



## 2020 AFPFMA President's Report

Mike Doroshenko

17.10.20

Wow, what a year it has been for the Australian Federal Police Former Members Association. For a young organisation we have achieved so much in such a short period of time. Much of what we have achieved could not have happened without the dedication of our board members and in particular I would like to thank Vice-President & Secretary Greg Ranse and our Treasurer Ian Jackson. Thank you to all who have served on the committee.

I would also like to thank our members for your support. The renewal of membership shows me that you have faith in the work that we are doing and we shall continue to place the interest of AFPFMA members at the forefront of everything we are doing.

You have all helped us create our vision for all former AFP members and today we are gathered to review the timeline of our history.

I have had the honour of being your President for the last 2 years and I am very proud of what we have achieved in that time. The AFPFMA have created tangible outcomes for the benefit of all former AFP members, not just those in our Association. Let's recap on some of the things that your Association has achieved in the last 12 months:

### TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

**2019 AGM** - October 2019. We held a very successful inaugural AGM and associated events, and it is a shame that we have had to scale back our events in 2020 due to the Corona Virus pandemic.

**Nominal Roll** – October 2019. AFPFMA member Dave Willson produced the Nominal Roll which listed all AFP members who were part of the AFP on Foundation Day (19 October 1979). It is a wonderful document which the AFPFMA endorsed and presented to the AFP (on behalf of Dave). The outcome being that the list has been printed by the AFP as a booklet and a 40 year certificate printed for foundation day members. To receive a copy of the certificate and booklet, please send your details (name, badge number and postal address) to [foundationday@afpfma.org](mailto:foundationday@afpfma.org).

**Our New Patron** - 29 November 2019. Major-General (Retired) Ron Grey AO DSO FAIM (former AFP Commissioner) accepted an invitation from the AFPFMA to be our inaugural Patron. On [2 August 2020](#) he was presented with a challenge coin in a commemorative box, lapel pin and AFPFMA coffee mug. Commissioner Grey goes from strength to strength and he also is our oldest member at 90 years of age. Good health to you Sir, it is our honour to have you as our Patron.

**Bushfire Appeal** – January 2020. It was a phone call that I made to Greg Ranse when I suggested we needed to act quickly and establish a Go-Fund-Me page after the summer bush fires ripped through NSW & Victoria. We needed to help our former AFP colleagues who have lost everything. Not knowing the extent of members who were affected, the search was on to check the welfare of all former AFP members in the fire zone, not just those in the AFPFMA. Thanks to the “Blue Family” I am pleased to say that we raised over \$19,000 for three bushfire effected former AFP members.

**Mates in Blue** - January 2020. It was also wonderful to see our [Mates in Blue](#) come together in a co-ordinated effort and help those in need. A group of dedicated members led by Trevor Coutts & Dave Fearnside [packed up a caravan](#) and headed to Cobargo where Dave Rugendyke had lost his home and all his possessions in the fire. My thanks to them and everyone who donated money and goods to the cause. This is just one example of how Mates in Blue can help all former AFP members.

**Improved Morale** – we have kept the morale high amongst our members during Covid-19 restrictions by creating some initiatives such as:

- Weekly online coffee catch-ups during Covid-19 lock downs
- Re-started our monthly physical coffee catch ups again in Canberra and Queensland
- Created entertaining posts in our Facebook group and page
- Promoted events on social media
- Regular email campaigns with interesting stories. Thanks to Marzio Da Re for his contributions.

**Face Masks** – with Covid-19 restrictions on around the country, our Victorian members are particularly affected. We have started to distribute washable face masks to all our Victorian members, with thanks to Red Six and the Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) for their donation.

**Book Club** – In August 2020 we launched an exclusive [Book Club](#). The idea is for financial members of the AFPFMA to share books amongst themselves, read them, hang onto them for up to 3 months then pass them onto other members. This is a free service for our members, all you do is pay for postage.

**NPRD** – September 2020. I attended a National Police Remembrance Day Service and laid a wreath on behalf of all former AFP members, on the Sunshine Coast, Qld.

**Wall of Remembrance** – We completed the Wall of Remembrance project and unfortunately added a further 43 former AFP members to the list who passed away in the last 12 months. I acknowledge the passing of AFPFMA members [Russell Perkins](#) #46 (29.10.19), [Andy Warry](#) #219 (4.5.20) and [Bob Gillespie](#) #151 (24.6.20). My thanks also to Ian Torrance and Bob Stephenson for their help and research, which allowed me to complete the WoR project. The average age of death of former AFP Veterans (that are known) since 1979, is 62.31 years of age. This is a sad statistic, but please put it into perspective and I hope that it is a wake up call for you, to love the family and friends around you, and to be thankful for what you have in your life.

**Cards and Flowers** – we sent get well cards to sick members, as well as sympathy cards and flowers to the family of members who have passed away. It is an important part of our ethos to acknowledge the service of our fallen colleagues.

**State Representatives** – the board decided to create State Representatives of the AFPFMA so that we can gain a local perspective on issues affecting our members. They are also the first point of contact. You can contact them at the email address (insert your state)@afpfma.org.

**Mascot** – following our bush fire appeal we had a costume donated by a Victorian member and it was eventually transported to Canberra via our network. We quickly named our mascot "Plod" the Platypus. He will be fun to bring out next year at social gatherings, when Covid-19 restrictions have eased.

**Website Changes** – We are constantly looking at improving our website, and we have added more items to our online [shop](#). Our challenge coin and lapel pins have been a real hit with members.

**Business Directory** – we have promoted businesses owned by members on our [Business Directory](#) and social media. I encourage all members who have a business, please let us know so it can be advertised for free on our website.

**Discount Codes** – we have provided discount codes to AFPFMA members, from various businesses, such as the Coffee Club and Olight.

