

PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE AGM & GM HELD ON 1 June 2025 at Geebung-Zillmere RSL Club, Brisbane

President Greg Ivey opened the AGM & Welcomed all in attendance, noting first time attenders, Lang Kidby, Barry Maffescioni, Trevor Shelley and Bernie Carney. One Minute's Silence was observed for deceased Veterans of the New Guinea Campaigns and deceased Association members.

Present: D. Graham, G. Ivey, K. Horton, L. Quinlivan, P. Jesser, F. Maclean, I. Ogston, K. Smith, B. Carney, G. Farr, L. Kidby, B. Maffescioni, T. Shelley, J. Worthington; and a number of wives.

Apologies: T. Edwinsmith, S. Beveridge, R. Wade, G. Johnson, G. Carnes, P. Adam, D. Dymock, J. Humphrey, J. Morris, G. Screen, I. Walton, C. Bell, M. Baillie, D. Thomson, R. Sayce, N. Hunter, K. Grant, S. Hill.

Guest Speaker: Member Bernie Carney gave an insightful talk and answered questions from the floor on 'Advocacy for DVA Claims'. Bernie's speech is **attached** and is well worth reading.

Minutes of 2024 AGM/GM

Moved: K. Horton, Seconded: K. Smith that the 2024 Minutes as circulated and tabled be confirmed. Carried.

Business arising - The 2024 Members Voluntary Levy for Ongoing Website Costs was mentioned and moved to General Business for discussion.

President's Report

President Greg Ivey presented a comprehensive Annual Report. (*See attached*)

Moved: G. Ivey, Seconded: P. Jesser That the President's Report be received. Carried

Correspondence: (Secretary)

Major inward/outward items consisted of multiple e-mails and snail mail relating to –

1. **Newsletters / information updates / items of interest** to/from members – (Norm Hunter, Ian Ogston, Greg Ivey, Kev Horton, Kevin Smith, Greg Farr, Steve Beveridge)
2. Emails to/from re the **2024 Kokoda Day** Service at Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL.
Kokoda Day 2024/25, Gold Coast Kokoda correspondence – to/from G. Friend / C. McCarthy, G.C. City Council / Invitations / letters to members / Southport Rotary C'tee.
3. **Membership reminders and Dues receipts/ new members welcoming letters/ membership forms** plus snail mail posting of Assn stickers – (Direct Credit payments and cheques for dues) to/from Treasurer Frankie Maclean, Membership Officer Kevin Smith, Secretary Kev Horton and President Greg.
4. **ANZAC Day 2025** letters/emails/photos to/from members, ANZAC March C'tee, 2/14th, 39th, 2/14th Assns, PNGVR, PNG Consul General, Lahui Ako, General Jerry Singirok, Margot Baillie also ANZAC Day March in Leeton, NSW re Jock Wilkinson. C'tee. Emails re Sydney march – G. Ivey/ K. Horton/ P. Adam/ R. Wade/ P. Porteous

5. Emails re Paver placement/design behind Kokoda Memorial Wall – K. Horton, Talkingstones, P. Jesser, G. Friend, Southport RSL, Kindred Assns, B. Templeton, Defence Dept Canberra.
6. Emails to/from PNG Brisbane Consul General and his secretary.
7. **Website updates and new articles** including articles from Peter Jesser, Norm Hunter, Kevin Smith. Kev Horton
9. Correspondence re 100th birthday of Sgt. Laurie Siegle (NGIB)
10. Newsletters from our Assn. and kindred associations.
11. Emails to/from Lahui Ako

All other e-mails/correspondence available to view on computer at AGM.

Business arising from Correspondence

The Assn banner is to be made available to G. Farr for use at the 2025 Kokoda Day Service at Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL Club on 10 August.

Moved: K. Horton Second F. Maclean that Incoming correspondence be received and Outward endorsed. Carried.

