

# Veterans' Voice

[www.veteranssa.agd.sa.gov.au](http://www.veteranssa.agd.sa.gov.au)



July 2010

## A Message from the Minister for Veterans' Affairs



On Wednesday 24 March, 2010, I was sworn in as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, the Hon. Michael

Atkinson M.P., who did an excellent job as the inaugural Minister for Veterans' Affairs. He was instrumental in establishing the portfolio and working in close partnership with the veterans' community, in particular via the Veterans' Advisory Council (V.A.C.).

My first duty as Minister for Veterans' Affairs was to attend the 4th Annual Veterans' Race Day held at the Balaklava Race Course. The Balaklava Racing Club, the R.S.L. and the T.P.I. Association supported what was a successful event for veterans, family, friends and the public who enjoyed a day of racing and entertainment.

On 15 April, I attended a V.A.C. meeting. This truly representative group of ex-servicemen and women, so ably led by Sir Eric Neal, is a priceless resource that I will no doubt regularly call upon for advice on matters of concern to veterans. At this meeting I heard loud and clear concerns about the Matthews Review into the indexation of military superannuation, health services for veterans, the concessional treatment of veterans and the special needs of veterans as a result of the unique nature of military service.

I then wrote to the Premier and asked him to send representations on your behalf to the Prime Minister about the V.A.C.'s dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Matthews review. I am pleased to tell you that the Premier wrote to Prime Minister Gillard on 1 July, 2010. Premier Rann has asked the Prime Minister for her views on the matter and, if the matter is to be investigated further, when such an investigation may take place. This strong advocacy from the Premier shows the respect and loyalty he has for your community.

ANZAC Day is arguably the most important day of commemoration in Australia. It's a day when we remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure we can enjoy the lifestyle we have today. It was pleasing to see such large numbers of South Australians attending ANZAC Eve Youth Vigils, Dawn Services and Marches around the State.

While not a veteran myself, I feel a strong connection to the veterans' community through the service of my father, 4719831 Private Laurence John Snelling who served in Vietnam with 1A.R.U., 1R.A.R. and 5R.A.R. between October 1968 and May 1969.

I look forward to being a strong advocate on your behalf at both the State and Federal level and to meeting members of the veterans' community.

The Hon. Jack Snelling M.P.  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs



Minister Snelling and Sir Eric present V.A.C. members Bill Schmitt A.M. (above) and Brenda Fergusson (below) with birthday gifts.

Ex-service organisations are encouraged to invite Minister Snelling to meet with their membership.

Invitations can be directed to:

The Hon. Jack Snelling M.P.  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
G.P.O. Box 1838  
ADELAIDE S.A. 5001  
Phone: (08) 8226 8552  
Email: [veteranssa@agd.sa.gov.au](mailto:veteranssa@agd.sa.gov.au)

## This Company of Brave Men: The Gallipoli V.C.s Exhibition

Minister Snelling encourages members of the veterans' community to attend the 'This Company of Brave Men: The Gallipoli V.C.s exhibition' at the State Library of South Australia.

The exhibition is open from 25 June till 8 August, 2010. Guided tours are conducted daily Monday to Friday at 10.30am, 12.00pm, 1.00pm, 2.00pm and 3.00pm. Entry and guided tours are FREE.

The exhibition was opened on Friday 25 June, 2010 by the Premier of South Australia, the Hon. Mike Rann M.P., in a ceremony attended by Mr Keith Payne V.C. his wife Flo, son Ron and the families of some of the recipients.

This is a rare opportunity for visitors to see these important symbols of the ANZAC experience.



*Major-General Steve Gower, Director, Australian War Memorial, S.A. Premier Mike Rann & wife Sasha Carruozzo and Alan Smith, Director of the State Library at the exhibition launch.*

## I was only 19

It is the anthem of the Vietnam veteran movement and I cannot hear it without the memories flooding back. Released in 1983 and sung by Redgum frontman and great Vietnam veteran supporter, John Schumann, it truly captures much of what Vietnam meant to many who went there. But what of the story? Have you ever asked yourself whose story this is? Who was the guy who was "only 19"? For South Australians the answer has always been on your doorstep!

Laconic Aussie Mick Storen is your man! Mick is the brother of Denise who is married to John Schumann.

