

Royal Australian Engineer Association of Victoria (Incorporated)

Annual Report 2024

(covering the period 30th March 2023 – 11th April 2024)

Introduction

The Committee of the RAE Association (Victoria) has continued focusing on:

1. growing membership,
2. achievement of the fundamental purposes of the association, and
3. strengthening the management and administration functions of the Association.

This report outlines the efforts and activities undertaken by the Association in achieving these areas of focus.

Growing Membership

Membership of the Association is its future and currently we are seeing this aspect under pressure. In the last 12 months we have seen a small increase in the overall numbers, but we are still having trouble penetrating the Regiment to gain complete support of the younger members. Whilst we enjoy a good relationship with the Regiment and have seen a steady number of applications it is unclear why we have encountered this reluctance to join the Association.

At the time of preparing this report we still had several outstanding memberships (24) which could be the result of the cost-of-living pressures or simply a change in circumstances. This number is higher than in the past and we are certainly spending more time trying to encourage renewal of memberships. It could be argued that we should have quality rather than quantity for members.

As of 20th March 2024, our membership numbers stood at 381.

Detail of membership categories is shown in the table below.

Membership level (31st December yearly)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Concessional Life Membership \$250 once only for those Aged 65 and over	37	37	34	37	39	37
Complementary Life Membership	1	1	1	1	1	1
Honorary Life Membership	6	6	4	4	3	3
Member	226	256	264	276	278	287
Associate Member	5	5	6	7	9	10
Over 80 Honorary Life Membership	42	42	41	45	42	43
Ordinary Member 10-year payment Year ending 2025-	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	325	355	353	373	375	384

Fundamental Purposes of the Association

To foster esprit-de-corps between all Sappers.

Our strategy for fostering esprit-de-corps is based on:

1. Developing and maintaining close ties with Sapper associations both locally and nationally.
2. Providing opportunities for members and guests to meet in fellowship.
3. Provide opportunities for members to attend excursions of both military and engineering interest.
4. strengthening and the development of ties with 22nd Engineer Regiment.

Developing and Maintaining Ties with Sapper Associations.

1. The RAE Southern Region Corps Committee (SRCC).

The SRCC transferred funds to the RAE Association of Victoria on 31st December 2021. The Colonel Commandant Southern Region, COL Bruce Murray, AM (Retd), is now a co-opted committee member of the Association and acts as a conduit between the Head of Corps, other RAE Associations and the Regiment. The Association is responsible for the continued support (including financial) of events previously administered by the SRCC such as the Sir Clive Steele memorial lecture and Golf Day.

2. Local Sapper Associations.

The Association retains positive links with local Sapper Associations such as the Woodpeckers, Blue Tongues and 22nd Construction Regiment Reunion group. The Woodpecker's Association has wound up and negotiations are currently being undertaken to consider transfer of membership and some assets.

3. Other Sapper Organisations.

We have continued to share information with our kindred organisations in Victoria and other RAE Associations and units around the nation by sharing reports and copies of the Sapper Summit.

4. The RAE Corps Conference.

The Corps Conference was conducted on 17th October 2023 with the Colonel Commandant Southern Region representing our written annual report on the Association.

Fellowship Activities.

The Association provided the following opportunities for fellowship and camaraderie:

1. Final Parade, 22nd Engineer Regiment. On the final Parade night conducted on 2nd December 2023 the Association was invited to attend the Regiment's end of year parade and provide a BBQ to members and families. The opportunity was also taken for the Association to present the Annual RAE Association Victoria Awards.
2. The 2023 RAEAV Awards. At the final parade the Annual RAEAV awards were announced. Most Outstanding Sapper, LCPL Robyn Baddock; Most Outstanding Junior NCO, LCPL Kate Moyle and Most Outstanding Young Officer, LT Michael Plant.
3. The Annual Sapper Muster. The Sapper Muster was conducted on 2nd March 2024 at conducted at Oakleigh Barracks. About 125 members and guests attended this year's event which provided an opportunity to catch up with friends and enjoy a wonderful social event. One Life Member was in attendance, Rob Youl OAM, RFD. Brigadier David Wainwright DSC, AM, along with our Patron Colonel John Wertheimer AM, RFD and Colonels Bruce Murray AM, Michelle McComack and Sharon Coates CSC were also warmly welcomed. RSM of 22 ER, WO1 Tom Jesser, formally represented the Regiment. Apologies were received from the Head of Corps, Brigadier Say DSC, the Corps RSM WO1 Russel Peel, CO 22 ER, LTCOL Russell Collins and BRIG Hutch Hutchinson DSC. Stewart (Ace) Williams, a valued sponsor, was also in attendance and had travelled from Cairns.