Treasurer's Report

Mrs Frankie Maclean presented the report showing an Income of \$1687, Expenditure of \$626.12 and a Current Balance of \$2,948.90 (*Report attached*)

Moved: F. Maclean Seconded J. Worthington that the Treasurer's report be received. Carried

Car / Van stickers

The Association currently has 179 smaller car stickers and 7 large stickers on hand for presentation to New Members and for sale. Email kevhorton49@gmail.com to request orders which are sent by snail mail. Current cost due to postage increase is - 1 sticker \$3 – any extra stickers in the same envelope \$2 each.

PayPal Auxiliary Report

Secretary Kev Horton presented the report related to our Website www.soldierspng.com as below.

Balance as at 25.05.2025 - \$62.08 AUD

Upcoming Expenditure

(Automatic deduction by 'Bluehost' - Annual Domain Name '**soldierspng.com**'

- \$23.99 **USD** (\$37.66 AUD) will be deducted by Bluehost.com on 04.06.2025

Moved: K. Horton **Seconded:** I. Ogston that the Report be received. Carried

Membership & Website Reports – These comprehensive reports were presented by Kevin Smith with a pleasing increase in membership in the last year and a request for more articles and photos of PNG from members. (*Reports attached*)

Moved: K. Smith Seconded P. Jesser that the M/ship & Website reports be received. Carried

Medallic Recognition Officer and NSW & ACT Rep. Report – (*See attached*) - These reports prepared by Russ Wade were presented by President Greg, and Kev Horton spoke on the PNGDF 50th Anniversary 1940-1990 Medal.

Moved K. Horton **Seconded** D. Graham that the reports be received. Carried

Newsletter Report – Norm Hunter, Ian Ogston, Steve Beveridge (*See attached*)

In the absence of Norm Hunter, Ian Ogston presented the report and mentioned the continuing new Newsletter style which is being very well received by members.

Moved: I. Ogston **Seconded** K. Smith that the Newsletter report be received. Carried

4. The area behind the magnificent Rotary Kokoda Memorial Wall has been opened up for families to purchase a paver for those Veterans who served in New Guinea during the Second World War in areas apart from the Kokoda Track. As part of our Association’s support for the Kokoda Memorial Wall area, it was proposed by Secretary K. Horton that a Large Paver with the wording **WORLD WAR II – VETERANS OF – NEW GUINEA CAMPAIGNS** be purchased at a cost of \$215. The new Paver would be laid as a headstone in the same style as existing headstones at the Wall. Several individual pavers are planned for this expanded area in 2025. Moved: K. Horton Seconded G. Farr **That the Association purchase a Large Heading Paver from ‘Talkingstones’ at a cost of \$215 to provide support for enhancing the Kokoda Wall remembrance facilities.**” Carried

5. All Association Members & partners have been invited by the Broadbeach Organizing Committee to attend the 83rd Anniversary of Kokoda Day on **August 8, 2025, at Cascade Gardens, Broadbeach, Gold Coast** beginning at 10.30am. A Lunch booking has been made for our Association Members and partners at the near by **Broadbeach Bowls Club** following the ceremony, from 12 noon onwards.

Also, all Association members and partners are invited to attend the annual Brisbane **Kokoda Day Commemoration Service at Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL Club on Sunday 10 August 2025**, with details to be advised later by Email.

6. Our last Brisbane event for 2025 will be the Qld RSL **Remembrance Day Service at Anzac Square, Brisbane on November 11**. Members and partners are invited to watch the Service, then attend our brief Poppy ceremony below the Shrine, and join us for Lunch at a near by Restaurant.

President Greg thanked everyone for their attendance and input, and for bringing a favourite keepsake from their time in PNG to display and share at the meeting, and wished all a safe journey home.

LEST WE FORGET

Recently Deceased Members

Education Sgt Peter Schroder, 2PIR 1968-69, Passed away on 02.06.2023

Meeting closed at 3.37pm.

Secretary’s Signature President’s Signature.....

President Report to 2025 AGM

by Greg Ivey

I would like to report to Members on our progress during 2024-25 and I would like to thank all Members for the part they played in that progress.