The ever alert among you will instantly see the link to the first line of the song



*John Schumann and Mick Storen*

"Mum and dad and Denny (Denise) saw the passing out parade at Puckapunyal". Mick enlisted in 1968 and after recruit training, he was posted to 6R.A.R. Mick returned from Vietnam in 1970 and married Anne in 1972.

Denise met John in 1982 and John had the idea for a song about Vietnam veterans. Mick tells me that many cans of beer were consumed at Denise's place one night and Mick reckons he was lucky to get home alive. When Mick first heard the song he was rendered speechless. John wanted to know if he had created an authentic article. Mick thought it was fantastic! I venture to say every Vietnam veteran feels likewise.

Mick and Anne have two daughters and two grandchildren. For the record, Mick turned 21 while he was in Vietnam. 6R.A.R. was certainly involved in a mine incident on 21 July, 1969 - "the day that mankind kicked moon" - but - the bit about Frankie going home in June wasn't strictly accurate. Going home in July didn't have the same ring to it - so according to pop history, Frankie was "going home in June".

*Bill Denny A.M., Director, Veterans SA*

## Centenary of ANZAC

The period 2014 till 2018 will mark the centenary of World War One. Earlier this year the Commonwealth Government announced a National Commission on the Commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary.

The National Commission is tasked with receiving suggestions from the Australian community about how we should honour and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have fought and served in all the wars of the last hundred years, and those who stayed behind on the home front.

For more information about how to make a submission visit [www.anzaccentenary.gov.au](http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au). Submissions close on 17 September, 2010.

## Taxi Driver Training

In response to concerns raised by the Consultative Council of Ex-Service Organisations, the Veterans' Advisory Council (V.A.C.) has addressed the treatment of elderly veterans by taxi drivers.

At the invitation of the President of the Taxi Council of South Australia, Mr Wally Sievers, the V.A.C. nominated Jennifer Dowling and Laurie Lewis A.M. to attend a future training session and work on a plan to improve taxi services.

Veterans wishing to make suggestions on how taxi services can be improved may wish to contact Veterans SA on 8226 8552.



*Wally Sievers and Laurie Lewis A.M.*

## Trojan's Trek 2010

Trojan's Trek is an initiative of the R.A.R. Association (S.A.). It is culture specific (delivered by veterans) and may be defined as a victim to warrior experience.

This year's Trek will be conducted from 19 to 24 September in the North Flinders Ranges. The trek is drug and alcohol free and is cost free ex Adelaide.

Younger veterans, i.e. post Vietnam, are the target group. The project will cater for up to 12 volunteers identified as individuals who may benefit from the experience. Some may still be serving and some will not be clients of D.V.A. The program will be delivered by veterans who have faced and overcome the issues that now confront younger veterans.

Younger veterans wishing to participate in Trojan's Trek 2010 are invited to contact Project Director, Moose Dunlop on 0408 088 886 or moose@olis.net.au

## Aboriginal Veterans' Commemorative Service

Aboriginal veterans were honoured at the fourth annual Aboriginal Veterans' Commemorative Service on Friday, 28 May, 2010 at the South Australian National War Memorial, North Terrace, Adelaide. The Director of Veterans SA, Bill Denny A.M. was pleased that around 200 people attended the Service.

Aboriginal Australians have served with distinction but very little recognition in every conflict in which Australia has been involved, from the Boer War and Gallipoli to Iraq and Afghanistan.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial is currently being planned and will be constructed adjacent to the Torrens Parade Ground. Commemorative pavers can be purchased and funds will be directed towards the cost of the memorial. Details can be obtained at



*Ngarrindjeri Elder Major Sumner conducting the smoking ceremony.*

[www.premcab.sa.gov.au/dpc/departments\\_aard.html](http://www.premcab.sa.gov.au/dpc/departments_aard.html) or by telephoning Andy Robb on 8226 8881.

## Expressway Pays Tribute to Service and Sacrifice

Australia's most famous military battles will be honoured along the almost-complete Northern Expressway. The joint State and Commonwealth funded 23km expressway will cut travel times between Adelaide and the outer north by up to 20 minutes.

The Veterans' Advisory Council was closely consulted in selecting the names of the five expressway interchanges, now poignantly known as:

- Hamel (Penfield Road interchange);
- Tobruk (Heaslip Road interchange);
- Kokoda (Curtis Road interchange);
- Kapyong (Angle Vale Road interchange); and
- Long Tan (Two Wells Road interchange).