4. Christmas Function. The annual Christmas (Saint Barbara) function was held on 1st December 2022 at the Croydon RSL. This event allowed members to gather in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.
5. Remembrance Day. The Association was formally represented at the Ringwood RSL, the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, and the Warrandyte RSL Remembrance Day Commemorations.
6. The following activities were also conducted: Corps 121st Birthday at the Belgrave/Upwey RSL on 1st July 2023, the Sir Clive Steele Memorial Lecture and the Sir John Holland Golf Day.

Excursions and Tours

The Association aims to provide a variety of excursion and tours annually.

1. Fire Services Museum & Old Treasury building (02nd April 2023). A day tour was organised with 25 people attending with the day ending with a lunch.
2. Kapooka Tragedy Commemoration. The Kapooka Tragedy Commemoration was conducted during the period 20 – 22 May 2023. The Secretary of the Association, Jim Davis, laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.
3. Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. A tour was conducted of the Veteran services and memorial aspects of the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital on 14th September 2023. This coincided with Australia Peacekeeping Day

To foster and maintain the history of the Royal Australian Engineers in Victoria.

The Association has four main areas of focus in maintaining the history of the Corps in Victoria:

1. History Rooms. The Association manages the preservation and collection of memorabilia for the 22 Engineer Regiment unit history rooms in three depot locations under a memorandum of understanding (MOU). This MOU is reviewed from time to time. With more than 3144 items and 31,800 photographs and 60 videos now registered, the Association is well advanced in the management and maintenance of RAE history and memorabilia in Victoria. The Association continues to have items donated and has secured further storage facilities at Oakleigh Barracks. The Association has a dedicated website that provides access to information on the artefacts and documents now managed by our curator, Mel Constable. More volunteers are always welcome to assist with the collection, display, and management of the collection. The website can be accessed at <https://raevictoria.com/>
2. Heritage Trail. The history trail project focuses on placement of markers on sites of historical significance to the Corps. A renewed focus on selecting and installing plaques on significant sites around the country is needed. Volunteers are invited to continue this important work.
3. Historical Plaques. The placement of a plaque at the Trades Hall Council to recognise the location of the first Engineer Depot at the site located on the corner of Lygon Street and Victoria Street, Carlton is complete. The outstanding efforts of our Patron John Wertheimer, along with the late Colin Bowater and Bruce Campbell, are acknowledged.
4. History Book. The book, *Forests, Fires and Fortifications*, the Platinum (70th) History of 22nd Engineer Regiment 1950 – 2020 chronicles the history of the construction elements of the current regiment (Headquarters 22 Engineer Regiment, 105 Construction Squadron and 203 Works Section). It is intended to be completed as an electronic copy. A further history volume is envisaged to tell the story of the supporting Associations along with a third volume to focus on Victorian Combat Field/ Engineers. These are large undertakings and will require further volunteers.

To disseminate information relating to Sapper activities.

Information dissemination is based on:

1. The Association's Website. The Association has a highly active and progressive website which provides flexibility with online purchases, membership and events which is located at <https://raevictoria.com/>
2. Facebook®. We increased the Association's facebook® page use with greater emphasis on advertising and reporting on activities and events. This will continue.
3. Mail. The committee continues to provide email updates for members who do not access social media pages. We also continue to use the Australia Post surface mail for members who do not access the internet.
4. Sapper Summit. The Association magazine, Sapper Summit, continues to provide informative and enjoyable articles and reports of RAE activities in Victoria. The Editor, Michael Potts, seeks contributions from any source.

Welfare

The Association provides limited welfare support through visitation by both members and the Association's Padre, John Raika. Additional professional or specialised guidance/assistance is provided through organisations dedicated to this task (RSL, Legacy, Open Arms etc). Increased exposure to the RAE Overwatch organisation is a positive method of ensuring that individual Association Members can assist in providing frontline welfare support to individuals in need.

Management and Administration

The overall management and administrative procedures within the Association are well established and in line with current practices.

Financial position

The Association's financial position remains strong allowing us to continue with the implementation of various projects as outlined in the financial reports.