Our Mission

We honoured our deceased Veterans & Members at Commemoration Services on Kokoda Day 8th August, Remembrance Day and Anzac Day. We were pleased to have the active participation in Brisbane of the PNG Consul-General for Qld, Hon. Reatau Rau, and the former PNGDF Commander, Major General Jerry Singirok, and their wives. Last Anzac Day, I was joined by Russ Wade and Garry Young at Leeton in NSW where we honoured the last surviving member of the Papuan Infantry Battalion, WO Jock Wilkinson, aged 104. In May 2025, I was joined by Kev Horton at Caloundra RSL Club where we celebrated the 100th birthday of Sgt Laurie Siegle (NGIB) among his family and his close friends.

To carry out our mission, we have also distributed *Armi Nius* to many friends in the Kokoda Email network and we have published PNG stories on our Website, in the *PNG Kundu* Journal and the *Sabretache* Journal. We are also using social media to advertise the Wreath Laying ceremony in Brisbane on Anzac Day.

Our Membership

We have been recruiting New Members through the DVA newsletter & website and the Qld RSL Newsletter. Our Committee team provide a Welcome letter, the latest Newsletter and a Car Sticker to each new member. We want to recruit more New Members, and we ask for your help by simply asking your friends or relatives to join the Association.

The Secretary also sends Thanks or Get-Well notes to Members as well as Sympathy messages if we learn of a Member's death. The interstate Representatives play a key role in keeping in touch with local Members and sending Member news to the Secretary.

We value every one of our Members and thank them for their Emails & phone calls and their support. Membership is open to anyone interested in our mission and we are very happy to see the descendants of War Veterans playing an increasing role in our events.

Our Finances

The annual membership fee remains at \$5 which is attractive for New Members. We hold a small balance in the bank to meet administration costs and occasionally make a modest donation to projects related to our mission. We are very grateful to Members who make Donations to support either our Website costs or the resources used to educate the next generation about the New Guinea campaigns. Donations are always very welcome.

Our Partners

We could not continue to contribute without the understanding and back-up of our wives and partners, so we thank them enormously for their patience and tolerance. We also want to acknowledge and thank our Kokoda Battalion partners who participate in the annual Services, reunions and lunch events. It is good to see the ongoing exchange of Newsletters among Kokoda Battalions and the linking of websites so we can all continue to learn about other Battalions. The friendships which follow are proving long-lasting.

Our Committee

Your elected Committee Members work hard behind the scenes to bring success to our everyday activities and our special events. I would like to publicly thank each person in the outgoing Committee for their hard work during 2024-25 and for supporting me as the New President. They are an amazingly talented team, so I encourage them to exercise that talent and potential within our Committee. As we all age, we need new people on the Committee, so I ask members to volunteer for the Committee for 12 months and we'll find a role that suits you.

Our Committee is very grateful for the advice & active involvement of our Patron, Major Don Graham. Don and his wife Barbara from the Gold Coast continue to "turn up" at all our events and they inspire us.

We are now sharing Committee Members' contact details to facilitate more contacts, collaboration, and cooperation on Association projects.

Our future

Our future is in your hands, so I invite you to attend our events, send me your suggestions for new projects, or join our Committee. With your input, I am confident about our future. Thanks everyone for your support.

Greg Ivey

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Treasurer's Report 2024 – 2025 Financial Year as at 30 May 2025

Opening Balance from last AGM:	\$1888.02
INCOME	
Dues:	\$495
Donations:	\$1186
Sticker purchase:	\$6.00
Total Income:	\$1687
Balance carried forward plus income:	\$3575.02
EXPENDITURE	
Refunds and payments:	
Rotary, Cascade Gardens (Int. Peace Pole):	\$100
Vice President expenses:	\$437.90
Secretary Expenses:	\$88.22
Total Expenditure:	\$626.12
Income less Expenditure:	\$1060.88
Balance as per Bank Statement, 30 May 2025:	\$2,948.90

Frankie Maclean
Honorary Treasurer

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AGM 2025 Membership Report

Membership Summaries 2024

STATE	Number	TYPE	Number
QLD	64	Members	37
NSW	33	Life	89
VIC	21	Life(Honorary)	9
SA	6	Honorary	14
WA	14		
NT	0		
TAS	0	Donor	0
ACT	5	Other	0
PNG	6		
Unknown	0		

Totals 149 149

Deletions: Two Victorian members have passed away. (L/Sgt Don Collins & Sgt Peter Schroder)

Additions: 1 new member in NSW was added in Dec 2024, and 12 new members have resulted from advertising in the RSL and DVA newspapers. (8 in QLD, 2 in VIC and 1 each in NSW and TAS.)