Hamel, Tobruk, Kokoda, Kapyong and Long Tan are sacred places for all Australians, having helped shape the destiny of our nation.

The bridges represent our role in all major conflicts of the last century. They represent some of the most important battles in which our nation has been involved.

These are locations of heroism, sacrifice and devotion. Each bridge will have adjacent interpretive signage erected.

For further information visit: [www.northernexpressway.sa.gov.au](http://www.northernexpressway.sa.gov.au)

### Veterans' Radio Updates

Weekly Updates are featured on the following radio shows from the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon. Jack Snelling M.P.

V.V.F.	Tuesday 6pm – 8pm	88.7FM (Coast FM)
V.V.A.	Thursday 7pm – 8pm	1197AM (5RPH)
R.S.L.	Thursday 6pm – 6.15pm	1197AM (5RPH)
Vietnam Veterans	Monday 6pm – 8pm	105.1FM (TraxFM)

### Did you know?

Eligible persons with a disability who are T.P.I. may request to purchase a Fleet SA vehicle from State Government Auctions at a fixed price prior to auction.

For more information on Fixed Price Sales to Eligible Clients telephone Fleet SA Government Auctions on 8226 4686.

## ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil Wins Australia Day Award

The ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil conducted annually at the South Australian National War Memorial on the corner of North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide has been announced as the Community Event of the Year by the Adelaide City Council.

In a presentation ceremony held at the Adelaide Town Hall on Australia Day, the Director of Veterans SA and Inaugural Chairman of the Vigil Committee, Mr Bill Denny A.M., received the award from the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Mr Michael Harbison.

Mr Denny thanked all of the vigil participants for their ongoing contribution and said that the dedication they have shown has enabled the Vigil to become a success. Following the success of the Vigil in Adelaide, others are now conducted at



*Lord Mayor Michael Harbison with the Inaugural Chairman of the Vigil Committee, Mr Bill Denny A.M. and representatives of the ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil participants*

Morphett Vale, Blackwood and Marion.

The ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil plays an important part in ensuring that the ANZAC spirit of remembrance is passed on to our young and to more recent arrivals in South Australia.

Mr Denny also acknowledged the contribution of Sabina Delalic and the team at Multicultural SA, who coordinate more than fifteen multicultural groups to attend each Vigil.

### Funding Opportunities

To assist ex-service organisations, my staff has put together a consolidated list of funding opportunities that governments, both State and Commonwealth, are offering to the veterans' community.

I am keen to hear what projects you are pursuing and will help where I can.

Please telephone my office on 8226 8520 should you require any further information about these funding opportunities.

### Enquiries about Veterans' Voice can be directed to:

Veterans SA  
G.P.O. Box 1838  
ADELAIDE S.A. 5001  
Phone: (08) 8226 8552  
Email: veteranssa@agd.sa.gov.au

### Mr Hieu Van Le A.O.

I think all Vietnam Veterans were thrilled to hear that our Lieutenant Governor and Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, Mr Hieu Van Le, was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List.

Hieu left Vietnam with his wife Lan as a very young couple in 1977. They left in a fishing boat with 42 others from the coast a little south east of Baria. Hieu tells a wonderful story of the old fisherman reaching a point not far off the coast of Vung Tau and relinquishing command of his boat because his previous fishing journeys had never taken him any further.

With little more than a recollection of his school boy geography, Hieu took over and successfully piloted the craft via Malaysia to Darwin. As his craft was entering Darwin Harbour on a flat calm morning he was passed by two blokes in a tinnie speeding the other way on a fishing trip. With Zinc cream noses and cans of beer in their hands they yelled: "G'Day mate, welcome to Australia". It's a welcome Hieu will never forget.

Whenever Vietnam Veterans reflect upon Vietnam as being the first war Australia lost, I suggest you think about Hieu and his countrymen. Sure, we were not able to deliver Vietnam the democracy its people craved so dearly - yes - we were on the losing side. Personally, I am enormously buoyed by the fact that my country was still able to help Hieu and many of his friends. They have come to our land and made every post a winner. They make an enormous contribution to Australia and I am proud to greet them all as fellow Aussies.

As for Hieu, well he remains a generous, distinguished, gentle and courageous man who would be an ornament to any country. We are so lucky he chose Australia.



Bill Denny A.M.,  
Director, Veterans SA