The financial accounts have been audited by independent auditors.

Administrative Systems

The Association continues to implement systems to reduce administrative workload whilst improving overall governance of the Association.

The main management system is based on a web-based application provided by "TidyHq". This system is the basis for both membership management and financial management of the Association, allowing relevant committee members access to all financial and membership data/information.

The introduction of the new website at <https://raevictoria.com/> has improve member access to information and introduce simplified procedures to access electronic funds transfers for payments and purchases.

The Association is in a strong position improving on the delivery of its products and services designed to achieve the fundamental purposes of the Association whilst maintaining a strong financial position.

Committee of Management

We would like to thank the management committee and guidance team for their efforts in continuing to improve the outcomes achieved by the Association.

COL John Wertheimer AM, RFD - Patron

COL Bruce Murray AM - Colonel Commandant

LTCOL John Raike - Association Padre
(to be replaced by CAPT Kirsten Linden in July)

Committee

LTCOL Don Hughes (Retd) - President
LTCOL Todd MacDougall (Retd) - Vice President
Jim Davis - Secretary
Duncan Howarth – Treasurer
Mel Constable - Curator, Heritage, and Tours
Michael Potts - Editor Sapper Summit
Eric (Jock) Howatt JP – Merchandise and Fundraising
Margaret Handte - Social
MAJ Mark Shanks RFD (Retd) – Golf and Latrobe Valley area representative

Life Members

MAJ Austin Byrne RFD (Retd)
Mr Norm Dodgson (RIP)
MAJ Les Malseed ED (Retd) (RIP)
LTCOL Colin Bowater RFD (Retd) (RIP)
MAJ Bruce Campbell RFD, ED (RIP)
LTCOL Rob Youl OAM, RFD (Retd)

22 Engineer Regiment.

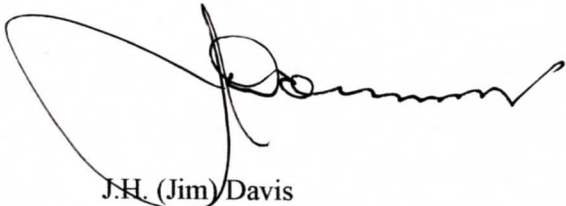
The Association warmly appreciates the ongoing support to all the Association's activities from 22 Engineer Regiment. In particular: the Commanding Officer LTCOL Scott D'Rozario, the RSM WO1 Tom Jesser and our Liaison Officers CAPT Ogi Javanovic and SGT Justin Merritt.

Succession Planning

A formal succession planning system is established within the Association. The vision is to have all positions filled, with future members identified and assisting the current incumbent. There is scope for additional functions to be included: heritage trail, history rooms, commemorative activities, Sapper Summit research and writing, visits and tours and sporting representatives. Regional representative and event organisers are also sought.

Conclusion

Overall, the Association is in a sound financial position with good reserves whilst it continues to actively achieve its fundamental purposes. Although the membership base is steady, further improvement could be directed towards recruiting current serving sappers throughout Victoria.



J.H. (Jim) Davis

Secretary

21st March 2024



D.C. (Don) Hughes

President

March 2024

RAE ASSOCIATION OF VIC INC

REG NO: A0046126U

AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

To the Members,

RAE ASSOCIATION OF VIC INC

Scope

We have audited the financial statements being a special purpose Financial Report of the RAE Association of Vic Inc for the year ended 31st December 2023

- Statement of Profit or Loss
- Statement of financial Position

The Members are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial Report and the information obtained therein and have determined that the accounting policies used in forming the Financial Report are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Victoria), and are appropriate to meet the needs of the Members. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial Report in order to express an opinion to the Members of the incorporated body.

Auditor's Responsibility

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial Report is free of material misstatements. The procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the Financial Report and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether in all material respects, the Financial Report is presented fairly in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Victoria).

There has been nothing brought to our attention that would lead us to conclude the financial records as provided by the RAE Association of Vic Inc would prevent the financial Report being prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting standards.

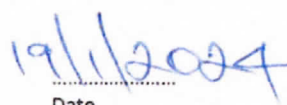
The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the Financial Report of the RAE Association of Vic Inc has been presented in a way to exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position of RAE Association of Vic Inc for the year ended 31st December 2023 in accordance with the Association Incorporation Act 2012 (Victoria).



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Date