**Workshops** – Greg Ranse facilitated and ran free computer skills workshops for members. Our thanks to Tom McQuillen at AFSI who helped us with the venue and his continued support to the AFPFMA.

**Increased Membership** – in the last 12 months we have welcomed 96 new members, that's a 36.64% increase from last year. Our membership has now reached 262 financial members, and continues to grow strong.

**Created Events** – Regular coffee catch-ups, dinners, lunches, BBQs, and reunions are an important part of what we do. In conjunction with AFP Ceremonial and Recognition, we held a formal medal presentation night on the Sunshine Coast, awarding service medals to various local recipients.

**Liaise with the AFP** – we regularly liaise with the AFP and the Commissioner’s Office, to learn more about the Commissioner’s FARM proposal, to establish a reserve Cadre’ and offers of future employment. It is a great opportunity for recently retired AFP members to re-join the AFP on a part-time/casual basis. I first suggested these ideas in a proposal to the AFP in 2016, so it’s good to see that some of the initiatives that the AFP are undertaking, is starting to take shape. However, more can be done by the AFP and the Federal Government, in particular to health and well-being initiatives of former AFP members. We also continue to work closely with Supt. Mick Travers, and his team at Ceremonial and Recognition, who do an outstanding job, regarding awards, funerals and death notices.

**Superannuation Rectification Project** – we continue to lobby the AFP for better outcomes for our members, such as the [Superannuation Rectification Project](#). We have stressed to the AFP the importance of finalising payments to our members who rely on their super as an income stream in their retirement.

**Police Veteran Campaign** - Our recent [#policeveteran](#) campaign has kicked off and we are spreading the term through social media. Please consider downloading the Facebook frame we created, for you to use on your profile picture. Search for Police Veteran in the “add frame” search.

**Sought Assistance from Government** – the AAFPMA has formally written and also lobbied local / state / federal members and Ministers for assistance for our members on a wide variety of issues, such as the term Police Veteran. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has written to me and declined our suggestion that the Government start referring to former Police as Police Veterans. Our campaign continues and we will not stop until we receive the proper recognition that our Police Veterans deserve. [Click here](#) to read the response from the PM.

**Engaged with Other Groups** – the AAFPMA has liaised with other like-minded groups and former Police Associations around the country. Many of those Associations have been in existence for over 80 years, so we can learn a lot from our partners. We have also sent letters of condolences to Victoria Police and other associations on the recent deaths on duty of their members. I would also like to thank former AFPA President Angela Smith who’s support to the AAFPMA has been outstanding. We look forward to continuing a strong relationship with the AFPA under new President Alex Caruana, and we wish him well.

**Attended PTSD Conference** – In order to better understand what some of our members are going through, I attended the Fearless National Conversation on PTSD, which was held on the Sunshine Coast. It was a wonderful experience which made me realise that not enough is being done to help our Police Veterans who are suffering with little to no support. Things need to change!

**Uniform and Insignia Project** - The AFP has endorsed a project to document the history of AFP Uniforms and Insignia. Our thanks to AFPFMA member Eric Grimm who will manage the project with support and internal coordination provided by the AFP Museum.

## MY VISION

Last year I made a wish list of where I would like to see us head towards. Some objectives are a long way off, but some are just around the corner. The wish list is important and should not be forgotten over time. I thought that I would mention the objectives still in play, with a few more additions for 2020.

### 2019 Wish List

- ✓ State Representatives will eventually become State Presidents with their own boards.
- ✓ A proper transition program for members that leave the AFP.
- ✓ A mental health strategy, and assistance specifically for former AFP members.
- ✓ Mates in Blue program will grow and receive funding to allow us to help ALL former AFP members in need, not just AFPFMA members.
- ✓ A dream that one day we will have a retirement village in Canberra for our Police Veterans, similar to the RSL.

### 2020 Wish List

- ✓ The term Police Veteran is widely accepted by the public, all Police Services, and all levels of Government. I acknowledge the great work already done by Victoria. Our campaign continues to grow and with your help we will succeed.
- ✓ The AFPFMA to implement the Police Veterans Benefit Card for all former AFP members (not just AFPFMA members).
- ✓ An employment and training solution for Police Veterans, similar to Soldier On.
- ✓ A whole department within the AFP (or the Department of Home Affairs) that purely looks after former AFP members, with tangible initiatives, support, training, funding and benefits similar to the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ✓ To see an independent study which investigates the problems that face Police Veterans when they leave the AFP, with a focus on mental health issues, and why the average age of death amongst our Police Veterans is well below the national average.
- ✓ A Senate enquiry into the compensation process for Police Veterans who suffer with PTSD, and how ComCare can improve.
- ✓ A national conference for all Police Veteran Associations across Australia, to implement a strategic direction for all Police Veterans, bringing together all Police Chiefs, industry experts in mental health and Government decision makers.

The future is bright for the AFP Former Members Association and your support plays a vital role in our success.

This will be my final President's report. As determined in our Constitution, the President's term is for a maximum of 2 years, and I will be stepping down after the AGM. We have new blood coming on board to our Committee which is a positive step forward.

I plan to still keep busy by looking after the AAFPMA's website, shop and also the Wall of Remembrance which has been a labour of love for me for the last 11 years. I also intend to take Mates in Blue to the next level, so stay tuned for more on that soon.

I am proud to have served as President of the AAFPMA and be the number one ticket holder. I am confident that I leave the AFP Former Members Association committee in very good hands. We have a wonderful team of volunteers, who are committed to helping ALL former AFP members. We stand together, as we celebrate our past, and strengthen our future. Thank you.

Mike Doroshenko  
AAFPMA Inaugural President  
2018 - 2020