Membership Summaries 2025

STATE	Number	TYPE	Number
QLD	72	Members	38
NSW	35	Financial Life	100
VIC	21	Life(Honorary)	8
SA	6	Honorary	14
WA	14		
NT	0		
TAS	1	Donor	0
ACT	5	Other	0
PNG	6		
Unknown	0		

Totals 160 160

The Online Membership form has recently been updated (www.soldierspng.com)

Kevin Smith
Hon. Membership Officer

Wordpress –

This is the host of the Association website.

The Wordpress reports continue to indicate successful blocking of malicious attacks.

The 2024 AGM report noted an annoying flood of trash comments that regularly require deletion. This continues to be the case in spite of attempts to minimize the problem. An investigation into the best solution to the problem will be undertaken.

Layout -

The layout of website posts and pages has not been updated for some time. Whilst they serve the purpose well, comparison of the home page with that of other related associations makes ours look rather dated. This was highlighted with the recent interest in membership where prospective members had to dig to find and download the membership application form. To attract members the website should perhaps highlight the “Become a member” message and make it easy to do so.

Links to external sites –

Links to like websites such as 39th Bn Assoc, 2/14th Bn Assoc, 2/ 16th Bn Assoc, the AWM, and the Chalkies website were previously displayed on the Contacts page. These have now been given their own page under Further Links.

Additions –

These are mainly the Newsletters and Recent article. The Newsletter carries significant articles but other contributions this year have included a Photo Gallery from David Gillis, and Article by Elizabeth Cox on “The Other side of the Track, a Gender Snapshot of Kokoda”, Graeme Johnson’s article on mosquito control at 2PIR and lastly an incomplete list of the Pipe Majors of the PIR and RPIR (which asked for any further information to be submitted).

Photos and Articles -

- Again, I would encourage members to look through their photo archives and send me photos (with captions) of their time and experience in PNG. These are not only personally valued but are also historically valuable especially to researchers or public visitors to the Association website, particularly the residents of PNG.
- Other suggestions are always welcome.

Kevin Smith

Hon. Website Manager

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**Newsletter Report
AGM 1 June 2025**

Four editions of the Association’s newsletter (*Armi Nius*) were produced in 2024.

The editors compose each newsletter based on a three-part plan:

- (i) Providing news, updates and items about activities in the various States, as well as on veterans and other people and groups who are in some way linked to the Association;
- (ii) Providing articles that may be of historical or current interest to members;

- (iii) Providing articles that invite readers to think about issues that are related to the mission of the Association.

The editors wish to thank the members of the Association who have offered encouragement and feedback throughout the year. We appreciate it and will continue to do all we can to keep some of Australian history's great stories alive.

Norm Hunter, Ian Ogston, Steve Beveridge
(Editors)

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025 MEDALLIC RECOGNITION OFFICER'S REPORT

PREAMBLE

The previous report to the 2024 AGM proposed the development of an "agreed position" on the interpretation of various letters from PNGDF Commanders and Senior Officers and a revised Interim Medals Policy and documented case for consideration by the Association's Committee. With changes in context, an Issues Paper is provided to the Committee.

CONSTRAINT BY FORMER CDF

The letter from the former CDF, General Angus Campbell AO DSC to President Don Graham dated 21 November 2018 made it explicit that foreign governments are not to be approached about awards. This may require legal advice to consider if the CDF is authorised to bind a citizen from dealing with any foreign government.

CURRENT CHIEF OF ARMY

The Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC has a family association with PNG. With Army engineer troops currently working on Manus Island consistent with a strategic re-focus on PNG, there may be an opportunity to further pursue the matter of the 50th Anniversary Medal.

