the VVAA and a reporting system to states for information

CARRIED

(National secretary to action)

NO 10 NEUROTOXIC MOTION

Moved : VIC

Seconded :SA

That the Neurotoxic stress report as presented by John Methven be accepted by this congress and that the matter be actively pursued for the VVAA by the appropriate National Officers.

CARRIED

ITEM ARISING

Moved : QLD

Seconded :WA

That a letter of appreciation be sent to Dr Cass Van Tiggelen

CARRIED

NO 11 REQUEST FROM K SMITH (TAS)

It was resolved that each State branch, if it so wishes, are asked to write a letter in support of the endeavors of Kevin Smith.

CARRIED

(Those wishing are to write to Kevin Walker, Tas State secretary for further details)

NO 12 HOSPITAL INTERGRATION

Moved : WA

Seconded :ACT

That the VVAA National policy on Hospital intergration be amended to delete the reference to "Priority of Access" and substitute the words "Guaranteed Access"

CARRIED

NO 13 UPDATE OF VVAA POLICY

Moved :WA

Seconded :VIC

That the VVAA National Executive re-circulate the National Policy of the VVAA 4 weeks after each National Congress and Council in a dated format so as to help each state update with current policy.

CARRIED

NO 14 MEDALLION PROJECT

That the VVAA support a Medallion issue by Goldcorp and that the proceeds (if any) be distributed as follows :-

VVAA	36%	=	36%
States	8% ea	=	64%
		Total	100%

CARRIED (NSW abstained)

NO 15 GULF VETERANS (Letter, dated 11 May 91, Fm NSW Refers)

Moved :NSW

Seconded : QLD

That the VVAA assist and invite Gulf Veterans to become members of our association

DEFEATED

NO 16 CURRENT STATUS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Moved :ACT

That the VVAA lobby the Minister for Defence that the Association deplores the state of the Armed Forces.

* This motion was declared out of order on the grounds that the VVAA constitution does not allow items unless connected to the welfare of association members.

NO 17 VOTE OF THANKS

Moved :TAS

Seconded : QLD

That a vote of thanks to the SA state branch be minuted as thanks for their hosting of this congress.

CARRIED

NO 18 SAP FUNDING

The NT Delegate re-interated the need for Association support in gaining SAP refunding and that this support was forthcoming.

CARRIED

NO 19 EXECUTIVE MAIL LIST FOR SITREP

It was resolved that a Mailing list be forwarded to the WA state Branch for assistance in SITREP delivery.

CARRIED

NO 20 INTERSTATE CHANGE / MEMBERSHIP

It was resolved that notice of Veterans change of address on transfer or moving inter state be forwarded to the new states if possible.

CARRIED

NO 21 GRANT TO HOST STATE BRANCH

Moved : SA

Seconded :TAS

That this congress grant an amount up to \$1,000 towards congress costs as well as future congress's, to the host state branch.

CARRIED

NO 22 LIFEMEMBERSHIP

Moved :SA

Seconded :QLD

That the retiring National Treasurer, Mr Grant Collins be endowed as a lifemember (National) of the VVAA.

CARRIED

NO 23 LIFEMEMBERSHIP

Moved :NSW

Seconded :WA

That lifemembership(National) be bestowed on the following :-

- (1) Mr Norm Robertson
- (2) Mr Don Wilson
- (3) Mr Graham Walker

CARRIED

NO 24 CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Moved :NSW

Seconded :QLD

That a Certificate of Appreciation be presented to Mr Justice Meres, Retiring chairman of the AVWV Trust

CARRIED

NO 25 PURCHASE OF FAX

Moved :VIC

Seconded :QLD

That arrangements be made within the National Executive for purchase of 2 x Fax machines so as to allow machines for the President and Treasurer.

CARRIED

NO 26 MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE

SA promoted sale of Video's (1,000 years War)

available from:David James,Republic Home Video,547 Balcombe Rd,
Black Rock.Vic.3193 (03)5893460

NO 27 RIDER TO MOTION

Moved :NT

Seconded :ACT

That the following be added to the motion General Business,
NO 6(d) "At the discretion of the National Executive"

CARRIED

NO 29 VOTE OF THANKS

Moved : VIC

Seconded :SA

That a vote of thanks for the efforts given to the VVAA as
National President be expressed to Tim and that we look forward
to his continued support in the chemical issues area

CARRIED BY ACCLIMATION

Meeting closed at 4 10 pm