ROLE OF CHRISTIES AND THE ASSOCIATION

Christies Pty Ltd was commissioned by the PNG Government to have the 50th Anniversary Medal minted for the PNGDF and sold to those with qualifying service in the Pacific Islands Regiment and its forerunners the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) and the New Guinea Infantry Battalions (NGIB).

The PIB NGIB HQ PIR Association provided a clearing house role in verifying medal purchasers who were Association members with qualifying service, including those who served with other units in the PNGDF, pursuant to the PNGDF's broadening of the qualifying criteria. This role has been made redundant by the availability of the 50th Anniversary Medal from other medal retailers, at competitive prices to Christies.

ISSUES PAPER

An Issues Paper 2025 has been separately provided for consideration by the Association's Committee. The Issues Paper takes account of changes in context and presents two courses of action for the Association, noting significant milestone dates in 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Association's Committee consider the Issues Paper 2025 and courses of action and provide further direction, before milestone commemorative dates in 2025.

Russ Wade
Medallic Recognition Officer

NSW AND ACT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT 2025

SYDNEY ANZAC DAY MARCH 2025

The family of 104-year-old PIB and NGIB veteran Jock Wilkinson requested that the PIB NGIB banner be brought to Leeton, in order that it could be displayed behind Jock in the Leeton Anzac Day March and Memorial Service.

Association President Greg Ivey and NSW & ACT Representative Russ Wade drove to Leeton on 24 May and were joined in Leeton by Canberra member Garry Young and his wife Sue. Jock's family were very welcoming to the Association visitors, hosting us at two dinners and lunch, where there were opportunities to engage with Jock.

The March was a resounding success, with many locals wanting to be photographed with Jock at the conclusion of the Memorial Service, as per the attached photo.

The local paper "The Irrigator", featured an article on Jock in their 26 April edition, a copy of which will be available to those interested.

Peter Porteous organised the remaining Sydney contingent to march with the ANGAU contingent, as the ANGAU contingent normally follows behind the PIB NGIB contingent.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY INFANTRY MUSEUM (AAIM)

I visited the AAIM on 27 February, only to find the PIR exhibition had been taken down, along with other displays. I followed up with the AAIM Curator, Paul Mitrovich and with Association Vice President Steve Beveridge.

Steve visited the AAIM on 6 May and met with the Curator. The results were fruitful, and Steve has documented key points from the meeting. The AAIM will compile an inventory of items in the former PIR display, with a view to a new display.

MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY OF NSW

The Association continues to support the promotion of military history and the lectures convened by the Military History Society of NSW at the Auditorium at the Anzac Memorial Hyde Park in Sydney, in communications to NSW and ACT members.

Russ Wade

NSW and ACT Representative



Garry Young, Jock Wilkinson, Greg Ivey with banner holders Russ Wade and Sam Wilkinson, 2025

Military Advocacy: a brief talk to AGM 2025

What are Military Advocates?

Military advocacy is unlike most other forms of voluntary work. It is a big commitment.

Trained military advocates are people who have undertaken nationally recognised training to assist ex-service men and women (also serving members) in accessing compensation and wellbeing services. These advocates have completed Units of Competency from the 'Course in Military Advocacy' through the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP). I have completed this training over the past 2 years, and I liken it to a mini university course but it is essentially based around on-the-job experience. Every trainee advocate works under a mentor until such time as they qualify at Level 2 status. ATDP trained advocates are covered by professional indemnity insurance, so it is akin to a professional occupation.

Advocates are generally volunteers who work for one or more Ex Service Organisations (ESO). They are not staff members of or employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); however, they deal directly with DVA on a regular basis on behalf of their clients – client being the term generally applied to those veterans whom advocates help. There are some paid advocates, and these are employed by RSL LifeCare Veteran Services. The services provided by both volunteer advocates and RSL paid advocates are free of charge.

There are two streams in advocacy – compensation and wellbeing. I'm trained in compensation advocacy, so my comments will relate to that stream only. I am a Level 2 advocate and the bulk of qualified, practising advocates are Level 2. There are Levels 3 and 4 but compensation advocates qualified at those levels are trained to deal with claims appeals to the Veterans Review Board and the Administrative Review Tribunal respectively (formerly the Administrative Appeals Tribunal).

The RSL has nearly 600 trained volunteer compensation and wellbeing advocates spread across the country. They deal with both male and female veterans from each of the three branches of the military.

As opposed to the historical definition, the modern definition of a 'veteran' is any person who has served at least one day of full-time military service. It then follows that eligibility for the Veteran White Card is the same – one day of full-time military service.

Although RSL advocates provide assistance for free, there are organisations out there that charge a fee or a percentage of any compensation awarded. There is a perception by some people that paid services are superior to those provided by volunteers. There is no substance to such a belief.

The 3 Acts

Currently, there are 3 Acts of Parliament covering military compensation. They are complex and each provides for different types of compensation and other benefits. The Acts cover different time periods of service (with some overlap) and they cover differing types of service – the principal difference being between peacetime service and operational service. Advocates are required to have a comprehensive knowledge of all 3 Acts and how to apply them.

As from 1 July 2026, the 3 Acts will be rolled into one known as the 'improved' Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act – commonly referred to as MRCA. All compensation

and benefits under the current 3 Acts will be grandfathered while all new claims will be processed under the new 'VETS Act' as it is colloquially termed.

What do Military Advocates do?

They help provide essential support to veterans claiming compensation from the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Claims are for both physical and mental health conditions. In my experience to date, more than fifty percent of clients have some type of mental health issues.

Advocates offer independent advice on making claims and inform veterans of the government legislation that covers veterans' compensation. They help to complete the veteran's application and support them through the claims lodgement process. They help make sure the veteran has all the correct documentation to support his or her claim.

Every veteran who walks through the door has a different story to tell and different experiences in the military, so advocates must be prepared to be challenged.

So what happens in practice?

All claims are assessed on medical reports or, in the case of mental health conditions, reports from psychiatrists. It is the responsibility of the veteran to obtain these reports when required. In addition to medical or psychiatric diagnosis, there is also a measurement of the effect of the diagnosed conditions on the veteran's lifestyle. These two factors combined produce an impairment rating which is used to calculate compensation, if compensation is applicable.

The next step is to establish what is termed a 'causal connection or link' between the veteran's claimed condition and service in the military. The advocate works with the veteran to do this and prepares a 'contention statement' which is intended to establish this causal link. If there is no causal link with service, then the claim will fail. The exception to the 'causal connection or link' requirement is Non-Liability Health Care which provides veterans with access to fully funded treatment for all mental health conditions, regardless of any link to service. You can access full information about this subject on the DVA website.

Once this is done, the claim is submitted to DVA for assessment, along with any other relevant documents. There is a long delay on all claims with DVA – anything up to 18 months to two years is possible. Some claims can take considerably less time.

When a decision is received from DVA, it is usually quite a comprehensive communication. Depending on the outcome, the advocate may need to explain the decision to the veteran. In some circumstances, if a claim has been declined, an appeal may be lodged.

If a condition becomes an 'accepted condition', the veteran is covered for all medical treatment for that condition. All 'accepted conditions' are recorded with DVA through the White Card or Gold Card system. There may also be other benefits and services to which the veteran is entitled, depending on a 'needs assessment' conducted by DVA.

The above has been an extremely brief outline of what happens in practice. As you can probably imagine, there are limitless circumstances depending on the veteran's role and time in the military and it is the advocate's job to know how to navigate these different circumstances.

Locating an advocate

- Enquire through the RSL State headquarters in your particular state.
- On the DVA website, visit the '[Finding an advocate](#)' page. The page includes a link to the [Accredited Advocate Register](#) as well as information about how advocates can help you access services and payments.
- Go to advocateregister.org.au and enter your postcode.

Recommendations

I would strongly recommend that two things be done:

1. Register with DVA through MyGov and obtain a White Card. I'm happy to answer any questions about the White Card or the Gold Card.
2. Have a look at the DVA website. It contains a wealth of information.

by Bernie Carney
Association Life Member